



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

MINUTES

Minutes of the Mission Council, held from 17th -19th March 1995, at St. Joseph's, Upholland, which was constituted by the Moderator, the Revd Dr Jack McKelvey, who presided. Worship was led each day by the Chaplain, the Revd Stephen Brown.

Bible study on the Epistle to the Philippians was led by the Moderator. The Council met in groups for Bible study and for discussion of various items on the agenda.

95/25 WELCOME

The Moderator welcomed members to the meeting, in particular those attending for the first time, including Ms Katherine Gould, FURY representative, and visitors:- the Revd Andrew Prasad, CWM Secretary for Personnel Resources, who had been invited to be the Theological Reflector for this meeting; the Revd Pepine Iosua, General Secretary of the Kiribati Protestant Church; and Mr Raymond Arua of the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

95/26 ATTENDANCE

There were 71 members present, with 15 staff members in attendance, Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow, Convener of the Task Group on Human Sexuality, the Revd Elizabeth Welch, Chaplain to the Revd John Reardon, (observer), the Revd Stephen Brown, Chaplain, and Mrs Sheila Tull, Minute Secretary.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Denis Earp (alternate: the Revd Janet Webber), Mr Ivan Andrews (alternate: Mr Geoffrey Lunt), the Revd Peter Poulter (alternate: the Revd Stephen Thornton); the Revd Geoffrey Bending, the Revd Patricia Nimmo.

95/27 AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

The General Secretary outlined the Agenda and presented the proposed timetable, which were approved.

95/28 MINUTES OF THE MISSION COUNCIL - JANUARY 1995

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Mission Council held on 21 January 1995 which had been circulated were, with the following correction, approved and signed:-
95/18(b) 2nd line should read "1st September 1995".
It was noted that the Revd Justine Wyatt had attended the January meeting as an observer.

95/29 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) The Pastoral Measure. (95/9) In the light of comments received, the Revd Keith Forecast reported that a completed re-writing was called for and it was proposed, and agreed by the Mission Council, that a final version be brought to the 1996 Assembly. The amendment already agreed by Assembly 1994 and the interpretation of "suspension" agreed by the Mission Council in October 1994 as an interim extension of the Pastoral Measure would continue to be used, as would also the interpretation of the functions of the Synod and the General Assembly made by the Mission Council acting for the General Assembly in January 1995 (Minute 95/14).

(b) An Appeal or Appeals to the General Assembly (95/6). The General Secretary informed the Council that there could be an Appeal or Appeals to the 1995 Assembly.

(c) Report on Provincial Moderator Appointments (95/19(d)). This matter needed further consideration by the Mission Council.

95/30 THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY

On behalf of the Ecumenical Committee, the Revd Murdoch Mackenzie proposed that the following resolution be brought to the Assembly by the Mission Council:-

The General Assembly, in this 200th year of the founding of the London Missionary Society,

Gives thanks to God for its founding and for the other mission agencies now incorporated in the Council for World Mission, and gratefully acknowledges the service of missionaries, administrators and supporters over the years;

Rejoices in the change of missionary understanding expressed in the present Council for World Mission, in which the United Reformed Church joins with other churches in a world-wide fellowship of equal partners in mission, and

Re-affirms its commitment to share in the proclamation of the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God throughout the world through the mutual sharing of the resources of people and money, supported by the prayers, informed interest, time, energy and giving of its members.

The Mission Council unanimously agreed to forward this resolution to the General Assembly.

95/31 ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Mrs Wilma Frew, Convenor, asked the Mission Council to deal with four matters.

(a) The free evening at this year's Assembly was open for use by a number of groups. It was agreed that the Ecumenical Committee should have the use of the main hall to mark the Bi-Centenary of the London Missionary Society. There should be no other Services of Worship that evening.

(b) 1997 Assembly. An invitation had been received from Wessex Province to return to Portsmouth from 1 - 7 July 1997. This would be the 25th anniversary of the URC. The invitation was gladly accepted.

(c) Reports and resolutions. There had been criticism of the way in which reports had been presented at the 1994 Assembly. For this year the Assembly Arrangements Committee suggested that reports should be presented as formerly, to enable members of Assembly to take note of the new Committees and those serving on them.

(d) Creche facilities at the Assembly. Following the resolution passed at the 1994 Assembly, the Assembly Arrangements Committee had given careful thought to this matter. After various investigations it had been agreed that the pre-booking of a professional creche using fully qualified people was required. The cost would be £1,000 as a minimum for the week to run the creche during the day-time. It was proposed that the first mailing of Assembly papers in the week of 1st April would include a booking form, with 31st May as the cut-off date.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed not to impose an upper limit on the numbers, but to leave it to the judgement of the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

95/32 RESOURCE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (1)

The Convener of the Resource Planning Advisory Committee, the Revd John Waller, introduced a paper, which with questions arising during the meeting, formed the basis of discussion in groups and in plenary session.

95/33 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

(a) Editor of "Reform" and Media Officer

The Revd Donald Hilton reported the process by which the Nominating Group unanimously nominated as Editor of "Reform" and Media Officer the Revd David Lawrence.

It was unanimously agreed that the Revd David Lawrence be appointed as Editor of "Reform" and Media Officer from 1 July 1995 for a period of five years.

(b) Children's Advocate

The Revd Stephen Thornton gave details concerning the work of the Nominating Group for the post of Children's Advocate and brought forward the name of Mrs Rosemary Johnston.

It was unanimously agreed that Mrs Rosemary Johnston be appointed as Children's Advocate from 1st April 1995 for a period of five years.

The Mission Council would receive in due course outline job descriptions of both these posts.

It was noted that care should be taken, when reporting future staff appointments in "Reform", not to give the impression that a nomination would automatically lead to an appointment. In particular, the use of a photograph ought to be avoided.

The Moderator thanked Norman Hart, who would soon be retiring as Editor of "Reform" and said there would be a more formal occasion for an expression of appreciation.

95/35 RESOURCE SHARING TASK GROUP

The Honorary Treasurer, Convener, introduced a progress report on the Provincial visits made by members of the Resource Sharing Task Group. It was noted that most of the resources do lie at the Provincial level. A report would be sent to the Provinces. It was intended that the report would consist primarily of statements of 'good practice'.

Mr Black thought that there would be a need for some follow-up once the Report had been received by the Provinces.

In discussion it was suggested that further study under the headings of "Ecumenical Sharing" and "Bringing the Centre to the Marginalised" might be given to standing committees. It was requested that when available a report be sent to the members of the Mission Council. Should the report be considered by the Mission Council and the Assembly? Mr Black replied that there had to be voluntary co-operation in the Provinces and therefore it was not proposed to make recommendations to the Assembly.

95/36 ADVISORY GROUP ON GRANTS AND LOANS

A report to the Mission Council from the Advisory Group on Grants and Loans had been circulated with the Agenda.

It was agreed that at the autumn meeting the Mission Council should review the work of this group and its membership. It was noted that churches have been given advice on applying for grants.

95/36 TASK GROUP ON HUMAN SEXUALITY (1)

Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow, Convener, presented the draft report to Assembly, and discussion took place in all the groups.

95/37 STAFFING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(a) Revision of job descriptions

The Revd Angus Duncan, Convener, reported that the job

descriptions of the following posts had been appropriately revised to take account of the new structures. Further revision might be needed in the light of experience:-

Secretaries for: Church and Society; Communications; Discipleship & Witness; Doctrine, Prayer & Worship; Ecumenical Relations; International Church Relations; Ministries; Training; and
Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant; National Youth Secretary; Office and Personnel Manager.

The Mission Council accepted this report.

(b) National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer

Mr Duncan reported that the Staffing Advisory Committee had applied its criteria to the post of NYCTO and considered what time-scale for a re-appointment would best help the Church in this transitional time of change.

It was suggested that there was no challenge either to the viability or the necessity of this post.

It was proposed by the Revd Julian Macro, seconded by the Revd Janet Sowerbutts, that this post continue until the end of December 1996.

The Revd Terry Oakley proposed an amendment to include the words "at least until 31st December 1996". The amendment was seconded by the Revd Margaret Taylor.

The amendment was carried and the substantive resolution was passed in the following form:

Mission Council resolves that the post of National Youth and Children Training Officer be continued at least until 31st December 1996.

SATURDAY 18th MARCH

9.30 am After worship and Bible study the Council proceeded with further business.

95/38 BUDGET

On behalf of the Resource Planning Advisory Committee the Revd John Waller presented the Budget for 1996, paying tribute to the work done by Mr Clem Frank and Mr David Butler.

It was noted that there was a budgetted deficit of £562,000, to be met by £142,000 from the Ministerial Training Fund and £420,000 from the General Fund.

The new format of the Budget should assist people to

understand how the majority of the money will be spent. £14.5 million would be spent on ministries, i.e. the local mission of the local church; £1.5 would be spent on training; £1 million on promoting mission.

Mr Waller proposed that the budget for 1996, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be sent to the General Assembly for decision.

The new format was warmly welcomed by members of the Council. Several suggestions about the wording of the headings under 'Expenditure' were noted by the Honorary Treasurer. It was agreed that explanatory notes would be provided where required.

In reply to a question about Assembly costs now carried by individuals and/or Districts being taken within the central Assembly costs, Mr Waller considered that this matter should become part of the five-year plan which will begin in 1997.

The Budget for 1996 was unanimously accepted for transmission as a resolution to the General Assembly.

95/39 TASK GROUP ON HUMAN SEXUALITY (2)

Reports were received from each of the groups and were noted by Mrs Goodfellow.

There was general concern about the proposed time-table. It was considered that there should not be delay in bringing this matter to the Assembly, but that in order to be positive and sensitive in terms of natural justice there was need to take as long as was needed.

It was proposed that part (b) of the suggested resolution be amended so as to allow a further year for discussion to take place before resolutions were brought to the General Assembly.

It was agreed that the resolution be submitted with revised wording later in the Council meeting.

95/40 NUMBER OF MINISTERS WORKING PARTY

The Revd Keith Forecast, in presenting a report of the Working Party on the Number of Ministers, asked that the revised paper R1 be substituted for paragraph 5. He said that the Working Party had had a difficult task. Hitherto there had been almost no control over the number of ministers on the payroll. He explained some of the items in the report and he and the Revd Michael Diffey replied to questions.

Mr Forecast moved that the report of the Working Party be accepted, with the resolutions, for transmission to the General Assembly.

The Mission Council considered the reports in group discussion.

95/41 RESOURCE PLANNING (2)

The Revd John Waller reported on the results of the first group discussion on this subject. They indicated that the views of the groups were broadly similar. The ideas could be summarised as follows:

to encourage each local church to enrich its discipleship both in its own life, and the life of the community

to provide materials and people for training local leaders and members

to consider the identity of the church, united and reformed, and its consequences for the ecumenical scene

to become more a Church talking to itself, networking information and sharing resources

to give special attention to children and young people, nurturing those within the church and speaking with those who are not

to foster the Church's engagement beyond itself, with the community, with society and with the world church

to place particular emphasis on the training and in-service training of all ministers as agent of encouragement and vision

to be a growing church where people want to be and which is relevant to their lives.

The groups were asked to discuss these themes in the light of how they might be achieved over a five-year period.

95/42 NEW SUB-COMMITTEES

(a) Europe Task Group

The Revd Murdoch Mackenzie, Convener of the Ecumenical Committee, presented a paper setting out the tasks, areas of policy, membership and budget for the proposed Europe Task Group. He took note of several suggestions from members of the Council.

The Mission Council agreed to set up a Europe Task Group with the terms of reference set out in the paper.

(b) Training Committee - three working groups

The Revd John Sutcliffe, Convener, Training Committee, presented a paper concerning the setting up of:

(i) a Studies Panel which would be concerned with the training of Non-Stipendiary Ministry Ordinands and Lay Preachers;

(ii) a Ministerial Training Fund Group;

(iii) a Training for Learning and Serving Course Task Group

Questions were asked and answered about the Training in Learning and Service Course. Comments and recommendations about this and other courses were noted.

The Mission Council agreed to set up

- (i) a Studies Panel sub-committee;
- (ii) a Ministerial Training Fund sub-committee;
- (iii) a Training for Learning and Serving Course Task Group

(c) Ministries/MoM - Pensions

On a presentation by the Revd Keith Forecast it was agreed that

(i) that Pensions be dealt with by a Working Group, responsible to the MoM Sub-Committee and to the Pensions Trust (of the latter it is still a sub-committee)

This was agreed.

(ii) the Convener of the Pensions Sub-committee be appointed as a voting member of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee.

The Mission Council agreed to this proposal.

(iii) that the Central Management Committee for Church-Related Community Work should be confirmed as a Sub-committee of the Ministries Committee.

This was agreed.

95/43 TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Revd John Sutcliffe, Convener, presented a paper on "Criteria by which the URC's Training Committee will be guided in recognising courses for Ministerial Training". This paper had been discussed in groups.

Mr Sutcliffe replied to points raised by the groups and from the floor.

The Training Committee would bear comments in mind in re-drafting the text and possibly include a new resolution regarding the time-table for implementing validation of courses.

95/44 DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

The Revd Donald Hilton, on behalf of the Mission Council Advisory Group, explained the thinking behind a proposal to the Mission Council concerning a new post of Deputy General Secretary, whose job specification would include the staff link with the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee.

MCAG was asking the Mission Council to act for the General Assembly on grounds of urgent need.

Comments were made by the Convener of the Staffing Advisory Group, the Moderator, the General Secretary (who then left the room), and other members of the Mission Council.

The following resolution was carried unanimously:

Mission Council resolves that the post of Secretary for Doctrine, Prayer and Worship be replaced by that of a Deputy General Secretary, expecting that the staff link with the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee be included in the job specification of the Deputy General Secretary.

The General Secretary rejoined the meeting and was assured by the Moderator of the Councils full support and goodwill.

It was further resolved:

Mission Council appoints a nominating group consisting of a convener, chosen by the Nominations Committee, a provincial moderator, chosen by the moderators, a member of the staff, chosen by the team meeting, two members elected by Mission Council and the General Secretary, with the Office and Personnel Manager as secretary, the group to bring a name to the General Assembly of 1995.

The Convener of the Nominations Committee proposed that the Revd George Thomas be appointed as Convener of the appointments committee.

95/45 THE USE OF WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

Dr David Thompson, on behalf of the Mission Council Advisory Group, presented a paper on "The Use of Westminster College".

After considering the submissions received following the circulation of the Consultants' Report, the Mission Council Advisory Group proposed that the Mission Council send a resolution about the use of Westminster College to the General Assembly. Dr Thompson noted that future decisions on Westminster College depended on the outcome of the Training Review which is expected by January 1997. The present Principal will retire in August 1996.

The proposed resolutions were as follows:-

The Assembly

1. commends Westminster College for its past and current work in preparing ordinands and others for their ministry and recommends that the United Reformed Church continue to use the college for various training purposes at least until 31 August 2000;

2. requests that the future training aims and purposes of the college be considered together with those of the other recognised theological colleges in the review of training needs for the United Reformed Church presently being undertaken by the Training Committee;
3. endorses the five year plan for the college suggested in the Westminster College Strategic Plan 1995-2000, subject to the college modifying its strategy in the light of any decisions resulting from the training review;
4. agrees to decide on the future use and purposes of Westminster College in the light of the training review and the College's response to it;
5. agrees to appoint a Board of Governors accountable to the General Assembly for the college with (i) oversight of all the activities in the college, (ii) accountability for the management and finances of the college, with the object of demonstrating financial viability by 31 December 1999; and
6. in the light of the above recommendations, agrees to appoint a new Principal for the college from 1 September 1996 for five years in the first instance.

Comments had been received from the Training Committee at its meeting of January 1995. Dr Thompson and Mr David Butler were asked to take up the question (under 5(ii)) of clarifying what is meant by "demonstrating financial viability"; and the method of setting up a Board of Governors.

The following points were noted:-

that the proposed Board of Governors would not become the Trustees;
that responsibility would remain with the General Assembly;
that the Training Committee envisaged that training of ministers should continue at Westminster College;
that the Board of Studies should continue as at present as a key group;
that regarding replacement of present members of staff an immediate decision would be made concerning the Principal. Other decisions would be made when appropriate.

The General Secretary suggested the inclusion of an additional resolution instructing the Mission Council to do whatever else was necessary to carry out the work.

On the understanding that MCAg would make any necessary amendments to the wording of the proposed resolution it was unanimously agreed to forward it to the General Assembly.

The Mission Council accepted the recommendation concerning the Board of Governors. Dr Thompson took note of comments.

Speaking as Principal of Westminster College, the Revd Martin Cressey thanked the group who had dealt with this matter with great sensitivity.

He requested that thought be given to the position of the Revd Dr Janet Tollington, who, because of the review of Westminster College, had been appointed on a short-term basis.

The Moderator expressed on behalf of the Council, good wishes to Martin Cressey and the other members of staff.

95/46 RESOLUTIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FROM THE ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE

The Revd Murdoch Mackenzie presented a paper from the Ecumenical Committee. These resolutions were noted by the Mission Council.

95/47 ORGAN DONATIONS AND AUTOPSIES

The Mission Council took note of a proposed resolution from East Midlands Province to the General Assembly.

95/48 PRESENTATIONS TO ASSEMBLY

The Revd Elizabeth Caswell, Convener, reported that the Discipleship and Witness Committee would like to make a short presentation to the Assembly on rural churches, illustrating something of their life and witness and their making use of New Enterprise in Mission funding.

Mr John Dryburgh said that FURY and Church and Society Committee might make their proposed presentation during one of the Assembly lunch breaks.

The Equal Opportunities wished to make a ten minute presentation on the subject of one of its concerns.

The Mission Council indicated its sympathy with these requests, which were referred to the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

95/49 PRESENTATION OF SYNOD REPORTS

The General Secretary asked for advice on how the 12 Synod Reports might be presented so as to be helpful to the Assembly. It was agreed that an outside "theological reflector" or interviewer might be a good idea.

95/50 REMIT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Reports were given from the groups which had discussed this matter.

The Honorary Treasurer replied to questions and said that he would take into account some of the comments from the groups. He asked for forbearance while the new structures took effect and the URC Trust's new role was clarified.

The General Secretary suggested that it would be advisable to leave matters as they are at present and bring the matter again to the Mission Council and thereafter to the General Assembly in 1996. This was agreed.

SUNDAY 19TH MARCH

At 7.30 am a Service of Holy Communion was held, led by the Revd Stephen Brown and with the Sermon preached by the Moderator.

95/51 GREETINGS TO THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AT DOMBODEMA

Mr Chris Wright proposed, and it was unanimously agreed, that a message of greeting be sent to the Congregational Church at Dombodema:-

Mission Council, meeting on 17th-19th March 1995, sends the greetings of the United Reformed Church to the Church of Dombodema in the Zimbabwe Synod of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, on the occasion of the celebration of its centenary.

We join with the people of Dombodema in giving thanks to Almighty God for 100 years of faithful witness to the Gospel and service to His people through agriculture, education and medical work. We recognise that there have been severe times of testing of that faith as well as times of joy and celebration. We pray with them for the ongoing life and mission of the Church throughout the Dombodema District in the years that lie ahead.

95/52 COMMITTEE REMITS

(a) Accreditation. Revised wording: It is concerned with numbers, recruitment, and it will oversee the work of the National Assessment Board, whose convener will be an ex-officio member of the committee.

(b) Ministries. The Revd Keith Forecast replied to a question and agreed to take the matter back to the Committee.

(c) Ecumenical Committee. The Revd Murdoch Mackenzie noted the revised wording suggested by the Council, replacing "and to those of other traditions in these islands" by "including the Christian traditions in these islands and those with experience of current affairs and to those of other faiths".

(d) Discipleship and Witness Committee. The revised wording proposed by the Discipleship and Witness Committee was noted.

(e) Doctrine, Prayer and Worship. Dr David Thompson gave details of amendments to the Committee's remit made because of the combination of tasks under the Doctrine and Prayer and Worship Committee.

The Revd Angus Duncan asked why the issues of Authority which had been raised in the Mersey Province and referred to the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee, had not been mentioned in the Report to Assembly.

The Mission Council noted that there had been a lack of communication, and agreed that the matter of Authority would be taken up by this Committee.

95/53 ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

There had been discussion in groups of Committee resolutions to Assembly. Conveners took note of comments; other suggestions not raised in plenary session should be conveyed by the group reporters direct to the Conveners.

95/54 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

The General Secretary reported that the Equal Opportunities committee needed further time before reporting to the General Assembly. It was agreed that a report be brought to the Mission Council in September/October and that the Assembly be informed that the matter is in hand.

95/55 NUMBER OF MINISTERS (3)

The Mission Council received further reports from the groups. The Convener took note of various matters and in particular it was agreed that the 88 part-time ministers on the payroll should be included within the total number. It was suggested that there should be a general review twice a year. There were still many questions to be answered.

The Revd Keith Forecast replied to comments and agreed to the redrafting of the resolutions.

95/56 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

The Clerk commented on two points of procedure. (i) It was not the task of Mission Council to scrutinise resolutions of committees to the General Assembly.

(ii) He also raised the question of how much weight should be given to comments made in group discussion without their being tested in plenary session.

These matters were referred to the Mission Council Advisory Group.

95/57 RESOURCE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (3)

The Revd John Waller expressed his feeling of encouragement at the way in which the groups had responded to the questions put to them. These responses would be reflected in the further work of the Committee. He suggested that the 8 points raised for discussion could be used locally.

With regard to the Budget, he hoped that the new format would help members of the Church to see how much of our money is raised locally and how much is used locally; that they could take pride in how much is invested in training and how relatively little is spent on administration.

Progress reports would be given to the Mission Council, with a plan in March 1996 for the General Assembly.

95/58 GENERAL ASSEMBLY - THE LOYAL ADDRESS

On behalf of the Mission Council Advisory Group, the General Secretary presented a paper with proposals on the Loyal Address to the Throne; papers prepared for MCAG by Dr David Thompson and the Revd Arthur Macarthur had also been circulated.

After a full discussion it was proposed:

That the practice of sending a loyal address to the throne, using that title, be retained;

The Revd Brian O'Neill proposed, and it was seconded, that the word "loyal" be omitted from the resolution.

The amendment was carried and became the substantive resolution:

Mission Council resolves that the practice of sending an address to the throne be retained.

The Mission Council agreed:

that the text would be prepared, as in the past, by the immediate past Moderator who could consult the General Secretary, the Secretary for Church and Society and others as appropriate and that it would be presented towards the end of Assembly.

The Mission Council Advisory Group asked the Mission Council to decide whether the resolution on the address to the throne should be confirmed by the singing of the National Anthem or a vote.

It was agreed that the confirmation should be by means of a vote.

95/59 NOMINATIONS GROUP ON THE POST OF DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

The Clerk reported the result of the vote for two members appointed by the Mission Council. Mr Alistair Black and Mr William McVey had been elected. The Moderators had appointed the Revd Donald Hilton as their representative.

95/60 INTERPRETATIVE RESOLUTION AS TO TRUST CORPORATIONS AND SECTION 19 OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ACT 1972

The Clerk explained the circumstances which made it expedient to propose the following resolution to the General Assembly:

Interpretative Resolution as to Trust Corporations and
Section 19 of The United Reformed Church Act 1972

General Assembly resolves that the Resolution of the United Assembly of 1972 approving the Scheme of Union in full shall be interpreted as approving for the purposes of Section 19 of The United Reformed Church Act 1972 all those Trust Corporations which from the date of coming into force of the Act held land for purposes relating to The United Reformed Church and further resolves to ratify all actions taken by such bodies since that date in acquiring land whether by purchase, transfer or Trusteeship or otherwise.

This was approved for transmission to the General Assembly.

95/61 APPEALS

(a) Mrs J.F.M. Maylor

The Clerk referred to the business considered by the Mission Council on 21st January 1995 (95/6). He explained the history of the dispute between Mrs Maylor and the URC and informed the Council of possible steps which might be taken to resolve the dispute. There had been consultation with the Legal Adviser and the General Secretary. The relevant District Council and Synod had agreed to the reference of the matter to the Mission Council. The Clerk said that it might be possible to take up an option which Mrs Maylor has presented, to appoint a group to consider the data provided by Mrs Maylor and prepare a report for the Assembly. Another way forward by way of scrutiny of a letter sent to the General Secretary was not pursued as the Legal Adviser strongly urged that nothing be done to breach confidentiality.

After discussion it was agreed to ask the following people to consider the data provided by Mrs Maylor:-

The Revd Bill Mahood, the Clerk, Mrs Wilma Frew as Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

The Legal Adviser said that Mrs Maylor should be given the names of the group.

(b) Appeal or Referral

The Clerk drew the Mission Councils attention to the difference between an Appeal and a Referral.

(c) Assembly Pastoral Committee and a URC minister

The Clerk informed the Mission Council of a case with which the Assembly Pastoral Committee had been dealing for a number of years. The Pastoral Committee finally decided that they could do no more for the person in the case. However, the aggrieved party wished to bring an Appeal against the Pastoral Committee's decision.

Under the terms of the remit of the Pastoral Committee, which had been set up by the General Assembly, there could be no Appeal against the Pastoral Committee's decision not to do things which the General Assembly had placed outside its remit. However, the aggrieved party now wished to bring forward new evidence, or evidence not fully appreciated at the time, of a supposed injustice.

The Clerk suggested that ad hoc and by its general powers the Mission Council could empower the Mission Council Advisory Group to appoint a panel of five people to examine the evidence in this case and to ask the General Assembly to give authority to Mission Council to deal with the matter on its behalf. The Mission Council would receive the report of the panel and decide on the matter in September 1995.

After discussion, in which the Legal Adviser was consulted, it was agreed to follow the line suggested by the Clerk, subject to the Legal Adviser's further judgement on its viability.

(d) Revision of the Pastoral Measure

The Clerk reported that the revision of the Pastoral Measure would include methods of dealing with such matters as those set out above.

95/62 TASK GROUP ON HUMAN SEXUALITY (3)

Dr David Thompson brought forward an amended Resolution:

Assembly

(a) invites the Mission Council Task Group on Human Sexuality to circulate material to enable the Church in all its councils to discuss the matter of human sexuality and its implications for ministry within the Church.

(b) requests that this discussion takes place in Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches, leading to a further discussion in Synods in the autumn of 1996;

(c) requests Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches to send their responses to the General Secretary by 1st December 1996, in order to allow Mission Council to bring any further resolutions to General Assembly in 1997.

95/63 FUNDING OF LAY TRAINING

The Revd John Sutcliffe proposed the following resolution:-

(i) Mission Council agrees to amend the budget to include £11,500 for 1996 in order to provide financial assistance to those taking the 'Training for Learning and Serving Course' and other approved courses

(ii) was withdrawn.

The resolution was carried.

95/64 FUTURE MEETINGS

1995 29 September-1 October	Damascus House
1996 20 January	possibly at Derby Central URC
15-17 March	St. Joseph's, Upholland
1-3 October	High Leigh

95/65 PROVINCIAL MODERATORS' REVIEW AND NOMINATING GROUPS

It was agreed that consideration of this paper be deferred and taken as an early item on the agenda of the autumn 1995 meeting. It was noted that one appointment would be dealt with under the current guidelines.

95/66 REFLECTIONS ON THE MISSION COUNCIL

The Revd Andrew Prasad gave his 'theological reflections' on this meeting of the Mission Council.

He focussed his views on the mandate of the Mission Council when it was set up and how its present work follows along the lines prescribed for it.

He thought that the concept of world mission was seriously lacking in the Mission Council and thought that the reception of more people from CWM Churches would be helpful to the URC.

He had learned much from his presence at the Council and was grateful for the fellowship.

The General Secretary thanked Mr Prasad for his clarity and wise words.

95/67 THANKS

The Moderator expressed the thanks of the Mission Council to those responsible for making preparations for the meeting, to the officers and to the Chaplain; also to those attending their last meeting; and to the staff of St. Joseph's. Thanks were expressed to the Moderator for his leading of the Bible studies.

Closing worship was conducted by the Chaplain.



The United Reformed Church

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General Secretary

The Revd Anthony G Burnham BA

To all Members
of Mission Council
visitors and Staff

9 March 1995

Dear Colleague,

This will be the only mailing of papers. Others, including a detailed timetable, will be handed out at St. Joseph's.

It might help you to note the following:

1. Some papers are backed with another letter: H/N and I/K.
2. Resolutions and Presentations for Assembly Papers J K L Q S U W
The only decision on these resolutions is whether to encourage their forwarding in this form to the GA.

Groups are listed overleaf. The first person listed is the leader and the second is the reporter.

Our guests include, as theological reflector, Revd. Andrew Prasad the CWM Secretary for Personnel Resources; also the Revd. Pepine Iosua, General Secretary of the Kiribati Protestant Church and Raymond Arua of the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

As usual there is a large agenda but there are one or two pearls to be found! See you at St. Joseph's

Yours sincerely,

Anthony G. Burnham

GROUPS

The first name is the leader, the second is the reporter.

A

Meekison
Bainbridge
Adams
Black
Coates
Macro
Taylor
Trippier
Webber
Woodside
Wright (Bill)

B

Butler
Fairbairn
Crack
Cressey
Diffey
Evans
Mahood
Rogers
Thornton
Waller
Whitten

C

Hughes
Cook
Clare
Frank
Hine
Hunter
Jenkins
Lunt
Oldham
Prentice
Sanderson

D

Gathercole
Frew
Curry
Franklin
Harrison
Humphreys
Lloydlangston
MacKenzie
Tull
Turner
Webb

E

McIntosh
Forster
Caswell
Collins
Forecast
Garrow
Goodier
Gould
Thomas
Welch
Wilson

F

McKay
Duncan
Black
Goodfellow
Gordon
Gunn
Head
Hilton
Singh
Wright (Chris)

G

Helyar
Oakley
Brown
Buxton
Dryburgh
Husselbee
Iosua
O'Neill
Shaffrey
Sowerbutts
Thompson

H

Rees
Hart
Arva
Brain
Hanson
Hardwick
Maxey
McVey
Rand
Reardon
Sutcliffe



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

BUSINESS AGENDA

*Some discussion in groups

1. MC 21 January 1995 - Minutes
Note 95/18b delete 'December' substitute 'September'
2. Matters arising
 - i) Pastoral Measure (95/9)
3. Notice of any other business
4. H: London Missionary Society
5. Assembly Arrangements Committee incl. dates and venues 1996 & 1997
6. Resource Planning Advisory Committee
 - i) Budget 1996
 - ii) M: Report*
7. Nominations
 - i) Committee report
 - ii) Editor of Reform and Media Officer (Proposer: Donald Hilton)
 - iii) Children's Advocate (Proposer: Stephen Thornton)
8. T: Resource Sharing Task Group
9. Advisory Group on Grants & Loans (AGOGAL)
10. R: Number of Ministers*
11. P: Loyal Address*
12. Staffing Advisory Committee
13. Interpretative judgement re trust corporation and GA 1972 decision (The Clerk)
14. Deputy General Secretary - a staffing proposal
15. Westminster College

16. J K L Q S U W: Assembly Resolutions and Presentations*

17. New Sub-Committees

- i) N: Ecumenical Committee - Europe Task Group
- ii) I: Training committee - three working groups
- iii) Ministries/MoM - Pensions Sub-Committee
- iv) Ministries - Central Management Committee (Re CRCWs)

18. Committee Remits (Adjustments to be proposed to GA)

- i) O: Finance/Ministries
- ii) V: Ecumenical Committee and Discipleship & Witness

19. Equal Opportunities Committee (EO)

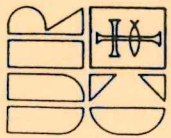
At the GA 1994 MC was instructed

- 1. to consider the motion from Thames North Synod on the allocation of a special multi-racial ministry;
- 2. to make proposals to the General Assembly of 1995 in consultation with the Committee on Equal Opportunities and the Finance Committee as to what post, if any, is needed and how it should be funded.

Equal Opportunities wish to give further consideration to this with a view to presenting recommendations to the MC Sept/Oct 1995.

20. Dates of future meetings

1995	29 Sept - 1 Oct	Damascus House
1996	20 January	possibly at Derby Central URC
1996	15-17 March	St. Joseph's Upholland
1996	1-3 October	High Leigh



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

TIMETABLE

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	8.30 Breakfast	7.30 Communion 8.30 Breakfast
	9.15 Prayers & Bible Study	9.15 Greetings to Dombodema Church, Zimbabwe
	10.30 Budget 1996	Group Reports - Numbers of Ministers Resource Planning
	10.45 Coffee	10.45 Coffee
12.00 Check in	11.15 General Assembly - group reports 11 + 16 + 18 - synod reports & resolutions Business- 13 + 19 12.45 Close	11.15 Synod groups 12.00 Reflections - Andrew Prasad 12.20 Prayers 12.45 Close
1.00 Lunch	1.00 Lunch	1.00 Lunch
2.00 Welcome and apologies Opening worship and Bible Study	2.45 Groups: Number of Ministers	Depart
3.00 Our Agenda		
3.10 Business 1-5		
3.45 Tea	3.45 Tea	
4.15 Resource Planning Groups	4.15 Resource Planning - group reports	
5.45 Business 7-9		
6.30 Supper	6.30 Supper	
7.30 Groups 11 + 16 + 18	7.30 Business 14 + 15	
8.15 Business 12 + 17		
8.45 Prayers	8.45 Prayers	



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

Chair:	The Moderator (Revd Dr Jack McKelvey)
General Secretary:	Revd Tony Burnham
Clerk:	Revd Martin Cressey
Moderator Elect:	Revd John Reardon
Past Moderator:	Revd Donald Hilton
Treasurer:	Mr Alistair Black
Deputy Gen Sec:	Revd Terry Oakley
Legal Adviser:	Mr Hartley Oldham

Assembly Standing Committees

Doctrine, Prayer & Worship	Dr. David Thompson
Discipleship & Witness	Revd. Elizabeth Caswell
Church & Society	Professor Malcolm Johnson
Youth & Children's Work	Mr Aubrey Curry (alternate)
Ecumenical	Revd. Stephen Thornton
Ministries	Revd. Murdoch Mackenzie
Training	Revd. Keith Forecast
Finance	Revd. John Sutcliffe
Communications and Editorial	Mr Alistair Black
Nominations	Mr Chris Wright
Assembly Arrangements	Revd. Jessie Clare
Equal Opportunities	Mrs Wilma Frew
Fury Council	Mrs Susan Rand
	Mr John Dryburgh & Ms Katherine Gould

Task Groups

Advocacy & Stewardship	- Revd. Julian Macro
Mission & Other Faiths	- Revd. Bill Mahood
Health & Healing	- Rev. Robin Hine

12 Provincial Moderators, plus 3 representatives from each Province:

1	Revd David Jenkins	Revd Peter Poulter, Miss Janet Turner, Miss Sheila Fairbairn
2	Revd Keith Forecast	Mrs Delyth Rees, Mr Andrew Goodier, Revd Brian O'Neill
3	Revd Graham Cook	Revd Angus Duncan, Revd Jean Forster, Mr Wesley Woodside
4	Revd Donald Hilton	Mr Brian Evans, Revd Duncan Wilson, Mrs Angela Hughes
5	Revd Malcolm Hanson	Mr Geoff Prentice, Mrs Maureen Buxton, Revd Margaret Taylor
6	Revd John Waller	Mr Ron Webb, Mrs Jennifer Shaffery, Revd Patricia Nimmo
7	Revd Bill Gathercole	Mr William McVey, Mrs Elizabeth Whitten, Revd Margaret McKay
8	Revd Ray Adams	Revd Sandra Lloydlangston, Mrs Joan Trippier, Mr Geoff Lunt
9	Revd Nelson Bainbridge	Revd Bernie Collins, Mr David Butler, Mrs Christine Hardwick
10	Revd Janet Sowerbutts	Revd Geoffrey Bending, Miss Marian Crack, Mrs Marlene Hunter
11	Revd David Helyar	Mrs Christine Meekison, Revd Raymond Singh, Revd Simon Thomas
12	Revd John Humphreys	Revd Henry Gordon, Revd Nanette Head, Revd. Janet Webber

In attendance:-

Minute Secretary	Mrs Sheila Tull	Editor, Reform	Mr Norman Hart
Moderator's Chaplain	Revd Stephen Brown	Training	Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee
Church & Society	Revd Peter Brain	Ecumenical Relations	Revd. Sheila Maxey
International Church Relations	Revd Tony Coates	Director, Windermere Centre	Revd Peter McIntosh
Ministries	Revd Michael Diffey	Communications	Carol Rogers
Chief Accountant	Mr Clem Frank	NYCTO	Eileen Sanderson
Youth Work	Mr Paul Franklin	Advocacy	Revd. Bill Wright
Discipleship & Witness	Mrs Muriel Garrow	Nominations	Revd. Arnold Harrison
Office & Personnel Manager	Mr Hilary Gunn	Task Group Convener	Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

H

PROPOSED RESOLUTION TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1995

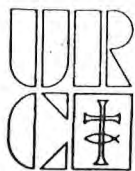
NOTE: It is felt that this resolution should not be brought to Assembly by the Ecumenical Committee, but by Mission Council itself.

The General Assembly, in this 200th year of the founding of the London Missionary Society,

Gives thanks to God for its founding and for the other mission agencies now incorporated in the Council for World Mission, and gratefully acknowledges the service of missionaries, administrators and supporters over the years;

Rejoices in the change of missionary understanding expressed in the present Council for World Mission, in which the United Reformed Church joins with other churches in a world-wide fellowship of equal partners in mission; and

Re-affirms its commitment to share in the proclamation of the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God throughout the world through the mutual sharing of the resources of people and money, supported by the prayers, informed interest, time, energy and giving of its members.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

N

The Ecumenical Committee, following its meeting on January 31, invites Mission Council to establish a **Europe Task Group** with the following terms of reference.

1 The basic task is to formulate a coherent policy in matters affecting the United Reformed Church as a church in Europe, in order to meet the following **perceived needs**:

- i To foster and to prioritise links between the United Reformed Church and other churches in continental Europe, within and beyond the Reformed family; to arrange appropriate visits; to encourage Province, District and congregational links.
- ii To encourage and oversee the full **participation** of the United Reformed Church in Europe-wide ecumenical institutions, both directly and indirectly through appropriate British ecumenical links.
- iii To promote a sensitivity to the **European dimension** in the ongoing life and work of the United Reformed Church; to encourage an openness to the insights of partner churches in our own planning.
- iv To promote informed **discussion** within and beyond the United Reformed Church concerning the future of (secular) European institutions and policies.

2 The Task Group would aim to report to Mission Council in early 1996 on the following **areas of policy**:

- i Reporting on developments regarding ecumenical Euro-links in Britain (CCOM Forum, Social Responsibility Network, para-church and non-church bodies, etc.).
- ii Advising on how the Province Euro-links can be serviced, e.g. organising an annual gathering, information sharing, etc..
- iii Bringing a recommendation regarding prioritising the links between the United Reformed Church nationally and churches in continental Europe in order to develop more meaningful partnerships.
- iv Discovering which Assembly committees are likely to generate materials or ideas which might be circulated to partner churches for comment.
- v Recommending a pattern for invitations from the United Reformed Church for visitors from continental Europe to Assembly and national committees or events.
- vi Advising on a strategy for making grants and contributions to European bodies (such as CEC, certain Brussels-based bodies, WARC-Europe, etc.).
- vii Reporting on preparations for the Second European Ecumenical Assembly.
- viii Presenting proposals for handling these issues within the central structures of the United Reformed Church in the future, noting that Philip Woods' appointment as European Issues Adviser for Church and Society comes to an end in January 1996.

3 **Membership:**

- i a convener who is a member of Mission Council
- ii Philip Woods as secretary
- iii Donald Norwood (currently 'Leuenberg' link person) or Fleur Houston
- iv Sheila Maxey, secretary to Ecumenical committee
- v A.N.O.

4 **Budget:** - *i.e. 1995 overspend requested*

£600 for the actual meetings and additional administration costs.

NB A first meeting of Provincial Europe Links is being arranged and will be subsidised.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

I

**United Reformed Church
Training Committee**

Resolution to Mission Council - Training Committee

Mission Council requests the Training Committee to set up the following working groups:

- (i) a Studies Panel which will be concerned with the training of Non-Stipendiary Ministry Ordinands and Lay Preachers.
- (ii) a Ministerial Fund Group
- (iii) a Training for Learning and Serving Group

Comment

At the first meeting of the Training Committee 16th-17th January 1995, the Training Committee passed the following resolutions:-

In order to maintain work which hitherto has been over-seen by subcommittees, the Committee proposes to establish three working groups:

(i) a Studies Panel which will be concerned with the training of Non Stipendiary Ministry ordinands and Lay Preachers. Once candidates have completed their training, their names will be passed to the Ministries Committee for recognition. This Panel of six people, two each representing the interests of Non Stipendiary Ministers and Lay Preaching and trainers, will combine the work which was done hitherto by the Board of Studies for Non-Stipendiary Ministry and the Lay Preaching committee.

(ii) a Ministerial Fund Group. This will be concerned with the administration of the Fund especially in relation to appeals for assistance. It will be composed of the three people representing finance, who will include the Treasurer and Chief Accountant and three members representing the Training Committee.

(iii) a Training for Learning and Serving Group which will be responsible for the initial setting up of TLS as a Training Scheme within the URC. This will be composed of six people who have carried the work thus far. Once this Course is running well, it is proposed that the responsibility for TLS should pass to the Studies Panel.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

K

RESOLUTIONS

TRAINING COMMITTEE

FUNDING LAY TRAINING

Resolution 4

Assembly agrees (i) to make a budget provision of £11,500 for 1996 in order to provide financial assistance to those taking the 'Training for Learning and Serving Course; (ii) It also agrees to make similar budgetary provision in subsequent years plus appropriate increases to cover inflation.

Comment

1. The cost of the Training Learning and Serving Course (TLS), when travel and the purchase of only essential books are included, is likely to be in the region of £415 per year. This points to the wider serious issue of the cost of all lay training. There is budget provision for the initial and in-service training of ministers; there is no such provision for lay people, though the Windermere and Yardley Hastings centres are able to give assistance to people attending courses at these Centres. The cost of lay training, on which the leadership of the church is likely to become more dependent, will continue to concern the Committee as it undertakes the review of training. In the meantime, we draw the matter to the attention of the Resources Planning sub-committee of the Mission Council. It is the view of the Committee that where the church asks a lay person to undertake training, the church should be willing to offer financial assistance. It is not the church's task to prejudge whether or not a lay person needs assistance.
2. Concerning the TLS only, the Committee proposes that a budget provision of £11,500 should be made in 1996 and with appropriate increases to cover inflation in subsequent years to meet the costs of 25 course members.



TRAINING COMMITTEE

RESOLUTIONS

Criteria by which the URC's Training Committee will be guided in recognising courses for Ministerial Training

Resolution 1

1. Assembly welcomes and adopts the following criteria by which the URC's Training Committee will be guided in recognising courses for Ministerial Training:

Ministerial Training should:

- (i) take place in an ecumenical context wherever possible and also include working in partnership with secular bodies¹;
- (ii) be open to both lay people and ordinands who will experience the Course together²;
- (iii) take seriously experience of participants on the Course and integrate experience and learning, theoretical and practical work, academic disciples and life in the world and in the church³;
- (iv) include supervised and assessed placement experience either over the full length of the Course or for one year full-time;
- (v) be international by helping participants to learn from the world church and from other cultures and faiths⁴;
- (vi) be flexible in relation to the needs of different people while maintaining academic excellence relative to the abilities of individual participants;
- (vii) use methods of teaching and assessment appropriate to modern adult education;
- (viii) be collaborative in style.
- (ix) take seriously issues of race, class, gender and disability and actively promote anti-oppressive practices.

The Training Committee will recognise Course only if :

- (a) It is satisfied re (i) - (ix) above;
- (b) two experienced ministerial and theological educators appointed by the Training Committee to assess a Course recommend its recognition by the Committee as a whole;

- (c) at least two courses/modules per year will be taught by active (an active) members (member) of the URC;
- (d) there will be opportunity for participants, as part of an ecumenical diet of worship, to worship following patterns commonly experienced in the URC and in a URC ethos.

Resolution 2

- 2. General Assembly requests colleges and courses which are training United Reformed Church ordinands to work towards creating joint courses which will be available to both lay and ordination candidates.

Resolution 3

- 3. Assembly requests the Training Committee to act on its behalf in validating courses for ordination training for Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and to report its decisions about the validation of Courses to Assembly and to Provincial Ministerial Committees

Comment

- 1. Debate about courses and colleges is a common feature in the major denominations. The demands being placed on Courses by the churches and the exigencies of mission have led in many places to a recognition that it is no longer possible to respond adequately simply by adding subjects. More far reaching changes in the content and style of Courses are necessary. Further, the pressure of denominational funds is making many to ask questions about the most appropriate location for training, especially for candidates whose family has to be supported for the duration of a Course. Several Courses teeter on the edge of financial vulnerability.
- 2. A number of these common issues have particular relevance within the URC. With an annual entry of relatively only a small number of candidates, year groups are viable only because Colleges and Courses work ecumenically. The Training Committee wants URC candidates to enjoy and benefit from ecumenical collegiality and the riches of other traditions and worship. This must be balanced with opportunities also to experience a warmth of collegiality and support among URC candidates, to encounter a variety of styles of worship common to URC churches and to learn about the history and practices of Reformed churches and the polity of the URC. In recent years a number of Diocesan Courses have been recognised by the URC largely because they were convenient for candidates in particular geographical areas. It seems reasonable now to question whether there are not more important factors at stake than geographical convenience and, as a consequence, whether all these Courses should continue to be recognised.

3. The Training Committee believes that URC resources should be used to support those Courses which best serve the needs of the URC and its candidates. Financial structures must be faced. The fees for Courses are not negligible. While it might be to the benefit of the Courses and URC candidates if URC Tutors were appointed, it is not financially possible to do so.

4. The Church of England is rigorous in monitoring Courses. The URC takes part in the quinquennial inspections but, in general, has a very weak voice. It is important that the Training Committee should set out a policy for the Church and that quinquennial visitors should do their work, within URC and ecumenical establishments alike, in the light of that policy.^o Where a URC inspector felt it to be necessary, we would welcome the writing of separate report addressed to the Training Committee covering issues of special concern to the URC.

5. The ecumenical validation of Courses could be a massive help to the URC. But it would be useful only if, in spite of our small numbers, we had an equal voice with all other partners. Until Ecumenical validation is agreed, it seems right that the Training Committee should be able to see, comment on and make recommendations about any Courses on which URC candidates are placed or which it is asked to recognise.

6. In view of the foregoing the Committee proposes to review the published list of recognised Courses and that no further candidates should be placed on other Courses. Where the Committee has not seen recent Course documentation this will be requested. Should this be deemed to be unsatisfactory recognition will be withdrawn. Since this is likely to be a recurring and detailed task, the Committee seeks permission to act on behalf of the Assembly in making decisions about Courses and to report its findings to the Assembly and Provincial Committees.

7. The URC's own Course, in significant ways, does not meet the criteria set out above. In view of the availability of other options it must be questioned whether it any longer provides an appropriate preparation for ordained ministry.

Footnotes:

a. ¹ This reflects the ecumenical commitment of the URC and the fact that many ministers will work for some time or throughout their ministries in union churches or Local Ecumenical Projects..

b. ² Experience suggests that where lay people and ordinands learn together there is a dynamism which benefits both.

c. ³ No experience of ministry draws on only one discipline. The process of integration should be part of the learning process.

d. ⁴ Patterns of learning must be developed which take seriously the commitment of the Church to be part of the world ecumenical community in which resources and theological insights are shared and the issues of the 'one household' are recognised as part of the context of learning.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

L

Resolutions to General Assembly from the Ecumenical Committee

World Mission posts in the UK

PREAMBLE

The 1988 General Assembly formally recognised that the URC needed to receive missionaries as well as send them by setting aside five special category ministry posts for such missionaries.

The appointments are for three years and provide, in selected situations, the opportunity for learning from the life and experience of Christians from other cultures and churches. Four of the posts are, at present, filled: the Revd Andrew Midian from the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, serving in Estover, Plymouth; Mr Johnson Jesudoss from the Church of South India, serving as a peace and justice worker in Milton Keynes; the Revd Dineke Ferwerda from the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, working in the Southall Inter-Faith Project; the Revd Emmanuel Frimpong from the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, chaplain to the Ghanaian community.

In the conviction that it is important to strengthen this kind of partnership in mission and believing that the year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the London Missionary Society is a particularly appropriate moment, the following resolutions are put forward:-

- i) The General Assembly affirms the URC's need for the insights, skills and vision of Christians from our partner churches and strongly re-affirms the policy inaugurated at the 1988 General Assembly of budgeting five special category posts for such World Mission work in the UK.
- ii) The General Assembly invites district councils in consultation with local churches to continue to identify appropriate innovative ministries for the five World Mission posts as they become vacant.

The URC and Intermediate Level Ecumenism.

PREAMBLE

One of the declared aims and functions of Churches Together in England is 'to promote, co-ordinate, support, service intermediate bodies in England, assisting them in their care for local ecumenical activity and representing their concerns at the national level.'

Definition of terms

An **Intermediate Body** is the means of cooperation between the churches at a level between the national and the local. A large number of these bodies are based on English counties but

not all. Some are based on large cities, two on new towns, and some deal with only part of a large county.

A **County Ecumenical Officer** (more accurately called an intermediate body ecumenical officer) is someone appointed and paid ecumenically to service the body and usually also to promote and advise on ecumenical development within the county/area. There are, at present, 8 full-time, 27 part-time and 6 spare-time CEOs and 6 Anglican diocesan ecumenical officers acting as county ecumenical officers.

The URC's relationship to the intermediate bodies.

The URC's ecumenical commitment is well known. It is demonstrated by the fact that at least 350 of our 1800 churches are shared congregations. It is also demonstrated by the fact that, although we only qualify for 12 representatives on Churches Together in England Forum, there were nearly 30 URC people at the 1993 Forum because URC people were there representing regional and other ecumenical bodies. But if the ecumenical vision and life of those joint congregations and those people is to get into the URC bloodstream and give the whole church new energy, then our district councils and the intermediate bodies must feed into each other more systematically.

Each provincial synod relates to several intermediate bodies but district councils are more likely to relate mainly to only one. It is important, therefore, if the URC at district and local level is to be more effectively fed by and engaged in ecumenical relations, that district councils are more clearly linked to the appropriate intermediate body. This would be facilitated if each district council shared with the provincial synod in the responsibility of appointing the URC representative(s) to the appropriate intermediate body. Where there is determination and commitment the mismatch of denominational boundaries can be overcome. **Good two-way communication between the district council and the intermediate body can be developed** if it is made clear to which committee (for example pastoral or executive) the URC representative on the intermediate body relates and if ecumenical affairs are regularly on the agenda of the district council.

When the new national ecumenical instruments were set up one of the ways in which the URC signalled its commitment was by setting up the **Ministry in Ecumenical Situations Fund**. The larger part is mostly used to pay the URC's share of the salary where the minister in the Local Ecumenical Partnership is not from the URC. The smaller part is used to pay the URC's part of the salaries of County Ecumenical Officers. County Ecumenical Officers have a vital role to play in our pilgrimage together but, being ecumenically appointed and funded, they also test our good practice in working together and are easy targets for cut-backs.

The following policy statement seeks to reaffirm the URC's commitment to intermediate level ecumenism and to the role of the County Ecumenical Officer, to define good practices in the appointment and funding of the posts, whether full or part-time, and to spell out the URC's financial commitment .

POLICY STATEMENT ON INTERMEDIATE LEVEL ECUMENISM

1. The URC would encourage all intermediate bodies to aim to appoint a County Ecumenical Officer who is at least half-time.
2. The URC would expect County Ecumenical Officer posts to be advertised openly and the candidates interviewed by a representative panel. The URC would expect every County Ecumenical Officer to have a job description approved by the intermediate body.
3. The URC believes that all the expenses of the post should be paid through the intermediate body concerned and that payments in kind, such as housing and office facilities, should be clearly identified. There should be clear guidelines about out of pocket expenses such as travelling and £5 000 p.a. is considered reasonable for a full-time County Ecumenical Officer's expenses.
4. The URC would expect each intermediate body to have its own budget and separate funding.
5. The contributions of the different denominations to funding County Ecumenical Officers will vary according to how many are involved and whether, in a particular situation, one church chooses to lead the way. The URC would support the general rule of: Church of England 33%, Roman Catholic Church 33%, Free Churches 34%, with the Free Church share divided: Methodist 40%, Baptist and URC 25% each, and other small churches 10%
6. The URC continues to commit itself to funding the salary costs of approved County Ecumenical Officers out of the Ministry in Ecumenical Situations Fund in line with the formula in paragraph 5.
7. The Ministry in Ecumenical Situations Fund should also be available in the form of 'start-up' grants to encourage new posts and to enable initial difficulties within intermediate bodies to be addressed where funding from other denominations is not immediately available.

RESOLUTION.

1. The General Assembly adopts the policy statement on intermediate level ecumenism.
2. The General Assembly calls on provincial synods and district councils to work together in the appointment of the URC representatives on intermediate bodies and in determining responsibility for the URC share of the cost of County Ecumenical Officer posts.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

M

REPORT OF THE RESOURCE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1 BACKGROUND

There are two aspects of the terms of reference of the Resource Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) which are new. The first is that it is responsible for advising Mission Council on all aspects of planning the church's use of resources; not just financial resources. The second is that the new committee is to produce a rolling 5-year plan. The only forward planning which has previously been considered by Mission Council or the General Assembly has been the annual Budget.

The purpose of this paper is to set out some of the thinking behind the introduction of long-term planning in the URC.

2 THE BUDGET

The purpose of the annual budget of the URC has been to seek to achieve balance between the projected income and expenditure of the central church and to facilitate financial monitoring and control. The budget is usually agreed in February or March for the year commencing on the following 1st. January. It is approved by the General Assembly only a few months before its implementation. There are two elements of the budget which have an overriding effect on the achievement of a balanced account. On the income side, it is the contributions of local churches to the Ministry and Mission Fund and on the expenditure side, the cost of ministerial stipends. However, other income and costs cannot be ignored or be assumed to be under control simply because they are of a much lower magnitude than the items just mentioned.

One of the most important considerations in preparing a budget is its structure. A new structure has been agreed by the Finance Committee. The proposed budget for 1996, which is in the new form, is given at Appendix I. The Mission Council is advised to recommend this budget to the Assembly. The figures for 1995 are also shown, but re-allocated in line with the new budget structure. This structure will be used as the basis for the five-year plan.

3 THE LONG-TERM PLAN: POLICIES

A long-term plan is essentially a series of budgets for future years. By producing a plan for a five-year period we can do a great deal more than guess what it will cost us to carry on as we are. We can decide on certain policy directions and then estimate how to direct resources in order to achieve them.

Five years is not a long time, yet some fairly radical things could be done. For example, a decision could be made to provide a full-time training officer in each Province, supported by material provided by the Training Committee, and funded by reducing by 50% our grant to CWM. That would be a response to a perceived need for more locally delivered training. It would also imply that we felt it right to reduce our giving to CWM!

Or it may be felt that too many of our resources are being used on stipendiary ministry. The Ministries Committee could be asked to prepare a plan to reduce the number of stipendiaries by, say, 20% over the five year period. That could be linked to an agreed changing pattern of ministry and the financial resources saved could be diverted to another part of the Church's life or it could reduce in real terms the amount contributed by local churches to Assembly funds.

The examples given are nothing more than examples!

4 THE LONG-TERM PLAN: ASSUMPTIONS

Since none of us knows what will happen tomorrow, the preparation of a five-year plan requires us to make assumptions. The assumptions will need to be checked each year and the plan amended as necessary.

Assumptions need to be made about:

- The likelihood or otherwise of any church union conversations beginning.
- The ability of local churches to increase financial giving at more than the rate of inflation; taking account of the size and age profile of our membership over the period.
- The possibility of sharing financial resources between 'rich' and 'poor' Provinces.
- The long-term future of our YCWT/YLTO team and the CRCW Programme.
- The policy to be adopted in making grants.

And many other things. The assumptions may lead us into "what if?" questions. What if the Assembly decided that the chief priority over the next five years is to increase the number of church members? What other decisions would need to be taken to support that policy?

It may be even more important to examine our assumptions regarding external factors. What is this country's economic outlook, particularly as it will affect incomes and employment? How will society's attitude to the Church change? Can we see any recent legislation having a radical effect on the Church's life and mission?

5 OUR TASK IN THE MISSION COUNCIL IN MARCH 1995

With all this in the background, the Council will be asked in groups and plenary session to give some answers to the question, "Where would you like the URC to be in five years' time?".

The task at this stage is to "dream dreams" although we cannot lose touch either with our present condition or what we judge to be realistic goals.

6 WHAT THEN?

The RPAC will work with the conclusions reached to begin to draw up the first plan, which will include the 1997 budget. We anticipate consulting Assembly committees, Provincial representatives and central church staff. The Committee hopes to be allowed to test its thinking at future Mission Councils. An ideal, if optimistic, goal is to present the first five-year plan to the Mission Council in March 1996 and to the General Assembly in July 1996.

APPENDIX I

EXPENDITURE	1995 Revised	1996 Draft
a MINISTRY		
Stipends, NI & Pension (Local & Special Ministries)	12176434	12577750
Stipends, NI & Pension (CRCWs)	97366	152510
Disturbance allowance, grants etc. (inc Welfare)	348000	355500
Provincial Moderators - stipends, housing, expenses	354250	352900
Pension Fund Additional Contribution	998000	1100000
	-----	-----
	13974050	14538660
b TRAINING		
College Training for the Stipendiary Ministry	729000	760000
Other training for the Stipendiary Ministry	61000	64000
Non-Stipendiary ministry training	108000	113000
YLTO/YCWT programme	330000	322900
Support for Westminster College	42000	55000
Support for Windermere Centre	34800	35700
Support for National Resource Centre at Yardley Hastings	30700	32500
St. Andrew's Hall Grant	76000	78300
	-----	-----
	1411500	1461400
c ASSEMBLY STAFFING		
Salaries/Stipends - Executive staff	215700	239000
Salaries/Stipends - Support staff	187550	189600
Housing and expenses	95100	101740
	-----	-----
	498350	530340
d MISSION		
Council for World Mission	576000	593280
Missionaries	89300	91900
Grants for national and local mission	199150	204660
Ecumenical Councils	104818	108610
General Assembly	61300	63300
Assembly committees/conferences	42560	44360
Mission Council committees/conferences	25200	26000
	-----	-----
	1098328	1132110
e COMMUNICATION AND EDITORIAL		
Salaries	132100	116000
Other costs	27200	28450
	-----	-----
	159300	144450
f ADMINISTRATION		
Salaries - Personnel & Finance	219800	225700
Management and personnel services - other costs	16385	16950
Finance - other costs	1924	2570
Premises costs	128409	141950
Professional Fees	49000	50450
Miscellaneous expenses	162490	178540
	-----	-----
	578008	616160
	-----	-----
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	17719536	18423120
	=====	=====

	1995 Revised	1996 Draft
INCOME		
m INVESTMENT INCOME		
Dividends	297000	324000
Interest on Cash	167000	171000
	-----	-----
	464000	495000
n GRANTS		
Memorial Hall Trust	385000	440000
New College London Trust	206000	216000
Deed of Covenant - URC Insurance Co Ltd	36000	37000
Department for Education	56450	58170
	-----	-----
	683450	751170
o MINISTRY AND MISSION CONTRIBUTIONS	16122000	16464000
p LEGACIES		
q SUNDRY INCOME		
Donations and Profits on activities	64550	63450
Provincial Contributions to YLTO/YCWT programme	94800	87500
	-----	-----
	159350	150950
TOTAL INCOME	17428800	17861120
	=====	=====
(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT IN YEAR	290736	562000
MET BY:		
Ministerial Training Fund	201000	142000
General Fund	89736	420000
	-----	-----
	290736	562000
	=====	=====



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995



THE REMIT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The remit of the Finance Committee was agreed by Assembly as follows;

"The Committee is responsible for the proper keeping of accounts and records the oversight of all funds and properties and will give advice on all financial matters".

The Finance Committee now feels that the detailed remit of the Committee should be stated as follows;

1. Preparation of Financial Statements.
2. Ensure URC's published accounts comply with the statutory requirements and SORP recommendations for charities.
3. Ensure URC accounts are filed as appropriate with Registrars and Agencies.
4. Monitor auditors performance and fees and ensure that full consideration is given to all their recommendations.
5. Attend auditors meeting prior to finalising the accounts.
6. Consider simplification with vision to format presentation of accounts to improve the prospects of their being understood by the average church member and to assist them to identify the true status of the church's current finances and future needs.
7. Provide general advice to other councils of the church on the format and presentation of accounts.
8. Such other matters as may be remitted by United Reformed Church Trust or other Church bodies.

Ministries Remit

MINISTRIES (8)

The Committee is responsible for the ministry of word and sacrament, (church-related community workers) and lay preachers. It is concerned with (numbers, recruitment,) central care and conditions of service, chaplaincies in industry, higher and further education and in the armed forces and 'special category' ministry. It will have concern for the pastoral support of ministers, church-related community workers and lay preachers, including supervision, appraisal, self evaluation and counselling. (It will oversee the work of the National Assessment Board, whose convener will be a member of the committee.) It will also be assisted by four sub-committees:

(i) ACCREDITATION (6)

Maintaining the Roll of Ministers, this sub-committee will accredit those applying for inclusion after training or coming from other denominations. It is concerned with numbers, recruitment, and It will oversee the work of the national assessment Board, whose convener will be an ex-officio member of the committee.

(ii) CENTRAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (6 including the CRCW Development Worker)

Will consist of a group of six people appointed for their management ability and understanding of Church-Related Community Work. It will be responsible for managing the CRCW programme under the terms agreed in the CRCW Covenant.

(iii) MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY (6 including the Treasurer of the Church)

Will advise on the level of stipend and minister's conditions of service through the Plan for Partnership. It will also be concerned for pensions through its associated Pensions Sub-Committee.

(iv) RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING (6 including the Treasurer and some Directors of the retired Ministers' Housing Society)

Will continue the work of the existing Committee in association with the URC Retired Minister's Housing Society Ltd.

Changes:-

1. The words *It is concerned with numbers, recruitment, and It will oversee the work of the national assessment Board, whose convener will be an ex-officio member of the committee* from Ministries Committee to Accreditation Sub-Committee in order to achieve a better distribution of work. The Ministries Committee suggest that the Convener of the National Assessment Board should remain a member of the Ministries Committee and in addition be an ex officio member of the Accreditation Sub-Committee.
2. The words *church-related community workers* are deleted from the Ministries Committee in view of a resolution to MC requesting that the Central Management Committee is recognised as a sub-committee of Ministries.
3. *Central Management Committee* is added as a sub-committee.
4. The MoM Sub-Committee have requested that the Convener of the Pensions Sub-Committee is appointed as a voting member of the MoM.
5. The Ministries Committee wish to seek the advice of Mission Council in relation to the position of sub-committee conveners and Mission Council and General Assembly and in particular the Conveners of the Accreditation and MoM Sub-Committees. Both these sub-committees are dealing with complex issues which the Convener of Ministries would feel unable to adequately represent. Consequently Mission Council and Assembly might be helped by having the conveners present.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

P

General Assembly - The Loyal Address

The Advisory Committee have given some thought to the matter of the Loyal Address at the Assembly. The members were greatly helped by a paper from Arthur MacArthur. It was believed that members of Mission Council would like to read it. A historical note has also been prepared by David Thompson.

It was agreed to recommend to Mission Council that

1. the practice of sending a loyal address to the throne, using that title, be retained;
2. the text would be prepared, as in the past, by the immediate past Moderator who would consult the General Secretary, the secretary for Church and Society and others as appropriate; and
3. it would be presented during the final session of the Assembly. This would permit the possibility of its content reflecting relevant decisions or debate which had taken place. It would also remove it from the ceremonial atmosphere of the opening session to give Assembly members greater freedom in giving it their support. It was also agreed to invite MC to decide on whether the resolution proposing the Address be confirmed by the signing of the National Anthem or a vote.

Addresses to the Throne - a historical note

1. The right of address to the throne has been highly prized by Dissenters since the Toleration Act of 1689. B.L. Manning's book on *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies* devotes a whole chapter to this subject (Part III, ch 7), which begins, "No privilege of the Deputies has been more highly valued or more often challenged than their traditional privilege of presenting Addresses to the Throne. At times the monarch received representatives personally; on other occasions they were submitted through the Home Secretary, with the traditional answer that the sovereign had been pleased to receive them 'in the most gracious manner' (p 453). The chapter gives a detailed account of such occasions from 1688 to 1947 (just before the book was written). It also notes that the occasions for an address were very different - great national occasions, domestic events in the Royal Family, situations which concerned religious affairs at home or overseas of special concern to Protestant Dissenters.

2 The various nonconformist denominations seemed to have followed similar practice in the nineteenth century. Albert Peel in his history of the Congregational Union simply remarks that "Loyal messages were sent to the Queen in times of joy and sorrow" (*These Hundred Years*, p 296.). I have not had time to quarry the *Congregational Year Book* for evidence, but I am sure that it is there. The same pattern seems to have been followed by the Presbyterian Church in England from 1836 to 1876. In the *Digest of Proceedings* edited by L. Levi, there is a list of occasions when addresses were sent (p 308) and they all concern domestic events in the life of the Royal Family. When the Presbyterian Church of England was formed in 1876 there was a Loyal Address on the occasion of the union. It emphasised the voluntarist character of the new church which had been formed, and may have been slightly slanted that way because of the disestablishment controversy in Scotland - but that is my speculation. Addresses in the P.C.E. in the late nineteenth century continued to be intermittent, related still to events in the domestic life of the Royal Family, but there were special addresses on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee in 1887 and the Diamond Jubilee in 1897. At the accession of the Edward VII, the King consented to receive the Moderator, Clerk and a group of other members of the Synod in person, when the Address was read and the King himself replied (S.W. Carruthers, *Digest of Proceedings of the Synod of the P.C.E., 1876-1905*, pp 676-8). Even the Annual Conference of Churches of Christ in 1901 made its first business an Address to the new King (*Year Book 1901*, pp 92-93). This has not been a common practice among Churches of Christ, and this occasion may have been unique.

3 The origin of the present practice clearly lies in decisions of the Presbyterian Synod from 1906. (Was that a significant year because of the Liberal landslide in the previous General Election?) The Synod resolved in 1906 on the motion of Mr Thomas Bell to present "a Loyal and Dutiful Address to the Throne" and instructed the Moderator and Clerk to prepare it. In 1907 the Synod appointed a Committee to do the same. From 1908 onwards the draft of a Loyal Address to the Throne was submitted by the ex-Moderator, read to the Synod, and adopted by a standing vote (S.W. Carruthers, *Digest of Proceedings of the Synod of the P.C.E., 1906-20*, p 410). So far as I can see, this procedure has never been incorporated in Standing Orders or specified as part of the required business of the Assembly, presumably because of the concern to maintain that Christ alone is the "King and Head of the Church".

4 There seems to me to be an important distinction between the right of address on matters of direct concern to the church, as embodied in the traditional right of the Protestant Dissenting Deputies, and the custom of addressing the Crown in relation to domestic occasions in the life of the Royal Family. The regularity of loyal addresses seems to have coincided with the increased symbolic role and decreased practical political role of the Crown. That does not matter in itself but it does suggest that we need to be clear why we are doing what we are doing.

David M.Thompson, 28/2/95

This practice in the URC requires a theological understanding of the right relationship between Church and State in the UK, in the secularised and multi faith community in which we exist as a small non-conformist community of Faith. The ecumenical debate has blurred the boundary between conformist and non-conformist.

The position of the URC as reached at the time of union and set out in the Basis of Union (para 8) and in the vows taken at ordination (Q7) was the result of much debate then. The Church is free to rethink that position but should do so in the wide context of Scripture, History and the ever changing nature of society. Addresses to the Throne are one small symbol of the carefully balanced understanding set out in the Basis and acknowledged in the need for an Act of Parliament to be given Royal consent. The Act is careful to avoid giving the State any power to constitute the Church. Its provisions had no effect until the URC constituted itself. But being constituted it asked the State to recognise its existence and to uphold its legal rights. Its first act after establishing itself according to the agreed Basis was to address the Throne (c.f. Minutes of Uniting Assembly p.69).

The subject has consumed as much paper and generated as much heat as any. Its discussion should begin from the New Testament. The Old Testament has much to say but the Jewish State was either in tribute to foreign powers or attempted to see itself as a theocracy - itself also the Church. This requires too much translation into other circumstances to be immediately helpful. I therefore suggest that you begin with Bible Study based on any or all of four passages John 18,28 - 19,16 : Romans 13, 1-8 : 1 Tim 2.2 or 1 Peter 2 13-16. All of these passages emerged from thought within a small persecuted community of faith in a multi faith society, coming to terms with its situation in varied societies, but largely under monarchic imperial rule. The State 'ordained of God' was ruled either by Nero or had a character which he represented. Paul appealed to Caesar and probably died in consequence.

The Calvinist tradition has been to claim absolute freedom for the Church to be the Church. Crown Rights of the Redeemer in His own Church etc. A Government distinct from Civil Government resting on the Sovereignty of our Lord. But it has also claimed all life for Christ and accepted that Society in which our neighbours have to be loved, includes those with other faiths and none. Hold those two things together and thus the Church's task, vis a vis the State, is to remind it of the Lordship of Christ, to offer the example of Christian Community, (to be a colony of heaven) and to uphold it in its sacred task of maintaining the order without which there can be no freedom save for the strong, privileged and ruthless. To accept a purely secular view of the State as if it were outside the ultimate rule of Christ, is to hand over very large slices of human life to a rigorous atheism. We have a duty to remind the State (even Nero or Hitler) that it is ordained of God, not self appointed. Barth would seem to say that the failure of the German Church with its Lutheran theology was partly due to this acceptance of the absolute secularity of the State. Only after Barmen did the Church see its way to challenge the behaviour of the State in the name of Christ. Unless He is Lord of the State as well as the Church there is no ground on which the Church can speak to ungodly rulers. They are a law unto themselves and we have no standing ground over against their pretensions. Of course like all texts the ordination of the

State can be interpreted in different ways. It can yield support to the Divine Right of Kings and to pretentious ideas of the rule of the Saints. It must not be held as a basis for Rights or Privileges. Before God we have no rights, only responsibilities, the duty to respond to Creation and to Grace, in gratitude, stewardship, worship and where directions are clear, in unquestioned obedience. Let Nebuchadnezzar tell us not to pray or to pray to him or some other idol, we will pray in the name of Christ, come lions or lawyers or Gestapo.

For good or ill, the State over against which the URC exists, is a Monarchy. There may be those who would prefer another form of government. Marx wanted the State to wither away. That idealistic view of human nature resulted in the tyranny of the KGB as truly as the Fascist view produced the Gestapo. Monarchy, as we know it, has no pretensions to perfection. It only claims to be the cohesive factor upholding good order for all the citizens. In our Loyal addresses we acknowledge that we live in a society in which the rights of all citizens are upheld by the State so constituted. If we do not accept that embodiment of the State, we have no right to criticise its actions. We do not thereby attribute any absolute right or rightness to it and hold our selves free to rebuke ministers of the Crown for their failure to fulfil the highest obligations of the State they serve but we do it under the Christ to whom the State owes obedience.

Addresses to the Throne include John Knox telling some home truths to Mary Queen of Scots. Melville reminding James (VI and I) that there were two kings in Scotland. 'Jesus Christ and James his silly vassal.' They include the struggles of Baxter and his colleagues for an Act of Comprehension. There were many such addresses during the arguments relating to the Union of the two parts of the Kingdom in the early eighteenth century. It was taken up in all the attempts to go beyond toleration so that dissenters could have equal status in society. The Protestant Dissenting Deputies and their ministerial counterpart, having failed to get the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, settled for the right to address the Throne. When the C of E, the Syndics of the two ancient Universities and other 'privileged bodies' addressed the Queen in person on her semi-Jubilee, the Dissenting Deputies including representatives of the URC were joined with them.

I began this paper thinking to say that this particular symbol of our relationship with the State, as a church believing in the Lordship of Christ, was easily dispensable. On reflection I see it as one of the little symbolic actions that carry large meanings. Because we recognise the State as itself under Christ, we have duty and standing ground for comment critical or commendatory upon the actions of the Queen's ministers. All such critical comment is limited in significance because it is subject to human fallibility and relates to discussion of ways and means and their effect on our neighbours. Only occasionally does it involve absolute principles. This issue of whether the State is under Christ or some other Lord or is self-sufficient touches absolute principle.

No doubt other symbols could be created but this one stands and has been operative in many circumstances. When the Palace responds as it used to do and I hope still does by formal acknowledgement, it thereby recognises the relationship.

The Council should give these general thoughts careful consideration. If the general principle is accepted then consider whether there are better ways of celebrating the relationship.

If none emerge then consider afresh the nature of such addresses. A session of private study in which each member of the Council drafts an address for 1995 could give you some useful fun.

Then what about the National Anthem. Again it is a symbol much less used than it was. Standing to attention has given way to lounging with hands in pockets! I will not ask God to help E.R.II to confound the Knavish tricks of lesser breeds without the Law. Ask the members to rewrite the National Anthem and even its bombastic tune, as an alternative to a revised form of address. You will need to have eyes on the clock but the subject has real importance.

January 1995

A. L. MacArthur



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

Q

REPORT OF THE DOCTRINE, PRAYER & WORSHIP COMMITTEE

1. The 1994 Assembly agreed to combine the proposed Doctrine and Prayer and Worship Committees in a single Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee, consisting of 12 members, one of whom is also a member of Youth and Children's work. The responsibilities of the Committee are:

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

2. There is substantial continuity between the membership of the new Committee and the old Doctrine and Worship Committee, though the smaller size means that some former members have not been re-appointed and we have also welcomed new members. Terry Oakley has served the Committee as Secretary for Doctrine, Prayer and Worship, and as he leaves for his new appointment in the Northern Province we take this opportunity of thanking him for all the hard work he has put in for the Committee over the years.

3. The old Committee held a residential meeting in July and the new Committee met residentially in January. It is proposed to continue the pattern of two twenty-four hour residential meetings per year, making use of sub-groups as appropriate. The main business has been:

- * a Confession of Faith in inclusive language
- * resources for worship
- * ecumenical discussions
- * Patterns of Ministry
- * young people and church membership.

A Confession of Faith in inclusive language

4. As reported last year, we have been working on an alternative version of the Confession of Faith in paragraph 17 of the Basis of Union. When amendments to the *Manual* were approved by the General Assembly of 1990, this was specifically excluded (*Record of Assembly 1990*, p 31). Subsequently we were asked by SPIN and other individuals to consider an alternative version of the Confession of Faith. The Confession in paragraph 17 was not intended primarily for liturgical use (though it was used at the inaugural service in Westminster Abbey in 1972), but we were persuaded that an authorised Confession of Faith in inclusive language would be welcome.

5. We are grateful to the Revd Alan Gaunt for his work in drafting and redrafting such a Confession. The Confession presented in the accompanying resolution is, in fact, the third draft, based upon extensive discussion of the two earlier versions. Paragraph 18 of the Basis of Union affirms the Church's right "to make such new declarations of its faith and for such purposes as may from time to time be required by obedience to the ... Spirit". The Committee therefore unanimously proposes that this Confession be added to the Basis of Union after Schedule D, with a note saying that the Assembly has approved it for use as an alternative to the statement in paragraph 17. The status of the existing paragraph 17 would be unchanged. This procedure was adopted for the alternative version of Schedule D by the Assemblies of 1980 and 1981. Since it constitutes an amendment to the Basis of Union, it will be necessary to refer it, if approved, to provincial Synods.

Resources for Worship

6. Unfortunately the third set of Festival Services promised for last year were not available until March. This set concludes our current programme. The Committee's Worship Reference Group, which has the task of identifying and publicising resources, has established a base at Westminster College. We have also done some work on providing an outline order of daily prayer, which might be included in the *Prayer Handbook*.

7. There has been no progress so far on the development of a common lectionary among the churches to replace the existing two-year lectionary, though there are some signs of disappointment with the new Joint Liturgical Group's four-year lectionary. We therefore propose to continue our policy of publishing both the two and four-year lectionaries, together with the themes from *Partners in Learning* in the annual *Scripture Readings*, which is available in September each year.

8. The stock of the 1989 *Service Book* are almost exhausted. We are considering whether to reprint some of the services in common use separately, possibly in a revised form. Work is nearing completion on the Companion to *Rejoice and Sing*.

Ecumenical discussions

9. The Committee provides representatives for certain national and international theological discussions, often in collaboration with the Ecumenical Committee. We have begun work on the reports produced by the 1994 Assembly of the Churches participating in the Leuenberg Agreement. The Committee nominated the Revd Fleur Houston as a URC observer on the discussion initiated last year between the Church of England and the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in France, and her first report was most interesting. As a result we suggested that informal discussion take place between the URC and the Church of

England on outstanding issues arising from *God's Reign and our Unity*, the report of the Anglican-Reformed International Commission of 1984. The first meeting took place in June.

10. The Committee's exchange of representatives with the Methodist Faith and Order Committee continues to be valuable. The Baptist Union has initiated discussions with the URC concerning baptismal policy in Local Ecumenical Partnerships, and we have been involved in the discussion of the proposals arising from the joint working group between the two churches.

Patterns of Ministry

11. The Committee contributed to the theological sections of the Interim Report of the Mission Council Working Party on "Patterns of Ministry", shaped on the general discussion of the report throughout the Church both before and after publication.

Young people and church membership

12. During the year we have received several enquiries on the question of the age at which children and young people might become church members. In some cases this seems to arise from policies adopted on admission to communion, and in others from questions about the appropriate age for baptism when a child has not been baptized as an infant. It is clear from the Basis of Union that anyone baptized upon confession of faith is immediately admitted to the full privileges and responsibilities of church membership. We have initiated a discussion with the Youth and Children's Work and the Discipleship and Witness Committees, to link the baptism and mission policies of the Church.

The Committee and the churches

13. The Committee regularly receives more correspondence than can be handled in full committee meetings; but members of the Committee are always ready to help churches, districts and provinces discuss the matters within its remit.

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 in place of, the Confession of Faith in paragraph 17 of the Basis of Union:

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.
We worship God,
Source and Sustainer of creation,
named by Jesus, Father,
proclaimed in the Scriptures by many names;

revealed as Love, in Jesus Christ,
the eternal word of God made flesh,
proclaimed by the apostles, Son of God;
who lived our life,
died for us on the cross,
rose from the dead,
and comes in judgement and mercy,
as Saviour and Sovereign,
to bring us to eternal life;

present as Power and Wisdom in the Holy Spirit,
who brings this gospel to fruition;
forgives our sins,
giving us the fullness of eternal life,
making us sisters and brothers of Jesus,
daughters and sons of God.

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.

We believe in the promise of God,
that in the fullness of time
all the things in heaven and earth
will be reconciled in Christ,
and God be perfectly honoured and adored.

We rejoice in God who has given us being;
in God for ever human with us 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.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

R

The United Reformed Church

Ministries Committee

NUMBER OF MINISTERS WORKING PARTY

REPORT TO MISSION COUNCIL - MARCH 1995

1. Background

- 1.1. During the early part of 1994 the Treasurer warned Mission Council that the number of ministers to be paid from the Ministry and Mission Fund was in excess of the number which had been used to calculate the Budget for that year and for 1995.
- 1.2. Discussion revealed that there was no effective mechanism in place to control the number of ministers coming on to the pay roll. In most years the number of those entering had more or less been matched by those leaving through retirement, resignation or death. The situation now being presented had come about because during 1993 this balance had been upset. The need for a control system had thus been made evident.
- 1.3. In order to bring about some immediate short term control Mission Council in March 1994 imposed a moratorium on the issue of certificates of eligibility to ministers of other denominations seeking to enter our stipendiary ministry.
- 1.4. General Assembly in July 1994 agreed to extend this moratorium until Assembly 1995 at the latest.

2. Assembly 1994 resolution

"The Assembly instructs Ministries, in consultation with Synod Moderators, the Patterns of Ministry Working Party and Finance (and with power to consult more widely) to submit to General Assembly, or the Mission Council, regulations for stipendiary ministry, including any necessary revision of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration, which shall:

- a) enable a more accurate estimate of future numbers of ministers and CRCWs available for call;
- b) ensure that (with some possible tolerance for small and temporary variation and with the retention of a scheme of issuing certificates of eligibility to ministers of other Churches) there cannot at any time be an excess of ministers and CRCWs to be paid from the Maintenance of the Ministry account over the full time equivalent number used in calculating the current year's budget;
and
- c) to consider any other relevant issues not covered by the Patterns of Ministry Working Party."

3. Ministries' Response

A working party was set up comprising the following;

The Revd Keith Forecast (Convener, Ministries Committee)

The Revd Malcolm Hanson (Convener, Patterns of Ministry Working Party)

The Revd John Waller (Provincial Moderator and, later, Convener, Resource Planning Advisory Committee)

The Revd Lesley Husselbee (Secretary for Training)

Mr Clem Frank (Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant)

The Revd Michael Diffey (Secretary for Ministries)

The General Secretary joined the group at its later meetings.

4. The Present Situation

4.1. The present control of the number of pastorates, and the introduction of ministers to them, is in the hands of district councils. There is no central control. Decisions about who should be accepted for training are made by synods. In the case of CRCW posts and the introduction of CRCWs to them, the Central Management Committee of the CRCW programme is also involved.

4.2. Ministers and CRCWs entering such stipendiary service do so by one of the following routes:-
a. upon ordination (or commissioning) following training
b. upon transfer from non-stipendiary to stipendiary ministry;
c. by transfer from the ministries of other denominations;

4.3. Ministers and CRCWs of our denomination sometimes return to stipendiary service after:-
a. service in another denomination;
b. service overseas;
c. the service of the wider church in ecumenical posts;
d. teaching in a theological college or other institution where the staff are paid locally;
e. secular employment;
f. a period under discipline.

4.4. All stipendiary ministers and CRCWs on the Roll of Ministers are eligible to be considered for a call to a pastorate.

4.5. Only those seeking to transfer to our ministry from other denominations are required to apply to the Accreditation Sub-Committee for a certificate of eligibility.

5. Attempts at Forecasting

5.1. The number of ordinands likely to be ordained and CRCWs to be commissioned in any one year is predictable, though it is not always possible to do so with total accuracy. Other numbers are even less difficult to forecast.

5.2. Complicating factors include:-
a. the unpredictability of the number of candidates offering;
b. the fact that acceptance for training is finally decided at synod level;
c. the fact that not all students complete their training by the expected date;
d. the fact that some students, for a variety of reasons, defer ordination after completing their courses of training;

- e. the difficulty of predicting which ministers will seek to return to stipendiary service from other employment or to enter it from non-stipendiary service;
- f. the possibility of ministers seeking to transfer from full-time to part-time service or vice versa;
- g. the continuation of applications for certificates of eligibility;
- h. the unpredictability of resignations and deaths in service.

5.3. The following figures show the estimated changes to the number of full-time stipendiary ministers in 1995 and 1996.

ADDITIONS		
	'95	'96
Ordinations - Full-time	30	20
CRCW Commissionings	3	2
NSM to SM	5	5*
Part-time to Full-time	8*	8*
Re-entry	4*	6*
Transfers	0	2*
TOTAL ADDITIONS	50	43
DEDUCTIONS		
Retirements	35	23
Resignations	8*	8*
Deaths in Service	2*	2*
Full-time to Part-time	8*	8*
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	53	41

* Estimates based on past figures.

On the basis of these figures it should be possible to permit 5 ministers from other churches to transfer to the URC Roll in 1996.

6. Control Mechanism

- 6.1 We are aware of the need to address the mission opportunities of the Church and to assess the consequent need for stipendiary ministers. These matters are on the agendas of the Patterns of Ministry Working Party and the resource Planning Advisory Committee.
- 6.2 Meanwhile we bring proposals which seek to provide an effective monitoring procedure for both short and long term.
- 6.3 We propose that the Deployment Policy be reactivated and applied more universally and with greater stringency. We realise that this cannot have any radical effect for some years, but there is evidence that where such a policy is given a high profile it has impact upon district pastoral strategies. (See Resolution 1)
- 6.4 We propose that each year the Resource Planning Advisory Committee, after having completing its annual consultation with provinces concerning human and financial resources,

shall recommend to the Mission Council/General Assembly the number of ministers to be paid in the year for which the budget is being set and that this number be placed in the budget.

- 6.5 We propose that on behalf of the Mission Council, the General Secretary, the Chief Accountant and the Secretary for Ministries should ensure on a month-to-month basis that, as far as possible, this number is not breached.
- 6.6 We further propose that, if it becomes evident that there is a shortfall between the number of ministers budgeted for and the actual number paid, the names of those eligible for introduction to a pastorate shall be submitted to the provincial moderators by the General Secretary, after consultation with the Ministries Committee. Priority shall be given to those completing training in one of the United Reformed Church's approved institutions and, thereafter, to the following order, although to some extent this may vary according to the needs of vacant pastorates and the skills offered.
- i) Ministers returning to stipendiary service from other ecclesiastical work;
 - ii) Ministers currently being paid part-time now seeking full-time posts;
 - iii) Non-stipendiary ministers seeking to transfer to stipendiary service;
 - iv) Ministers in secular employment seeking to re-enter stipendiary ministry in the Church;
 - v) Ministers of other denominations seeking certificates of eligibility to serve in the United Reformed Church.
- 6.7 We also propose that further thought may need to be given to the number of students entering training in order that at no time shall the number of ordinations and inductions of new ministers breach the agreed number.

RESOLUTIONS:

1. Assembly, accepting the need to share the ministers paid from the Maintenance of the Ministry account, instructs the Mission Council to consult with representatives of the provincial synods about the present deployment policy and to decide on and introduce an appropriate policy as soon as possible.
2. Assembly accepts the controlling mechanism for the number of ministers outlined in sections 6.1 to 6.6 of the above report.

**Number of Ministers Working Party**Amendment of report to Mission Council (Paper 'R') March 95

5.3 The following figures show the estimated changes to the number of full-time stipendiary ministers paid by the MoM in 1995 and 1996.

		'94	'95	'96
	ADDITIONS			
i	Ordinations (Full-time)		26	20
ii	CRCW Commissionings (Full-time)		3	2
iii	NSM to SM		5	5
iv	Part-time to Full-time		8	8
v	Re-entry		8	8
	TOTAL ADDITIONS		50	43
vi			770	760
	DEDUCTIONS			
vii	Retirements		-35	-23
viii	Resignations		-8	-8
ix	Deaths in Service		-2	-2
x	Full-time - Part-time		-8	-8
	TOTAL DEDUCTIONS		-53	-41
xi	Number paid in December	720	717	719

Notes

- i/ii Ordinations and CRCW Commissionings - The numbers included are the number of students due to complete training and be available for ordination/commissioning.
- iii NSM to SM - Up to '94 the average over the previous three years was one; in '94 five were accepted for additional training and will complete in '95. To date ministries has been informed of the possibility of three NSMs applying to transfer and if accepted will be ready for induction in '96 and there is still time for more.
- iv/x Part-time to Full-time and vice versa - Although the figures eight are estimated they cancel each other out.
- v Re-entry - This figure includes those returning to the payroll from ecumenical and secular appointments. Between '90 and '94 the figure has fluctuated between four and ten. The average works out at eight per year.
- viii/ix Resignations and Deaths in Service - These are estimates based on the average taken over the past four years.
- xi Number paid in December - The Working Party on Number of Ministers agreed that the number of ministers paid in December '95 and '96 should not exceed the number paid in December '94, ie. 720.

On this basis, in December '95 it is estimated there will be a shortfall of three and in December '96 a further shortfall of one, making four over this two year period. This means that four ministers from other churches can be permitted to transfer in '96 without exceeding the number used to calculate the budget.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

S

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS - 1995

From the Finance Office

Resolution 1

Assembly adopts the accounts for 1994

1. Accounts

- 1.1 The audited accounts covering the United Reformed Church central funds for 1994 are shown in Appendix ?
- 1.2 They have been prepared under the guidance of the new Finance Committee and follow the same format as for 1993, which introduced some modest changes in anticipation of the recommendations to be included in the final version of SORP 2, covering accounting by charities. Regretably, there was considerable delay in the final publication of these recommendations although these are now available.
- 1.3 Now that the recommendations are available the Finance Committee will study them with a view to considering their application to the URC Accounts for 1995 alongside the simpler revised layout which the Finance Committee has agreed with the Resource Planning Advisory Committee and which has been introduced for the 1996 budget.
- 1.4 The SORP 2 recommendations will be studied by the Finance Committee, and advice will be given to local churches on the changes.

Resolution 2

Assembly gratefully acknowledges the giving of the churches in 1994 to the Ministry and Mission Fund

2. General Fund

- 2.1 It is pleasing to record a surplus of £***** in 1994 as compared with an estimated budget deficit of £38,000.

- 2.2 However, this improvement was principally achieved by transferring £269,000, which represents most of the Memorial Hall Trust grant received in the year, to the general funds of the church to assist in offsetting the increased Maintenance of the Ministry costs of £304,000 arising out of the increased number of ministers on the payroll as compared with both budget and the preceding year.
- 2.3 In 1994, contributions to the Ministry and Mission Fund from churches increased by 4.25% over 1993, which is an encouraging response in view of the singularly low level of earnings inflation.

AMENDMENTS TO THE PLAN FOR PARTNERSHIP IN MINISTERIAL REMUNERATION

Resolution 3

Assembly amends para 5.5 of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration to read "Lay workers to be included".

Assembly amends the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration by addition of a new para 5.5.2 "Lay missionaries serving in posts recognised and designated by the Ecumenical Committee".

- 3.1 Approval was given by the Executive some time ago for the payment of lay missionaries from overseas serving in the UK from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund. This decision by the Executive has not been formalised in the Plan for Partnership, and to do so requires the above resolution.

Resolution 4

Assembly adds the following para 8.4.5 to the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration "Where the minister has attained the age of 60 and, with the approval of the pastorate and the District Council, moves into the property designated as the retirement home, retirement resettlement and removal grants, as set out in this para, shall be paid. Retirement removal and resettlement grants shall only be paid once during the ministry of any minister, or ministerial married couple".

- 4.1 From time to time ministers move to their final retirement home before ceasing to serve their local church, and are thereafter paid a housing allowance. In such circumstances the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee is asked to pay retirement removal expenses and retirement resettlement grant. In order to provide for this contingency, the above resolution is required.

Resolution 5

Assembly amends para 6.1.3.2 of the Plan for Partnership to read "All ministers and CRCW's who are unable to work for more than 3 days should advise the Finance Office, as soon as possible during their illness, in order that the necessary records can be maintained".

- 5.1 Regulations with regard to sickness have changed recently, and as para 6.1.3.2 is now out of date the above resolution is proposed.

AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION FUND.

Resolution 6

Assembly amends the Rules of the United Reformed Ministers' Pension Fund (both the rules applying before Assembly 1993, for those who elect to be dealt with under these rules, and the rules adopted by Assembly 1993) as follows:-

Rule 22.3 to read "Where a member leaves one or more children below the age of 24 years, an annual pension in respect of each child until the child attains the age of 24 years, or until the child ceases to be dependent, whichever is the earlier. Initially this pension is £256 and this level of pension will be reviewed annually."

- 6.1 **Members of the Assembly may recall that at Assembly 1994 the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee brought a resolution to increase the amount of the children's award under the Rules of the Pension Fund to £250 initially. The resolution was not put, as following a proposed amendment, difficulty arose with regard to the wording. Increased allowances are temporarily being paid from discretionary funds, in the care of the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee, but the above amendment to the Rules to the URC Ministers' Pension Fund is proposed.**
- 6.2 **It should be noted that all pensions including the children's benefit escalate annually in terms of Rule 25.**

Resolution 7

Assembly approves the deletion of the words "every year on 1 November commencing 1 November 1994" in Rule 25.1, and the deletion of the words "September immediately preceding 1 November" in Rule 25.2 of the rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund, and by their substitution of the words "every year on 1 January commencing 1 January 1996" in Rule 25.1, and the words "November immediately preceding 1 January" in Rule 25.2.

- 7.1 **Difficulty has arisen with regard to the computation of pensions in respect of ministers who attain the age of 65 between the normal pension escalation date (1 November) and the normal stipend escalation date (1 January). In order to overcome these difficulties, the Pensions Sub-Committee propose to change the pension escalation date to 1 January. This will require a resolution as above.**
- 7.2 **If this rule change is passed by Assembly 1995, there will be no requirement under the rules to escalate pensions on 1 November 1995, and it is proposed that a 14 month escalation shall be paid on 1 January 1996. The escalation under the rules will then be that the RPI for the month which is published in September 1994 will be compared with the RPI published in November 1995. Thus, in 1995 only, the comparison will be made with the index published for the same month 14 months earlier. It is not considered necessary to amend the ruling of Rule 25.2 to take account of this anomaly, but members of the Assembly should be aware of this technical departure from the wording of Rule 25.2.**

Resolution 8

Assembly amends Rule 20 of the Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund to commence "In the event that a member retires before normal pension age on account of incapacity to undertake the duties of a stipendiary minister due to ill-health duly certified to the satisfaction of the Pension Trustee, he/she shall be entitled to an immediate pension"

- 8.1 Members of the Pensions Sub-Committee have felt that the wording of Rule 20 with regard to ill-health retirement is not as clear as might be, and the above resolution is proposed.

Resolution 9

Assembly amends Rule 20.4 of the Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund by the additional of Rule 20.4.1 as follows "If any member who has been granted an ill-health pension recovers sufficiently and undertakes remunerated employment, that member must advise the Trustee accordingly". Rule 20.4 is renumbered as 20.4.2.

- 9.1 In connection with ill-health retirement, Rule 20.4 currently provides that the Pension Trustee may vary or suspend any pension under this rule if the member makes a full or partial recovery before normal pension age. The Pensions Sub-Committee wish to seek powers to require ministers who have taken ill-health retirement to advise the Trustee, and the above resolution is proposed.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

T

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH - RESOURCE SHARING TASK GROUP

Report to Mission Council and General Assembly 1995

1 BACKGROUND

The Group was set up by Mission Council at its meeting in January 1994 (Minute 94/5) with terms of reference that had been agreed at its previous meeting (Minute 93/82). The Group was asked to adopt a staged approach to its work, to make interim reports to Mission Council as appropriate and to consult widely before taking any specific proposals to the General Assembly. An interim report of the Group was adopted by Mission Council at its meeting in October 1994 (Minute 94/65). This report proposed a series of inter-Provincial consultations aimed at discerning and sharing 'models of good practice' in resource sharing within and between the Provinces of the URC. It was hoped that this part of the Group's work might be completed and a report prepared in time for the 1995 General Assembly.

2 PROGRESS REPORT OF PROVINCIAL VISITS

The Group wishes to place on record its warm appreciation for the positive and co-operative spirit in which the Provinces and those conducting the visits have approached the task. It is too early to predict the value of the exercise but first indications are that the visits have been generally welcomed and have already stimulated new thinking within some of the Provinces. The visits will be complete by mid-February. Representatives of the visiting teams will meet with the Task Group in March to analyse the results and a final report will be agreed by all team members in early May. It is intended that the report will consist primarily of statements of 'good practice'.

The Task Group and those conducting the visits are quite clear that the real benefit of the consultation will come from careful consideration of the report by all the Provinces of the URC. It is therefore not intended to present the report to the General Assembly, but simply to ask the Assembly to note its existence and to encourage the Provinces to use it.

3 FUTURE WORK

Although the Provincial Visits have represented a significant piece of work for the Task Group, it is clear that further study is necessary under the headings of 'Ecumenical Sharing' and 'Bringing the Marginalised to the Centre'. The Group asks that it may be permitted to continue its work in these areas and in appropriate follow-up to the Provincial Visits.

ADVISORY GROUP ON GRANTS AND LOANS
REPORT TO MISSION COUNCIL (AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY)

MARCH 1995

With the new committee structure it was decided from January 1995 to merge the grant-making funds of the old committees into a new URC Mission Fund. This includes the New Enterprises in Mission and Ministry Expenses in the UK Funds (formerly Missionary & Ecumenical Work At Home), the Funds supporting ecumenical posts (formerly Ministries) and the Ecumenical Projects Fund (for World Church & Mission's use at home and abroad).

Local churches no longer have to frame their application to suit one fund. The merger provides flexibility and recognizes overlap; by readjusting the 'headings' it has been able possible for the first time to make grants for Social Action projects at national level. In due course Mission Council will be able to focus grants on particular aspects of mission while supporting what has already been done.

A leaflet about the grants was circulated with the Information Service encouraging several local churches to think imaginatively of what they might do with some financial help. The Secretary, Revd Roger Whitehead, receives all applications; he is available to help local churches make their case.

The funds are administered by AGOGAL on the advice of the appropriate staff person who makes recommendations in accordance with guidelines decided by the relevant committees. AGOGAL is a committee of Mission Council, and on its behalf AGOGAL has also sought to review the URC's contributions to ecumenical and inter-church bodies.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995



Mission Council Task Group on Human Sexuality

Report to Assembly

1. The Mission Council at its meeting in September 1994 established a Task Group to enable the Mission Council to place the issue of Human Sexuality on the agenda of the 1995 General Assembly. The Task Group consisted of Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow (Convener), the Revd Donald Hilton, the Revd Roberta Rominger, and Dr David Thompson (Secretary), with the Revd Peter Brain (Secretary for Church and Society) in attendance.
2. The establishment of the Group was prompted by the decision of the Board of Studies of Westminster College in June 1994 to "accept declared homosexual candidates for training only if the Assembly gives clear guidance that this is in accordance with Church policy". This decision arose from the case of a candidate who had been recommended to his Province by the national assessment conference but was rejected by Westminster. The candidate was subsequently provisionally accepted by the Ministerial Training Committee of Mansfield College, "recognising that this does not contravene any existing national URC policy", and was formally accepted as a candidate by the Provincial Synod after an appeal in October 1994.
3. The Task Group was asked by Mission Council "to work out a process whereby the URC can be enabled to hold an informed debate on the matter of human sexuality and come to a decision on the implications for ministry within the Church". The Group has met four times and considered a variety of material. It rapidly became clear that there was a conflict between the wish for an informed debate in the Church on human sexuality, which requires time, and the felt need for a relatively speedy decision on the specific question of admitting practising homosexuals as candidates for training with a view to ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.
4. Accordingly the Group sought and obtained approval from the meeting of Mission Council in January 1995 that the General Assembly of 1995 should not be asked to decide on any matters of policy but rather to approve a process by which the Church might discuss the ordination of homosexuals in the context of human sexuality as a whole. Such a discussion is particularly important for Provincial Synods since at present they have the responsibility of accepting candidates for training and determining their eligibility for a call when training is complete. The Group also believes that the process should include discussion in District Councils and local churches. To assist the discussion the Group is preparing papers to enable informed and careful discussion; if Assembly approves this process, these will be distributed with the July Information Service. Any resolutions on policy would come to Assembly as a result of the process of debate initiated at the 1995 General Assembly.
5. The question of homosexuality is not a new one for the United Reformed Church. Debate in the late 1980s prompted the former Church and Society Department to set up a working party which published *Homosexuality: a Christian View* (1991). The Department sought the approval of Assembly in 1992 for the publication of further contributions to the ongoing debate, recognising that "no single view on the issue of homosexuality is of the essence of the Christian faith and witness today" and that there was "a range of attitudes, genuine and sincere, held by thoughtful people across the church" (*Reports to Assembly, 1992, p198*). Subsequently the Department published the report of a working party set up by the Group for Evangelism and Renewal in the United Reformed Church (GEAR), entitled *Homosexuality and the Gospel* (1993). Most recently the Church and Society Committee have published *Speaking for Ourselves*, written by a group of Lesbian and Gay Christians in the United Reformed Church (1995). Other churches have also been involved in similar debates, including the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church, not to mention a variety of churches in North America and elsewhere. The process of discussion envisaged by the Task Group involves a serious engagement by Provinces, Districts and local churches with the issues raised in these and other reports on this subject.
6. The Group wishes to draw the attention of the Church to the following points:
 - a) the United Reformed Church is already a church which has practising homosexuals as members, elders and ordained ministers. Even if this were not apparent before, it has been made clear by the publication of *Speaking for Ourselves*. This implies that any decision that the Assembly might make either not to ordain or

not to accept as candidates for ordination practising homosexuals will immediately raise questions about the position of those who are already ordained;

b) the two reports, *Homosexuality: a Christian View* and *Homosexuality and the Gospel* show that, even if it were possible to reach agreement on how the relevant biblical material were to be interpreted, there is no possibility of reaching agreement on their authority for the Church today without movement on one or both sides from the positions set out in those documents. Hence those who discuss this subject in the Church have to recognise that the topic is highly charged with emotion on all sides and must therefore handle the matter with great sensitivity and forbearance, recognising the real potential for damaging division over the issue;

c) the current constitutional position is that:

(i) the Church Meeting of the congregation to which the candidate belongs has initially to testify to "their faith and character, and their aptitude for the work of the ministry" (*Manual*, p134);

(ii) all colleges have to bear in mind "the need to exercise a judgement on the overall fitness of the ordinand to exercise ministry in the URC" in granting a Leaving Certificate (*Manual*, p143);

(iii) the Provincial Synod has the responsibility of deciding whether to accept candidates for training and to declare them eligible for a call, but it is only when a candidate has received and accepted a call from a pastorate or for another recognised ministry that ordination takes place;

d) although the Church is not legally bound by Sex Discrimination legislation in respect of ministers, the General Assembly in 1990 adopted a declaration of Equal Opportunities policy (*Manual*, p165). There would, however, be difficulties both in principle and in practice in seeking to develop any policy over the ordination of homosexuals on such a basis. It is not possible to base any case for the ordination of homosexuals on Equal Opportunities legislation.

7. Many questions arise when these matters are discussed. We shall indicate some of these in our discussion papers. For example, we have to ask ourselves whether the sexual orientation and behaviour of candidates should be identified and added to other considerations in assessment or eligibility, such as age or academic achievements, as a matter on which the Assembly should formulate a policy. We need to consider whether the same question should be raised by local congregations in considering eligibility for the eldership or for membership, and if not, why not. The question of whether a distinction can or should be drawn between homosexual orientation and practice in determining policy will need to be addressed.

8. The Group recognises that this is not an easy subject to talk about in public because it involves matters that are not only personal but also intimate. The atmosphere in which morality is discussed in contemporary society also allows openness on such questions to be misunderstood or misrepresented, particularly if debates are reported in the media. The background papers we are preparing will therefore include suggestions about how discussion might be handled: for example, after a general presentation of the issues it may be helpful to organise discussion in smaller groups which enable a large number of people to express their views and seek to understand one another, before any wider debate takes place.

9. The purpose of discussion in all the councils of the Church whatever the issue is to listen for what the Spirit is saying to us, to hear one another, and to find the appropriate way forward, recognising that part of our task as Christians is to learn how to live with differences of conviction. That process will be harmed if we are tempted to collect mandates or try to create majorities in favour of a particular point of view. If the General Assembly of 1996 is to discern the mind of the Church, it will need to gather together all the points being made whilst remaining ready to hear what is said at the Assembly itself. For this prayer, as well as debate, will be required.

10. RESOLUTION

Assembly:

a) invites the Mission Council Task Group on Human Sexuality to circulate material to enable the Church to discuss the matter of human sexuality and its implications for ministry within the Church;

b) requests Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches to send their responses to the General Secretary by 15 December 1995, in order to allow Mission Council to bring any further resolutions to General Assembly in 1996.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

V

THE REMIT OF THE ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE

This committee is a channel for the United Reformed Church's commitment to the World Church, to the British and Irish ecumenical pilgrimage, to our European setting and the world in which we live. On behalf of Mission Council, it will examine the need for a body to oversee, co-ordinate and develop the church's involvement in Europe, in accordance with the Assembly resolution in 1993. It also seeks to ensure that wherever the URC meets in worship, council or committee, it is aware of its partnership within the World Church and the whole human family. So its membership will include members from other Assembly committees and part of its task will be to listen to those with experience of the World Church and of current affairs and to those of other traditions in these islands. It will maintain official URC links with overseas churches and international church councils, and guide the URC's participation in the Council for World Mission. Through its official contact will be made with British and Irish ecumenical bodies, and it will respond to national and international events making the URC voice heard in co-operation with other churches. It is responsible for the URC's involvement in St Andrew's Hall. Because its agenda is so wide its way of working may include breaking into groups to prepare work for decision by the whole committee; and more than one member of staff will be required to take forward these decisions. The work of selecting, training, and caring for missionaries and overseeing exchange of personnel will be undertaken by the Overseas Exchange Sub-Committee.

Reports to General Assembly 1994 Appendix III 5.3 proposed amendments from the Discipleship and Witness Committee.

(This committee encourages) The committee's remit is:

(It will) to encourage growth in faith among people of all ages(.) ;

to support the work of exercising pastoral care, particularly by elders, lay preachers and members of local churches, and the work of District Councils in their pastoral oversight of the local church(.) ;

(It will also)

to challenge the local church to share the gospel and stimulate Districts and Synods in the development of their own strategies for outreach(.) ;

(It will)

to encourage churches in their participation in the Decade of Evangelism(.) ;

(The committee will)

to listen to concerns raised, to share information and provide appropriate support(.) ;

(It is)

to be responsible for the Windermere Centre.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

W

Church and Society resolutions for 1995 General Assembly

1 Israel/Palestine

Assembly

- offers encouragement to all who are working for a just and lasting peace between the peoples and nations of the Middle East and especially Israeli and Palestinian leaders;
- welcomes and supports the ecumenical statement from church leaders in Jerusalem calling for "a special judicial and political statute for Jerusalem which reflects the universal importance and significance of the city ... a symbol and a promise of the presence of God, of fraternity and peace for humankind, in particular the children of Abraham, Jews, Christians and Muslims";
- reminds would-be tourists from Britain of the possibilities and the importance of meeting people of all faiths, including Palestinian Christians, during their visits to the 'Holy Land'

2 Our common life in Britain

Assembly

- is concerned and dismayed at the **persistence of poverty and growing inequality** in Britain as evidenced by the findings of the 'Inquiry into Income and Wealth' supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and by the testimonies being gathered during 'poverty hearings' arranged by Church Action on Poverty through its programme "Local People, National Voice";
- is aware of increasing **personal insecurity** affecting a wide range of people in work, in education and in retirement;
- welcomes the more **integrated approach to a range of policy areas** being taken by church bodies, individual commentators and, for example, the Commission for Social Justice chaired by Sir Gordon Borrie;
- calls on all political parties to press for a **major review** of the tax and benefits systems, of employment legislation and social policy with the defined aim of reducing poverty and polarisation in our country;
- invites local churches and/or District Councils as appropriate to participate in, or if necessary to instigate, local '**poverty hearings**' in co-operation with Church Action on Poverty and to report to their MPs and to the Church and Society committee..

3 National Lottery

Assembly urges the members and councils of the church to disassociate themselves from the Lottery by refusing to buy tickets and by declining to apply for Lottery-generated funds for church purposes.

Ministries Committee

4. Assembly affirms the action taken by the Ministries Committee as reported in para.... to delete the name of the Revd. Donald McIlhagga from the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church.

5. Church & Society

The Church and Society committee would like to offer two presentations to be included on the Eastbourne programme. We hope it will be possible to accommodate both.

One would be derived from the work of our regional Fieldworker/Animateur Susan Flynn and in particular her paper on '*some reasons which prevent Christians from becoming involved in issues of justice*'. This paper would be edited into a leaflet for distribution at the Assembly. The Church and Society committee meeting on February 27, found in their own discussion that this overview was very stimulating and helpful. An Assembly presentation would be dramatic in style, involving some role-play and (one hopes) provoking audience reaction!

The other request is made by Church and Society on behalf of FURY Council and concerns an issue for which our committee has been responsible in the past. This would be a presentation by young people of the benefit of buying more fairly traded goods, in particular Cafédirect. It would also give an opportunity to reinforce the arguments for boycotting Nestlé products since Church and Society will not be bringing a resolution this year. There was an excellent session on this at the FURY Assembly in January and we hope to capture the spirit of that for Assembly.

Equal Opportunities

6. The Committee wishes to make a ten minute presentation on the subject of one of its concerns

ORGAN DONATIONS AND AUTOPSIES

The URC East Midlands Province resolves that the following statement be adopted for the guidance of URC members :

1 Whereas we believe :

- 1.1 the developments in modern medicine that make possible a growing range of organ and tissue transplants are to be welcomed, because they offer hope of renewed life to people who face sickness and the possibility of early death;
- 1.2 that the knowledge gained from autopsies in hospitals can contribute significantly to the quality of medical care available to us;
- 1.3 that becoming an organ donor, or agreeing to a hospital autopsy when requested, can be an expression of the love which is part of our Christian discipleship; and
- 1.4 that such actions are also expressions of our solidarity with other members of the human family, and of the ties which bind us together.

2 We recommend :

- 2.1 that our Church and Society officer expresses our support of the Government in its initiative to institute a national computer register of organ donors;
- 2.2 that members of the United Reformed Church be encouraged to volunteer to become organ donors and to consent to an autopsy (post mortem examination) when a hospital seeks permission to carry out this procedure;

- 2.3 that those who are willing to become organ donors, and those who have no objection to being the subject of an autopsy, take appropriate action to make their wishes known, in ways such as the following :

2.3.1 most important of all, having frank and specific discussions within the family, so that other members of the family, specifically next of kin, understand the wishes of the person or persons concerned, and are prepared to see that these wishes are carried out, when the opportunity arises;

2.3.2 taking action to make these wishes known (specifically in regard to organ transplants) in some durable, written format, which may include :

- * carrying a donor card;*
- * making a declaration of intent in a will;*
- * registering with the UK Transplant Support Services Authority, or some other such registry for specific organs;*
- * completing any form which offers the opportunity to make personal wishes publicly known and requesting next of kin to keep a copy of such a form.*

3 It was further resolved :

- 3.1 that the Background Paper "Organ Donations and Autopsies" prepared by the URC EMP Ministry in the World Committee, be made available to churches and interested persons.
- 3.2 to take these resolutions forward for the consideration of General Assembly in July 1995.

*Moved: Rev'd Mark Dunn (Church and Society Officer)
Seconded: Rev'd Roy Cole (Convenor, Ministry in the World Committee)
This Resolution was carried by the Synod on 8/10/1994*



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

X

Deputy General Secretary

1. The following is an extract from the Assembly Record in 1993 (p10):

'The General Assembly confirms that the Deputy General Secretary is an officer of the Assembly with membership of the General Assembly under para. 2(5)(b) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church, with the duty of deputising for the General Secretary, in close consultation with the other officers of the Assembly, in an emergency which made it impossible for the General Secretary to carry out Assembly duties.'

The Rev. David Miller asked what procedure would be followed in the appointment of the Deputy General Secretary.

The General Secretary agreed to take the point raised by Mr Miller to the Mission Council and to report to the General Assembly in 1994.

In 1994 MC reported to GA (p7) as follows:

2.3 Appointment of Deputy General Secretary. At the 1993 Assembly the General Secretary, in responding to a question about the procedure that would be followed in the appointment, agreed to consult the Mission Council and report to the 1994 Assembly.

Mission Council noted that in the recent appointment there had been no change in the role, which is to cover for any significant absence of the General Secretary. In so far as no change in the person of Deputy General Secretary is in view, it was not necessary at present to define the procedure. However before any change is made, or at the time of the committee restructuring, both the role and the method of appointment will be reviewed.

In the event, therefore, of the Assembly agreeing to the new committee structure, Mission Council will consider this matter again.

2. Committee Structure The ending of the office of Departmental Secretary means that additional responsibilities for the care and support of the executive staff fall to the General Secretary (GS). At the GA 1994 some disquiet was expressed about the responsibility that would have to be carried by one person for so many. A residential staff consultation in November 1994 asked for the post of DGS to be reshaped, giving it a support and pastoral role.

3. MCAG considered the paper agreed by the staff and noted also that the work load of the GS had increased significantly due to

- i) the creation of MC and its advisory committees;
- ii) the decisions to undertake major reviews of different areas of the Church's life;
- iii) problems relating both to the procedures regarding disciplinary and pastoral matters and the number and complexity of individual cases involving ministers in pastoral charge; and
- iv) the conflict which arises in connection with the latter between the role of the GS and that of acting as the secretary of the Pastoral Committee.

It was also noted that the present deputising role was almost ineffective due to the DGS' lack of involvement in the GS' day to day work. (This was equally the case in the time of previous office holders.) In addition, the DGS' own duties meant that it was not always possible to provide cover and another staff member had then to be appointed on an ad hoc basis.

4. After noting the tasks of the Secretary for Doctrine, Prayer and Worship MCAG proposes that this post be radically revised in order to create a more significant role for the DGS. As part of the role was to deputise for the GS, who had to be a minister, and noting the significant element of pastoral care and knowledge required, it is also recommended that the post ought to be filled by an experienced senior minister.
5. It is therefore proposed that the secretary for Doctrine, Prayer and Worship be replaced by a Deputy General Secretary who will work in collaboration with the General Secretary, deputising during the latter's absence, assisting at other times and sharing in the support and care of the staff. The Deputy will, in addition, be responsible for servicing the Mission Council and its advisory committees and act as secretary of the Assembly Pastoral Committee.
6. These changes have been considered by the Staffing Advisory Committee which supports the proposals.

Possible Timetables

	A	B
Group meets to prepare papers, agree procedures and fix dates	April	May
GA decides on the principle and delegates the appointment to the MC.	-	July
The post is 'advertised' on the vacancy list	April	July
The post is advertised in REFORM	April	September
Interviews leading to a nomination	June	September
Appointment made by GA	July	-
Appointment by MC	-	Sept/Oct
The DGS takes up office.	September	January

Resolution 1A

Mission Council resolves that the post of Secretary for Doctrine, Prayer and Worship be replaced by that of a Deputy General Secretary expecting that the staff link with the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee be included in the job specification of the Deputy General Secretary.

Resolution 1B

Line 1 delete the word 'resolves'
substitute 'recommends to General Assembly'

Resolution 2

Mission Council appoints a nominating group consisting of a convener, chosen by the Nominations Committee, a provincial moderator, chosen by the moderators, a member of the staff, chosen by the team meeting, two members elected by MC and the General Secretary, with the Office & Personnel Manager as secretary.

RESOLUTION for General Assembly 1995

**Interpretative Resolution as to Trust Corporations
and Section 29 of The United Reformed Church Act 1972**

General Assembly resolves that the Resolution of the United Assembly of 1972 approving the Scheme of Union in full shall be interpreted as approving for the purposes of Section 19 of The United Reformed Church Act 1972 all those Trust Corporations which from the date of coming into force of the Act held land for purposes relating to The United Reformed Church and further resolves to ratify all actions taken by such bodies since that date in acquiring land whether by purchase, transfer or Trusteeship or otherwise.

Provincial Moderators' Review and Nominating Groups

Report on Group discussions January 1995

The general outcome was to look for significant variations on the present system. There was a very strong resistance to the concept of a standing committee (5:1) but clear support for a limit of two terms (4:1). In some cases the groups divided evenly and here the alternatives are underlined. On the basis of the suggestions made a revised procedure would be as follows.

The General Assembly will appoint/the Provincial Synod will call and the General Assembly will concur in the appointment of a provincial moderator, who may serve for a maximum of two terms, a first term of seven/six years and a second term of five years or a period not longer than the first term. This is to allow for flexibility with regard to retirement.

Procedure for Nomination

1. The vacancy is announced on the monthly list/and advertised in REFORM (Only three groups discussed this, thus divided 1:2). Information is given as to how to nominate or apply.
2. The Nominating Group of ten appointed by the synod and ten by the Assembly including a convener would undertake the work, serviced by the General Secretary.
3. The synod undertakes a review of its life and proposes a job specification.
4. More information about all possibilities including CV's was requested. This presents problems except with regard to applications. To ask for 25 CV's and reports for one post, to be made available for 20 people is a daunting task. One group suggested a short listing procedure involving a smaller group. Could the synod and Nominations appoint three each out of the ten to produce a short list of not more than 6/8/10 names about whom information is gathered for the larger group to consider at a first meeting?

5. The group chooses possible candidates and interviews them all/interviews only the first name (reserving the others in case the first choice does not wish to be considered).
6. The nomination is presented to MC to appoint for service to begin in September/to the GA to begin in January

Review (There was much uncertainty and more discussion is needed. However some clues emerged).

1. An appraisal system needs to be created to enable Moderators to be helped throughout their service. One suggestion: after three years conducted by 3-4 from synod and 3-4 from Assembly Nominating group.
2. A 'quinquennial' review of the province ought to be undertaken before the Moderator is reviewed.
3. The review group to be 5 plus 5. The Assembly 5 to be from neighbouring provinces.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

Z

THE USE OF WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

After considering the submissions received following the circulation of the Consultants' Report, the MC Advisory Group recommend the following resolution:

The General Assembly

1. commends Westminster College for its past and current work in preparing ordinands and others for their ministry and recommends that the United Reformed Church continue to use the college for various training purposes at least until 31 August 2000;
2. requests that the future training aims and purposes of the college be considered together with those of the other URC training establishments in the review of training needs for the United Reformed Church presently being undertaken by the Training Committee;
3. endorses the five year plan for the college suggested in the Westminster College Strategic Plan 1995-2000, subject to the college modifying its strategy in the light of any decisions resulting from the training review;
4. agrees to decide on the future use and purposes of Westminster College in the light of the training review and the College's response to it;
5. agrees to appoint a Board of Governors is appointed by, and accountable to, the General Assembly for the college with (i) oversight of all the activities in the college, (ii) accountability for the management and finances structure for the college, with the object of demonstrating financial viability by 31 December 1999; and
6. in the light of the above recommendations, agrees to appoint a new Principal for the college from 1 September 1996 for five years in the first instance.

Cont/d.....

The MC Advisory Group further recommend

- a) that the Board of Governors consist of ten members made up as follows:
 - i) up to three persons with expertise in management, finance and the maintenance of buildings;
 - ii) up to three persons with expertise in education;
 - iii) up to three persons with ministerial experience;
 - iv) the Chair of the Cheshunt Governors ex officio;
 - v) a clerk of secretary to the Board, chosen for that purpose

Mission Council should decide whether the Principal should be a member of the Board, or in attendance: if it is proposed to have a member of staff as a Governor, then the Principal should be a member. Within the total membership suggested above it would be helpful to include a representative of the Cambridge Theological Federation, a representative of the University of Cambridge, or the Faculty of Divinity of the University, and the Secretary for Training;

- b) that the Board of Studies should continue as at present, preferably with some overlap in membership with the Board of Governors;
- c) that the Board of Governors should be encouraged to explore with other members of the Cambridge Theological Federation opportunities for the further sharing of resources in teaching and financial administration with a view to taking advantage of any possible economies of scale.



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

AA

**RESOLUTION TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY FROM
THE ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE**

Preamble

At a national conference by the Free Church Council of Wales, held at Aberystwyth on 11 October 1994 the following resolution was passed by a substantial majority.

We are of the opinion that new conversations should be opened between the Nonconformist denominations in Wales with a view to the formation in Wales of one United Free Church comprising both Welsh speaking and English speaking churches.

Since then the FCCW has communicated with all the denominations it believes belong to the Council urging them to respond positively to the above resolution.

Representatives of the URC in Wales consulted with representatives of the Council for Methodism in Wales and agreed to the wording of a resolution to be put before the Synods of both churches.

Note Enfys (meaning 'rainbow') refers to the Commission of the Covenanted Churches in Wales whose members are the Church in Wales, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the United Reformed Church and certain churches of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Resolution

The General Assembly welcomes the resolution passed by the Wales Synod of the United Reformed Church on 11 March 1995 that

In order to further the mission and ministry of the Gospel it [the Wales Synod] should support conversations to establish a United Church, affirmative of the linguistic and cultural identities of Wales, and to include Enfys and non Enfys who wish to be included in the conversations.

and instructs the Ecumenical Committee, in full consultation with the Wales Synod, to take responsibility for the URC's share in these conversations.

Mission Council Task Group on Human Sexuality

Amended Resolution

Assembly:

- a) invites the Mission Council Task Group on Human Sexuality to circulate material to enable the Church in all its councils to discuss the matter of human sexuality and its implications for ministry within the Church;
- b) requests that this discussion takes place in Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches, leading to a further discussion in Synods in the autumn of 1996;
- c) requests Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches to send their responses to the General Secretary by 15 December 1996, in order to allow Mission Council to bring any further resolutions to General Assembly in 1997.



The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9RT
General Secretary The Revd Anthony G Burnham BA

Telephone 0171 916 2020
Fax number 0171 916 2021

To: District Secretaries
Synod Clerks
and Members of Mission Council

26 April 1995

Dear Colleagues,

Here are the minutes of the last Mission Council. You will see that a substantial amount of time was taken in considering the future work of the Resource Planning Advisory Committee. You will find the enclosed letter from the Convener and Secretary of the Committee helpful in explaining what was achieved. Please read that letter carefully and note the opportunity for your District Council to participate in the process.

I was also asked to send out copies of the advertisement for applications and nominations for the post of Deputy General Secretary and some details, overleaf, about the responsibilities of the Children's Advocate and the Editor of Reform who will also be our Media Officer.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony G. Burnham

P.S. To everybody who attended Mission Council.

Did you loose a silver paper-mate fountain pen at St. Joseph's? One was found in the conference room after we had left, and this has now been sent on to me. If this belongs to you, please give me a ring.

Sheila Andrews

The role of the Editor of Reform and Media Officer

The role of Editor centres around the commissioning, editing and origination of suitable written material, together with the selection and preparation of photographic and other illustrations. Insofar as each Editor brings a distinctive personal style, it is the intention of the new Editor to attempt to place more emphasis on the anticipation of issues and events arising within the life of the church and the early commissioning of relevant material. Such an aim implies the development of close and frequent links with a wide range of people within and without the Church, who contribute to shaping its agenda.

The changeover will see a substantial alteration in methods of working. The preparation and layout of material will largely be brought in-house, employing a dedicated computer system. It is hoped that the increased control over layout which the new system will provide, combined with the ability to spend more time on all aspects of design, will allow the appearance of the magazine to be improved in some ways.

A further facet of the newly defined role will be the gradual transfer of responsibility for matters relating to the promotion of the magazine and the administration of subscriptions to the editorial team, with the intention of achieving (within realistic limits) an increase in circulation both within and outside the URC.

The role of Media Officer is less easily defined. It is not the intention that the Media Officer should be regarded as a universal spokesperson for the Church. In general the job is to:

- ♦ develop relationships with journalists and others in the media
- ♦ smooth their access to appropriate representatives of the Church at all levels
- ♦ help to raise the profile of the church by ensuring the free flow of accurate and relevant information to the media, not least through the application of new technology to distribution of material

In addition, it is hoped that the appointment of a Media Officer to be permanently based at Tavistock Place will allow the development of supportive relationships with those responsible for contacts with the media at a more local level.

David Lawrence

The role of the Children's Advocate

To promote and encourage the best possible work with children throughout the United Reformed Church through:

- ♦ supporting the network of District and Province Children's Work secretaries
- ♦ producing, circulating and having available helpful information for all concerned with children being aware of, evaluating and making known new resources and ideas
- ♦ thinking and planning with the Youth and Children's Work Committee
- ♦ collaborating with the Youth and Children's Work Trainers, the Master Pilot, the Windermere Centre, Yardley Hastings and the Secretary for Youth
- ♦ sharing issues of common interest with other committees within the URC and ecumenically
- ♦ visiting local churches, Districts and Provinces
- ♦ listening to children and encouraging adults to continue discovering the contribution children can make to our life and growth in faith.

A new Youth and Children's Work Office is being completed. From 3 April there will be a part-time Personal Assistant, Vivienne Thorne, in the Office (0171 916 2020) on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. I will be there on some days most weeks.

The work will be reviewed and will develop. Your comments are welcome.

Rosemary Johnston



MISSION COUNCIL

17th - 19th MARCH 1995

MINUTES

Minutes of the Mission Council, held from 17th -19th March 1995, at St. Joseph's, Upholland, which was constituted by the Moderator, the Revd Dr Jack McKelvey, who presided. Worship was led each day by the Chaplain, the Revd Stephen Brown.

Bible study on the Epistle to the Philippians was led by the Moderator. The Council met in groups for Bible study and for discussion of various items on the agenda.

95/25 WELCOME

The Moderator welcomed members to the meeting, in particular those attending for the first time, including Ms Katherine Gould, FURY representative, and visitors:- the Revd Andrew Prasad, CWM Secretary for Personnel Resources, who had been invited to be the Theological Reflector for this meeting; the Revd Pepine Iosua, General Secretary of the Kiribati Protestant Church; and Mr Raymond Arua of the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

95/26 ATTENDANCE

There were 71 members present, with 15 staff members in attendance, Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow, Convener of the Task Group on Human Sexuality, the Revd Elizabeth Welch, Chaplain to the Revd John Reardon, (observer), the Revd Stephen Brown, Chaplain, and Mrs Sheila Tull, Minute Secretary.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Denis Earp (alternate: the Revd Janet Webber), Mr Ivan Andrews (alternate: Mr Geoffrey Lunt), the Revd Peter Poulter (alternate: the Revd Stephen Thornton); the Revd Geoffrey Bending, the Revd Patricia Nimmo.

95/27 AGENDA AND TIMETABLE

The General Secretary outlined the Agenda and presented the proposed timetable, which were approved.

95/28 MINUTES OF THE MISSION COUNCIL - JANUARY 1995

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Mission Council held on 21 January 1995 which had been circulated were, with the following correction, approved and signed:-
95/18(b) 2nd line should read "1st September 1995".
It was noted that the Revd Justine Wyatt had attended the January meeting as an observer.

95/29 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) The Pastoral Measure. (95/9) In the light of comments received, the Revd Keith Forecast reported that a completed re-writing was called for and it was proposed, and agreed by the Mission Council, that a final version be brought to the 1996 Assembly. The amendment already agreed by Assembly 1994 and the interpretation of "suspension" agreed by the Mission Council in October 1994 as an interim extension of the Pastoral Measure would continue to be used, as would also the interpretation of the functions of the Synod and the General Assembly made by the Mission Council acting for the General Assembly in January 1995 (Minute 95/14).

(b) An Appeal or Appeals to the General Assembly (95/6). The General Secretary informed the Council that there could be an Appeal or Appeals to the 1995 Assembly.

(c) Report on Provincial Moderator Appointments (95/19(d)). This matter needed further consideration by the Mission Council.

95/30 THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY

On behalf of the Ecumenical Committee, the Revd Murdoch Mackenzie proposed that the following resolution be brought to the Assembly by the Mission Council:-

The General Assembly, in this 200th year of the founding of the London Missionary Society,

gives thanks to God for its founding and for the other mission agencies now incorporated in the Council for World Mission, and gratefully acknowledges the service of missionaries, administrators and supporters over the years;

Rejoices in the change of missionary understanding expressed in the present Council for World Mission, in which the United Reformed Church joins with other churches in a world-wide fellowship of equal partners in mission, and

Re-affirms its commitment to share in the proclamation of the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God throughout the world through the mutual sharing of the resources of people and money, supported by the prayers, informed interest, time, energy and giving of its members.

The Mission Council unanimously agreed to forward this resolution to the General Assembly.

95/31 ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Mrs Wilma Frew, Convenor, asked the Mission Council to deal with four matters.

(a) The free evening at this year's Assembly was open for use by a number of groups. It was agreed that the Ecumenical Committee should have the use of the main hall to mark the Bi-Centenary of the London Missionary Society. There should be no other Services of Worship that evening.

(b) 1997 Assembly. An invitation had been received from Wessex Province to return to Portsmouth from 1 - 7 July 1997. This would be the 25th anniversary of the URC. The invitation was gladly accepted.

(c) Reports and resolutions. There had been criticism of the way in which reports had been presented at the 1994 Assembly. For this year the Assembly Arrangements Committee suggested that reports should be presented as formerly, to enable members of Assembly to take note of the new Committees and those serving on them.

(d) Creche facilities at the Assembly. Following the resolution passed at the 1994 Assembly, the Assembly Arrangements Committee had given careful thought to this matter. After various investigations it had been agreed that the pre-booking of a professional creche using fully qualified people was required. The cost would be £1,000 as a minimum for the week to run the creche during the day-time. It was proposed that the first mailing of Assembly papers in the week of 1st April would include a booking form, with 31st May as the cut-off date.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed not to impose an upper limit on the numbers, but to leave it to the judgement of the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

95/32 RESOURCE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (1)

The Convener of the Resource Planning Advisory Committee, the Revd John Waller, introduced a paper, which with questions arising during the meeting, formed the basis of discussion in groups and in plenary session.

95/33 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

(a) Editor of "Reform" and Media Officer

The Revd Donald Hilton reported the process by which the Nominating Group unanimously nominated as Editor of "Reform" and Media Officer the Revd David Lawrence.

It was unanimously agreed that the Revd David Lawrence be appointed as Editor of "Reform" and Media Officer from 1 July 1995 for a period of five years.

(b) Children's Advocate

The Revd Stephen Thornton gave details concerning the work of the Nominating Group for the post of Children's Advocate and brought forward the name of Mrs Rosemary Johnston.

It was unanimously agreed that Mrs Rosemary Johnston be appointed as Children's Advocate from 1st April 1995 for a period of five years.

The Mission Council would receive in due course outline job descriptions of both these posts.

It was noted that care should be taken, when reporting future staff appointments in "Reform", not to give the impression that a nomination would automatically lead to an appointment. In particular, the use of a photograph ought to be avoided.

The Moderator thanked Norman Hart, who would soon be retiring as Editor of "Reform" and said there would be a more formal occasion for an expression of appreciation.

95/35 RESOURCE SHARING TASK GROUP

The Honorary Treasurer, Convener, introduced a progress report on the Provincial visits made by members of the Resource Sharing Task Group. It was noted that most of the resources do lie at the Provincial level. A report would be sent to the Provinces. It was intended that the report would consist primarily of statements of 'good practice'.

Mr Black thought that there would be a need for some follow-up once the Report had been received by the Provinces.

In discussion it was suggested that further study under the headings of "Ecumenical Sharing" and "Bringing the Centre to the Marginalised" might be given to standing committees. It was requested that when available a report be sent to the members of the Mission Council. Should the report be considered by the Mission Council and the Assembly? Mr Black replied that there had to be voluntary co-operation in the Provinces and therefore it was not proposed to make recommendations to the Assembly.

95/35 ADVISORY GROUP ON GRANTS AND LOANS

A report to the Mission Council from the Advisory Group on Grants and Loans had been circulated with the Agenda.

It was agreed that at the autumn meeting the Mission Council should review the work of this group and its membership. It was noted that churches have been given advice on applying for grants.

95/36 TASK GROUP ON HUMAN SEXUALITY (1)

Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow, Convener, presented the draft report to Assembly, and discussion took place in all the groups.

95/37 STAFFING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(a) Revision of job descriptions

The Revd Angus Duncan, Convener, reported that the job

descriptions of the following posts had been appropriately revised to take account of the new structures. Further revision might be needed in the light of experience:-

Secretaries for: Church and Society; Communications; Discipleship & Witness; Doctrine, Prayer & Worship; Ecumenical Relations; International Church Relations; Ministries; Training; and
Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant; National Youth Secretary; Office and Personnel Manager.

The Mission Council accepted this report.

(b) National Youth and Children's Work Training Officer

Mr Duncan reported that the Staffing Advisory Committee had applied its criteria to the post of NYCTO and considered what time-scale for a re-appointment would best help the Church in this transitional time of change.

It was suggested that there was no challenge either to the viability or the necessity of this post.

It was proposed by the Revd Julian Macro, seconded by the Revd Janet Sowerbutts, that this post continue until the end of December 1996.

The Revd Terry Oakley proposed an amendment to include the words "at least until 31st December 1996". The amendment was seconded by the Revd Margaret Taylor.

The amendment was carried and the substantive resolution was passed in the following form:

Mission Council resolves that the post of National Youth and Children Training Officer be continued at least until 31st December 1996.

SATURDAY 18th MARCH

9.30 am After worship and Bible study the Council proceeded with further business.

95/38 BUDGET

On behalf of the Resource Planning Advisory Committee the Revd John Waller presented the Budget for 1996, paying tribute to the work done by Mr Clem Frank and Mr David Butler.

It was noted that there was a budgetted deficit of £562,000, to be met by £142,000 from the Ministerial Training Fund and £420,000 from the General Fund.

The new format of the Budget should assist people to

understand how the majority of the money will be spent. £14.5 million would be spent on ministries, i.e. the local mission of the local church; £1.5 would be spent on training; £1 million on promoting mission.

Mr Waller proposed that the budget for 1996, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be sent to the General Assembly for decision.

The new format was warmly welcomed by members of the Council. Several suggestions about the wording of the headings under 'Expenditure' were noted by the Honorary Treasurer. It was agreed that explanatory notes would be provided where required.

In reply to a question about Assembly costs now carried by individuals and/or Districts being taken within the central Assembly costs, Mr Waller considered that this matter should become part of the five-year plan which will begin in 1997.

The Budget for 1996 was unanimously accepted for transmission as a resolution to the General Assembly.

95/39 TASK GROUP ON HUMAN SEXUALITY (2)

Reports were received from each of the groups and were noted by Mrs Goodfellow.

There was general concern about the proposed time-table. It was considered that there should not be delay in bringing this matter to the Assembly, but that in order to be positive and sensitive in terms of natural justice there was need to take as long as was needed.

It was proposed that part (b) of the suggested resolution be amended so as to allow a further year for discussion to take place before resolutions were brought to the General Assembly.

It was agreed that the resolution be submitted with revised wording later in the Council meeting.

95/40 NUMBER OF MINISTERS WORKING PARTY

The Revd Keith Forecast, in presenting a report of the Working Party on the Number of Ministers, asked that the revised paper R1 be substituted for paragraph 5. He said that the Working Party had had a difficult task. Hitherto there had been almost no control over the number of ministers on the payroll. He explained some of the items in the report and he and the Revd Michael Diffey replied to questions.

Mr Forecast moved that the report of the Working Party be accepted, with the resolutions, for transmission to the General Assembly.

The Mission Council considered the reports in group discussion.

95/41 RESOURCE PLANNING (2)

The Revd John Waller reported on the results of the first group discussion on this subject. They indicated that the views of the groups were broadly similar. The ideas could be summarised as follows:

to encourage each local church to enrich its discipleship both in its own life, and the life of the community

to provide materials and people for training local leaders and members

to consider the identity of the church, united and reformed, and its consequences for the ecumenical scene

to become more a Church talking to itself, networking information and sharing resources

to give special attention to children and young people, nurturing those within the church and speaking with those who are not

to foster the Church's engagement beyond itself, with the community, with society and with the world church

to place particular emphasis on the training and in-service training of all ministers as agent of encouragement and vision

to be a growing church where people want to be and which is relevant to their lives.

The groups were asked to discuss these themes in the light of how they might be achieved over a five-year period.

95/42 NEW SUB-COMMITTEES

(a) Europe Task Group

The Revd Murdoch Mackenzie, Convener of the Ecumenical Committee, presented a paper setting out the tasks, areas of policy, membership and budget for the proposed Europe Task Group. He took note of several suggestions from members of the Council.

The Mission Council agreed to set up a Europe Task Group with the terms of reference set out in the paper.

(b) Training Committee - three working groups

The Revd John Sutcliffe, Convener, Training Committee, presented a paper concerning the setting up of:

(i) a Studies Panel which would be concerned with the training of Non-Stipendiary Ministry Ordinands and Lay Preachers;

(ii) a Ministerial Training Fund Group;

(iii) a Training for Learning and Serving Course Task Group

Questions were asked and answered about the Training in Learning and Service Course. Comments and recommendations about this and other courses were noted.

The Mission Council agreed to set up

- (i) a Studies Panel sub-committee;
- (ii) a Ministerial Training Fund sub-committee;
- (iii) a Training for Learning and Serving Course Task Group

(c) Ministries/MoM - Pensions

On a presentation by the Revd Keith Forecast it was agreed that

(i) that Pensions be dealt with by a Working Group, responsible to the MoM Sub-Committee and to the Pensions Trust (of the latter it is still a sub-committee)

This was agreed.

(ii) the Convener of the Pensions Sub-committee be appointed as a voting member of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee.

The Mission Council agreed to this proposal.

(iii) that the Central Management Committee for Church-Related Community Work should be confirmed as a Sub-committee of the Ministries Committee.

This was agreed.

95/43 TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Revd John Sutcliffe, Convener, presented a paper on "Criteria by which the URC's Training Committee will be guided in recognising courses for Ministerial Training". This paper had been discussed in groups.

Mr Sutcliffe replied to points raised by the groups and from the floor.

The Training Committee would bear comments in mind in re-drafting the text and possibly include a new resolution regarding the time-table for implementing validation of courses.

95/44 DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

The Revd Donald Hilton, on behalf of the Mission Council Advisory Group, explained the thinking behind a proposal to the Mission Council concerning a new post of Deputy General Secretary, whose job specification would include the staff link with the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee.

MCAG was asking the Mission Council to act for the General Assembly on grounds of urgent need.

Comments were made by the Convener of the Staffing Advisory Group, the Moderator, the General Secretary (who then left the room), and other members of the Mission Council.

The following resolution was carried unanimously:

Mission Council resolves that the post of Secretary for Doctrine, Prayer and Worship be replaced by that of a Deputy General Secretary, expecting that the staff link with the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee be included in the job specification of the Deputy General Secretary.

The General Secretary rejoined the meeting and was assured by the Moderator of the Councils full support and goodwill.

It was further resolved:

Mission Council appoints a nominating group consisting of a convener, chosen by the Nominations Committee, a provincial moderator, chosen by the moderators, a member of the staff, chosen by the team meeting, two members elected by Mission Council and the General Secretary, with the Office and Personnel Manager as secretary, the group to bring a name to the General Assembly of 1995.

The Convener of the Nominations Committee proposed that the Revd George Thomas be appointed as Convener of the appointments committee.

95/45 THE USE OF WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

Dr David Thompson, on behalf of the Mission Council Advisory Group, presented a paper on "The Use of Westminster College".

After considering the submissions received following the circulation of the Consultants' Report, the Mission Council Advisory Group proposed that the Mission Council send a resolution about the use of Westminster College to the General Assembly. Dr Thompson noted that future decisions on Westminster College depended on the outcome of the Training Review which is expected by January 1997. The present Principal will retire in August 1996.

The proposed resolutions were as follows:-

The Assembly

1. commends Westminster College for its past and current work in preparing ordinands and others for their ministry and recommends that the United Reformed Church continue to use the college for various training purposes at least until 31 August 2000;

2. requests that the future training aims and purposes of the college be considered together with those of the other recognised theological colleges in the review of training needs for the United Reformed Church presently being undertaken by the Training Committee;
3. endorses the five year plan for the college suggested in the Westminster College Strategic Plan 1995-2000, subject to the college modifying its strategy in the light of any decisions resulting from the training review;
4. agrees to decide on the future use and purposes of Westminster College in the light of the training review and the College's response to it;
5. agrees to appoint a Board of Governors accountable to the General Assembly for the college with (i) oversight of all the activities in the college, (ii) accountability for the management and finances of the college, with the object of demonstrating financial viability by 31 December 1999; and
6. in the light of the above recommendations, agrees to appoint a new Principal for the college from 1 September 1996 for five years in the first instance.

Comments had been received from the Training Committee at its meeting of January 1995. Dr Thompson and Mr David Butler were asked to take up the question (under 5(ii)) of clarifying what is meant by "demonstrating financial viability"; and the method of setting up a Board of Governors.

The following points were noted:-

that the proposed Board of Governors would not become the Trustees;
that responsibility would remain with the General Assembly;
that the Training Committee envisaged that training of ministers should continue at Westminster College;
that the Board of Studies should continue as at present as a key group;
that regarding replacement of present members of staff an immediate decision would be made concerning the Principal. Other decisions would be made when appropriate.

The General Secretary suggested the inclusion of an additional resolution instructing the Mission Council to do whatever else was necessary to carry out the work.

On the understanding that MCAG would make any necessary amendments to the wording of the proposed resolution it was unanimously agreed to forward it to the General Assembly.

The Mission Council accepted the recommendation concerning the Board of Governors. Dr Thompson took note of comments.

Speaking as Principal of Westminster College, the Revd Martin Cressey thanked the group who had dealt with this matter with great sensitivity.

He requested that thought be given to the position of the Revd Dr Janet Tollington, who, because of the review of Westminster College, had been appointed on a short-term basis.

The Moderator expressed on behalf of the Council, good wishes to Martin Cressey and the other members of staff.

95/46 RESOLUTIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FROM THE ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE

The Revd Murdoch Mackenzie presented a paper from the Ecumenical Committee. These resolutions were noted by the Mission Council.

95/47 ORGAN DONATIONS AND AUTOPSIES

The Mission Council took note of a proposed resolution from East Midlands Province to the General Assembly.

95/48 PRESENTATIONS TO ASSEMBLY

The Revd Elizabeth Caswell, Convener, reported that the Discipleship and Witness Committee would like to make a short presentation to the Assembly on rural churches, illustrating something of their life and witness and their making use of New Enterprise in Mission funding.

Mr John Dryburgh said that FURY and Church and Society Committee might make their proposed presentation during one of the Assembly lunch breaks.

The Equal Opportunities wished to make a ten minute presentation on the subject of one of its concerns.

The Mission Council indicated its sympathy with these requests, which were referred to the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

95/49 PRESENTATION OF SYNOD REPORTS

The General Secretary asked for advice on how the 12 Synod Reports might be presented so as to be helpful to the Assembly. It was agreed that an outside "theological reflector" or interviewer might be a good idea.

95/50 REMIT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Reports were given from the groups which had discussed this matter.

The Honorary Treasurer replied to questions and said that he would take into account some of the comments from the groups. He asked for forbearance while the new structures took effect and the URC Trust's new role was clarified.

The General Secretary suggested that it would be advisable to leave matters as they are at present and bring the matter again to the Mission Council and thereafter to the General Assembly in 1996. This was agreed.

SUNDAY 19TH MARCH

At 7.30 am a Service of Holy Communion was held, led by the Revd Stephen Brown and with the Sermon preached by the Moderator.

95/51 GREETINGS TO THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AT DOMBODEMA

Mr Chris Wright proposed, and it was unanimously agreed, that a message of greeting be sent to the Congregational Church at Dombodema:-

Mission Council, meeting on 17th-19th March 1995, sends the greetings of the United Reformed Church to the Church of Dombodema in the Zimbabwe Synod of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, on the occasion of the celebration of its centenary.

We join with the people of Dombodema in giving thanks to Almighty God for 100 years of faithful witness to the Gospel and service to His people through agriculture, education and medical work. We recognise that there have been severe times of testing of that faith as well as times of joy and celebration. We pray with them for the ongoing life and mission of the Church throughout the Dombodema District in the years that lie ahead.

95/52 COMMITTEE REMITS

(a) Accreditation. Revised wording: It is concerned with numbers, recruitment, and it will oversee the work of the National Assessment Board, whose convener will be an ex-officio member of the committee.

(b) Ministries. The Revd Keith Forecast replied to a question and agreed to take the matter back to the Committee.

(c) Ecumenical Committee. The Revd Murdoch Mackenzie noted the revised wording suggested by the Council, replacing "and to those of other traditions in these islands" by "including the Christian traditions in these islands and those with experience of current affairs and to those of other faiths".

(d) Discipleship and Witness Committee. The revised wording proposed by the Discipleship and Witness Committee was noted.

(e) Doctrine, Prayer and Worship. Dr David Thompson gave details of amendments to the Committee's remit made because of the combination of tasks under the Doctrine and Prayer and Worship Committee.

The Revd Angus Duncan asked why the issues of Authority which had been raised in the Mersey Province and referred to the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee, had not been mentioned in the Report to Assembly.

The Mission Council noted that there had been a lack of communication, and agreed that the matter of Authority would be taken up by this Committee.

95/53 ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

There had been discussion in groups of Committee resolutions to Assembly. Conveners took note of comments; other suggestions not raised in plenary session should be conveyed by the group reporters direct to the Conveners.

95/54 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

The General Secretary reported that the Equal Opportunities committee needed further time before reporting to the General Assembly. It was agreed that a report be brought to the Mission Council in September/October and that the Assembly be informed that the matter is in hand.

95/55 NUMBER OF MINISTERS (3)

The Mission Council received further reports from the groups. The Convener took note of various matters and in particular it was agreed that the 88 part-time ministers on the payroll should be included within the total number. It was suggested that there should be a general review twice a year. There were still many questions to be answered.

The Revd Keith Forecast replied to comments and agreed to the redrafting of the resolutions.

95/56 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

The Clerk commented on two points of procedure. (i) It was not the task of Mission Council to scrutinise resolutions of committees to the General Assembly.

(ii) He also raised the question of how much weight should be given to comments made in group discussion without their being tested in plenary session.

These matters were referred to the Mission Council Advisory Group.

95/57 RESOURCE PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (3)

The Revd John Waller expressed his feeling of encouragement at the way in which the groups had responded to the questions put to them. These responses would be reflected in the further work of the Committee. He suggested that the 8 points raised for discussion could be used locally.

With regard to the Budget, he hoped that the new format would help members of the Church to see how much of our money is raised locally and how much is used locally; that they could take pride in how much is invested in training and how relatively little is spent on administration.

Progress reports would be given to the Mission Council, with a plan in March 1996 for the General Assembly.

95/58 GENERAL ASSEMBLY - THE LOYAL ADDRESS

On behalf of the Mission Council Advisory Group, the General Secretary presented a paper with proposals on the Loyal Address to the Throne; papers prepared for MCAG by Dr David Thompson and the Revd Arthur Macarthur had also been circulated.

After a full discussion it was proposed:

That the practice of sending a loyal address to the throne, using that title, be retained;

The Revd Brian O'Neill proposed, and it was seconded, that the word "loyal" be omitted from the resolution.

The amendment was carried and became the substantive resolution:

Mission Council resolves that the practice of sending an address to the throne be retained.

The Mission Council agreed:

that the text would be prepared, as in the past, by the immediate past Moderator who could consult the General Secretary, the Secretary for Church and Society and others as appropriate and that it would be presented towards the end of Assembly.

The Mission Council Advisory Group asked the Mission Council to decide whether the resolution on the address to the throne should be confirmed by the singing of the National Anthem or a vote.

It was agreed that the confirmation should be by means of a vote.

95/59 NOMINATIONS GROUP ON THE POST OF DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

The Clerk reported the result of the vote for two members appointed by the Mission Council. Mr Alistair Black and Mr William McVey had been elected. The Moderators had appointed the Revd Donald Hilton as their representative.

95/60 INTERPRETATIVE RESOLUTION AS TO TRUST CORPORATIONS AND SECTION 19 OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ACT 1972

The Clerk explained the circumstances which made it expedient to propose the following resolution to the General Assembly:

Interpretative Resolution as to Trust Corporations and
Section 19 of The United Reformed Church Act 1972

General Assembly resolves that the Resolution of the United Assembly of 1972 approving the Scheme of Union in full shall be interpreted as approving for the purposes of Section 19 of The United Reformed Church Act 1972 all those Trust Corporations which from the date of coming into force of the Act held land for purposes relating to The United Reformed Church and further resolves to ratify all actions taken by such bodies since that date in acquiring land whether by purchase, transfer or Trusteeship or otherwise.

This was approved for transmission to the General Assembly.

95/61 APPEALS

(a) Mrs J.F.M. Maylor

The Clerk referred to the business considered by the Mission Council on 21st January 1995 (95/6). He explained the history of the dispute between Mrs Maylor and the URC and informed the Council of possible steps which might be taken to resolve the dispute. There had been consultation with the Legal Adviser and the General Secretary. The relevant District Council and Synod had agreed to the reference of the matter to the Mission Council. The Clerk said that it might be possible to take up an option which Mrs Maylor has presented, to appoint a group to consider the data provided by Mrs Maylor and prepare a report for the Assembly. Another way forward by way of scrutiny of a letter sent to the General Secretary was not pursued as the Legal Adviser strongly urged that nothing be done to breach confidentiality.

After discussion it was agreed to ask the following people to consider the data provided by Mrs Maylor:-

The Revd Bill Mahood, the Clerk, Mrs Wilma Frew as Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

The Legal Adviser said that Mrs Maylor should be given the names of the group.

(b) Appeal or Referral

The Clerk drew the Mission Councils attention to the difference between an Appeal and a Referral.

(c) Assembly Pastoral Committee and a URC minister

The Clerk informed the Mission Council of a case with which the Assembly Pastoral Committee had been dealing for a number of years. The Pastoral Committee finally decided that they could do no more for the person in the case. However, the aggrieved party wished to bring an Appeal against the Pastoral Committee's decision.

Under the terms of the remit of the Pastoral Committee, which had been set up by the General Assembly, there could be no Appeal against the Pastoral Committee's decision not to do things which the General Assembly had placed outside its remit. However, the aggrieved party now wished to bring forward new evidence, or evidence not fully appreciated at the time, of a supposed injustice.

The Clerk suggested that ad hoc and by its general powers the Mission Council could empower the Mission Council Advisory Group to appoint a panel of five people to examine the evidence in this case and to ask the General Assembly to give authority to Mission Council to deal with the matter on its behalf. The Mission Council would receive the report of the panel and decide on the matter in September 1995.

After discussion, in which the Legal Adviser was consulted, it was agreed to follow the line suggested by the Clerk, subject to the Legal Adviser's further judgement on its viability.

(d) Revision of the Pastoral Measure

The Clerk reported that the revision of the Pastoral Measure would include methods of dealing with such matters as those set out above.

95/62 TASK GROUP ON HUMAN SEXUALITY (3)

Dr David Thompson brought forward an amended Resolution:

Assembly

- (a) invites the Mission Council Task Group on Human Sexuality to circulate material to enable the Church in all its councils to discuss the matter of human sexuality and its implications for ministry within the Church.
- (b) requests that this discussion takes place in Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches, leading to a further discussion in Synods in the autumn of 1996;
- (c) requests Provincial Synods, District Councils and local churches to send their responses to the General Secretary by 1st December 1996, in order to allow Mission Council to bring any further resolutions to General Assembly in 1997.

95/63 FUNDING OF LAY TRAINING

The Revd John Sutcliffe proposed the following resolution:-

(i) Mission Council agrees to amend the budget to include £11,500 for 1996 in order to provide financial assistance to those taking the 'Training for Learning and Serving Course' and other approved courses

(ii) was withdrawn.

The resolution was carried.

95/64 FUTURE MEETINGS

1995 29 September-1 October	Damascus House
1996 20 January	possibly at Derby Central URC
15-17 March	St. Joseph's, Upholland
1-3 October	High Leigh

95/65 PROVINCIAL MODERATORS' REVIEW AND NOMINATING GROUPS

It was agreed that consideration of this paper be deferred and taken as an early item on the agenda of the autumn 1995 meeting. It was noted that one appointment would be dealt with under the current guidelines.

95/66 REFLECTIONS ON THE MISSION COUNCIL

The Revd Andrew Prasad gave his 'theological reflections' on this meeting of the Mission Council.

He focussed his views on the mandate of the Mission Council when it was set up and how its present work follows along the lines prescribed for it.

He thought that the concept of world mission was seriously lacking in the Mission Council and thought that the reception of more people from CWM Churches would be helpful to the URC.

He had learned much from his presence at the Council and was grateful for the fellowship.

The General Secretary thanked Mr Prasad for his clarity and wise words.

95/67 THANKS

The Moderator expressed the thanks of the Mission Council to those responsible for making preparations for the meeting, to the officers and to the Chaplain; also to those attending their last meeting; and to the staff of St. Joseph's. Thanks were expressed to the Moderator for his leading of the Bible studies.

Closing worship was conducted by the Chaplain.

PHILIPPIANS I

R.J.McKelvey

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the Philippians is one of the gems of the NT. Paul obviously had a great affection for this church. He goes so far as to call it his "crown and joy" (4.1). Thought of his friends there involuntarily turned into prayer. "I thank God every time I remember you", he says (1.3). Such sentiments were reciprocated on the part of the Philippians. The result was a "partnership in the gospel" (1.5). They continued to support him long after he had left Philippi (4.15; II Cor.11.8,9). They sent one of their members, Epaphroditus, all the way to visit Paul in his prison cell and made it possible for him to stay with Paul and attend to his needs (2.25ff,30).

Where Paul was in prison is a matter of debate amongst scholars. Some still hold the view that his prison was in Rome. Others think it was in Ephesus. In any case Paul's opponents seem to have been bent on making capital out of his misfortune, "seeking" as Paul says, "to afflict me in my imprisonment" (1.17), on the basis presumably that there is no smoke without fire. Since Paul was in prison he must be a wrongdoer, and who would want a wrongdoer for an apostle. But the Philippians, bless them, had no doubts about Paul's integrity. They stuck by him.

Now Paul, for his part, comes to their help with this letter. From this point, however, the situation becomes less certain. It is not exactly clear as to all Paul had in mind in writing his letter. Certain things are clear enough. The epistle has a lot about suffering and was clearly written for the purpose of helping the readers in their suffering for their faith. Also the Philippians were having trouble from people Paul describes as "your opponents" (1.28). Possibly these are the

Judaisers who are lambasted in Chapter 3. And there were rivalries in the church (2.2ff), and two of their leaders - Euodia and Syntyche - were at loggerheads (4.2f). And of course Paul wished to thank the Philippians for the further gift which they had sent by the hand of Epaphroditus (4.10ff).

It strikes modern readers as rather odd that Paul should leave his "thank you" so late in the letter. Wouldn't courtesy have demanded him to have begun by acknowledging the gift? Some scholars make so much of this difficulty that they suggest that the paragraph of the letter in which Paul thanked them for the gift was in fact a separate letter, a "thank you" note sent at another time. I.e. Philippians is a composite document made up of several letters.

Another puzzle is at 3.2. Note that Paul strikes out suddenly and vehemently at people he calls "the dogs". This is so different from the tone and the content of the context that some scholars think that this too must have been from a separate letter, which attacked the Judaisers. I.e. Philippians is thus made up of three letters.

Finally, there is Paul's call to the Philippians to suffer for the cause of Christ. How do we explain this? Is it a general exhortation or related to some specific issue?

Although Polycarp spoke of "letters" having been written to the Philippians by Paul, there is no textual evidence to support that Philippians is made up of several letters. Most scholars therefore argue for the unity of the epistle. It is to the merit of recent work on Philippians, employing the sociological approach, that the epistle is shown to have an underlying theme which binds it into a unity.

SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

In this case the sociological approach used has to do with the Roman Empire. Philippi was a Roman colony and the pressures upon Christians would have been considerable. The continental scholar, Dominique Cuss, argues that pressures were being brought to bear upon those who confessed that Christ is Lord, not Caesar. Building upon this suggestion, the Swedish scholar, Mikael Tellbe, argues that the suffering to which the Philippians were exposed had to do with their making Christ their Lord and it resulted from a head-on clash between the gospel and the ideology of the Roman Empire.

Now with this suggestion in mind I want to engage you in the study of the Philippians.

PHILIPPI

We begin by trying to form a picture of the city of Philippi so that we shall be better able to understand what it would have been like for its citizens to become Christian converts.

The city of Philippi was a very Roman city and very proud of it. It took its name from Philip the Second of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, who fortified it. It passed into Roman hands in 168BC and in 42BC became world-famous as the scene of the great battle in which Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius, the assassins of Julius Caesar. This victory paved the way for the creation of the Roman Empire under Octavian, the future Augustus.

Philippi was not the leading city in Macedonia but under the Romans it became a city of great importance. It was strategically situated on the great Roman road - via Egnatia - connecting Rome with Byzantium. It had a good water supply and nearby there were rich deposits of gold and silver.

Octavian rebuilt the city and it goes to show the importance he attached to it that he had his architects lay out the streets as a replica of Rome itself. In other words, it was a miniature Rome. He made it a colony. The Roman colonies were amazing institutions. They were not colonies in the sense of being outposts of civilization in unconquered parts of the world. They were nerve centres of the empire. The Roman language was spoken. Roman dress was worn. Roman customs were observed. Octavian bestowed on Philippi the title Ius Italium, the highest privilege which could be awarded to a provincial municipality. It meant that its citizens had the same rights as citizens of Italy. They could purchase, own and transfer property, and had the right to civil law suits. They were also exempt from both poll tax and land tax.

THE IMPERIAL CULT

As you might imagine, Philippi was a stronghold of the imperial cultus connected with the Emperor. Cities vied with one another in demonstrating loyalty to the Emperor, by promoting his veneration. The work of successive ages of archaeologists at Philippi shows the influence of the imperial cult. The whole plain at the foot of the mountains is littered with the remains of buildings and statues, many of which had to do with worship. The rocks on the hillside have many inscriptions of devotion to the gods. The ancient gods of Thracia and Greece and the later incomers from the Orient and Egypt were taken over and given Roman names. At the heart of the city the monuments of the imperial cult are still in evidence. There are statues of Victoria Augusta (the divine spirit that gives Augustus the victory) and several inscriptions which connect emperors Augustus, Claudius and Nero with the gods (F.Paprazaglou, "Macedonia under the Romans." ANRW II.7.1,p541). The city had its official priests of the imperial cultus and the high priest had oversight of the administration of the city. Philippi in fact, was one of

the few Greek cities in which the ranks of Roman citizens included Augustans, an order devoted to the worship of the emperor.

Emperor worship had the potential for being a serious threat to the Jews, but they had become a recognised religion and were thus excused.

(Cf. C.N.Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture, Oxford, 1944; L.R.Taylor, The Divinity of the Roman Emperor, Middletown, Conn. 1931; Cambridge Ancient History XII, 1939; Domique Cuss, Imperial Cult and Honorary Terms in the New Testament. Fribourg, 1974).

PAUL EVANGELISES AT PHILIPPI

Paul's mission in Philippi marked a significant new development in his work. Paul was now on the mainland of Europe. This important extension of Paul's mission is dramatized by the author of the book of Acts by having the "man of Macedonia" appear to Paul in a vision and issue a call to him "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (Acts 16.6-10). Philippi was also very important to Paul himself. He describes it in Phil.4.15 as "the beginning of the gospel". A remarkable phrase which is unfortunately obscured in some of the new translations.

For Paul who had been working in Asia for at least 14 years to describe his work at Philippi as a new beginning is extraordinary. Its significance is indicated by F.W.Beare says in his commentary. He says:

He was making his first contact with Romans...
Philippi must have seemed to him like the entrance
to a new world with new problems and new perspectives (10)

Paul would not have been unaware of the risks he was taking in evangelising in a city like Philippi. He had not been there long before he was arrested, beaten and imprisoned.

Read Acts 16.21-24.

Note verse 21: the charge brought against the apostles was that, although thought to be Jews, they were teaching practices "unlawful" to the Romans(16.21). I.e. the conflict was primarily a conflict between the gospel and Roman law and custom. Although St Luke does not tell us the precise reason why Paul's preaching was considered "unlawful", it is fair to assume that it had to do with the fact that Christianity was not a religion recognised by the empire. By seeking to convert non-Jews to their new religion, Paul and Silas "threatened to divert attention and sacrifice away from the gods who protected the state" (J.Stamburg & D.Balch, The Social World of the First Christians 61)

Now this was very serious. The gods were the protectors of the State. Anyone who challenged the gods would be seen as undermining the State. Some commentators find a direct challenge to the great god Apollo in the reference to the demon who possessed the slave girl. This is in Acts 16.16 (F.F.Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles 3rd Ed, 360f; Tellbe 109). Note in verse 18 that Paul casts the demon out in the name of Jesus Christ. The cult of Apollo was closely associated with the cult of the Emperor (Tellbe 109 n.50). This means that the claim that Jesus is Lord could easily have been taken to be an attack on the Emperor. Note the charge brought against the apostles at Thessalonica in Acts 17.7.

"These are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is a rival king, one called Jesus".

Now if the proclamation of Jesus as the universal Lord was understood to be aimed at persuading people to stop

worshipping the emperor then this amounted to sedition. Sedition was an offence against public law and order, and required no special decree of Caesar to enforce it (Bruce 371, Tellbe 109f; E.A.Judge, RTR (1971) 1-7)

Thus the new religion brought to Philippi by Paul and the Christian missionaries would be seen to be a danger to Roman society, undermining the authority of the State.

We are nowhere near the persecution of the Church foreseen in the Book of Revelation. There the Emperor is depicted as the blasphemous Beast who demands worship from all and sundry (13.14f), but if this interpretation of Philippians is correct then the conflict between Church and State is shaping up and it will be only a matter of time before the church has its first martyrs.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

It is against this background that the sociological approach I have described suggests that we should attempt to understand Philippians.

The suffering about which Paul writes and the threat from the opponents whom he condemns may well result from the struggle which Christianity had with the political ideology of the city of Philippi. I.e. what we have here is another aspect of what we noted in our Bible studies on Galatians at our last residential weekend. There we saw Christianity defining itself in relation to Jewish culture. Here in Philippians we see Paul defining the gospel in relation to the ideology of the Roman empire.

This is a further instance of the beginning of the long struggle between Christ and culture which the Church was destined to wage. This means that Philippians is an essential

document for us today when it comes to opposing the principalities and powers of our culture.

We begin then by noting that Paul is writing this letter from prison (1.7,13f, 17; 2.17). Note also that the Philippians are suffering for the sake of Christ (1.29). They are thus drawn together through their common experience of suffering for Christ (1.29-30).

PHILIPPIANS 2.5-11

For the first Bible study, I want you to consider Phil.2.5-11. This is a well known passage. It is quite possible it had a history prior to its use here in Philippians. Some scholars think it was originally it was a creed or a hymn based on the confession that Jesus is Lord.

It is usual to read this passage with the visual diagram of the parabola in mind and it is hard to read what Paul says without lapsing into the familiar interpretation which contrasts Christ and Adam - Adam who grasped at equality with God and did not empty himself but rather exalted himself. I want you to try your best to shut out that interpretation for the moment. I want you to think instead of the political context at Philippi and what these words would have meant in the light of the claims being made for Caesar.

You will note that this famous passage is used by Paul in relation to odious comparisons and partisan practices at Philippi. But as often happens when Paul deals with a problem in one of his churches what results is a profound piece of theology. Using the sociological approach to Philippians it turns out to be theology which is fashioned in the crucible of the church in the Roman world.

2.6 Jesus is described as "equal with God"

The phrase "equal with God" was used in the state religion. The emperors were regularly referred to as ("equal with God"). The cult itself was described as "honours equivalent to those paid to the gods"(Dio Cassius 52.35f; Tellbe 113n). By contrast Jesus Christ, though he is "equal with God" did not use this for his own advantage (). Unlike the rulers of Rome who were notorious for grasping and seizing power. Christ renounced power.

2.7 "He took the form of a slave".

Think how this statement would have fallen on Roman ears! For people who prized their status as citizens and free persons it would have been an incredible reversal of values. Slaves were not regarded as persons. Juvenal has one of his characters ask haughtily, "Is a slave really a man?". Slaves could not take any part in the municipal affairs or in the imperial cult. They had no rights or privileges. At all points, the slave stands in contrast to the Lord, that is, the emperor.

2.8 "He humbled himself".

The best commentary on this are the words of our Lord to James and John when they ask for the best jobs in the Kingdom. He pointed them to the way that the leaders of this world throw their weight around, adding, "it shall not be so among you, whoever will be great among you must be your slave". In a comment which links the thought of our passage with the political situation of Philippi, Karl Barth says, "Once more he (Jesus) does not stand where the people of Philippi apparently stand - not where the battle is fought for honour, right and credit - but: he humbled himself" (Philippians 64).

2.8 "Even death on a cross"

This is an even more telling indictment on Roman culture. Death by crucifixion was regarded by the Romans with horror and disgust. To quote Cicero,

"Let the very name of the cross be far away not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes and ears". (Pro.Rab. 5.10,16; Cf Verr. 5.64; M.Hengel, Crucifixion)

Small wonder then that Paul acknowledges that the cross is folly to Gentiles (I Cor.1.23)

2.9 "Therefore God has highly exalted him"

Up until this point it is Christ who acts. Now it is God. God vindicates his son who has been treated so unjustly at the hands of the Roman empire. We have here the familiar idea of vindication which follows suffering, which is common to the Old Testament and to the Son of Man sayings in the synoptic gospels. Karl Barth emphasises the force of the preposition "therefore"(dio):

"It does not say that he who was humbled and humiliated was afterwards exalted, was indeed rewarded for his self-denial and obedience. But what it says is that precisely he who was abased and humbled ... is also the exalted Lord....(his) abasement and humiliation is not by any means washed out or cancelled - it is he who is exalted, it is to him the great name (of Lord) is given" (Philippians,66).

2.11 "So that every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord".

Paul's words may well have in mind the enthronement of the emperor, when the crowds acclaimed the new emperor bowing their knees and confessing that Caesar is Lord.(So Lightfoot, Michaelis, Collange: Cf. D. Cuss 77ff).

From the second century BC the title "Lord" or "Kurios" was regularly applied to emperors. Particularly striking is its frequent use for Nero (A.Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East 352f: Cf.Acts 25-26)

The early Christians gave the title to Jesus. It became an important confession of faith (Romans 10.9). It is very interesting that the title Kurios is used no less than fifteen times in Philippians. This can hardly be accidental in view of the variety of titles and descriptions for Jesus used by Paul in his other writings. The emphasis in Philippians seems to be deliberate. This may well be another comment by Paul on Roman culture, a "silent protest" against the pretensions of Caesar (Deissmann 355; Cf.Cuss, 88; Tellbe 112) If this is the correct exegesis then it is an unwarranted domestication of the confession "Jesus is Lord" in this passage to make it simply an expression of personal piety. This is the confession of faith as to who it is who rules the world (R.P.Martin Philippians 101f). The martyrs of the early church went to their deaths precisely because they refused the individualising and privatising of the gospel and insisted that Jesus is Lord of the whole world. Hence the point made by Arthur McArthur in his interpretation of the loyal address.

So this well-known and well-loved passage of the New Testament turns out to be Paul's critique of the culture of his day. It is used by Paul to help the Philippians reaffirm their loyalty to Christ so that they will stand firm in the face of persecution and suffering.

I would like you in your groups to go over this passage and discuss this interpretation and ask yourselves what it has to say to us about our culture today - culture which enthrones pluralism and relegates Christianity to the private sphere, i.e.challenges our proclamation of Jesus as Lord of all.

PHILIPPIANS II

R.J.McKelvey

THE TEMPTATION TO AVERT THE THREAT OF SUFFERING

INTRODUCTION

"Beware of the dogs. beware of evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh" (Phil.3.2)

Who are these people whom Paul is warning the Philippians against? Well, obviously people who wanted to circumcise them. In other words, they were Judaisers. Whether they were Jewish Judaisers or Christian Judaisers need not detain us. Nor need we spend any time on the question whether Paul later in Phil. 3 moved on to attack a different group of opponents: libertines of some sort. Some scholars think that Paul was fighting on two fronts. Most scholars nowadays think that Paul is attacking one group, namely, the Judaisers.

Now given that we can identify the troublemakers at Philippi as Judaisers we still have the problem of explaining how this fits in with the overall theme of Philippians. The sudden outburst with which Paul begins Chapter 3 has puzzled commentators so has the difference in content. Some have wondered whether in fact Chapter 3 is not from a different letter.

It is to the credit of Mikael Tellbe, a Swedish scholar, that he makes sense of this chapter in relation to the rest of the epistle. He does this by suggesting that Paul's attack on the Judaisers is to be understood in the light of the threatened suffering to which the Gentile converts of Philippi were

exposed because of the demands of the state religion. Judaism was recognised by the state and Jews were not persecuted. So why not be circumcised and avoid persecution!

JUDAISM AS A RELIGIO LICITA

It will help us understand the precarious social position of the early Christians due to their not having a recognised social identity if we consider what it meant for Judaism to be a recognised religion (Religio Licita).

The attitude of the Romans towards ethnic groups was one generally of toleration. Rome had a vast empire to rule and it had no wish to make more problems for itself than was strictly necessary as far as the religious practices of its subject races were concerned.

From the very earliest times the Romans accepted that the Jews were a people apart from other races. They were prepared to grant them exemptions and privileges. First, we hear of Jews being allowed to live in communities of their own in foreign cities and allowed a fair degree of freedom to run their own affairs (Josephus, Antiq.12.108: Ep.Aristeas 310). Then we read of permission being given to them to send money to Jerusalem for the upkeep of the Temple, a significant concession when one considers the fact that the Roman senate prohibited the export of gold and silver to foreign countries. Next we hear of Jews being exempted from military service.

In the course of time these ad hoc concessions were formalised, legalised and extended by Julius Caesar. His charter of Jewish rites granted the right to observe the Sabbath, the festivals and the other requirements of the law of Moses. It also entitled them to hold funds, transfer the Temple tax and to build synagogues (Suetonius, Iul.42.3). The Jews' communal property was safeguarded by a ruling that the

theft of the temple tax or of the scrolls from the synagogue by a gentile should count as sacrilege and be punished by the confiscation of property. Their religious liberty was protected by exemption from summons to attend court on the Sabbath, so that they would lose their cases by default for not appearing on the Sabbath (Antiq.16.162-5).

If we find it surprising that such favours were granted to the Jews it may help us to know that it was not unconnected with the help Caesar received from Herod Antipater during his Alexandrian campaigns and with his generally friendly relations with the high priest Hyrcanus II and the Jews of Palestine (Antiq. 16.162). The important thing to note, for our purpose is that these privileges had the effect of establishing Judaism as a religio licita, an incorporated body with its own authorised worship, throughout the whole of the empire (E.M.Smallwood,The Jews under Roman Rule, 1976, Chap.6).

The fact that Judaism was an officially recognised religion meant that Jews were freed from the time-consuming and often expensive civic duties required of citizens (Antiq.16.162-8). Above all, they were exempted from worshipping Roman deities and from participating in the imperial cultus (Antiq.19.284f,303ff; Cf.14.27ff,59f; Smallwood, 137,147f,243f).

It also meant that as a recognised religion Judaism enjoyed the protection of the State. Thus when mob violence was used against Jewish communities in any part of the empire they could appeal to the Roman authorities for help. There are numerous instances of how Rome came to the help of Jews threatened by such violence. (Antiq.14.244ff;16.58ff;19.278ff;Philo Leg.Gai. 43.335f).

It is not surprising therefore that Jewish communities of the dispersion often flourished and expanded in numbers. In cities like Caesaria, Apanea, Antioch, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Sardis and Ephesus, not to mention Alexandria and Rome, Jews were a significant and visible part of the population. If you go to Turkey for a holiday and go on a tour of the seven churches of Asia Minor and reach Sardis, you will see for yourself the remains of what was a magnificent synagogue from the early centuries of the C.E. Its size and architectural features show that the Jewish community at Sardis must have been numerous and prosperous, while the fact that it was built next door to the gymnasium and right in the centre of the shopping area indicates the confidence of the Jews of Sardis and the liberties they enjoyed. In many cities Jews served on city councils. Some held posts in the provincial administration, while the sons of the wealthy, like Paul himself, had access to the best education these cities offered (W.A.Meeks and R.L.Wilken, Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four centuries of the Common Era, Missoula, 1978).

CHRISTIANITY AS A RELIGIO ILLICTA

By contrast, the early Christians enjoyed no such favours, for they were not recognised by the State. They were therefore vulnerable and liable to mob violence at any time. Prof. W.H.C.Frend in his classic study of Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church shows what a precarious social identity the early Christians had. On the one hand, they were rejected by the Jews as not belonging to the Jewish tradition. On the other hand, they were suspected by the Roman authorities for withdrawing from the civic cultus. In such circumstances, denunciation to the authorities was an ever-present danger. Once denounced, they were at the mercy of the magistrate. The basic problem was the lack of a recognised status in society (Frend 168f).

So, why should the Gentile Christians not become circumcised and pre-empt possible danger?

To people who felt exposed and vulnerable this no doubt had its appeal. Instead of appearing as an upstart religion they would have a more recognisable and acknowledged place in Roman society. They would thus avert the threat of persecution. What that meant was already clear from the harsh treatment which their apostle had received at the hands of the Romans when he arrived in Philippi. Not that they needed any proof of how Rome treated those who refused to toe the line. Rome was notorious for the punishments it meted out to offenders. Even such a member of the Roman establishment as Cicero felt obliged to put on record the brutality which resulted from the use of the dreaded flagellum, the vicious flail tipped with bone or metal, which shredded the flesh till the bone was exposed. There was also the loss of citizenship, slavery, life-long servitude in the mines or the gladiatorial arena, or execution by Rome's ultimate deterrent - crucifixion (Stamburgh and Balch, Social World of the First Christians, 32-6).

The temptation to play safe by taking on the status of Jews may therefore have been a very real one.

Paul warned the Philippian Christians to have nothing to do with Judaisers. They would suffer for their faith (1.29), but they must remain true to Christ. What Paul does is to show that what the Judaisers are proposing is theologically indefensible. It is Christians who are the true circumcision. "If anyone has reason to be confident in the flesh, I mean confident in his circumcision, it is me. I'll tell you why. I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I belong to God's chosen people, of the tribe of Benjamin in fact. I am a Hebrew, born of Hebrews. As far as the law of Moses is concerned I belong to the elite group for I am a Pharisee. I

have shown my zeal for the Law by persecuting the church. And as far as righteousness according to the law of Moses is concerned I measure up to its requirements " (3.2-6). But in sharp contrast to the righteousness that comes from the law - "my righteousness" as Paul calls it - is the righteousness given by God on the basis of faith.

In other words, Paul places himself on the same footing as the Jews to show that he is on a par with the best of them. He could hold his own with any of them. Indeed, he could beat them hands down (ego mallon), but he will not dwell on that. He has discovered through his encounter with Christ something which was infinitely more valuable, viz. "the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (3.8) and "the righteousness which comes through faith in Christ"(3.9)

So infinitely greater is Christ that Paul sacrificed all his privileges and advantages. "For his sake I suffered the loss of everything, the whole lot went (ta panta in v.8 is radical). Just in case anyone should think that this is rhetoric Paul points out that he did actually loose them. Whether he means that his asset stripping was undertaken voluntarily or was the penalty inflicted on him by the Jewish authorities or indeed by his own family is not clear. (The NRSV wording - "suffered the loss" - suggests the latter by preserving the passive Greek verb). It is possible that he may have been thrown out of the synagogue and deprived of all his rights in the Jewish community and disowned perhaps disinherited by his family (cf. F.W.Beare, Philippians, 115). In any case, the loss was a real one, and Paul's claim to regard everything as "loss" was no idle boast.

But

"Whatever gain I had, I have come to regard as loss because of Christ"

Then he changes to the present tense: "(and what is more) I continue to count them as loss" (3.8)

In other words, getting one's values right is not a once and for all decision. It must be reinforced daily by continuous moral choices against depending on oneself, who one is, what one owns, what one has achieved, by depending wholly upon God (G.F. Hawthorne, Philippians, 136).

Paul's extraordinary evaluation of things that are normally regarded as advantages, things like privilege, family, religious upbringing, education, as one enormous loss is the result of his having a new perspective, his being given a criterion in the gospel by which he evaluates everything. Everything is seen in a new light.

What mattered now, what was supremely valuable, was "to gain Christ and be found in him, not having the righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith".

This is Paul's answer to the Judaisers and anyone in Philippi tempted to listen to them. He says to them, "Look, Righteousness is not a matter of moral achievement. It is not conduct or character improved to the point where it meets God's approval, so that I could put my name on it and call it my righteousness". The idea that in addition to believing in Christ one can acquire a righteousness of one's own, as the Judaisers imply, is quite out of the question. That ruins everything. Righteousness comes from God and God alone, and it is received through faith - the grateful acknowledgement of what God has done and a trustful commitment to this.

This is of course the great foundational doctrine of justification by faith. This is what gives the Christians of

Philippi and everywhere else their identity. To try and find one's identity in anything else is to make that identity less than Christian. To try to play safe by taking out the insurance cover offered by the Judaisers, or anyone else, is to destroy the Christian faith. One must put one's faith in Christ and Christ alone.

Question for Groups:

What are the dangers to which Christians are exposed in today's culture?

What is the theological answer we have to give to such dangers?

PHILIPPIANS III

R.J.McKelvey

"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead"
(Phil.3.10-11)

These words are a fitting climax to what Paul has been saying in the earlier verses of Chapter 3. Some commentators indeed regard them as one of the great peaks of Paul's theology and spirituality. "To know Christ" was the supreme good for which Paul had forfeited everything.

Knowing Christ was much more than knowledge about Christ, intellectual knowledge. Look up any good commentary and you will be reminded that the idea of "knowing" in the Hebrew tradition has its ultimate expression in the sexual union and its intimacy, joy and fulfilment. I.e. it is existential knowledge which is Paul's burning desire. It is an every-deepening and life changing experience, resulting from living with Christ.

Then to spell out what he means Paul continues. The essence of knowing Christ means knowing the power of his risen life and the sharing of his sufferings. This is participationist theology, as Prof. Morna Hooker has emphasized. In a tightly packed passage, in which one idea connects domino-like with the next idea, we see that the knowledge of Christ which Paul desires so ardently is attained by a personal experience of Christ's divine power, which in turn implies sharing in Christ's sufferings and a growing conformity to his death. This in turn leads to the resurrection from the dead.

I WANT TO KNOW HIM AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

Paul is not talking here about the resurrection from the dead. That comes later in the final clause of the passage. He is

speaking here of the power of the risen Christ in the here and now. In other words when Paul says he wants to know the power of Christ's resurrection what he means is, he wants to know Christ in the power of his resurrection. That is to say, he wants to know Christ's risen power.

Even so, some people think it odd that Paul should reverse the order of things, speaking of resurrection before he speaks of suffering and death (contrast Rom.6.5). This is not a slip on Paul's part. It is quite deliberate. The power of the risen Christ in him is what makes it possible to endure suffering. This is what the Philippians needed to know and what we need to know. There is a dynamic available to help us in our hour of need. Paul will go on presently to tell us about suffering. That is the other side of the paradox. But before he deals with that he wants us to know that there is a power greater than our own power to help us when suffering comes our way. This is the good news of the gospel.

I think it is a great pity that we in the church today in our well-intentioned efforts to show the relevance of the gospel to social problems have not always emphasized the power of the gospel to redeem individual lives. We've busied ourselves in good causes, and goodness knows its all been necessary, but not surely at the expense of individuals and their need to be saved from themselves and from the evil influences of our culture. People desperately need saving and when we neglect this it has a way of reminding us with a vengeance. So where we have concentrated on society's problems or world issues to the neglect of individuals and their need to find a power greater than their own to cope with their innate drives and outward pressures, we must bear part of the blame for the price being paid by so many in broken relationships, bad parenting, lust, as well as from the suffering caused by market forces.

So let us not sell people short but give them the good news of the gospel. There is power to rescue them and empowerment for living.

St. Paul knew that he stood little chance of the Philippians remaining true in the evil day if he could not offer them the strength of the gospel to do so. Thus he very wisely begins by mentioning first the power of the risen Christ.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS

Having done this Paul can then safely deal with the question of suffering. Suffering will come, in one way or the other. It is an escapable part of the Christian life. So, good pastor that he is, Paul prepares his converts for it. He wants them to regard suffering not as a penalty for being Christians but as a privilege, a fellowship, a sharing - a koinonia - with Christ in his sufferings. Thus all the while Paul is sharing his inmost desires with them, he is counselling them in their understanding of Christian living, and the words of our text are an integral part of the overall theme of suffering in the epistle. Then before he finishes the chapter, in case he has not made himself clear, he throws reserve aside and tells them plainly that he wants them to imitate him (3.15.17)

So "what I want is to know Christ....and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death". This is also the essence of knowing Christ.

If we had begun to wonder whether Paul in longing to know the power of the risen Christ was not subscribing to the triumphalist form of Christianity, this gives the lie to it. Christian life for Paul is an experience not only of divine power but of suffering and dying to one's self. This is not a prelude to the power of the risen Christ. It is part and

parcel of it. Notice, again, that the experience of suffering and death comes after the experience of divine power. It manifests itself precisely in and through suffering. Knowing Christ in the power of his resurrection and in the fellowship of his sufferings are thus not two distinct and separable experiences but two aspects of the one and the same experience. They are like the two sides of a single coin. (as is indicated by the fact that in the Greek both statements are governed by the one definite article).

The French New Testament scholar, Jean-Francois Collange put it well, when he says:-

"To know Christ is to have experience of a life - giving power, but this power is shown only in the midst of difficulties, sufferings and death. Furthermore, the fellowship uniting Christians with Christ and with one another (koinonia) is forged only within such difficulties and sufferings" (Philippians, 131).

In modern jargon there is solidarity in suffering. Christ, Paul and the Philippians are bound together.

(Paul's teaching in Philippians came to play an important part in the life of the early church as it entered the three centuries of persecution which lay ahead of it. It is quoted widely in the writings of the early fathers who prepared the church for martyrdom (L.G.Bloomquist, The Function of Suffering in Philippians, 1993, chap.1). Paul himself saw martyrdom as a possibility when he wrote Philippians (2.17) and for all he could tell the Philippians might face the same fate).

Our text should not be taken to mean that Paul actually sought suffering, or courted martyrdom. In the Book of Acts we see how quick he was to use his Roman citizenship to avoid trouble. So why does he emphasize the cross of Christ and our

sharing in Christ's sufferings? Nobody gave a better answer to this one than Martin Luther. He went to the heart of the matter when he said: "The cross puts everything to the test". Included in the famous 95 theses which he nailed to the door of his church are seven theses on his theology of the cross. These are in explicit opposition to what Luther called the theology of glory. The theology of glory wants God on its own terms. It decides what discipleship is. It does not take Christ as its model. If we want to test our discipleship we cannot do better than put it to the test that Luther supplies for us, which is the test Paul supplies. Do our lives enshrine the cross?

A present day Lutheran, Ernst Kasemann, has a word for modern Christians who marginalize the cross when he attacks the "enthusiasts" - those who want the divine power but do not want the cross. He says:

"We must not fall into the error of the enthusiasts, who for the sake of the risen Lord's presence turn the cross into a historical affair. That must not be done, even if it is described as a unique supreme sacrifice and a once-for-all reconciliation. Jesus' cross has not passed away on earth; it is now borne not by him but by us as his delegates" (Jesus means Freedom, 74).

Paul had great difficulties at Corinth from people he called false apostles. They rejected the cost of discipleship and talked only about its joy and power. To counteract their one-sided understanding of the Christian life Paul lists the marks of the true apostle. These marks are in the shape of the cross. In his life the cross expressed itself in the hardships and trials of his work (I Cor.4.11-13; II Cor.6.1-10; 11.22-31).

Recent study of the lists of hardships experienced by Paul serve to show how his sufferings had to do not only with the more obvious things like the forty lashes less one, but less obvious things like Paul's work as a non-stipendary apostle, or his care of the churches.

We've read Paul's comments about his work, like I Thess., where he says he "worked night and day" (I Thess.2.9; cf.II Thess.3.8) or I Cor. where he says "we grow weary from the work of our own hands" (I Cor.4.12), but we didn't give it much thought until the American New Testament scholar Ronald Hock produced evidence of the work practices of artisans in Paul's time. This shows how time-consuming and labour-intensive such work was. Drawing upon the descriptions of tentmakers and shoemakers in the classical writings, Hock pictures Paul starting work before daybreak, in the freezing cold in winter, and, stripped to the waist in summer, slaving in the hot and dingy little workplaces often used by artisans (The Social Context of Paul's Ministry, 1980,35ff). Whether Hock is correct or not in thinking that Paul's experiences of being hungry and thirsty, cold and "naked" belong to his tentmaking rather than his travels, there is no denying the very exhausting nature of his manual work. This is clear from the very terms Paul uses to describe his work. They emphasize effort expended to the point of fatigue, discomfort and pain (Hock, 38).

But that was not all. There was the stigma attached to the trades. They were regarded as brutish, demeaning and unbecoming of anyone except a slave. A workshop, says Cicero, is no place for a free man (De off. 1.42.150; Hock 36). Paul of course was a free man and by birth a member of the socially elite. We may well have a hint of Paul's loss of social status in what he was prepared to put up with as a tent making apostle in order not to be a burden on his newly formed congregations when he says that he became a slave (I Cor.9.15-19) or when he says he is held in disrepute (atimos - "without honour") (cf. II Cor 11.7, "I abased myself").

There was also Paul's care for the churches. How demanding this was upon Paul can be seen from the way he describes it. He refers to it as "the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety

for all the churches" (11.28). This is the final hardship in Paul's list and scholars think that this signifies it was the hardest of all. Each church had its own particular needs, which were constantly on Paul's mind. There were journeys to make and always letters to write. The needs of his converts were constantly in his prayers. His concern must have turned to frustration on many occasions by his sheer inability to do anything to help.

Recent studies of Paul's pastoral method draw upon methods of nurture used by Stoic and Cynic to show how time consuming it was (I Cor.3.1-3; I Th.2.7; A.J.Malherbe, Paul and the Thessalonians, 1987). Those of you who have to spend a good deal of your time on counselling can understand therefore why Paul ranks his care of the churches as the most demanding aspect of his work!

How was he able to keep it up? Because he found in it a way of opportunity of fellowship with Christ crucified.

When Paul spoke about being conformed to Christ's death he knew what he was talking about. The sheer hard work, the hazards and misfortunes to which he was subjected throughout his ministry were the means by which he died daily (Beare, Philippians, 124). As he tells the Corinthians, he was "always carrying in (his) body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our bodies" (4.10).

But it was well worth it all. He had discovered the way in which to transform his hardships into blessings.

Earlier he described the opportunities which it gave him to preach the gospel. His imprisonment helped him to evangelise the whole praetorian guard (I.13; 4.22).

Now he describes another payoff. The sufferings which came drew him closer to his Lord (cf. Col. 1.24). Paul wants the Philippians to know and he wants us to know that the suffering we fear contains within it rewards which are not otherwise possible. Suffering borne for the sake of Christ and his people takes one to deeper levels of truth and experience.

Perhaps I can illustrate this by a story from the Second World War. It is from Pierre d'Harcourt's autobiography (The Real Enemy). He was a member of the French Resistance. He was betrayed to the Germans and shot down in Paris. While recovering in hospital he made plans to escape, but this plans were discovered. The police rushed into the hospital and chained him to the bed. Reflecting on this bitter disappointment, this is what he wrote:

"The hour which followed was one of the blackest of my life...As I realised my chance had gone, despair over came me..... Beneath everything, beyond everything, I felt myself humiliated and defeated. I had been so confident and now my pride had been laid low. There was only one way of coming to terms with my fate if I was not to sink into an abyss of defeatism from which I knew I could never rise again. I must make the gesture of complete humility by offering to God all that I suffered. I must not only have the courage to accept the suffering he had sent me; I must also thank him for it, for the opportunity he gave me to find at last his truth and love. I remember the relief of weeping as I realised that this was my salvation. Then the inspiration came to me to kiss the chains which held me prisoner, and with much difficulty I at last managed to do this. I am not a credulous person, but even allowing for the state of mind I was in that night, there can be no doubt in my mind that some great power from outside momentarily entered into me. Once my lips had touched the steel I was freed from the terror which had possessed me. As the handcuffs had brought the terror of death to me, now by kissing my manacles I had turned them from bonds into a key."

But thank God, imprisonments, suffering and fear of death do not have the final word in God's plan for us.

He has a better prospect in store for us. So Paul finishes by looking forward to the future - to the resurrection from the dead, that is the resurrection of the body.

Since it is the resurrection of the body which is promised what we look forward to is no mere shuffling off of this mortal coil, in which the struggles and hardships are lost. The resurrection of the body is the resurrection of our whole selves. Our bodies, like Christ's, are part of the physical, material world. God, who brought creation into being and pronounced it good, used this part of creation in the incarnation to become one of us. Now, in the resurrection, he shows us its final destiny, transformed, of course, but still related to this body. To say that the body is disposable is to say that creation finally does not matter. To affirm the resurrection of the body is to affirm that this material world matters to God. After all, he made it and used it to save us. The resurrection of the body is the pledge that what is good in our lives, what is done for the sake of Christ and for others is of lasting value. Everything that is of Christ will be raised up and form the new person of the new age.

And once again, Paul's theology is of immediate relevance to life in the here and now:

"Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (I Cor.15.58).

So:

"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (Phil.3.10-11). AMEN

**THE
UNITED REFORMED
CHURCH**

MISSION COUNCIL
17th - 19th March 1995

**WORSHIP
MATERIALS**

LEAD U - S A - N D I - N T - O T E - M P A - T I O N
 B U T D E - L I - V E R U S F R O M A D T H A T I S E - V I L , M A Y
 T H A N K B E T H E K I N G D O M T H E P O - W E R A N D T H E G L O - R Y
 O N E A R T H A S I - T I S I N H E A - V E N

**READING: Philipians
3.1-11**

**"Public Faces, Private
Hearts"**

HYMN

Caryl Micklem (1925-)
Tune: Gatescart

Give to me, Lord, a thankful heart
and a discerning mind;
give, as I play the Christian's part,
the strength to finish what I start
and act on what I find.

When, in the rush of days, my will
is habit-bound and slow
help me to keep in vision still
what love and power and peace can fill
a life that trusts in you.

By your divine and urgent claim
and by your human face
kindle our sinking hearts to flame
and as you teach the world your name
let it become your place.

Jesus, with all your Church I long
to see your kingdom come;
show me your way of fighting wrong
and turning sorrow into song
until you bring me home.

**BIBLE STUDY
THE GRACE**

EVENING "Heavenly Humility"

**CALL TO WORSHIP
PSALM (8)**

"O Lord, our Lord"
O Lord, our Lord, throughout the earth
how glorious is your name,
and glorious too where unseen heavens
your majesty proclaim.
On infant lips, in children's song
a strong defence you raise
to counter enemy and threat,
and foil the rebel's ways.

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Tune: Kingsfold

When I look up, and see the stars
which your own fingers made,
and wonder at the moon and stars,
each perfectly displayed;
then must I ask, 'Why do you care?
Why love humanity?
And why keep every mortal name
fixed in your memory?'