



**MISSION COUNCIL**  
*19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> March 2004*

**MINUTES**

**FRIDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2004**

**SESSION 1**

Worship was led by the Chaplain, the Revd Carolyn Smyth.

**04/25 Welcome**

The Moderator, the Revd Alasdair Pratt, welcomed everyone to the meeting, mentioning in particular:- the Revd Howard Sharp (Mersey synod moderator), the Revd Dr John Campbell (Principal-elect of Northern College) as Theological Reflector, Mr Roger Allen (deputising for the Revd John Kingsley, Mersey synod representative), Mr John Brown (Secretary for Youth Work), the Revd John Durell (deputising for Dr Peter Clarke, Northern synod representative), the Revd Carla Grosch-Miller (deputising for the Revd Roz Harrison, South Western synod representative), Miss Fleur James (FURY Council), Mrs Val Morrison (Yorkshire synod clerk), Dr Brian Woodhall (Convener of the Grants and Loans Group), the Revd Alistair Smeaton (in attendance - chaplain to the Moderator-elect)

**04/26 Attendance**

There were 68 members present with 19 staff and others in attendance and Mrs Barbara Hedgecock (Minutes Secretary).

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Suzanne Adofo (CRCW Development Worker), the Revd Wilf Bahadur (Convener of Equal Opportunities), Miss Angela Bebbington (South-Western synod), Mr Andrew Bradstock (Secretary for Church and Society), Mrs Karen Bulley (Pilots Development Officer), Mrs Helen Clapp (Thames North synod), Mr Roderick Garthwaite (Yorkshire synod), the Revd Roz Harrison (South-Western synod), the Revd John Kingsley (Mersey synod), Ms Catriona Smith (Synod of Scotland), Mr Stephen Summers (CRCW), the Revd Bill Wright (Secretary of Resource Planning Advisory Group).

**04/27 Minutes of Mission Council 24<sup>th</sup> January**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January, which had been circulated, were presented by the Clerk. They were approved and signed as a true record by the Moderator after the following amendments: 04/02 Apologies should have included the Revd Sheila Maxey; (Paper L first section) 04/04 (03/76) spelling of Hind; 04/13 Minutes page 6 – delete second paragraph of the resolution. With the permission of the Moderator, the Clerk expressed his thanks to those members of Mission Council who had written to him after the death of his mother soon after the January Mission Council.

**04/28 Matters Arising**

**04/13: Resolution in anticipation of local and European elections:**

The response in the ethnic press had been very encouraging.

**04/29 Additional Business**

The Deputy General Secretary informed Mission Council that there were two additional papers to consider:

- i. L – includes nominations and reports from RSTG and EIAG to Assembly.
- ii. D1 – Section O resolutions to Assembly. Mission Council agreed that a small group be formed to look at Paper D1 with the Clerk, prior to discussion in Session 4. Three volunteers were sought.
- iii. Assembly Arrangements Committee presentation.

#### **04/30 Election of Advisory Groups to Mission Council (Paper A revised)**

The Deputy General Secretary introduced this paper and emphasised the need to have the vacant posts filled by Sunday. The Clerk explained the election procedures, asking for nominations in writing to be handed to him by Saturday evening with the name of proposer and seconder, in order to hold the election on Sunday morning. *See Minute 04/40, 04/53*

#### **04/31 Mission Council Advisory Group (MCAG) (Paper M)**

The Deputy General Secretary brought items 1- 4 as matters of report. It was agreed that the General Secretary would write a letter of thanks on behalf of Mission Council to Victor Hughff, the retiring convener of the Pensions Executive.

The General Secretary reported on an additional item – trusteeship in local churches and informed Mission Council that a small group would be meeting with the Charity Commission to clarify the nature of trusteeship within the URC. MCAG would report on the outcome of this meeting to General Assembly.

#### **04/32 Nominations Committee (Paper L and N)**

Dr Stephen Orchard introduced Paper L and the following resolution:

**Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly re-appoints the Revd Arnold Harrison to serve as Moderator of the Yorkshire Synod from 1 September 2004 until 29 February 2008. This was agreed.**

It was noted that an appointment group for a new Human Resources Manager had been formed and Mrs Val Morrison was the convener.

Dr Stephen Orchard also introduced Paper N (The Appointment of Synod Moderators and the Review of their Appointments) and discussion took place regarding the guidance notes contained therein. The Clerk stated that the guidance should be in the Assembly Resolution rather than in the attached papers. Changes to the rules of procedure should be taken to General Assembly. Mission Council agreed that advertising should be clarified in the guidance notes.

The following resolution was passed:

**Mission Council accepts the report of the Nominations Committee containing new guidelines for the appointment and review of synod moderators, and invites the committee (a) to propose to Assembly 2004 any consequent changes to the Rules of Procedure, and (b) to inform that Assembly that the new guidelines have replaced those reported to the Assembly of 1986.**

#### **04/33 Financial Outlook and Draft Budget 2005 (Papers C, C1 and O)**

Mr Eric Chilton presented these reports, which were followed by discussion. In reporting on the financial outlook for the Church Mr Chilton undertook to report further to future meetings of Mission Council and requested that Mission Council begin the process of addressing the longer term issues which had been identified. It was noted that there was very little change to

the proposed budget from the previous year. Mr Chilton proposed that the budget should be presented to General Assembly and this was seconded by Mr William McVey. All were in favour. The Moderator thanked Mr Chilton and his committee for their work.

#### **04/34 Grants and Loans Group (Paper E)**

The new convener, Dr Brian Woodhall brought this paper for information only.

#### **04/35 Staffing Advisory Group (Paper B)**

Mrs Val Morrison, convener of SAG presented this paper. She noted possible changes to the future pattern of Assemblies and requested permission to amend her resolution slightly. The following resolution with amendments suggested by the Clerk was passed:

**Mission Council agrees**

- a) **that the timetable for the review of all staff posts in consultation with the General Secretary's Review Group should be timed to take place during 2004/2005; the Staffing Advisory Group to report progress on the review of staffing to Mission Council in October 2005.**
- b) **That during the period March 2004 and July 2007**
  - i. **At the point where a review of a post would normally take place, and provided the relevant committee is willing, the postholder will be offered a contract extension to July 2007;**
  - ii. **Those staff who have already been offered an extension of their contract to 2006 should immediately be offered a further extension to 2007.**

The General Secretary agreed to send a circular around to staff after Mission Council.

### **SESSION 2**

The Moderator had been delayed in arriving at Mission Council due to a problem on the motorway. His opening address and bible study had therefore been deferred until this part of the agenda. The reflections were taken from Jeremiah 32, v6-16 and v39.

#### **04/36 Papers from Advisory Groups (Resource Sharing Task Group and Ethical Investment Advisory Group) (Paper L)**

The Deputy General Secretary reported on items 3, 4 & 6.

Item 3: Mission Council was content that (subject to comments made being taken into account) the Resource Sharing Task Group's report should be included in the Mission Council Report to General Assembly.

Item 4. Thanks were offered to the Revd Tony Burnham who retires from the convenership of the Resource Sharing Task Group after an extended term of more than 8 years. The Deputy General Secretary reported that a preliminary approach had been made to the Revd Elizabeth Caswell to consider taking on the post. Mission Council agreed to include this nomination in the elections and the Clerk asked for any further nominations for this appointment to be submitted to him by the following morning.

Item 5. It was agreed that the report of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group, written by Mr John Ellis, would be included in Mission Council's Report to General Assembly.

Item 6. The appointment of a permanent convener was required for the Ethical Investments Advisory Group.

#### **04/37 Assembly Arrangements Committee**

Mr William McVey, convener of Assembly Arrangements Committee reported on the costs of future Assemblies and stated that in 1972 there were 4 members per 1000 church members in attendance at General Assembly. Now the ratio is 8 members per 1000. A further resolution was proposed to remove the 3 synod representatives. The Clerk said that it was his understanding that it would be possible for Assembly to remove the 3 representatives of each synod but that the 9 representatives of Scotland who joined at the time of the Scottish Union were part of the 2000 Union Agreement. This proposal was therefore withdrawn. Mission Council was invited to show its views on the removal of 3 representatives from each synod, in order to give some form of guidance to the review group. A vote took place and the outcome was 30 in favour and 30 against.

#### **04/38 Explanation Notes**

The Deputy General Secretary gave notices regarding the evening session which would be the opportunity for a two-way briefing between members of Mission Council and staff secretaries and their conveners. The Clerk stated that if any synod intended to take a resolution to General Assembly, he would be grateful if they would show it to the Clerk first.

The Chaplain led worship and Mission Council adjourned.

### **SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2004**

Mission Council joined in Worship led by the Chaplain, which included Bible Study.

#### **SESSION 3**

##### **04/39 'Equipping The Saints' (Paper J)**

Mr John Ellis, convener of Ministries Committee introduced the report. Mission Council then split into discussion groups, followed by a plenary session. The Moderator thanked the leaders of the groups who reported back and also thanked Mr John Ellis and his committee. There was considerable disquiet in several groups concerning Recommendation 5 that "The United Reformed Church should adopt the title 'local preacher' in place of 'lay preacher'. The convener undertook to remove that recommendation and its accompanying text from the report.

#### **04/40 Additional Notices**

The Deputy General Secretary advised that the Clerk still required two more representatives to join the group looking at the Section O business. The Clerk was also awaiting more nominations and the deadline for receiving these would be Saturday evening.

#### **SESSION 4**

##### **04/41 Mission agenda from local contexts – Northern Synod**

The Revd Peter Poulter presented a series of news stories from Northern synod. Mission Council then divided into buzz groups, followed by a short plenary session to discuss headline news from the groups.

##### **04/42 Resolutions to General Assembly from Church and Society Committee (Paper ASS)**

The Revd Martin Camroux, convener of Church and Society Committee, brought Resolution CS1 on International Finance Facility and Resolution CS2 on Israeli Separation Barrier with their background papers. *See Minutes 04/52 and 04/55*

#### **04/43 Life and Witness Committee (Paper G)**

The Revd Brian Jolly, convener of Life & Witness Committee, presented this report which was followed by a slide presentation by Mr Lawrence Moore, Director of the Windermere Centre. Mission Council then divided into buzz groups to discuss whether this was a vision to pursue and if so whether it was the appropriate time to do it. This was followed by a plenary session and the comments provided by Mission Council would be taken into consideration before a final decision was made by the Committee. There was a question on whether lottery funding could be used and the Committee was asked to clarify this. *See Minute 04/54*

#### **04/44 Ecclesiastical exemption (Paper H)**

The Moderator welcomed Mr Hartley Oldham who presented this paper. Mr Oldham posed a number of questions to Mission Council. All were agreed but referred to MCAG for further consideration.

Question 1:

**Mission Council needs to consider the appropriateness of Mission Council as the body which authorises and oversees the work of those representing the United Reformed Church in negotiating and maintaining the Exemption status.**

Question 2:

**Does Mission Council support and encourage the work which Hartley Oldham and Tegid Peregrine are doing in relation to the present consultation?**

MCAG was asked to set up a procedure to appoint successors as Chairman and Secretary.

Question 3:

**Does Mission Council agree with this report's suggestions (i) as to the preparation and submission of the Church's response to the Consultation Paper and (ii) as to the other steps which might follow from the Consultation (e.g. the completion of a high-level management agreement)?**

Question 4:

**What procedures need to be put in place to cover future reporting to Mission Council (or other committee – depending on the answer to 1 above)?** It was agreed that an annual report should be made to MCAG.

#### **04/45 Section O Advisory Group (Paper D and D1)**

Mr Hartley Oldham, Secretary of Section O Advisory Group presented these two papers. Mission Council supported the recommendation set out in paper D. In paper D1 Mission Council was asked to agree the resolutions and supporting report to General Assembly regarding changes to the Section O Process. These were all agreed apart from the last resolution which had been omitted from the paper. The Revd John Waller suggested that the terms of this resolution be discussed by the small group led by the Clerk before being brought to Mission Council later in the agenda. This was agreed. *See Minute 04/47*

#### **04/46 Joint Statement by Faith Community Leaders (Paper P)**

The General Secretary introduced this paper and recommended that Mission Council endorsed the signing of this document. Mrs Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, the Racial Justice Secretary was asked to speak and provide the history to the document. She proposed that the statement be signed and the Revd Dr John Parry seconded this. The Clerk moved **that Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly authorises the Moderator to sign it in his own name and on behalf of the United Reformed Church.** All were in favour. The Editor of Reform was asked to publicise this decision.

## **SESSION 5**

### **04/47 Section O Advisory Group (Paper D and D1) *Continued from Minute 04/45***

The Clerk reported back from the group which had looked at these proposals and suggested inserting the words “not currently the subject of any case in the Section O Process for ministerial discipline referred to in function xviii below.” It was noted that a minister could not resign whilst undergoing the Section O Process and that a minister ceases to be a minister of the church once his resignation is accepted by the district council. The group also looked at paragraph 9.2 and felt that it should be allowed to go to General Assembly as it stood. The Revd Christine Craven was asked to give an outline of the criteria the Ministries Committee used when interviewing candidates for the ministry. The Deputy General Secretary reported that the last Mission Council meeting agreed to set up a reference group for blemished disclosures. Mission Council was happy with the decisions made earlier regarding the resolutions. Mr Hartley Oldham was thanked.

### **04/48 Multi Cultural Ministry (Paper K)**

The Deputy General Secretary presented the paper and the Revd Philip Woods, Secretary for International Relations, and Mrs Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, the Racial Justice Secretary provided some background information. Mission Council agreed that the following resolutions should be taken to General Assembly as part of the Mission Council report:

- 1. The Racial Justice Committee be renamed the Racial Justice and Multi-Cultural Ministries’ Committee, with secretaries for International Relations and Ecumenical Relations becoming members ‘ex officio’.**
- 2. The RJ&MM and Ecumenical Committees should work together to develop relations with multi-ethnic congregations, recognising that there may be reallocation of committee responsibilities in due course, but these should evolve gradually through practice. Nominations Committee should be consulted and briefed about the specific gifts and skills required to equip the RJ&MM committee to develop its new role.**
- 3. In order to facilitate change and exchange, the Convener of RJ&MM Committee shall be an ex-officio member of the International Exchange Sub-Committee, and the RJ&MM Committee shall be represented on the Ecumenical Committee.**
- 4. An inter-committee forum should meet occasionally to discuss issues arising from the United Reformed Church’s developing commitment to multicultural ministry. This will help avoid duplication of work, and provide opportunities for mutual accountability.**
- 5. The Mission Partners programme will remain within the remit of the International Exchange Sub-committee.**

Thanks were given to the Revd Philip Woods and Mrs Katalina Tahaafe-Williams.

#### **04/49 Youth and Children's Work Committee (Paper F)**

The Revd Kathryn Price, convener of this committee introduced the paper and the following resolutions:

##### Resolution 1.

**General Assembly endorses the revised strategy, in response to Resolution 12 of the General Assembly in 2003, for the support of children's and youth ministry in local churches proposed by the Youth and Children's Work Committee.**

The Clerk responded to a point of order made by the Revd Terry Oakley regarding this paper. The Clerk agreed that the committee had not done what the General Assembly had asked it to do, in which case the resolution was out of order. The Revd John Waller advised that the committee had addressed the question and the Revd Kathryn Price replied that there had been no support for 'ginger groups'. The Clerk asked the Moderator to request that the committee withdraw this resolution in order that a consultation under Standing Order 3(e) iv be held. The Moderator agreed to defer the matter until the next session.

##### Resolution 2:

**Mission Council agrees to the sending of Good Practice 3 to all local churches.**

The Clerk moved a technical amendment which the Convener accepted.

**Mission Council agrees to the sending of Good Practice 3 to all local churches and Mission projects.**

This was agreed.

Mrs Rosemary Johnston, the Children's Advocate was granted permission to speak as the budget holder and advised that funds had been allocated as long as Mission Council took the responsibility that it was a Church matter. *Continued in Minute 04/51*

The Chaplain led worship and Mission Council adjourned.

#### **SUNDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2004**

Mission Council, led by the Moderator and the Chaplain, met for worship, which included the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

#### **SESSION 6**

**04/50 Elections to Advisory Groups (Paper A) *Continued from Minutes 04/30 & 04/40***

The Clerk announced the nominations for MCAG and asked Mission Council to cast their votes. Mr Donald Swift was the only nominee to serve as convener for the Church House Management Group. Mission Council agreed the appointment of Mr Swift. *See Minute 04/53*

There being no other nominations for convener of Resource Sharing Task Group, Mission Council agreed the appointment of the Revd Elizabeth Caswell.

No names had been forthcoming for Secretary of Grants and Loans Group and therefore MCAG would be given authority to appoint a new secretary.

**04/51 Youth and Children's Work Committee (Paper F) *Continued from Minute 04/49***

The Moderator announced the amended Resolution to General Assembly:

**General Assembly notes that after considerable research the Youth and Children's Work Committee has been unable to comply with the instruction contained in resolution 12c of 2003 ' to use the model of the Ginger Group teams and work with others in drawing up plans for the development of a team to become a resource to local churches...'**

**General Assembly therefore calls upon the Youth and Children's Work committee**

**To re-establish a network of district and Synod youth secretaries complementing the children's work network;**

**To develop an Assembly wide data-base of youth and children's groups and workers, with the aim of sharing resources and skills;**

**To have regular mailings building on the success of URCHIN and BRIDGE which shall include opportunities for the participation of young people and children;**

**To develop a five year plan focusing work under the headings of Belonging, Worship, Discipleship, Evangelism and Action. All are to be featured every year, but each year there shall be a particular emphasis on one;**

**To ensure that all those working within the United Reformed Church with children and young people are adequately trained for their role;**

**To monitor, in collaboration with the Training Committee, training offered at all levels, including training for ordination, TLS, CME and youth work training;**

**To support and advocate the YCWT programme**

**To create a forum for reflection on youth and children's work ministry both within the United Reformed Church and ecumenically;**

**To offer opportunities for children and young people and those who work with them to explore faith development and spirituality**

**To ensure good stewardship of financial resources.**

Mission Council agreed that the report and resolution in this form might be submitted to General Assembly.

**04/52 Assembly Resolutions (Paper ASS) *Continued from Minute 04/42***

The Revd John Humphreys introduced Resolutions T1 – T6, stating that the Revd Stanley Jackson would replace the Revd David A. L. Jenkins on the TLS programme; The Revd Betsey Gray-King had been appointed as a Post Ordination Commissioning Education and Training Officer to start at the beginning of April. *See Minute 04/55*

**04/53 Election results *Continued from Minutes 04/30, 04/40 & 04/50***

The Clerk announced results of election for MCAG. After the counting of votes, the Revd Andrew Prasad was elected to serve on MCAG.

**04/54 Life & Witness Committee (Paper G) *Continued from Minute 04/43***

Mr William McVey brought a procedural matter to Mission Council regarding an appeal for the Windermere Centre. Mr McVey informed Mission Council that the Mission Council Advisory Group was unaware, when discussing the Life and Witness Committee's proposal, that the committee was not due to report to General Assembly this year. Assembly Arrangements Committee therefore sought the advice of Mission Council as to whether Life



and Witness Committee's resolution should be considered as urgent. This was put in the form of the following resolution:

Resolution:

Mission Council advises the Assembly Arrangements Committee to consider including the resolution from the Life and Witness Committee in the business of General Assembly 2004 as an exception to the 2 year procedure.

The Revd Peter Brain proposed an amendment and the Revd David Bedford seconded it. The amendment was lost. The Revd Terry Oakley proposed the following amended resolution and the Revd Clive Sutcliffe seconded it:

**Mission Council advises the Assembly Arrangements Committee to include the resolution from the Life and Witness Committee in the business of General Assembly 2004 as an exception to the 2 year procedure.** The resolution was carried.

#### **04/55 Assembly Resolutions (Paper ASS) *Continued from Minutes 04/42 & 04/52***

The Deputy General Secretary explained the procedure and Mission Council moved into discussion groups to consider resolutions to Assembly from the Ministries Committee, Training Committee and Communications and Editorial Committee. This was followed by a plenary session. The Revd Christine Craven, Secretary of the Ministries Committee discussed some of the concerns that arose from the groups and sought Mission Council's advice as to whether the resolutions M1 – M4, with minor modifications, should go to General Assembly. Mission Council agreed that they should. With regard to training issues, the Revd John Humphreys noted the comments. The Communications and Editorial Committee issues were also noted. The Clerk had received notice of three resolutions from synods – namely: Yorkshire; North Western; and jointly from North Western and Northern synods. The Clerk requested that he receive prior notice of any other resolutions before the 30<sup>th</sup> March.

#### **04/56 The World Convention of the Churches of Christ**

The Revd Philip Woods informed Mission Council about this forthcoming event, which would be held in Brighton. Leaflets were been distributed.

#### **04/57 Additional Business**

The Deputy General Secretary asked for comments on the two-way briefing session which had been held on Friday evening. It was thought by some that too little time had been allowed for each group to meet; it would have been helpful to have a list of topics provided by staff secretaries prior to the sessions; and it would be especially useful, if the briefing session were to be repeated, for it to take place at the October Mission Council when a number of new members attended for the first time. Generally it was thought to be have been a very valuable exercise, and should happen again.

#### **04/58 Thoughts from the Theological Reflector**

The Moderator introduced the Theological Reflector, the Revd Dr John Campbell (principal-elect of Northern College) who presented his first impressions to Mission Council. (The text would be circulated with the minutes). He commented on the time, experience and energy that was wasted going over papers that would be presented to General Assembly.

#### **04/59 Close**

The Moderator thanked those who were attending Mission Council for the last time, mentioning in particular: the Revd John Waller who concludes his period of service as immediate-past Moderator of General Assembly (and after a long period of service to Mission Council, and membership of MCAG); Dr Peter Clarke who retired as Northern Synod Clerk on 1<sup>st</sup> March and as a Mission Council representative; Mr Simon Rowntree who would retire as West Midlands Synod Clerk on 31<sup>st</sup> March and as a Mission Council representative; Mrs Barbara Hedgecock who was completing her period of service as Minutes Secretary of Mission Council; Mr Hilary Gunn who would retire after General Assembly as Office and Personnel Manager at Church House, and would conclude his major responsibility of planning and organising General Assembly; Miss Angela Bebbington (South Western synod); the Revd Paul Snell (South Western synod); Mrs Marion Bayley (Southern synod) and Mr George Morton (Western synod). The Moderator thanked his colleagues at the table. The Moderator then thanked the Revd Carolyn Smyth (Chaplain) for the way in which she had conducted worship both at General Assembly and Mission Council. The General Secretary thanked, on behalf of Mission Council, all those who had responded to "Catch the Vision" – the response had been overwhelming. He would be writing to all Churches in due course. The General Secretary also expressed the thanks of Mission Council to the Moderator for guiding the meetings with kindness, courtesy and insight. The General Secretary also thanked the Chaplain for the gentle way in which she had taken Mission Council through worship during the past year.

Closing Worship was led by the Chaplain.



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

# The United Reformed Church

86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT, United Kingdom  
Deputy General Secretary: The Revd Raymond Adams

To: Members of Mission Council  
and staff in attendance

16<sup>th</sup> February 2004

PLEASE REPLY TO THIS LETTER, IF POSSIBLE, AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE IT

**Mission Council : 19- 21 March 2004**  
**The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire**  
Telephone: 01773 602482 Facsimile: 01773 540841

Dear Colleague,

There is always a tight turn around between the January and March meetings of Mission Council. This year is no exception. So, please find enclosed both the minutes of the January Meeting at Stoneleigh and a request for accommodation and meal requirements for the meeting at Swanwick from 19-21 March.

The March Mission Council is traditionally a busy one, as it considers the Assembly budget and looks at committee resolutions to General Assembly. This year there will be an anticipation of the next stage of the "Catching the Vision" process initiated by Mission Council in October 2002, and developed by the General Secretary, in the light of initial responses received from local churches, districts and synods.

The enclosures will help the practical arrangements for Mission Council to be processed efficiently, as well as giving you some early reading. The first set of papers include:

- directions for getting to The Hayes Centre
- a list of members (to help people plan shared transport)
- an expense slip (to be completed and handed in at the meeting)
- a form giving your accommodation and meal requirements, and certain other information.

Please will you return this form as quickly as possible, preferably by 23<sup>rd</sup> February, as we have to send information to the Hayes well in advance of the meeting date. You may find it more convenient to respond by email to [krystyna.bilogan@urc.org.uk](mailto:krystyna.bilogan@urc.org.uk).

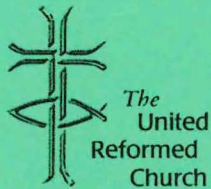
There will be a further mailing of papers in about two weeks' time but I enclose Paper A which gives notice of elections to Mission Council groups.

When you think of packing for your trip to Swanwick, please remember to include a Bible and a copy of Rejoice and Sing. I look forward to seeing you on 19<sup>th</sup> March.

With good wishes

Yours sincerely

The Revd Raymond Adams  
Deputy General Secretary



## MISSION COUNCIL

### 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2004

The Moderator:	Revd Alasdair Pratt	Past Moderator:	Revd John Waller
General Secretary:	Revd Dr David Cornick	Moderator Elect:	Revd Sheila Maxey
Deputy General Secretary:	Revd Ray Adams	Treasurer:	Mr Eric Chilton
Clerk:	Revd James Breslin	Legal Adviser:	Mrs Janet Knott

#### Assembly Standing Committees

Doctrine Prayer & Worship:	Revd John Young
Life & Witness:	Revd Brian Jolly
Church & Society:	Revd Martin Camroux
Youth & Children's Work:	Revd Kathryn Price
Ecumenical:	
Ministries:	Mr John Ellis
Training:	Revd John Humphreys
Finance:	Mr Eric Chilton
Communications & Editorial:	Revd Martin Hazell
Nominations:	Revd Dr Stephen Orchard
Assembly Arrangements:	Mr William McVey
Equal Opportunities:	Revd Wilf Bahadur
Inter-Faith Relations:	Revd Dr John Parry
Racial Justice:	Revd Andrew Prasad

#### Fury Council

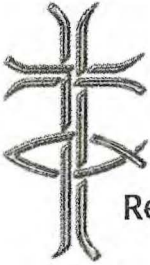
Ms Amanda Wade
Miss Fleur James

#### 13 synod Moderators, plus 3 representatives from each synod

1 Revd Peter Poulter	Revd Colin Offor, Dr Peter Clarke, Mrs Susan Rand
2 Revd Peter Brain	Revd Chris Vermeulen, Mr George Morton, Mrs Janet Eccles
3 Revd Howard Sharp	Mr Donald Swift, Revd Martin Hardy, Revd John Kingsley
4 Revd Arnold Harrison	Revd Pauline Loosemore, Mr Roderick Garthwaite, Mrs Val Morrison
5 Revd Terry Oakley	Mrs Ann Ball, Mrs Barbara Turner, Revd David Miller
6 Revd Elizabeth Welch	Mrs Melanie Frew, Mr Simon Rowntree, Revd Simon Helme
7 Revd Elizabeth Caswell	Revd Victor Ridgewell, Mick Barnes, Joan Turner
8 Revd David Grosch-Miller	Revd Roz Harrison, Revd Paul Snell, Miss Angela Bebbington
9 Revd Adrian Bulley	Revd Clive Sutcliffe, Mrs Glennis Massey, Revd David Bedford
10 Revd Roberta Rominger	Mrs Helen Clapp, Revd Dr Roger Scopes, Revd Jane Wade
11 Revd Nigel Uden	Mrs Marion Bayley, Revd Lesley Charlton, Mr David Howell
12 Revd Peter Noble	Revd David Marshall-Jones, Mrs Janet Gray, Mr W Stuart Jones
13 Revd John Arthur	Mrs Helen Mee, Miss Catriona Smith

#### In attendance

Minute Secretary	Mrs Barbara Hedgecock	Rural Consultant	Mrs Jenny Carpenter
Moderator's Chaplain	Revd Carolyn Smyth	Moderator's Chaplain Elect	Revd Alistair Smeaton
Editor, Reform	Revd David Lawrence	Church & Society	Dr Andrew Bradstock
Training	Revd Roy Lowes	Pilots Development Officer	Mrs Karen Bulley
International Church Relations	Revd Philip Woods	Ecumenical Relations	Revd Richard Mortimer
Ministries	Revd Christine Craven	Director, Windermere Cntr	Mr Lawrence Moore
Finance	Ms Avis Reaney	Communications	Mrs Carol Rogers
Youth Work	Mr John Brown	Children's Advocate	Mrs Rosemary Johnston
Life & Witness	Revd John Steele	Convener RPAG	Revd Julian Macro
Office & Personnel Manager	Mr Hilary Gunn	Secretary RPAG	Revd Bill Wright
Church Related Community	Mrs Suzanne Adofo/	Racial Justice Secretary	Mrs Katalina Tahaafe-Williams
Work Development Workers	Mr Stephen Summers	Grants & Loans Conv'r	Dr Brian Woodhall
Theological Reflector	Revd Dr John Campbell		



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86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT, United Kingdom  
Deputy General Secretary: The Revd Raymond Adams

To: Members of Mission Council  
and staff in attendance

11<sup>th</sup> March 2004

**Mission Council : 19- 21 March 2004**  
**The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire**  
**Telephone: 01773 602482 Facsimile: 01773 540841**

Dear Colleague,

Enclosed is the second mailing of papers for Mission Council, which includes the following:

The Agenda	
List of groups	
List of members and staff in attendance	
Paper A ( <u>revised</u> )	Election of advisory groups
Paper B	Staffing Advisory Group – review of posts
Paper C	Financial Outlook – a paper from the Treasurer
Paper D	Section O Advisory Group
Paper E	Grants and Loans Group
Paper F	Youth and Children's Work Committee
Paper G	Life and Witness Committee paper re the Windermere Centre
Paper H	Ecclesiastical exemption
Paper J	Ministries' Committee – 'Equipping the saints'
Paper K	Multi cultural ministry
Paper N	Nominations Committee – 'The Appointment of Synod Moderators and the Review of their Appointments'
Paper P	Joint statement by faith community leaders
Paper ASS	Assembly Resolutions

Papers to be tabled at Mission Council:

Paper L	Additional Business
Paper M	Mission Council Advisory Group Report
Paper O	The 2005 Budget

**If you have not received any of the above, or require us to provide papers from previous Mission Councils, please contact Krystyna Bilogan on 0207 916 8646**

You will see from the agenda that there are several key issues to be considered: a substantial period of time will be given to considering the Ministries' Committee's report to General Assembly "*Equipping the saints: changing ministry for the challenge of mission*". There is also an attempt to respond to the comment that the Church's mission agenda should not always appear to be set by Assembly committees. Mission Council might like to consider how to create and improve dialogue between local churches and Assembly-appointed committees and personnel. Residential Mission Councils can provide flexibility for experiment which is often denied single-day meetings. Note the 'two-way briefing session' on Friday evening, and the opportunity for Northern synod (Saturday afternoon) to share some of its insights and the challenges facing it.

Now to some practicalities: Registration at Swanwick will be in the LAKESIDE building – at the ground floor reception area. Our main sessions will be held in Orchard Hall, which is a departure from our previous practice.

Please remember, when packing, to include a Bible. We plan to use 'powerpoint' to project the hymns on to a screen, and therefore it is probably not necessary to bring a copy of *Rejoice and Sing*. If, however, you would like a music copy, or don't trust in technology, you may wish to bring your own copy.

I look forward to seeing you at Swanwick on 19<sup>th</sup> March

With every good wish

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Adams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

The Revd Raymond Adams  
Deputy General Secretary



**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**19-21 March 2004**

**AGENDA AND**  
**TIMETABLE**

*The General Assembly has agreed that every agenda should be headed with the question, what are the ecumenical implications of this agenda?*

**FRIDAY**

11.30 am onwards - check in

12.45pm LUNCH

2.00 pm WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY  
Welcome and apologies

Minutes of the meeting on 24 January 2004

Matters arising

04/22 Nominations Committee paper (to be taken later in this session)

Notice of additional business	(Paper L) - <i>to be tabled</i>
Explanation of election procedures	(Paper A)
Mission Council Advisory Group	(Paper M) - <i>to be tabled</i>
Nominations Committee	(Papers L- <i>tabled</i> - and N)

3.45pm TEA

4.15pm	Financial Outlook – the Treasurer	(Paper C)
	The Budget – the Treasurer	(Paper O) - <i>to be tabled</i>
	Grants and Loans Group	(Paper E)
	Staffing Advisory Group	(Paper B)

6.45pm DINNER

7.45pm Two-way briefing session: the opportunity to lobby staff secretaries and committee conveners about issues which are relevant to local churches, districts and synods – and for the secretaries to explain and discuss matters on their current agendas.

9.00pm PRAYERS

**SATURDAY**

8.30am BREAKFAST

9.15am WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY

10.00am 'Equipping the Saints' - Introduction (Paper J)

GROUPS

10.45am	COFFEE	
11.10am	GROUPS (continue)	
11.45am	Plenary on 'Equipping the Saints'	
12.45pm	LUNCH and free time	
3.00pm	Mission agendas from local contexts – Northern Synod	
3.45pm	TEA	
4.15pm	Resolutions to General Assembly from Church and Society Committee	(Paper ASS)
	Life and Witness Committee	(Paper G)
	Ecclesiastical exemption	(Paper H)
	Section O Advisory Group	(Paper D)
6.45pm	DINNER	
7.30pm	Joint Statement by faith community leaders	(Paper P)
	Multicultural ministry	(Paper K)
	Youth and Children's Work Committee	(Paper F)
8.45pm	PRAYERS	

## **SUNDAY**

8.30am	BREAKFAST	
9.15am	HOLY COMMUNION	
10.15am	Elections to Advisory Groups	(Paper A)
	Introduction to Assembly resolutions	(Paper ASS)
10.45am	COFFEE	
11.00am	Groups to consider Assembly Resolutions	(Paper ASS)
11.45am	Result of elections	
	Plenary on Assembly Resolutions	
	Any remaining business	
	Thanks to those completing their service on Mission Council	
12.30pm	CLOSING WORSHIP	
12.45pm	LUNCH and departure	



**Mission Council Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2004**  
**Revised Timetable**

9.15: Communion

**Session 6**

- 10.15 a.m. Election to Advisory Groups: - include RSTG nomination (E. Caswell)-  
*(where no nominations have come forward, suggest it be remitted to MCAG to approach people and to appoint them on behalf of MC)*
- 10.20: Youth and Children's Work revised resolution
- 10.40: Ask John Humphreys to speak briefly about the supporting text for Training resolutions ( ASS) /
- 10.45 Coffee
- 11.0 Return to Orchard Hall for Windermere Appeal – procedure ( William McVey, Clerk et. al)
- 11.30 Groups – (in Orchard Hall) discuss ASS paper
- 11.50 Plenary on ASS paper
- 12.15 Theological Reflector – Dr John Campbell
- 12.20 Feedback from MC about Friday evening and possible areas of development
- 12.25 Thanks ( see annotated Agenda)

The Moderator thanked Mr John Seager, for whom this would be his last appearance at Mission Council as Yorkshire synod clerk. The Moderator wished Mrs Val Morrison well as John Seager's successor.

Closing Worship was led by the Chaplain.

**Mission Council: Swanwick**  
**Friday Afternoon/ Evening 19th March 2004**  
**Two –way briefing**

- Opportunity for those appointed as staff secretaries direct engagement with local experience – and to hear local concerns
- Opportunity for them to communicate to members of MC – one of assumptions of conciliar process is that those who represent one constituency – engage in communication to and from – and report back. Experience shows that even when that works well ( and many times when it doesn't) it has to be reinforced by providing opportunities for it to happen.
- There are many new members of MC: easy for the old-hands to assume that the reason we are here is clear to everybody
- Developing a corporate vision for the Church happens at different levels and in different settings and in different styles – and not always in the main sessions of MC – but also in personal interaction.
- Gives the opportunity to those staff members whose committees don't have such a high profile as others to engage with MC members.
- Because of the limitation on room space – I have focussed on those committees whose staff secretaries are present. As it is an experiment, we may do this again, and priority will be given next time to those who have not been included today
- Method: staff members have prepared a sheet with a number of topics on them: helps you to know what these people do – and they are happy to cover whatever topics you wish to cover – but BE REMINDED it is your opportunity to raise your issues
- Ask staff secretaries to note any matters which might be future agenda issues – return to me sometime tomorrow – raise on Sunday morning

(see paper 'Group venues' )

The Second question, which arises both from this resolution and from a general question raised by the Convener of Ministries, is "*By what route shall Synod Resolutions reach the Assembly?*" Sometimes they have come directly and sometimes by way of Mission Council.

The answer here appears to be that this currently is a decision which lies in the hand of the Synod. The rights of Synods to make proposals in the General Assembly are contained in the Structure Paragraph 2. (4) A (xi) "*to make proposals to and raise concerns for consideration by the General Assembly*" This is amplified by the Standing Order 2b. which sets out the procedure to be followed by a Synod wishing to put forward a motion.

When the Mission Council was created the rights of the Synods were not affected although in the Executive Committee report to the General Assembly, dealing with Mission Council it was stated "*We regard it as essential that the Provincial Synods should be enabled to have adequate time to present their concerns to the mission Council and to the General Assembly. The first duty of the General Assembly is "to oversee the total work of the church" and not only that work which is undertaken nationally. The Mission Council, therefore, will need to be aware of matters which are of great concern to the Synods.*"

The Mission Council is a two headed beast, being both a Committee of the General Assembly and a Commission of the General Assembly. I tend therefore to think that my general advice about the duty of Proposers to submit their motions to the appropriate committee cannot apply to Mission Council in the same way. In order to fulfil its duty of oversight Mission Council ought to be able to choose to debate Synod Resolutions as it can Committee Resolutions. Paragraph 2.2 of the 1992 report sets out the means whereby Committee business intended for the General Assembly can be brought before Mission Council and places responsibility for such actions with the Secretary of Mission Council. In 1992 this was the General Secretary but it is now the Deputy General Secretary.

(It has, for some years, been the practice of the Clerks of the Assembly to scrutinise Resolutions intended for the Assembly at the March meeting of Mission Council. This has often been done in consultation with the General Secretary, but it has had no formal status. The purpose of this exercise has merely been to enable the Clerk to advise Committees and Synods of any problems with regard to the wording of a Resolution that might result in its being ruled out of Order and when requested to do so to suggest alterations. If this brief exercise were to be formalised and used to assess whether or not Synod Business should properly be debated in Mission Council it would need to be done much earlier than is now the case.)

Nonetheless, the present rules of the United Reformed Church are quite clear. Synods may but are not required to notify Mission Council of proposals they wish to bring to Assembly. Committees must give notice of proposed business introducing new work but Mission Council is not required to discuss these proposals unless it chooses to do so.

J. Breslin  
Clerk  
8/12/03



**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**19 - 21 March 2004**

A

(revised)

**Election of Advisory Groups to Mission Council**

The groups are listed below. Under each there is a statement of its remit, a list of the current members and the date on which their service ends. There are also details of eligibility and length of service.

**1. Mission Council Advisory Group**

*The remit of Mission Council Advisory Group ("MCAG") is*

- (i) to plan the meetings of Mission Council;*
- (ii) to ensure that appropriate follow up actions are taken following meetings of Mission Council and General Assembly; and*
- (iii) to provide support and advice to the Assembly Moderator and the General Secretary.*

*In carrying out the above remit, MCAG should have regard to the Functions of General Assembly, as set out in the Structure, and should seek to ensure that Mission Council and General Assembly are provided with appropriate reports to enable them to see that those Functions are properly carried out.*

Moderator	Alasdair Pratt	
Immediate past Moderator	John Waller	
Moderator-elect	Sheila Maxey	
2 Committee Conveners	John Ellis	2006
	<b>Vacancy</b>	(2008)
Treasurer	Eric Chilton	Dec 2006
4 members of Mission Council	Adrian Bulley	2007
	Roz Harrison	2007
	Helen Mee	2006
	Val Morrison	2007

General Secretary  
Deputy General Secretary in attendance

Conveners serve for 4 years from their year of appointment or until they cease to be conveners, whichever is the shorter.

Members serve for 4 years from year of appointment or until they cease to be members of Mission Council, whichever is the shorter.

**2. Resource Planning Advisory Group**

*Within the context of the United Reformed Church's mission, the group will advise Mission Council on*

- 1. long-term strategic planning;*
- 2. priorities in the use of human and material resources;*
- 3. the use of ministry, by*
  - 3.1 liaising with the Ministries Committee and the synods in matters of the deployment of stipendiary ministry;*
  - 3.2 liaising with the Ministries Committee to facilitate the development of new forms of ministry;*

4. *Assembly appointed posts, having received reports from the Staffing Advisory Group;*
5. *financial planning, by*
  - 5.1 *overseeing the budget process, and by its presentation to the church;*
  - 5.2 *seeking to educate the whole church and advocate the needs of mission, liaising with the Stewardship Subcommittee of the Life and Witness Committee;*
  - 5.3 *liaising with the Resources Sharing Task Group over the management of the financial resources of the whole church.*

The group will undertake such other tasks as Mission Council gives to it.

Convener	Julian Macro	2005
Secretary	Bill Wright	2006
Synod Moderator	Peter Brain	2005
Member	Roger Pickering	2005
Member	Steve Wood	2006
Member	Erica Young	2005
Convener Staffing Advisory Group	Val Morrison	2006
General Secretary	David Cornick	2008
Treasurer	Eric Chilton	2006 (Dec)

#### **In Attendance:**

Secretary for Ministries	Christine Craven
Secretary for Finance	Avis Reaney
Secretary for Life and Witness	John Steele
Representative of Resource Sharing task group	David Butler
Deputy General Secretary	Ray Adams

The convener and secretary, if not members of Mission Council, will be invited to attend. Members may or may not be members of Mission Council but they should have experience of synod or district council work. Elected officers and members will serve for four years, although the convener will normally serve a preliminary year as convener-elect.

### **3. Staffing Advisory Group**

*The Group considers any Assembly post due to become vacant, or proposals for new posts and recommends to Resource Planning Advisory Group whether this post should continue or be created.*

Convener	Val Morrison	2006
Secretary	The General Secretary	
3 members	Ken Forbes	2005
	Veronica Taylor	2006
	Chris Wright	2006

The Convener must be a member of Mission Council and serve for 4 years or until s/he ceases to be a member of the Council, whichever is the shorter. Members may or may not be members of Mission Council and should serve for 4 years.

#### 4. Grants and Loans Group

*The group considers all grant and loan applications from local churches and local church projects. This includes the grants previously on the agenda of the Advisory Group on Grants and Loans, grants and loans from the Church Buildings Fund, and the consideration of grant applications to the CWM self-support fund. It also stimulates reflection on the theology and practice of mission in the light of its experience.*

Convener	Brian Woodhall	2008
Secretary	<b>Vacancy</b>	(2008)
One representative from each synod plus, as consultants:		
Secretary for Finance		
Secretary for International Relations		
Secretary for Life and Witness		
Secretary for Church and Society		
A CRCW Development Worker		
Secretary for Youth Work or Children's Advocate		
Deputy General Secretary		

The convener must be a member of Mission Council, or be invited to attend, and will serve for 4 years. The secretary may or may not be a member of Mission Council and serves for 4 years.

#### 5 Section 0 Process Working Party

Convener	Tony Burnham	2006
Secretary	Hartley Oldham	2006
Ex officio:		
Secretary of Commission Panel	Brian Evans	2005
Convener of Commission Panel (co-opted)	Helen Brown	2005
The General Secretary		
The Clerk to the Assembly		
The Secretary for Ministries		
The Legal Adviser is in attendance		

#### 6 Church House Management Group (established in November 2002)

Convener	<b>Vacancy</b>	(2008)
Member	David Marshall-Jones	(2006)
Member	Val Morrison	(2007)
Member	John Woodman	(2008)

In attendance  
Deputy General Secretary (secretary)  
Financial Secretary  
Human Resources and Facilities Manager  
Secretary for Communications and Editorial

**6 Criminal Records Bureau (Churches Agency for Safeguarding)  
Reference Group (established in January 2004)**

Adrian Bulley (a synod moderator)  
Liz Crocker (a child care specialist)  
Wilma Frew (a magistrate)  
The Children's Advocate/ the Secretary for Youth Work  
The Deputy General Secretary

**The March 2004 Mission Council therefore will need to elect:**

**Mission Council Advisory Group:**

A member (who is the convener of an Assembly Committee, and therefore a member of Mission Council).

**Grants and Loans Group:**

A secretary (who may or may not be a member of Mission Council.)

**Church House Management Group:**

A convener (who may or may not be a member of Mission Council)

Nominations shall be taken from proposer/seconded  
or from groups at Mission Council.





**MISSION COUNCIL**  
**19 - 21 March 2004**

**B**

**Staffing Advisory Group**  
**Review of Posts**

At its meeting in October 2003, Mission Council passed the following resolution:

**'The Staffing Advisory Group undertake a review of all staff posts in consultation with the General Secretary's Review Group, co-opting additional personnel to help with the review as necessary, with the aim of presenting a report on this SAG review to Mission Council in January 2005'**

In considering a timetable to enable a report to be brought to Mission Council and in consultation with the General Secretary, it is proposed that the following timetable be adopted:

An overall review of staffing should be timed to take place during 2004/2005 working in conjunction with the 'Catch the Vision' process. The Staffing Advisory Group will report progress on the review of staffing to Mission Council in October 2005 with a final report feeding into the 'Catch the Vision' group process for their proposals to go to the 2006 Assembly with implementation being from Assembly 2007.

Whilst considered this timetable SAG were aware also that a number of the current posts and post holders are due for review before that date and indeed we have recently been offering some staff short term extensions to General Assembly 2006. But the process of review is time consuming for committees and potentially stressful for individuals. Staffing Advisory Group, having consulted with committee conveners, therefore proposes the following:

At the point where a review of the post would normally take place, and provided the relevant committee is willing, the postholder will be offered a contract extension to Assembly 2007, after which time the shape of the United Reformed Church and its range of programmes may well look different. Those staff who have already been offered an extension of their contract to 2006 would immediately be offered a further extension to 2007.

**Resolution:**

**Mission Council agrees**

- a) that the timetable for the review of all staff posts in consultation with the General Secretary's Review Group should be timed to take place during 2004/2005; the Staffing Advisory Group to report progress on the review of staffing to Mission Council in October 2005.
- b) that during the period March 2004 and Assembly 2007
  - i. at the point where a review of a post would normally take place, and provided the relevant committee is willing, the postholder will be offered a contract extension to Assembly 2007;
  - ii. those staff who have already been offered an extension of their contract to 2006 should immediately be offered a further extension to 2007.



## MISSION COUNCIL 19 – 21 March 2004

# C

### The Financial Outlook

#### Introduction

As part of the presentation of the budget figures for 2005 to Finance Committee and RPAG, a review of the year 2003 to date and the outlook for 2004 was given.

At the beginning of last year we were aware that the total of Synod M & M pledges for 2003 was around £149k short of what had been included in the budget agreed by General Assembly in 2002. However, because there has been a considerable underspend across the board by budget holders, I hope the final figures will show a good outcome. This should be available at Mission Council in March.

#### Outlook for 2004

The pledges for 2004 are again under the target set when the budget was agreed by General Assembly in July, according to December figures by £233k, despite considerable efforts by some Synods to meet their target. It is disappointing that most of the Synods, especially some of those making the largest contributions, are falling short of expectation. In fact, according to December figures, two Synods have currently offered less than for 2003. This worsening trend in not reaching targets does have serious consequences especially as it undermines the whole basis on which the budget is prepared. If General Assembly cannot rely on the M & M contributions it can hardly agree the budget as there is no certainty that expenditure can be funded.

The outcome for 2004 depends on several things:

- a) the eventual level of the M & M contribution
- b) the savings in budgeted expenditure achieved
- c) legacies and other income

none of which can be predicted at this stage. However if nothing were to change the shortfall, according to December figures, in meeting the M & M target of £233k and the budgeted excess of expenditure over income of £430k would lead to a deficit of £663k.

#### Budget 2005

The detailed figures presented to January Mission Council showed a modest increase in total expenditure of £235k. (only 1.1%) over 2004. Within this is an allowance for an increase in stipends and salaries of 3.5%. Although there will be some small adjustments to these figures, (e.g. for Youth and Children's Work, whose budget requires an extra £30k as a response to Assembly resolution 12 in 2003), these should not be significant. However the concern remains over the level of M & M

contributions which can be achieved where the target is for an increase of 3% over the 2004 pledges.

### **Issues for consideration now**

There is very little scope for quick fixes so some longer term planning is called for and amongst the measures which should be considered, are the following:

1. Reviewing the programmes agreed by General Assembly. There is an expectation that all detailed programmes are sacrosanct until Assembly agrees otherwise. However faced with the present outlook, each Committee should continue to examine its programme and prioritise work accordingly. Not everything should enjoy equal importance.
2. Having greater control over part time ministry. Ministers numbers are now set to track the changes in membership although the target may not be met immediately. However, for part time ministers there is currently no fixed retirement date and upwards adjustment to hours is permissible.
3. Reviewing the level and eligibility for training grants.
4. Encouraging the Ecumenical Committee in its continuing exploration of how it can emphasise the centrality of belonging to the world church whilst decreasing costs.
5. Proposals about General Assembly. This will continue to be more expensive with the current level of representation. Proposals are being developed which will need the agreement of Assembly over two years.
6. Mission Council should also be aware of the 'distinct elephants' of government legislation, particularly the introduction of certain employment rights to ministers of religion, and the ending of exception status under the long awaited new Charities Act (now timed for 2005/6). These could/will have expenditure implications.

### **Conclusion**

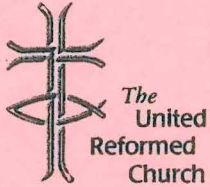
Presenting a budget for 2005 with such a modest overall increase in expenditure should be a positive message to the Church, especially when the amount budgeted for improved stipends and salaries is much greater. However there remain longer-term issues which should be addressed now and I believe these should be progressed under the umbrella of the Review.

*Eric Chilton  
Treasurer  
February 2004*

### MINISTRY AND MISSION TARGETS FOR 2004 - as at 18 March 2004

Synod No.	Synod	2003 Target (2002 pledge + 4.5%)  (000's)	2003 Pledge as at Jan 03  (000's)	2003 Actual  (000's)	2004 Target (2003 pledge + 4%)  (000's)	2004 Exptd Pledge as at Jan 04  (000's)	% Difference 2003-2004 Pledge	2004 (Shortfall)/ Surplus  (000's)
1	Northern	1,178	1,178	1,178	1,225	1,178	0.0%	(47)
2	North Western	1,758	1,710	1,710	1,778	1,830	7.0%	52
3	Mersey	1,220	1,232	1,232	1,281	1,260	2.3%	(21)
4	Yorkshire	1,220	1,228	1,228	1,277	1,231	0.2%	(46)
5	East Midlands	1,252	1,241	1,240	1,291	1,268	2.2%	(23)
6	West Midlands	1,463	1,419	1,430	1,476	1,480	4.3%	4
7	Eastern	1,658	1,633	1,633	1,698	1,683	3.1%	(15)
8	South Western	1,243	1,225	1,223	1,274	1,300	6.1%	26
9	Wessex	2,121	2,110	2,110	2,194	2,195	4.0%	1
10	Thames North	2,275	2,290	2,290	2,383	2,279	-0.5%	(104)
11	Southern	2,823	2,795	2,795	2,907	2,870	2.7%	(37)
12	Wales	678	666	666	693	698	4.8%	5
13	Scotland	577	577	577	600	574	-0.5%	(26)
		19,466	19,304	19,312	20,077	19,846	2.8%	(231)

The 2004 target of £20,077K was approved at General Assembly 2003



MISSION COUNCIL  
19 – 21 March 2004

D

Section O Advisory Group

**A proposed procedure where a Minister is unfit to exercise ministry**

Section O provides a procedure to discipline ministers who are held to be in breach of the promises which they made at ordination. In appropriate cases the names of ministers can be removed from the Roll under Section O. However, there may also be ministers who are regarded as unfit to exercise ministry but who fall outside Section O because, for medical, psychological or other similar or related reasons, their conduct cannot be considered 'blameworthy' or 'their fault' in the generally accepted sense.

At present the Church does not have any clear-cut process for handling such cases and this is giving rise to difficulties. At our last two meetings, we (i.e. the Advisory Group) have been considering this matter and recommend to Mission Council that procedures should be introduced which specifically address the problems created by ministers falling into any of the 'unfitness' categories mentioned above.

Although we have not yet done any detailed drafting work, it is clear that the proposal would involve not only the introduction of another set of procedures but also some changes both to the Structure and to the Section O Process. Despite this, we believe that the matter is of sufficient importance to justify the steps, which we are proposing.

Before we tackle the detailed work, we shall be glad to know whether, in principle, Mission Council will support our recommendation. If so, our intention would be to bring a first draft of the new proposals to Mission Council either in October or, at the latest, January 2005, with the final proposal going to Mission Council in March 2005 ready to be put before General Assembly in July 2005. It is stressed that, at this stage, this suggested programme is provisional and only as the detailed work proceeds will we will able to map out the timetable with any precision.

Hartley Oldham – Secretary

March 2004



MISSION COUNCIL  
19 – 21 March 2004

D1

## SECTION O ADVISORY GROUP - 2

The Advisory Group wishes to recommend that Mission Council presents to General Assembly 2004 the following resolutions regarding changes to the Section O Process and offers the following wording for the supporting paragraphs of the Mission Council Report to Assembly:

### **Resolution No. [ to be inserted ] - Ratification of Section O Part I changes**

**General Assembly agrees to ratify its decision of July 2003 to make the following changes to Part I of the Section O Process for Ministerial Discipline:**

*[ Here set out verbatim the changes contained in Resolution 9 of July 2003 ]*

### **Resolution No. [ to be inserted ] – New changes to Section O Part I**

General Assembly agrees to make the following changes to Paragraph 9 of Part I of the Section O Process for Ministerial Discipline:

The existing Paragraph 9 to become 9.1 and a new paragraph to be added as 9.2:

'9.2 As part of such consideration, the Assembly Commission or Appeals Commission shall be entitled to have regard to any conduct on the part of a Minister occurring prior to his/her ordination to the ministry which, in the Commission's view and when viewed in the light of Schedule E to the Basis of Union, would have prevented, or was likely to have prevented, him/her from becoming ordained, where such conduct was not disclosed by the Minister to those responsible for vetting his/her candidacy for ordination.'

*[ This resolution will be subject to the constitutional rule for reference back ]*

### **Resolution No. [ to be inserted ] – New changes to Section O Part II**

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

#### **Section A**

Change the heading of Section A from 'Introduction' to 'General' to avoid confusion with the Introduction to the whole of Section O, which is being re-instated.

#### **Paragraph B.6.2**

Alter the wording in the brackets at the end of the paragraph to '(see also Paragraphs B.8.2 and B.11)'.

### **Paragraph B.8.1**

At the end of the paragraph, add the following sentence: '(As to the contents of the written notice of suspension, see also Paragraph B.11)'.

### **Paragraph B.11**

Add a new B.11 as follows:

'The Notice of Suspension, whether issued under Paragraph B.6.2 or Paragraph B.8.1, shall inform the Minister that, in accordance with these Rules of Procedure, any conduct on his/her part which breaches or contravenes Paragraph 4 of Schedule E to the Basis of Union may be taken into account by the Assembly Commission in reaching its decision under Paragraph 10 of Part I.'

### **Paragraph B.12**

The existing B.11 to become B.12

### **Paragraph C.1.6**

Add a new Paragraph C.1.6 as follows:

'On receipt of the Minister's response under Paragraph C.1.2 and any documents which may accompany it, provide the Mandated Group with copies thereof.'

### **Paragraph C.1.7**

Add a new Paragraph C.1.7 as follows:

'In any case arising as a consequence of a Notice of Reference back, where comments are received from either of the parties as a result of the invitation contained in Paragraph C.1.3, provide the other party with copies thereof.'

### **Paragraph E.3.1**

Replace the existing Paragraph E.3.1 with the following:

'E.3.1 Unless the case is subject to compulsory adjournment under Paragraph E.7, the Secretary of the Assembly Commission shall as soon as practicable after the appointment of the Assembly Commission:

E.3.1.1 provide the Convener and the other members of the Assembly Commission with (i) copies of the Referral Notice, the Minister's response under Paragraph C.1.2 and any documents which may accompany it and

E.3.1.2 in the case of any Assembly Commission appointed as a consequence of a Notice of Reference back, provide the Convener and the other members thereof with copies of (i) the Notice of Reference back, (ii) the documents, statements and information delivered to the previous Assembly Commission in accordance with these Rules of Procedure and (iii) any comments received from the parties as a result of the invitation contained in Paragraph C.1.3 and

E.3.1.3 consult with the Convener and the other members of the Assembly Commission and, where possible, with the Parties as to a suitable venue, date and time for the Hearing and, having so consulted, decide thereupon.

*Suggested paragraphs for Mission Council report:*

Paragraph 9 of Part I states that cases must be judged by reference to the Basis of Union and in particular Paragraph 2 of Schedule E. This in turn refers to the responsibilities undertaken by ministers at ordination and sets out the criteria which they must apply in the exercise of their ministry. There is no reference, either in Schedule E or in Paragraph 9, to pre-ordination conduct which might, had it been disclosed during the candidating process, have led to a person's being rejected for ministry. As a result, should any such hitherto undisclosed conduct come to light subsequently, that conduct, however serious, could not under the present wording of Section O form the basis of a disciplinary case against the minister concerned. The resolution to add Paragraph 9.2 to Part I is designed to bring such a case within the ambit of Section O.

When first instigated, Section O carried an Introduction, which was later omitted when the Guidelines were prepared. However, the first part of the Introduction set the disciplinary process in its Biblical context and will be re-instated when the Manual is reprinted.

During 2003 the Advisory Group completed the series of Guidelines mentioned in last year's Report and these can be downloaded from the Church's website.

This year the Advisory Group is running a Training Day for members of the Commission Panel and a series of Training Days for the members of Mandated Groups which will cover all thirteen Synods.

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Grants and Loans Group  
Annual Report to Mission Council

1. INTRODUCTION

The Grants and Loans Group has been active for nearly four years and has successfully incorporated the work of the former Church Buildings Fund, AGOGAL and CWM Self-support Fund. During this period one major change has been the move from an across-the-board generous financial provision to that of a reduced level of grants given to Synods and Churches with the greatest need. Mission Council supported the revised policies of GLG at its meeting in October 2001. In February 2003 GLG decided to reduce its frequency of meetings to two per year in order to spread the allocation of its funds more equitably through the year. In 2004 Meetings will be held in May and December.

2. BUDGET PROVISION

For the year 2003 the budget allocation was approximately £96,000 from the Church Buildings Fund, which has been used to assist churches in the provision of facilities for the disabled and for feasibility studies. By the end of the year Grants of £130,130 and Loans of £125,000 were approved. For Mission Projects the budget allocation was £109,000 and by the end of the year some £108,007 grants were approved. The budget remainder of about £1000 was committed at the December meeting to a project starting in January, 2004. For 2004 the Mission Budget is set at £115,000 of which £103,133 is already committed to ongoing projects.

For the sake of simplicity GLG's Mission Projects have subsumed under the title "Mission Project Fund", the former separately identified projects for NEM (New Enterprise in Mission), MEUK (Mission Expenses in the UK), MES (Mission in Ecumenical Situations) and SA (Social Action).

3. GRANTS FOR FACILITIES FOR THE DISABLED

Applications continue to come in from churches and we anticipate that this will continue, albeit at a smaller number. This should enable GLG to consider other projects within the scope of its budget of about £96,000. (*see appendix for details for 2003*)

4. MISSION PROJECT FUND - Churches working for the community in partnership with local authorities, ecumenical partners and other charitable bodies.

During 2003 some four applications were received and approved. (*see appendix for details for 2003*)

GLG has been delighted with the reporting back from projects, which, as last year's report showed, covered a wide variety of activities. The reports are a great encouragement in that they reflect the initiative, determination, faith and commitment of people seeking to be "Church" in our evolving society.

5. CWM SELF-SUPPORT FUND

Though this source of funding is finished, there has been some "tidying up work" on the projects at Clapton Park, Providence, New Mills, and the HEARTH project at Horsley in the allocation of residual funding.

6. PUBLICITY is mainly achieved through the pages of Reform through its Community Project Awards and the telling of "good stories". Synod representatives are important advocates in their local areas in helping to advertise the existence and purpose of GLG.

7. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

GLG believes that the money it makes available from Central funds is of real benefit both to local churches and their communities. Without this assistance many projects could not be sustained or get off the ground. Here are some extracts from the reporting back of projects assisted by GLG:

*One project combines a variety of activities with links between the UK and Prague, a learning space Café, working with different faith communities, offering assistance to enable people to discover their physical and spiritual potential, partnership with the local Churches Together to engage with the community and understanding mission, spirituality and justice workshops, theological reflection on Peace Building.*

*Working with young people: "I guess the greatest challenge for us a Church is simply - Where do we want to go, in terms of youth and children's work? In a sense our task is similar to our walk up the Great Orme, it is difficult and demands effort! It would seem that there is a growing realisation amongst all churches that no longer can we simply allow youth and children's work to be an add-on to our programs. They need to be an integral part of our planning strategy and vision! We need a holistic approach in terms of looking at all ages within the Body of Christ. I believe we do need to be ever more creative and radical in our planning if we are to create services and meetings that do not alienate young adults, young people and children from attending."*

*Drop in Centres: "130 plus people passing through the doors of the centre each session - tenancy support for the vulnerable - furniture project - a Thank you from a friend: I know it's been a while since I last wrote, but I still like to keep in touch and to let you know how I am getting on. In the last couple of years since, with your help, I got into recovery, my life has turned around completely. I've been in my flat for a year now and I've really settled in. The furniture and equipment that the \*\*\* gave to me has been a major factor in this and I would like to thank you, yet again."*

The word "Partnership" is one which is integral to so much of what is being achieved in developing community life, or "Civic Society" is the jargon being used in the Regional Development Agencies. The place of the church and faith communities is recognised as essential to the growth and sustaining of community life. There appears to be a shift in thinking with the availability of significant grants to match the commitment of the church and others.

Angus W. Duncan  
Convener  
2003

APPENDIX

CHURCH BUILDINGS FUND

SUMMARY OF GRANTS AGREED FOR FACILITIES FOR THE DISABLED, FOR  
FEASIBILITY STUDIES AND FOR LOANS - January/December 2003

	<u>No. of Churches</u>	<u>(2002)</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>(2002)</u>
Disabled Facilities	27	(12)	£102,890	(£42,275)
Feasibility Studies	3	( 3)	2,240	(£ 2,043)
Special Grant #	1	-	25,000	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>31*</u>	<u>(15)</u>	<u>£130,130</u>	<u>(£44,318)</u>

\* Breakdown by Synod

- 4 Northern
- 6 North Western
- 4 Mersey
- 1 Yorkshire
- 6 East Midlands
- 1 West Midlands
- 4 Eastern
- 1 South Western
- 4 Scotland

# to assist with purchasing the freehold of the church and hall buildings from the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion

31

SUMMARY OF LOANS - January/December 2003

	<u>No. of Churches</u>	<u>(2002)</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>(2002)</u>
Building Loan )	1	(2)	£75,000	(£150,000)
Professional Fees Loan )		(2)	£25,000	(£ 50,000)
Special Loan #	1	-	£25,000	-
	<u>2 (West Midlands)</u>	<u>(2)</u>	<u>£125,000</u>	<u>(£200,000)</u>

each church had both types of loans

**SUMMARY OF 'MISSION' GRANTS – January/December 2003**

**£26,000** over five years to support The Bridge Centre at Boulevard, Nottingham (East Midlands)

**£12,000** over three years to support a part-time office and catering manager at New Brunswick, Bristol (South Western)

**£17,150** over five years to support Special Category Ministry at Boulevard, Nottingham (East Midlands)

**£20,000** over five years to support a Youth Worker at Shanklin, Isle of Wight (Wessex)

**CWM SELF-SUPPORT FUND**

**£100,000** previously allocated to a project in Wales which did not take place was successfully re-allocated to projects in Northern Synod (£30,000) and North Western Synod (£70,000).

## Youth and Children's Work Committee

### The Way Forward

#### Resolution (for General Assembly)

**General Assembly endorses the revised strategy, in response to Resolution 12 of the General Assembly in 2003, for the support of children's and youth ministry in local churches proposed by the Youth and Children's Work Committee.**

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#### Background:

General Assembly in 2003 passed a resolution (12), which

*"reaffirms its declaration that ' the prime venue for work with children and young people is the local church in community, within the context of a national strategy and the provision of supportive resources' (2002:41a), and to this end:*

- a) *calls upon the Youth and Children's Work Committee to use the model of the Ginger Group teams and work with other sin drawing up plans for the development of a team to become a resource to local churches, District/ Area Councils and Synods in the stimulation and support of youth and children's ministry, such a team to be appropriately managed and supported, and based in as central location or locations .....*

The Youth and Children's Work Committee welcomes this Resolution and has taken this opportunity to reconsider the strategy for supporting children's and youth ministry in local churches.

The Committee asks General Assembly to provide additional funding (£30,000) to enable it to implement its revised strategy.

The Committee has formed Task Groups:

#### Network and communications

- to re-establish the network of district and synod youth secretaries to complement the children's work network;
- develop an Assembly-wide data base of youth and children's groups and workers, with the aim of sharing resources and skills;
- have regular quality mailings, building on the success of *Urchin* and *Bridge*, including opportunities for the participation of young people.

#### Programme

A five-year plan to focus work under the following headings: Belonging, Worship, Discipleship, Evangelism, Action. All will be featured in every year, but with a particular emphasis on one. 'Action' is, of course, in every one.

### **Training**

- to ensure that all those working within the United Reformed Church with children and young people are adequately trained for the role they are fulfilling;
- monitor training offered at all levels, including training for ordination, TLS, CME and youth work training;
- support and advocate the YCWT programme.

### **Theological reflection**

- to create a forum for reflection on youth and children's work ministry, both within the United Reformed Church and ecumenically;
- offer opportunities for young people and their workers to explore faith development and spirituality.

### **Budget and finance**

- to ensure good stewardship of financial resources;
- to advocate future funding.

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### **Resolution (for Mission Council):**

**Mission Council agrees to the sending of *Good Practice 3* to all local churches.**

The Youth and Children's Work Committee seeks Mission Council's endorsement of the committee's view that it is the responsibility of the whole church to inform all churches of their responsibilities by providing them with *Good Practice 3*.

The reason for this is that *Good Practice -1* was sent out but not *Good Practice-2*, and much has changed since the first edition. The committee feels strongly that this should not be solely its responsibility since *Good Practice* is concerned with general health and safety issues and with vulnerable adults as well as children and young people.



## MISSION COUNCIL 19 – 21 March 2004

# G

### Life and Witness Committee

## Proposal to General Assembly that there be a development appeal for the Windermere Centre

### The Place ...

The Windermere Centre is the United Reformed Church's own residential training centre in the heart of the Lake District. Founded in 1984, it was to equip the whole Church to develop a faith and life relevant to its context. The Centre has assumed a pivotal place in the life of the United Reformed Church. It provides an imaginative and wide-ranging programme of approximately 100 courses and events annually. An average of 2000 members of the United Reformed Church from across England, Scotland and Wales, together with international visitors, come to the Centre each year to develop their life-in-mission, both as individuals and communities of faith. There are testimonies to the transforming moments that people, groups and local churches have experienced while at the Centre. It is a place where God is found to be very close.

### The Purpose ...

The Centre belongs within a bold vision – a vision in which the Church has a significant future in God's mission. It belongs within a vision of God who is active in the world and calling the Church to renewed discipleship. It belongs within a vision of a Church that is not dying but seeking to respond in new and faithful ways to that call.

The Windermere Centre Review Group confirmed that the Windermere Centre is the space within which the Church can develop its life-in-mission at every level. This is the place where there is co-ordinated, sustained and strategic exploration of how to move beyond a "survivalist" mindset and practice, reconnect with society, and manage the resultant changes. The Centre has the resources to enable the Church to:

- Understand and engage critically with contemporary society and culture
- Develop missiological thinking, theology, practice and structures
- Facilitate communication throughout the United Reformed Church and share thinking and best practice
- Encourage ecumenical thinking and engagement
- Be exposed to leading thinkers and practitioners in different fields
- Develop spirituality that will nourish and sustain life-in-mission
- Be refreshed, renewed, encouraged and revitalised
- Relax, play, pray and develop gifts and talents

### The People ...

The Centre belongs to the United Reformed Church – its people – and must meet their needs.

*"I never knew the Bible and God could be so exciting!"* (Church weekend)

*"This has changed my theology!"* (Stewardship Advocate)

*"We have come back again because we need to develop further what we started as a result of being here last year. Our church hasn't been the same since."* (Church mission audit)

*"The peace and stillness; the beauty of the gardens and the mountains – just what I needed! I feel like a new person!"* (Easter Retreat)

*"I always thought theology was complicated and boring. You've taught me why it matters – and how exciting God can be!"* ('The Minister as Theologian' POET course)

***"The idea that we only have to be faithful and that the future of the Church is God's problem is immensely liberating. An awful burden has been lifted and I feel I can begin to be courageous and experimental."*** ('Theology of the United Reformed Church')

***"The fellowship and nightly prayer have been amazing! I have never felt so close to God. I am not the same person who came here."*** (Advent Retreat)

## **The Problem ...**

The Conference Room is too small to accommodate more than 20 people in comfort, or for anything other than lecture-style layout; its size and shape frequently limits effective course work because leaders are prevented from using café-style, free seating or other layouts with more than a dozen or so people.

The present lounge is too small to accommodate more than 15 people. It is useful as a meeting room, but there is no place for 33 guests to relax and socialise as a group.

The present library is housed in a number of shelves scattered along the length of the first floor corridor. The presence of books in a corridor designated as a fire escape route falls foul of the latest fire safety regulations. There is no space to develop the library storage or usage area any further, and yet the Centre continues to expand and enhance its reference library for the use of guests. There is a recognised need for a collection that houses all United Reformed Church publications, papers and a mission collection that can be used by ministers on sabbatical studies and more occasional mission research.

## **The Proposal ...**

Stringent planning constraints mean that the present Centre buildings cannot be developed to solve the problem.

However, Carver United Reformed Church has a hall, kitchen and office complex adjoining the church, which they are prepared to lease to the denomination in the same way as they currently do the Windermere Centre. By retaining eating, sleeping and socialising in the Centre, and moving all conference activity to the Carver hall complex, we will be able to:

- Construct a purpose-built conference room above the church hall, seating 40 people in the full variety of layouts and combinations.
- Install an adjoining library with on-line facilities, housing United Reformed Church publications and papers and a mission collection.
- Create a Director's office and 2 smaller meeting rooms.
- Link the hall complex with the church building via an open-plan building with reception, refreshment and break-out facilities, together with a bookshop.
- Have access to the remodelled church building for prayers and larger public meetings associated with the Centre's programme.
- Link the new conference centre to the Centre building via an enclosed walkway.
- Develop the basement/cellar area into a storage and recreation area, especially suitable for young people. Install a hot-desking office for community use.
- Refurbish the church hall. The church hall and meeting rooms will be available for church and community use and the rental income will be used to offset costs.
- Extend the present conference room to provide a proper lounge for larger groups to relax and socialise in comfort and housing the Centre bar.



## The Price ...

Planning approval has been received for the proposals. Building will be able to proceed, subject to funding. With General Assembly's approval, we will launch a Church-wide appeal to raise the money. It is important to note that General Assembly is *not* being asked to find the money from within the budget; rather, the appeal will be made to individuals, local churches and the various councils of the Church, as well as to outside funding bodies.

The project has been costed by Telford Hart Associates, a local firm of Quantity Surveyors with a proven track record in project management. The costs that appear here are based on present prices and allow for the reasonable duration of the project. Should the project be significantly delayed, prices will rise accordingly.

<b>Windermere Centre Phase 1</b>	Make all first and second floor accommodation en-suite; convert existing communal bath and toilet facilities into single, en-suite bedroom accommodation; extend existing office; install disabled public toilets.	<b>£ 131,000*</b>
<b>Windermere Centre Phase 2</b>	Convert existing lounge into 2 single en-suite rooms; convert Director's Office into single en-suite room; reduce existing ground-floor rooms from 4 to 2 fully-equipped disabled rooms; provide egress to link corridor; convert existing Conference Room into lounge with bar; build extension to lounge.	<b>£ 149,000</b>
<b>Integral work to Carver Church</b>	Remove existing pews, pulpit and platform; replace with chairs and moveable preaching platform; install new sound and heating system and lighting desk.	<b>£ 60,500*</b>
<b>Conference Centre</b>	Link existing church and halls with open plan reception, bookshop, refreshment & entrance building; construct new Conference Room and library above existing hall; construct office and meeting rooms; install new toilet facilities; install lift from basement to first floor; modify existing cellar.	<b>£ 645,000</b>
<b>Link corridor</b>	Link Centre and conference facilities via a covered walkway; install a wheelchair lift in Centre.	<b>£ 196,000</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>		<b>£1 181,500</b>
<b>Less money raised*</b>		<b>£ 191,500</b>
<b><u>APPEAL TOTAL</u></b>		<b><u>£ 990,000</u></b>

## The Plan ...

An appeal committee, chaired by [Lady Bloggs-Doorway] is responsible for raising money. There are 3 sources of funding:

- The United Reformed Church – individuals, local churches, districts and synods
- Community and specially designated funding for the public buildings
- Carver Church, which is redeveloping their sanctuary to be a more flexible worship space and more suitable for use by the wider community and the Centre. The Carver-funded development will facilitate the total development of the Conference Centre.

The development will be phased so as to minimise disruption to the Centre's programme. The final phase of the building will include the conversion of the present lounge into 2 single bedrooms and the Conference Room into the Centre's lounge. This will ensure that the Centre does not have to close in order to complete the building.

## FAQs

- 1. Why does the Centre want to expand at present? Why don't we carry on as we are for the present and see what happens in the next 5 years or so?**

*We are not expanding. There are no plans to increase the numbers of people the Centre caters for. This plan provides what is necessary to do what the Church has set up the Centre for and affirmed in the recent Windermere Centre Review. At present, we cannot do that properly because the facilities are inadequate. We are losing trade because people are going more and more to places that can provide the accommodation and conference facilities that they desire. That trend will only increase during the next 5 years.*
- 2. This is a time of cutting back. Surely it makes no sense to be spending such sums of money?**

*This is a time for reassessing our priorities. We need to spend money strategically in order to achieve our vision for ourselves as a Church. The Vision Statement envisions a Church that is "vibrant and sustainable" within the next 10 years. The Centre exists to facilitate that; in addition, the Centre itself needs to be vibrant and sustainable.*
- 3. The legal arrangements could be very complicated. Who will own the buildings?**

*The United Reformed Church will lease the buildings from Carver Church under the same legal arrangements as it does the Centre (which used to be the Carver manse). The Church will effectively "own", develop and maintain the buildings. Carver will lease back the hall from the Centre and the Centre will receive all income from rental of the rooms to the Windermere community.*
- 4. Does this mean you are effectively asking the wider United Reformed Church to fund a local church development?**

*No. The opposite is the case. Carver is funding the redevelopment and refurbishment of their church building, but doing so as a contribution to the overall plan. They have already contributed nearly £61 000 to the project and are raising further funds towards it.*
- 5. Is this a sound investment?**

*Yes. The capital value of the buildings – Centre and Church – increases by more than the money spent. It not only increases their resale value, but their desirability as a saleable property. And property is always at a premium in this area.*
- 6. The sort of estimates you provide are usually hopelessly optimistic, both in terms of time and expense. How can we be sure these will not spiral?**

*We have been scrupulous about costing this as accurately as possible. Telford Hart and the architect, Clifford Patten (of Lewis Patten Chartered Architects), have proven track records in foreseeing all eventualities and in minimising actual costs. The first phase of the Centre development, estimated at £131 000, was achieved for £120 000 – on time and within budget.*
- 7. You talk of funding from outside the Church. How much of the project cost do you expect to have to raise from within the Church?**

*We don't know. Our research indicates that there is significant money potentially available from government, European and community sources. This is important because we see the provision of a suite of buildings suitable for community use as part of the Church's mission locally.*
- 8. What happens if you can't raise all the money?**

*We will have to make choices about how much of the project can be achieved. You will see that it is phased. The phasing allows us to make these judgments.*
- 9. What if General Assembly refuses the request to launch the appeal?**

*The Centre exists to serve the Church, not vice-versa. We have made this proposal in order to implement the recommendations of the Review Group and carry out the role that General Assembly 2003 agreed. This is what makes the development necessary. If General Assembly does not want to see this development, we will carry on offering imaginative, high quality training and development within the current limitations, but the Church needs to recognise that we will not be able to provide what it has asked of the Centre as the United Reformed Church looks towards the next ten years of its life.*

## Appendices

Plans and drawings  
Current programme  
Recommendations of the Review Group



MISSION COUNCIL  
19 – 21 March 2004

H

## Ecclesiastical Exemption

Ecclesiastical Exemption is exemption from the requirement to obtain secular listed building consent or conservation area consent from a local planning authority in respect of works to church buildings.

When the issue of Ecclesiastical Exemption first arose in the early 1990's it was debated in the Assembly Executive Committee (the precursor of Mission Council) and decided that the United Reformed Church, as a mainstream denomination, should seek to retain the exemption by operating a 'self-regulatory' system approved by the Department of the Environment (as it then was). A small group was appointed to draft a procedure document and to negotiate this with the Department. This having been done, two members of that group, Hartley Oldham (formerly the United Reformed Church's Legal Adviser) and Tegid Peregrine, have continued overseeing the conduct of these procedures and liaising with the government department.

The procedure itself is operated by synods, each of which has appointed a Listed Buildings Advisory Committee (LBAC). When a local church wishes to carry out work on a church building which is either listed or in a conservation area, instead of applying to the local planning authority for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent, its application is dealt with through the Church's system. The role of the LBAC within that system is to examine applications from local churches and to advise the Synod Property Committee (SPC), which makes its final decision.

Members of all the Synod LBACs and SPCs meet twice a year at Church House. These meetings are chaired by Hartley Oldham, with Tegid Peregrine acting as secretary. The meeting provides a forum for discussion and ensures that synods are kept up-to-date with new information.

Tribute should be paid to the immense amount of time and expertise which is being placed unstintingly at the disposal of local churches and synods by the members of the Synod LBACs. The discovery of such a wealth of talent has been one of the unexpected bonuses of having to operate our own system.

The present system was only introduced after long and painstaking negotiations, and the Department made it clear that the Government would insist upon regular reviews of the Exemption. Hartley Oldham and Tegid Peregrine were involved in the first of these reviews which was undertaken five years ago by Professor John Newman. He concluded his review by saying that he was satisfied with the Church's performance in the first three years of the new system.

A second review is now in progress. Last year the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) requested an interim report with all the relevant statistics. After consultation with the synods, the information was provided.

There has been concern that the Department would use the review to initiate major changes to the Exemption. This would raise an important issue for the Church. When first negotiating with the Department, our central argument (along with those representing the other

denominations) for maintaining Exemption was the fundamental right of freedom of worship and consequently the right to 'order' the worship building so as to achieve that objective without interference from the secular authorities.

That principle was accepted and is expressed in the opening paragraph of the United Reformed Church's procedure document. No such right exists to protect the buildings of those Churches which lost the Exemption, nor the buildings of other faiths.

As part of the current review, the DCMS has said that it wishes to meet representatives of each of the exempt denominations. Hartley Oldham and Tegid Peregrine are prepared to attend any such meetings to represent the United Reformed Church. The Churches Main Committee (CMC) also plays an important role in co-ordinating the position of all the exempt churches. If, in discussions with the DCMS, Exemption is under serious threat, the CMC is likely to set up a joint meeting for representatives of the exempt denominations to meet DCMS to make as strong a case as possible for the continuation of the Exemption in its current form.

In the meantime, it would be helpful to clarify the precise status of Hartley Oldham and Tegid Peregrine as they work on the Church's behalf. The joint meetings of the LBAC and SPC representatives are informal (rather like the meetings of the Provincial Legal and Trust Officers - PLATO), but unlike PLATO there is a national or central element in the Ecclesiastical Exemption procedure. Although each of the synods had to pass its own resolution in order to operate it, every synod has to apply the same set of rules, contained in our procedure document. This has been sanctioned by Government regulations, as has the Church's authority to operate the Exemption.

The periodic reviews of the system and the negotiations with the Department have to be dealt with at national rather than synod level, and our representatives are recognised as representing the whole Church. They are conscious, however that there is no central committee to whom they can report, and they seek to have their status and line of accountability clarified. Although the subject matter of this work centres on church buildings, it has a wider aspect in the worship and mission of the local church, which is what makes the Exemption worth preserving. It seems appropriate, therefore, that Mission Council should retain oversight of those involved in its implementation.

The Department has recently produced a consultation paper which can be accessed on the DCMS website: [www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk) . Whilst the exemption itself is not under threat, the Government intends to tighten the procedure under which the exempt denominations operate. With this in mind the DCMS is proposing that all the exempt denominations should enter into "high-level management agreements". There is a further proposal that English Heritage should act both as the body which validates the agreements and as the body which monitors the performance of the denominations under those agreements.

The expression "high-level management agreements" is not defined in the Consultation Paper and will obviously depend very much on the structures of the individual Churches. However, these words indicate that, whilst the practical working of the procedures will still be under the control of the Synods through their Listed Buildings and Property Committees, the DCMS will require one management agreement to be signed on behalf of the Church centrally.

The consultation process will end on 31 May 2004 by which time the Church will need to have submitted its response to the Consultative Paper. Hartley Oldham and Tegid Peregrine will be involved in the negotiations and will prepare the response to the Consultation Paper on behalf of the Church. Before lodging it with the DCMS, our representatives suggest that they

submit it for approval to, say, the Officers of Assembly and/or any other persons whom Mission Council might wish to suggest.

**The issues which Mission Council now need to consider are:**

- 1. The appropriateness of Mission Council as the body which authorises and oversees the work of those representing the United Reformed Church in negotiating and maintaining its Exemption status.**
- 2. Does Mission Council support and encourage the work which Hartley Oldham and Tegid Peregrine are doing in relation to the present consultation?**
- 3. Does Mission Council agree with this report's suggestions (i) as to the preparation and submission of the Church's response to the Consultation Paper and (ii) as to the other steps which might follow from the Consultation (e.g. the completion of a high-level management agreement)?**
- 4. What procedures need to be put in place to cover future reporting to Mission Council ( or other committee- depending on the answer to 1 above)?**

Hartley Oldham  
Chairman  
Synod Listed Buildings Advisory Group

Ministries Committee

**EQUIPPING THE SAINTS**  
**CHANGING MINISTRY FOR THE CHALLENGE OF MISSION**  
**Future Patterns of Ministries Report**

**CONTENTS**

- 1 Summary: What's this all about?
  - 2 Challenging context
  - 3 Meeting the challenge: from disciples to apostles
  - 4 Meeting the challenge: the whole church working together
  - 5 Meeting the challenge: set apart ministries
  - 6 Meeting the challenge: further implications
  - 7 Conclusion, recommendations and resolution: What next?
- Appendix I Background: terms of reference, working party and previous work.  
Appendix II Feedback: responses to the interim report to Assembly 2002.  
Appendix III References: details of important reference documents.

**1 SUMMARY: WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?**

- 1.1 A fast changing society provides a challenging context (section 2) for the Church's mission. In our interim report to the 2002 Assembly, we suggested that the Church's response would need to recapture a sense of the ministry of the whole people of God (section 4), and our post-bag has supported this view. One way of viewing this key concept is to think of making people more active members of the Church focused outwards into the world - from disciples to apostles (section 3). We challenge every local church to think afresh about its support of its members when they are dispersed in their daily living (sub-section 4.4).
- 1.2 Fortunately our heritage provides many riches to help us understand and implement ministry that is not restricted to the clergy. We believe that the ministry of the Elders (sub-section 5.3) is central in this and, indeed, that it is a precious gift the United Reformed Church has to offer its ecumenical partners. The Church needs to be more careful and focused in the way it appoints, develops and uses Elders. It also needs to be clearer about the role of Local Church Leaders within the Eldership (sub-section 5.4).
- 1.3 Ministers of the Word and Sacraments (sub-section 5.7) are a valuable and scarce resource that the Church must use more effectively. As Elders become more confident in their leadership of local churches, the Church can allow itself to think differently about the deployment of Ministers. Spreading Ministers ever more thinly cannot possibly be the best mission strategy. We believe that the assumption that every congregation should have a slice of its own Minister is unsustainable, but every congregation does need effective leadership. The Church needs to be much more imaginative in its development of flexible collaborative leadership patterns (sub-section 5.8).

- 1.4 If the Church is to develop more diverse leadership patterns then it needs more flexible arrangements for the training, funding and deployment of Ministers and other church leaders (sub-section 5.9).
- 1.5 More diverse leadership patterns also make it desirable and necessary that the Church should think again about presidency at the sacraments (sub-section 5.11).
- 1.6 In presenting this report we know that the changes it recommends cannot happen instantly, that some of them require further work, and that they do not address other major issues for the Church (section 6). But we believe that they would contribute to Changing Ministry for the Challenge of Mission.

## **2 CHALLENGING CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Background and terms of reference**

- 2.1.1 Assembly 2002 received an interim report from the working party on Future Patterns of Ministries. It asked Ministries Committee to present a further report to Assembly 2004. This second report from the Future Patterns of Ministries working party is the response to that request. Appendix I provides more information on the terms of reference of the working party, its membership, its method of working and the previous work on which this report is built.

### **2.2 The changing world in which we live**

- 2.2.1 The United Kingdom today is a place where most people have no involvement in and no real contact with organised religion. Indeed, for most people being committed members of any institution (in the traditional understanding of 'committed') is something they do not want to do or to be. Of those who are active in the practice of their faith, an increasing proportion are non-Christian. Many of those who say, when asked, that they are Christian choose not to take part in the activities and structures of the Church as an institution.
- 2.2.2 Even for those who are committed members of the Church, the congregation to which they belong is but one of many foci in their increasingly complex lives. This is the case, for example, for parents with young families and for people with busy and stressful jobs / roles outside the Church. When the Church should be supporting such people it is too often increasing the pressure on them by making unrealistic demands on their time and energy in support of 'in church' activities.
- 2.2.3 Many older church members remember when their local church was not only the centre of their life but also the main centre of the life of their community. This was the situation for a relatively short period, in historical terms. There are very few places where this is now the case. There are many more places where the local church behaves as if this is the case - continuing with activities that are not what local people now want or need; struggling to maintain work that would now be done better by others or collaboratively with others in the community; hoping that people who have no real or recent experience of Church will come into their church as it is rather than looking for new ways of reaching out to those beyond its walls. It is almost a century since William Temple reminded the Church that it is the one institution that exists primarily for the benefit of its non-members.
- 2.2.4 Yet, surveys repeatedly tell us that people are as spiritually aware as ever. And our eyes and ears tell us that the mission imperative is as urgent today as ever it was. The cries for justice, healing and reconciliation can be heard all around us. The isolation caused by the fragmentation and individualisation of society leaves people

desperate for somewhere to belong, somewhere to share their unanswerable questions, somewhere they can feel safe and loved. The local church ought to provide such a place: a worshipping community that enables people to be and to live, where people are drawn into a relationship with the transcendent; a living community that seeks to be a sign, foretaste and instrument of God's kingdom.

- 2.2.5 A current Government consultation is looking at the application of employment rights to office holders, including ministers of religion. Legislation may follow. There are other Government and Charity Commission initiatives which could have a significant impact on the Church, its ministers and other staff. The Church must remain alert to such developments, influence them when it can and respond to them when it must, but we do not speculate on them further in this report.

### **2.3 Ministry is for mission - God's unchanging mission to the world**

- 2.3.1 Talk of the mission of the Church, whether local or universal, is shorthand that can be misleading. The Church must keep reminding itself that mission is God's activity in which it is called to participate. The context of God's mission is not only the Church but is primarily the world. Ministry in all its forms should be enabling and enacting this participation in God's mission.

- 2.3.2 The *Basis of Union* (paragraph 11) states that the purpose of the United Reformed Church is

to make its life a continual offering of itself and the world to God in adoration and worship through Jesus Christ;

to receive and express the renewing life of the Holy Spirit in each place and in its total fellowship, and there to declare the reconciling and saving power of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;

to live out, in joyful and sacrificial service to all in their various physical and spiritual needs, that ministry of caring, forgiving and healing love which Jesus Christ brought to all whom he met;

and to bear witness to Christ's rule over the nations in all the variety of their organised life.

- 2.3.3 The five marks of mission adopted by the United Reformed Church, as well as by most of its ecumenical partners, are

to proclaim the good news of the kingdom

to teach, baptise and nurture new believers

to respond to human need by loving service

to seek to transform unjust structures of society

to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

- 2.3.4 Taking these two statements together, it is clear that the Church exists for mission, the whole life of God's people is for mission, and ministry is for mission, because mission is God's activity. In order to fulfil their part in this activity, the people of God are



endowed with a rich variety of gifts that enable all the members of the Church to make their unique individual contributions to the common life and witness of the Church in the course of their daily living. All these gifts should be valued equally within the fellowship of the Church. It is as these gifts are used for the common good under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that the members of the Church become the whole people of God, Christ's body in the world.

2.3.5 God's mission is unchanging but the context is always changing. The *Basis of Union* and the *Growing Up* document, based on the five marks of mission, do not present a complete account of what God's mission is or how the Church is to be engaged in that mission. These are complex questions that will, to some extent, have different answers in each place and in every time.

## 2.4 Changes in the United Reformed Church since the Patterns of Ministry Report in 1995

2.4.1 The nature and effectiveness of ministry has always been a matter of concern, debate and development in the United Reformed Church and in its antecedent traditions. Assembly is not the only council of the Church, but its reports and resolutions give a flavour of what has been happening.

2.4.2 In 1995, Assembly received the *Patterns of Ministry* Report. That report, like this one, focussed on the need for more effective missionary engagement as the proper basis for ministerial deployment. There was agreement on many things including there being a single order of Ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the United Reformed Church, embracing stipendiary and non-stipendiary service. Proposals were not accepted for the appointment of Moderating Elders in every congregation; for the development of Local Ministers; or for the renaming of lay preachers. Further work was requested on a statement on the *Theology of Ministry*. This was prepared by the Doctrine Prayer and Worship Committee and accepted by Mission Council in 1997 as a resource document of the Church. This statement is available on the Church's website.

2.4.3 In 1998, Assembly agreed on guidelines for appointing Local Church Leaders and how they might be recognised, affirmed and developed. Synods, District Councils and local churches were encouraged to experiment. The report to Assembly spoke of every church member having a ministry to exercise within the ministry of the whole people, and of how the Church is enriched as more members are enabled to use their gifts in a creative and satisfying way. There are now some very different models of Local Church Leadership operating in a number of the Synods. In other Synods, there is apparently no opportunity to offer this form of service.

2.4.4 In 1999, Assembly adopted the *Growing Up* document as the mission strategy of the Church, based on the five marks of mission. This strategy was to be implemented from 1999 to 2001, recognising that any plan is time limited. The effect of this document has been, rightly, to place mission at the centre of recent thinking about and planning of the life and work of the Church including, and perhaps especially, the life and work of local congregations in their communities. It follows that mission must also be at the centre of any planning for ministry.

2.4.5 In 2001, Assembly passed an enabling resolution concerning the grouping of churches, which followed on from the report on this subject distributed to churches in May 2000. An increasing proportion of congregations belong to denominational or ecumenical groupings. The 2001 report defined what it meant by 'group' and 'joint pastorate', though this did not mean that all existing groups or joint pastorates were

defined in this way. Various experiments have been introduced in different Synods, including 'clusters' and 'local mission partnerships'. One of the few things all these models have in common is one or more ordained Ministers often with other church leaders working together with several local churches. The precise relationship of Minister to congregation varies widely. An ever-present question about such structures is to what extent they continue to be effective: are they driven by maintenance issues or mission priorities?

2.4.6 Ministerial deployment is always a 'hot' topic and has recently been the focus of a separate working group. Throughout the life of the United Reformed Church the proportion of its members that are serving Ministers has been growing. In this sense, to talk of a current shortage of Ministers is factually inaccurate as well as unhelpful. However, whilst membership numbers have reduced substantially the number of local churches has hardly reduced at all. The United Reformed Church is mainly made up of small congregations. The real strain on ministerial deployment and on the individual Ministers is caused by expecting those people to provide effective ministry to all these congregations and the communities in which they are set. Serious questions have to be asked about whether continuing with this approach is really serving the needs of God's mission and also about what this is doing to the Ministers themselves. Ministerial recruitment is a related matter and is a real concern for the Church as it seeks to replace Ministers who are retiring or leaving the ministry from a shrinking pool of potential candidates. The number of lay preachers is likely to reduce significantly over the medium term because of the age profile of those currently serving. It is a challenge for every member of the Church to identify people who might serve in these ways and encourage them to put themselves forward.

2.4.7 Finance is also an ever-present issue. Each year, Assembly approves a budget for the following year. However, responsibility for meeting that budget rests with the church members. Over 85% of the central budget is spent on stipendiary Ministers, Church Related Community Workers, and training. Because, over a number of years, basic stipends have been increased above inflation and the ratio of Minister numbers to membership numbers has increased, there has been a 'double whammy' on the budgets of congregations and individual church members. It can be argued that the challenge of this growing cost of ministry is one that church members should be ready to meet but there is growing evidence of their unwillingness to do so. Any strategy for future patterns of ministries must ensure that the Church makes best use of its financial as well as its human resources.

2.4.8 The policy of the United Reformed Church regarding presidency at the sacraments has changed little. There is wide diversity of practice to meet the perceived needs of local congregations and this practice is not always in line with the Church's stated policy.

2.4.9 In the autumn of 2002, Mission Council launched a thorough and radical review of the life of the United Reformed Church, now under the banner of 'Catch the Vision for God's tomorrow'. Clearly, in relation to matters of ministry our concerns overlap with those of the Review Group.

## 2.5 Responses received to the 2002 Future Patterns of Ministries interim report

2.5.1 We are most grateful to those who responded in writing to the questions posed at the end of the 2002 report. We have also talked with many others who have engaged with the material that was sent to them. Appendix II contains more details of the responses received from individuals, local churches, Districts and Synods.

2.5.2 The 2002 report, and the questions that were circulated for consideration and feedback, focussed mainly on the 'ministry of the whole people of God' or, more precisely, on the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ 'in and through the Church, the whole people of God' (*Basis of Union*, paragraph 19). The responses indicated widespread acceptance of the concept of the ministry of the whole people of God and of our shared responsibility to make this as effective as possible. However, there was considerable variation in understanding of what this might mean in practice and of what terms like 'ministry' mean. Many respondents were concerned to emphasise the importance of Ministers and leadership, alongside their commitment to the ministry of the whole people.

2.5.3 All the feedback received has been carefully considered and has informed our subsequent work, including the contents of this report.

## 2.6 The challenge of language - some definitions

### 2.6.1 Coping with variation

It is clearly important to be as precise as possible with the language that we use. It is also necessary to acknowledge the wide variety of interpretations of many words that are in common use among us including 'minister', 'ministry', 'ministries', 'vocation' and 'discipleship' and that words can have different meanings in different contexts.

The two documents that we have considered most important in this context are the *Basis of Union* and *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Details of these documents and others are listed in Appendix III.

### 2.6.2 The ministry of the whole people of God

The section of the *Basis of Union* on ministry proceeds from the ministry of Jesus Christ through the ministry of the whole people of God to particular set apart ministries. It begins with (paragraph 19) 'The Lord Jesus Christ continues his ministry in and through the Church, the whole people of God called and committed to his service and equipped by him for it'. It goes on to say 'This service is given ... by obedient discipleship in the whole of daily life'. We endorse this understanding and have based our work upon it.

The first section of the chapter on ministry in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* is headed 'The calling of the whole people of God'. It includes (section I paragraph 5) 'The Holy Spirit bestows on the community diverse and complementary gifts. These are for the common good of the whole people and are manifested in acts of service within the community and to the world. ... All members are called to discover, with the help of the community, the gifts they have received and to use them for the building up of the Church and the service of the world to which the Church is sent.'

Both documents set ministry in the context of the world, the place where the people of God spend their daily lives – the 'dispersed mode' of being the Church described in sub-section 4.3 below.

### 2.6.3 Ministers and ministries

The *Basis of Union* continues with (paragraph 20) 'For the equipment of his people for this total ministry the Lord Jesus Christ gives particular gifts for particular ministries and calls some of his servants to exercise them in offices duly recognised within his

Church'. It then goes on to describe the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, the ministry of Church Related Community Workers and the ministry of Elders.

What distinguishes Ministers, Church Related Community Workers and Elders is not that they are more involved than anyone else in the ministry of the whole people of God but that their ministries are exercised in offices recognised by the Church.

*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* defines its use of the term 'ministry' as meaning (section II paragraph 7b) 'in its broadest sense the service to which the whole people of God is called, whether as individuals, as a local community, or as the universal church. Ministry or ministries can also denote the particular institutional forms which this service may take.' It goes on (paragraph 7c) 'The term ordained ministry refers to persons who have received a charism [gifts bestowed by the Holy Spirit] and whom the Church appoints for service by ordination and the laying on of hands.' In relation to the ordained ministry, it says (section II paragraph 8) 'In order to fulfil its mission, the Church needs persons who are publicly and continually responsible for pointing to its fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ and thereby provide a focus for its unity.'

#### 2.6.4 Vocation and discipleship

To describe every member of the Church as having a particular ministry to exercise or as participating in the ministry of the whole people of God is not the same as saying that every member is a Minister. To do this would be to render the term 'Minister', which has an established and well understood meaning within and beyond the Church, completely redundant.

For this reason, some would prefer to talk about the discipleship or vocation of church members rather than the ministry of the whole people of God. This may be just a difference of terminology to describe the same thing. However, we are concerned to emphasise that the ministry of the whole people of God requires the active participation of every church member, and that it relates to every aspect of their lives not just when they are together in church. The particular ministries of individuals should be understood as being within the context of the ministry of the whole people of God, out of which they emerge.

### 3 MEETING THE CHALLENGE: FROM DISCIPLES TO APOSTLES

3.1 The gospels in the New Testament present a picture of a small group of people becoming disciples of Jesus – his followers – literally, one might say, as they followed in his wake as Jesus strode towards his destiny in Jerusalem. The rest of the New Testament shows us how that small group of people was transformed by the Easter / Pentecost experience. They were still disciples but now they were empowered to go, empowered to preach teach and baptise, empowered to be witnesses. They became apostles.

#### 3.2 A picture of the Church

Pictures are dangerous because analogies are always imperfect, but a simple diagram has helped our thinking. A moving picture is more effective than a static diagram, as we hope to demonstrate at Assembly and on the Church's web-site.

**Shade One**

The area within the outer circle represents the whole membership of the Church, all those who to some degree seek to be disciples.

### **Shade Two**

The area within the intermediate circle represents those members who are living as apostles (what some might call the apostolate), actively engaged in the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ through his Church.

### **Shade Three**

The area within the inner circle represents people recognised and set apart by the Church to exercise particular ministries.

#### **Two diagrams to be added:**

One, headed 'Maintenance', of three concentric circles with the intermediate circle small and arrows pointing towards the centre.

One, headed 'Mission', of three concentric circles with the intermediate circle large and arrows pointing outwards.

- 3.3 There is a danger that congregations can become increasingly passive groups of people looking more and more to their Ministers and / or the Elders to do the work of the Church. Then, the intermediate circle shrinks. This can happen in congregations of any size and circumstance. The reasons for it are complex and not always the same. It might be that a congregation has become over-dependent on a few people making it vulnerable to changes in their availability or involvement; or that its commendable faithfulness leads to misplaced determination to preserve activities and buildings that have outlived their usefulness rather than to an openness to the needs of God's mission today. Whatever the reasons, the effect is that the congregation becomes inward focused. In the diagram, the intermediate circle becomes hardly larger than the inner circle and ministry becomes largely what the Ministers and a small number of others do.
- 3.4 The challenge is to expand the intermediate circle as more people grow in their understanding of discipleship into a commitment to be witnesses in word and action. The work of ministry is then more fully shared by the whole Church. Those in set apart ministries are not left to shoulder impossible expectations and workloads. There is time and energy for the Church to address more challenges than just the challenge to survive.
- 3.5 If the Church remembers that it is part of the world and it is that world, beyond the outer circle, that is the main place of God's mission then the Church's eyes will be automatically focussed outwards rather than inwards. The Church's recognised ministries will become the means by which all the gifts of all the people are engaged in the ministry of the whole people of God. The intermediate circle will not just expand towards the outer circle but the energy will overflow beyond it into the world. We see this as a central objective for the Church and for every one of its congregations.

## **4 MEETING THE CHALLENGE: THE CHURCH – THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD IN MINISTRY TOGETHER**

### **4.1 Corporate not personal**

- 4.1.1 It is our understanding of ministry that it is a corporate activity of the Church, the whole people of God. However, this does not mean that it is just about what the people do when they are together. It does mean that all legitimate ministry should be

of the people of God, specifically of a worshipping Christian community, owned, affirmed and supported by them, even when it is exercised by an individual on their behalf.

## 4.2 'Laos' means everybody

4.2.1 In the New Testament, 'laos' means people and the 'laos of God' are the people of God, the Church, with different and complementary gifts and ministries but sharing one common vocation to be the people of God's new creation. In law and medicine it is customary to use the term 'lay' to describe people who are not professionally qualified. In some parts of the Church this usage is adopted and those who are not ministers or priests are described as 'lay' or 'the laity'. This can easily lead to a view of these 'lay' people not only as untrained but also as amateurish in their discipleship with the ministers seen not only as learned but also as a higher grade of Christian. Although the Churches of the Reformed tradition largely rejected this usage within the Church, it is sadly not wholly absent in thought or practice. The ministry of the whole people of God should mean the ministry in which every member is called to be engaged in every aspect of their lives, including those called to ministries set apart by the Church.

## 4.3 Gathered and dispersed

- 4.3.1 The United Reformed Church believes in the priesthood of all believers. The emphasis is on the 'all', the community of the baptised. Appendix B of the *Patterns of Ministry* report quoted the following from *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (commentary on section II paragraph 17). 'The priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of the baptised have in their respective ways the function of sacrifice and intercession. As Christ has offered himself, Christians offer their whole being "as a living sacrifice". As Christ intercedes before the Father, Christians intercede for the Church and the salvation of the world. Nevertheless the differences between these two kinds of priesthood cannot be overlooked. Whilst Christ offered himself as a unique sacrifice once for all for the salvation of the world, believers need to continually receive as a gift of God that which Christ has done for them.'
- 4.3.2 It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the life and witness of the gathered Christian community. However, it has been said already (paragraph 2.2.2) that even for those who are committed members of local churches the life and work of the gathered community is one commitment among many, and most of their time is spent elsewhere. More importantly, most encounters of church members with other people do not take place inside church buildings doing churchy things. Most of the opportunities to work for God's justice, healing and reconciliation are not to be found inside the Church. The context of God's mission is not only the Church but primarily the world.
- 4.3.3 The emphasis of the life and witness of each congregation ought to be much more on when its members are dispersed and less on when they are gathered, even if this means giving up some of its in-church activities. If a congregation is to be a Christian community that is truly a sign, foretaste and instrument of God's Kingdom then its life as a community must embrace what its members do when they are apart at least as much as it embraces what they do when they are together. These are both aspects of what it means to be 'church in community'.
- 4.3.4 It is vital that this embracing of the life of the individual in the life of the whole, and of the ministry of the individual in the ministry of the whole, includes every person whatever their age or circumstances.

#### **4.4 Challenged, recognised and affirmed**

- 4.4.1 Some people are set apart by the Church to exercise ministries in dispersed mode. This includes Church Related Community Workers and Chaplains. However, there is a great deal of ministry exercised by others in dispersed mode, i.e. in their daily lives, that currently goes unrecognised and unsupported by the Church. This is the fault of the Church and not of those engaged in these dispersed ministries. The Church needs to put this right.
- 4.4.2 It may be, also, that there are others in local churches who need to be challenged to recognise the opportunities for ministry in the places where they spend their time. They also need to be encouraged and supported in these ministries.
- 4.4.3 The enabling and equipping of this dispersed ministry of the whole people should be a major priority for Ministers and Elders.

#### **Recommendation 1:**

**Every local church should be challenged to review its life at all levels with the specific aim of being more supportive and enabling of the dispersed ministry of its members even if this means doing less 'in church' activities. Local churches should look for ways, within the context of worship and otherwise, of affirming the ministries of their members outside the church. This needs to be an inclusive activity from which no one is left out.**

#### **4.5 Diversity and experiment**

- 4.5.1 In order to achieve this major shift in emphasis (at least for some) towards the world as the main focus for the ministry of God's people, congregations should be encouraged to experiment with new ways of being church. This might mean stopping some 'good work' in order to create space for new work that is even more relevant to their understanding of God's mission today. It might, for instance, include new ways of gathering Christians together ecumenically at different times and in different places – going to where people are rather than expecting them to come into existing church buildings or services.
- 4.5.2 There are good stories of such experiments around the Church. These include congregations that have moved out of their long cherished buildings to worship elsewhere, releasing the buildings to be used in new ways to meet local needs, bringing new life to both congregations and communities. We need to share these stories more so that we can learn together.

#### **Recommendation 2:**

**Every local church should be encouraged to explore new ways of gathering at different times and places – the Church going to meet people where they are rather than the Church expecting people to come to where it is.**

### **5 MEETING THE CHALLENGE: SET APART MINISTRIES**

#### **5.1 Being thankful for what we've got**

5.1.1 Any consideration of future patterns of ministries must start from where we are today and must begin by affirming with great thankfulness the quality and quantity of sacrificial service that is offered within and on behalf of the United Reformed Church. This includes, but is not limited to, those serving in the various set apart ministries formally recognised by the Church.

5.1.2 The main focus of our 2002 report was on seeking a common understanding of the phrase 'the ministry of the whole people of God'. We were disappointed by the reaction of a small number of people who thought that this emphasis implied a devaluing of the contribution of those serving as Ministers of the Church. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

## 5.2 Summary of current situation regarding set apart ministries

5.2.1 'Ministry' may be defined simply as service and set apart ministries might then be understood as various forms of servant leadership based on the model of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is an extensive and varied range of recognised ministries within the United Reformed Church. Some of the most common of these are considered below but there are others including pastoral visitors, Junior Church leaders, training officers, synod moderators and various other Assembly appointments. Some of these are recognised locally and others by the whole Church, some are restricted to Ministers and others are not. They are all in some sense set apart ministries.

5.2.2 The United Reformed Church ordains those who are called to be Ministers of the Word and Sacraments and those who are called to be Elders. Ordination is, in each case, to a particular form of ministry. The United Reformed Church is not the only Church that ordains people to ministries that do not include presidency. For example, the Roman Catholic Church ordains its deacons and these people are not authorised to preside at the sacraments. Ordination is important because it represents a life time commitment or, in the words of the *Basis of Union* (paragraph 20), a commitment to serve for 'so long as God wills'. Although ordination continues to be a somewhat controversial matter, we are content with the statement on ordination included in the 1995 *Patterns of Ministry* report and do not repeat its arguments further here.

5.2.3 The United Reformed Church is deliberately diverse as it seeks to respond to God's call to mission in different places and times. We welcome this diversity and look for increased flexibility to enable the Church to become even more effective. Nevertheless, we also recognise the need to be concerned for the good order of the Church and aware of the sensitivities of its ecumenical partners.

## 5.3 Elders

5.3.1 The *Basis of Union* says (paragraph 22) that Elders are called to 'share with ministers in the pastoral oversight and leadership of local churches'. Later, it lists the functions of the Elders' meeting. We consider that the *Basis of Union* says all that is necessary about the ministry of Elders. The challenge for the Church is to take what it says more seriously.

5.3.2 Eldership was not invented by the United Reformed Church. Elders were introduced by Reformed Churches after the Reformation in order to provide a group of 'lay' people to share responsibility with the Minister for the ruling of the parish or congregation. It was believed that various references in the New Testament Epistles showed that this was the practice of the early Church. Some writers believed that Elders were equivalent to New Testament Presbyters (Ministers), with a distinction made between ruling and teaching Elders, but this was never a universal view. Later,



Elders were given a pastoral role which complemented their responsibility for church governance. Elders were ordained to recognise their commitment to ministry. This was not a case of people taking their turn at doing a job for a period. Elders worked alongside Ministers in all the councils of the Church. This was, in summary, the understanding of Eldership that the Presbyterian Church of England brought into the United Reformed Church.

- 5.3.3 It is our view that the ministry of the Elders is at the heart of what it means to be the United Reformed Church, both in its function and in its operation. The ministry of the Elders is of the local church, it is locally focussed and it is collaborative in style. The pastoral oversight and leadership of each local congregation is primarily the responsibility of its Elders' meeting supported by its Minister(s), rather than the other way round (which is how many see it). There is considerable evidence that a congregation is more likely to be effective when its members have a shared vision. The Elders' meeting in each congregation needs to foster a vision of what it means to be a community of God's people in that place. Where Ministers are present they are part of the Elders' meeting, with one of their key tasks being to ensure that every Elder and the Elders as a team are properly prepared for and supported in their roles.

See Recommendation 6 following paragraph 5.7.12

- 5.3.4 The representative ministry of each local congregation in its local community and among its local ecumenical partners should be the responsibility of its Elders, even though these duties may be carried out by a Minister or a Local Church Leader (see sub-section 5.4 below).
- 5.3.5 The effectiveness of the ministry of Elders is impeded in some congregations because the Elders' meeting acquires a whole range of tasks which, however important, do not need to be performed by the Elders. This can, in turn, lead to an increase in the number of serving Elders beyond what is necessary. It is our view that Elders' meetings will be most effective where they are relatively small and focussed on their core responsibilities of providing pastoral oversight and leadership. Some local churches have benefited greatly from the appointment of councils or committees to assist with some of the pastoral, practical and administrative tasks. Non-serving Elders can have an important role here.
- 5.3.6 We consider that best practice in the appointment of Elders normally involves the following sequence of events: 1: Election; 2: Preparation; 3: Ordination; and 4: Development. Election is the discernment by the church meeting of those among them called to be Elders, and the process used should reflect the importance of this task. Preparation confirms the call for the individual and for the congregation. Ordination is the setting apart of people for this particular form of ministry. Development includes ongoing support and appropriate training where specific skills need to be developed. This development will hopefully encourage some Elders to offer other forms of service, including those discussed in sub-sections 5.4 to 5.7 below. Synods and Areas / Districts should ensure that resources are available to support and facilitate such best practice in all local churches.
- 5.3.7 Eldership is a ministry of the local church and authority for the election and ordination of Elders rests with the congregation in church meeting. However, ordination is a representative act carried out by the local church on behalf of the whole Church. It is therefore appropriate that District Councils should formally acknowledge the call of Elders by local churches and, where possible, be represented at their ordination and, if they are transferring from another District, their induction.

**Recommendation 3: The appointment and ordination of Elders should involve a commitment to continuing development, including appropriate training. Synods should facilitate this training, working with local Ministers and making full use of available resources. District Councils should formally acknowledge the call of Elders by local churches and be represented at their ordination and, if they are transferring from another District, their induction.**

#### **5.4 Local Church Leaders**

5.4.1 Since the concept of Local Church Leaders was approved by Assembly in 1998, a number of Synods have introduced their own models. Others have apparently done nothing. Although there is considerable variation, the models may be summarised as either roles or functions. In some Synods, the Local Church Leader has a role in the local church and Elders' meeting not unlike the 'Moderating Elder' proposal that was rejected by Assembly in 1995. In other Synods, each Local Church Leader is appointed to carry out one or more particular tasks or projects but he or she does not have any overall responsibility. Although these developments are to be warmly welcomed, the inconsistent opportunities for service, practice and training between different Synods can cause problems.

5.4.2 It is crucial that local church leadership remains rooted in the Elders' meeting of the particular congregation and that it is seen as part of the corporate ministry of the Elders. We do not believe, therefore, that the Local Church Leader should become a separate order or category of ministry.

5.4.3 Our understanding is that the concept of Local Church Leader approved by Assembly in 1998 was of a role rather than a set of tasks. We support this emphasis and are attracted to the term 'Pastor' to describe this role. It is also our view that Assembly needs to come to a mind about the nature of Local Church Leaders, the scope of their role and to adopt an overall framework. Such a framework for this form of local leadership would help define this role to ecumenical partners. It would not invalidate other patterns of leadership but it would make clear that they are different. However, it will be important not to be over prescriptive. Some Elders' meetings will recognise the value of appointing one (or more) of their number to this sort of role. Others will prefer to carry this responsibility collectively. The Church should not act as if one model is better than another. Support and training need to be offered to every Elders' meeting, whatever model they adopt for their leadership. What matters is the effectiveness of the leadership provided to each local church by its Elders, not precisely how this is done.

**Recommendation 4: Whilst welcoming the current Local Church Leaders as successful experiments and effective forms of local leadership, the Church should build on this experience to create a flexible framework for the introduction of Pastors of local congregations, a role working from within the Elders' meeting. All Synods could then be encouraged to make use of this as one optional form of leadership available to local churches.**

#### **5.5 Accredited Lay Preachers**

5.5.1 Worship is at the heart of the life of the United Reformed Church and each of its congregations. To maintain worship of the highest possible standard that is challenging, exciting and inclusive requires people to lead it who are properly trained and equipped for and supported in this role. This does not mean that every worship leader needs or should receive the same training. It does mean that initial and

continuing training is important for all those who regularly lead worship on the Church's behalf.

- 5.5.2 The Church is greatly indebted to all those who regularly lead its worship, not least its Ministers but also those who have committed the time and energy to become Nationally Accredited Lay Preachers and who offer this demanding service, often with too little appreciation. We should also acknowledge that there are other lay preachers who are recognised / accredited by their District Councils and others of all ages who help to lead the worship of local churches.
- 5.5.3 The training of lay preachers is best used in the leading of worship, teaching and Bible study. If lay preachers are locally based then their work can be more fully integrated into the collaborative ministry in that place, with Ministers, Elders and others. We welcome this local focus. However, this does not take anything away from the important contribution of those lay preachers whose ministry is exercised through the leading of worship of congregations over a wide geographical area. To emphasise the importance of the relationship with local churches and to avoid inappropriate associations with the word 'lay', we would prefer that the title of this form of service was changed from 'lay preacher' to 'local preacher'. Such a proposal was narrowly rejected by Assembly in 1995. The commitment to seek a joint pastoral strategy with the Methodist Church would be helped by the removal of differences in terminology that are not significant.

**Recommendation 5: The United Reformed Church should adopt the title 'local preacher' in place of 'lay preacher'.**

## **5.6 Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs)**

- 5.6.1 CRCWs have become an important recognised ministry of the United Reformed Church. However, it is important to acknowledge that church related community work in this Church did not begin with the appointment of the first CRCW. For example, there are many Ministers today who are engaged in similar work for at least part of their time.
- 5.6.2 If diaconal ministry is understood to be about building bridges between church and society then, clearly, the work of CRCWs is one important expression of the Church's diaconal ministry. We welcome the present policy of growing this ministry.
- 5.6.3 Following the *Patterns of Ministry* report in 1995, Mission Council initiated some work on Diaconal Ministry and the possibility of establishing a Diaconate within the United Reformed Church. A paper was presented to Mission Council in 2000. No action was taken. Diaconal ministry is being exercised on behalf of the Church by many people including but by no means limited to CRCWs. It is our view that this diaconal ministry needs to be encouraged and developed but that this would not be helped by the creation of a Diaconate.

## **5.7 Ministers of the Word and Sacraments (Ministers)**

- 5.7.1 The *Basis of Union* says (paragraph 21) 'Some are called to the ministry of the Word and Sacraments'. It goes on to say 'They are commissioned to conduct public worship, to preach the Word and to administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, and to give leadership to the Church in its mission to the world'.
- 5.7.2 The title 'Minister of the Word and Sacraments' is not entirely satisfactory in that Ministers are required to do many things in addition to preaching and presiding and

much preaching and presiding is done by others. However, the title does emphasise the centrality of worship in the life of the Church and the important contribution that Ministers make to that worship. The Church looks to its Ministers to act, not exclusively but principally, as the guardians of its faith and witness, helping 'keep the community faithful to the teaching and practice of apostolic Christianity' (David Bosch). In this quotation 'apostolic' means being sent; it is not a reference to the first century Church. The question is how should this be done in the context of today's Church and world. As the Church adapts to meet the challenge of God's mission today, so must its use of Ministers adapt to keep the Church effective as well as faithful.

- 5.7.3 The United Reformed Church, like any human community, needs leadership – locally and as a whole. The effectiveness of the Church is directly dependent on the quality and appropriateness of its leadership. Ministers play a crucial role in the leadership of the Church. The contribution of Ministers to the ministry of the whole Church will, in our view, always be vitally important. The primary model for leadership in the Church is the servanthood of Jesus Christ.
- 5.7.4 The United Reformed Church, within the Reformed tradition, has a high view of the role of its Ministers. Ordination to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments (and also to the Ministry of the Elders) is once for all and not repeated. The *Basis of Union* says (paragraph 20) 'those who enter on such ministries do so for so long as God wills'. Ordination recognises that this calling is a commitment to a way of being as well as to a way of doing. The most important qualities of people called to this service are the depth of their faith, their commitment to journeying with others, and their willingness to proclaim the gospel within and outside the Church, in words and actions. The demands made on these people make it essential that they are thoroughly prepared and then continually supported and developed in order to sustain them and to keep them effective.
- 5.7.5 If the membership numbers in the Church continue to decline then there will be further human constraints on the number who offer to serve as Ministers and financial constraints on the number of stipends that can be paid. Ministers will be, as they have always been in our traditions, a scarce as well as a valuable resource. It is the duty of the whole Church to ensure that these people who are God's gift to the Church are properly cared for and that, as far as possible, their gifts are deployed effectively and realistically. In many cases, we are currently doing neither of these things.
- 5.7.6 If the vocation of the Church is to participate in God's mission in the world then the main purpose of Ministers must be to equip, empower and lead the members of the Church, the whole people of God, for their ministry in the world in response to God's call. PT Forsyth wrote that Ministers 'act on the church so the church can act on the world'. The Church's expectations of its Ministers must be re-focussed if they are to be enabled to do this more effectively. It has been said already that the United Reformed Church is mainly made up of small congregations. It is likely to remain so unless the Church takes strategic decisions to withdraw from many of those places where it is currently present but not numerically strong. Although some hard decisions are undoubtedly necessary, they must be taken according to mission priorities not congregation sizes.
- 5.7.7 The *Basis of Union* says (paragraph 24) that the Church 'shall take steps to ensure that so far as possible ordained ministers ... are readily available to every local church'. The practical meaning of 'so far as possible' has changed significantly over the lifetime of the United Reformed Church. It is unavoidable that the interpretation of 'readily available' must also change. This phrase cannot now mean, if it ever meant,

that every congregation can assume a right to be served directly by a slice of 'their own' Minister. For example, a rigid allocation of Sunday services and an assumption that a particular Minister will be available for all hospital visits and funerals may not be practicable. We are convinced that the practice of spreading Ministers ever more thinly, without fundamentally changing the expectations of what the Ministers can and should do, is not the best mission strategy. Expectations that are unachievable and inappropriate, whether held by church members or by the Ministers themselves, need to be challenged and changed.

- 5.7.8 As stated above, we believe that the Elders of each local church must be the ones primarily responsible for the development and continuation of its ministry. Ministers can then be deployed in far more varied and imaginative ways than have previously been possible. We would hope for a much better match, in future, of the gifts of particular Ministers with the tasks the Church asks them to undertake.
- 5.7.9 Central to the role of Ministers as a whole and the roles of most Ministers in practice, working particularly through clusters / groups or Area / District Councils, should be the development and support of the leadership of local congregations. The emphasis in this work with local churches must be on developing more effective collaborative ministry, dealt with further in sub-section 5.8 below.
- 5.7.10 Ministers, alongside the Elders in each place, also have a key representative role, interpreting the world to the Church and the Church to the world, and representing the wider Church (United Reformed and ecumenical) to the local church. For some, this role will be embodied in work as Chaplains and other work set in the world. This representative role of Ministers has implications for their ongoing training in relation not only to developments in theology, doctrine and worship but also to their appreciation of changes in community and culture.
- 5.7.11 A Minister is a member of a local church. Whatever the Minister's particular role, his / her ministry is part of the ministry of the whole people of God. It will continue to be necessary, where the Minister is the best equipped or where other resources are not available, to ask a Minister to do work that is not, exclusively, his / hers on behalf of the Church. This might be locally to initiate or support church programmes or community development work, or it might be administrative work in support of the Church's structures. For each individual Minister this part of his / her work must be properly defined so that the scoping of the overall workload is realistic. For the Church as a whole there needs to be a mechanism within the deployment process for assessing how much of this work its Ministers can collectively support before it is counter productive, however useful in itself. It is our view that neither of these objectives is currently being met satisfactorily.
- 5.7.12 The United Reformed Church employs a number of its Ministers in Assembly, Synod and District appointments. The justification of these posts is not within the remit of this report, though we do readily acknowledge that a great deal of vital work is being done in this way. The Church has procedures in place for reviewing these posts and, in particular, all Assembly appointments will be considered as part of the 'Catch the Vision' review of the structures of the Church. Whether these posts should be filled by Ministers is a separate matter that needs to be considered in relation to each post and also in relation to the Church's overall deployment of its Ministers.

**Recommendation 6: The United Reformed Church should re-commit itself to the development of appropriate and effective leadership in every local congregation, whilst recognising that this does not mean that every congregation will have a Minister directly providing their day-to-day leadership. The deployment of Ministers should be**

determined by the need to make the best use of this scarce resource in equipping, empowering and leading the Church in its participation in God's mission.

## **5.8 Collaborative and complementary leadership**

- 5.8.1 The United Reformed Church is a conciliar Church with a collaborative style of leadership. This has already been referred to several times in this report. The Elders' meeting of each local congregation is at the heart of this collaborative leadership. The purpose of this approach is to make the best use of the particular people available in each place for the good of the whole people of God and the effectiveness of its ministry in the world. Some would question whether the Church has been good at putting this collaborative style into practice. We hope that as Elders' meetings become more confident in their leadership of local congregations so Ministers will be released into developing new ways of working that are more creative, supportive and purposeful.
- 5.8.2 The Church's structures and policies are deliberately flexible. There are very few tasks that are the responsibility of one particular office within the Church. This flexibility creates enormous potential for a high quality, richly diverse and complementary style of leadership to be offered to the Church locally and nationally.
- 5.8.3 In a situation where leadership resources are scarce, it is vital that the Church orders its life in a way to make best use of the gifts and service that are offered. The opportunities for mutual support and personal development available to the members of ministerial teams are of great benefit to the Church as a whole as well as to the individuals. We would encourage the further development of local groupings or clusters of churches, described by some as local mission partnerships, served by teams of leaders including Ministers, Elders, Local Church Leaders, Lay Preachers and others. In some cases, the Area / District Council will be the natural 'cluster'.
- 5.8.4 With the focus on mission, there will be many places where the most effective 'cluster' will be a local ecumenical grouping embracing churches serving the same community, rather than a denominational one linking United Reformed Churches serving very different communities, perhaps far apart.
- 5.8.5 It will still be appropriate, in some circumstances, for a Minister to be scoped to work full time with a single congregation but this ministry should still be collaborative in style. Where this happens it should reflect agreed mission priorities and should not be driven by history or size of congregation.

**Recommendation 7: Churches should be encouraged to work in groups or clusters, wherever possible ecumenically, with Ministers, Elders, Local Church Leaders, Lay Preachers and others offering them collaborative leadership.**

## **5.9 Classification, training and remuneration of Ministers and other ministries**

- 5.9.1 The United Reformed Church has stipendiary and non-stipendiary Ministers, but Assembly made clear in 1995 that there is a single order of Minister of the Word and Sacraments comprising both stipendiary and non-stipendiary service. The *Manual* (section K) sets out 'Patterns of Stipendiary Ministry' based on a document produced by Ministries Department (as it then was) in 1988 and 'Models for Non-stipendiary Ministry' approved by Assembly in 1995. The actual situation is more complex than this. There are stipendiary Ministers who do not work full time for the Church and others who are full time but do not take any stipend. There are non-stipendiary

Ministers who are working full time for the Church in an exactly comparable way to their full time stipendiary colleagues.

- 5.9.2 Increasingly frequently, the Church receives requests from individual Ministers who want to switch from stipendiary to non-stipendiary service or vice versa or to change from full time to part time service or vice versa. This may be in response to changed personal or family circumstances or to perceived changes in the needs of the Church. The Church is not consistent in the way it responds to such requests and the further training it requires of such people.
- 5.9.3 The Church needs to be much more flexible in its recruitment and deployment of Ministers and others and to reduce the obstacles that are perhaps inadvertently put in people's way in order to make more effective use of the service being offered. In particular, the Church needs to be more successful in attracting people to serve as non-stipendiary Ministers. To facilitate this the Church needs to uncouple ordination, training and remuneration from one another so that it can be more flexible in relation to each of them. It is our view that ordination (or commissioning) should be about setting a person apart for a particular ministry on behalf of the Church; training should be about equipping a particular person for a particular role (it should therefore be tailored and continuing); and payment should be a practical matter dependent on the circumstances of the individual and the resources of the Church. What is said here about Ministers should logically also apply to Church Related Community Workers and we welcome the current work towards the introduction of non-stipendiary Church Related Community Workers.
- 5.9.4 The Church needs to develop new ways of classifying its Ministers and CRCWs that are more useful to the Church and the individuals. This should be based on the service they are able to offer and might include the available time (e.g. half time or full time); whether they are geographically restricted (as are most non-stipendiary and many stipendiary Ministers); and what particular skills or experience they have. Such a change would clearly have implications for the way that the deployment of Ministers, CRCWs and others is understood and operated.

**Recommendation 8: The Church should develop a new way of classifying its Ministers according to the service being offered that can supersede the existing stipendiary 'Patterns' and non-stipendiary 'Models'.**

- 5.9.5 We welcome the decision of Mission Council to ask for a development policy for Ministers and Church Related Community Workers, including a review of methods of appraisal and accountability. The Church needs a more flexible approach to initial and continuing training that is more responsive to the varied needs and changing circumstances of students and those appointed to these ministries.

**Recommendation 9: The Church should continue to develop the flexibility of the initial and continuing training of its Ministers and Church Related Community Workers to meet more effectively their varied circumstances and their fast changing contexts and to enable them to more easily transfer between different forms of service.**

- 5.9.6 The payment of a stipend is meant to allow a person set apart by the Church as a Minister or CRCW to fulfil his / her vocation. The level of the stipend should be adequate to free the person and his / her dependents from financial anxiety and to enable him / her to participate in society. It would be wholly wrong if any financial constraints on the Church persuaded it to pay less than adequate stipends. The 'right' level of the stipend will always be a controversial matter that will need to be handled

sensitively. We believe that the concept of the stipend in relation to Ministers and CRCWs is still more appropriate than the payment of a salary.

- 5.9.7 The logic of this argument suggests that there ought to be much greater variation in the amount offered to Ministers and CRCWs, up to an agreed maximum stipend plus allowances, reflecting the significant variations in their circumstances including income from other sources inside and outside the Church. It also implies that it might be necessary and just to offer at least a part stipend or other benefits to some of those serving as Ministers and currently classified as non-stipendiary where they are not receiving adequate income from elsewhere. This increased flexibility might also affect the policy of the Church regarding the retirement of Ministers and CRCWs. Some Ministers choose not to take all the stipend and allowances which the Church offers them. This is and should remain entirely their personal decision.
- 5.9.8 We envisage a significant change over the next, say, twenty years in the balance between stipendiary and non-stipendiary service with many more people offering part time service to the Church whilst working and earning income elsewhere. If this were to happen it would enable the Church to have Ministers and CRCWs serving in more locations (albeit in part time service) without increasing the Church's costs.

**Recommendation 10: Work should be done on the implications and mechanics of making the remuneration package of all Ministers and Church Related Community Workers more flexible according to their circumstances, such as dependent relatives, within the maximum figures approved each year by Assembly.**

#### **5.10 Finance – flexible resources to support flexible leadership patterns**

- 5.10.1 The central budget of the Church receives income from various sources. However, most of the income comes from local churches through the Ministry and Mission Fund and this broadly equates to the total costs of training, paying and supporting Ministers and Church Related Community Workers. Given the diversity of ministries within the Church and the varying needs of local churches, it would make sense to broaden the use of the Ministry and Mission Fund from a 'payments to Ministers' fund to a fund that supports the Church's rich variety of leadership patterns. This should include existing national grants to support local non-standard ministries and be able to support more than just the work of Ministers and Church Related Community Workers. It follows that the Church might decide in the future to spend more of its available resources on other forms of leadership and, by implication, less of those resources on Ministers. Such decisions could affect only future actions and it is vital that those people already paid out of the Ministry and Mission Fund continue to be properly looked after. We envisage that all congregations would continue to contribute to the Ministry and Mission fund whether or not a Minister was involved directly in their local leadership and all local churches would be eligible to benefit from the Fund to support their mission. Local churches would deserve much more and clearer information about how their money was being spent through this Fund.
- 5.10.2 The proposals in sub-sections 5.9 and 5.10 could not be considered properly without taking account of the relationship between the central Ministry and Mission Fund and the financial resources held elsewhere in the Church and between appointments supported from the Fund and appointments funded by Synods, Areas / Districts, and local churches.

**Recommendation 11: Detailed consideration should be given to broadening the terms of the Ministry and Mission Fund so that it could be used not just to pay for Ministers and Church Related Community Workers but also to support other forms of leadership**



within the Church. An attractive annual report on how the Ministry and Mission Fund is spent should be made available to local churches.

## 5.11 Presidency at the Sacraments

5.11.1 Given the changing relationship between Ministers and congregations, and the developing ministry of Elders that we call for in sub-section 5.3 above, we believe that the issue of presidency needs to be re-examined. There is very significant variation of practice around the Church and it is not all in line with what is said in the *Basis of Union*. The Church needs a policy that preserves order but allows for variety of both circumstance and practice. We begin by summarising in paragraphs 5.11.2 to 5.11.7 what we understand to be the current stated position of the Church.

5.11.2 The *Basis of Union* says (paragraph 24) that the United Reformed Church shall 'make provision through District Councils, in full consultation with the local churches concerned, for the recognition of certain members of the Church, normally deaconesses, elders or accredited lay preachers, who may be invited by local churches to preside at baptismal and communion services where pastoral necessity so requires ... only such recognised persons may be invited.'

5.11.3 A statement on the then situation concerning presidency at the sacraments was accepted by Assembly in 1991 and is included in the current *Manual* (section F). This statement sets out the background, describes the variety of practice and sets out three alternative views concerning presidency – in summary, restrict it to Ministers; extend it to include lay preachers; or extend it further to include presidency by 'local lay leaders'. However, the statement did not propose any revision of the *Guidelines on Presidency at the Lord's Supper*. These Guidelines date from 1975 and were re-affirmed by Assembly in 1980. They are available on the Church's web-site.

5.11.4 The *Manual* also includes (section F) the Statement on Presidency at the Sacraments from the *Patterns of Ministry* report which was accepted by the 1995 Assembly as expressing the mind of the Church 'at this present time'. This Statement suggests the following pattern of presidency:

- a) a Minister should preside when available;
- b) in situations of pastoral necessity where no Minister is available, the District Council should make provision for lay presidency; Moderating Elders and Lay Preachers should be considered first;
- c) authorisation for lay presidency, normally from within the congregation concerned, should not cover a period longer than a year without consultation and review of the needs of the congregation concerned.

[This is the wording that was accepted by the 1995 Assembly even though it separately rejected the proposal to establish 'Moderating Elders'.]

5.11.5 This 1995 Statement clearly acknowledges that it is possible for District Councils to authorise lay presidents for a longer term than for particular dates and times. It draws attention to the sentence in the *Basis of Union* (paragraph 24) that says 'the pastoral needs of each situation shall be reviewed periodically by the district or area council in consultation with the local church'. This is not a reference to the regular quinquennial visits by Area / District Councils to congregations but a separate requirement of those Councils to review regularly the pastoral needs of congregations where special arrangements have been made. It is important to emphasise that it is for each local church to decide how often it wishes to celebrate the sacraments. For example, the 1995 statement recognises that some congregations wish to celebrate communion every Sunday and this is part of the pastoral needs of these congregations to which their Area / District Councils must attend.

- 5.11.6 The *Basis of Union* refers (paragraph 24) to lay presidency by accredited lay preachers and one of the functions of Area / District Councils is to accredit lay preachers (*The Manual* section B paragraph 2 (3) A (vii).) In 1979, Assembly resolved to establish a Register of Nationally Accredited Lay Preachers and expressed the hope that District Councils, in accrediting lay preachers, would apply the national standards. In 2002, Assembly accepted a Lay Preaching Strategy which acknowledged that District Recognition of lay preachers exists alongside National Accreditation. It is our view that the word 'accredited' in the *Basis of Union* refers to all those accredited by District Councils and not only those on the Register of Nationally Accredited Lay Preachers. Therefore, the *Basis of Union* permits District Recognised Lay Preachers to be invited to preside at baptismal and communion services.
- 5.11.7 In 1998, Assembly approved an amendment to the *Basis of Union* to provide for presidency at the sacraments in local churches in emergency situations.
- 5.11.8 It is our view that the *Basis of Union* provides sufficient flexibility to allow for the appropriate authorisation for presidency at the sacraments of every local church.
- 5.11.9 Presidency at the sacraments in the United Reformed Church is in two senses a representative act. The president represents the congregation in what s/he does and represents the wholeness of the wider church in the local congregation. Presidency by a visiting Minister, for example a Synod Moderator, can be an important expression of the wider church in the local congregation. However, because of the importance of the representation of the congregation in the presidency, we consider that the person who presides should normally be someone who is in an ongoing close relationship with that congregation. The implication of the wording in the *Basis of Union* and of the 1995 Statement is that a Minister in such a close relationship will normally be available to preside and that 'situations of pastoral necessity' will be the exception. In fact, the availability of such a Minister is less and less common. The result is that the celebration of the sacraments in a local church is increasingly frequently presided over either by a Minister who is not well known to the congregation or by a Lay Preacher or one of the Elders who are authorised by their District Council on a semi-permanent basis. The current wording is, therefore, not entirely satisfactory.
- 5.11.10 The change in the pattern of local church presidency suggests that it may be time for the Church to re-state its policy on this matter in a form not only that is consistent with its understanding of the nature of presidency and the distinct ministries of Ministers and Elders but also that caters for most circumstances in most congregations.
- 5.11.11 In the context of what is said in sub-section 5.3 above, the question arises as to whether some or all of the Elders of each local congregation should be permanently appointed or ordained to preside at the sacraments. To appoint or ordain only some of the Elders to preside would divide the Eldership into two categories that would be confusing within the United Reformed Church and would create difficulties in its ecumenical relationships. To appoint or ordain all Elders to preside would seriously blur the distinction between the ministries of Ministers and Elders and would, again, cause ecumenical difficulties. We therefore conclude, perhaps reluctantly, that the existing provisions are preferable to any alternative currently available.
- 5.11.12 As stated above, we consider that the person presiding in a local church should normally be someone who is well known to that congregation. We believe that the current provisions of the *Basis of Union* for Area / District Councils to authorise particular Elders or Lay Preachers to preside for defined periods are adequate. We

hope that Area / District Councils will take their responsibilities seriously in recognising when 'pastoral necessity' arises in each local church, what the best response should be, and in keeping such situations under review.

- 5.11.13 Presidency at the sacraments is a matter on which particular sensitivity is required regarding the Church's relationships with its ecumenical partners. However, some have argued that it is the varied practice within the United Reformed Church, rather than its policy, which causes most concern in some of the other Churches.

**Recommendation 12: Area / District Councils should recognise and use the flexibility provided by the *Basis of Union* with regard to presidency at the sacraments to ensure that the needs of each local church are properly met. Where 'situations of pastoral necessity' occur, the Councils should take great care to keep them fully and regularly under review, out of respect to the congregations concerned and to the Church's ecumenical partners.**

## **6 MEETING THE CHALLENGE: FURTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 Ecumenical relationships**

- 6.1.1 An increasing number of United Reformed Church congregations are involved in local ecumenical projects or partnerships. The Church's future patterns of ministries need to take this fact into account, allowing these congregations maximum local flexibility and minimising the burden placed on them by Church structures.
- 6.1.2 All the major Churches in the United Kingdom are, in one form or another, reviewing their future patterns of ministries. It is vital that the United Reformed Church continues to pay attention to what its ecumenical partners are thinking and doing and that any proposed changes to the United Reformed Church's patterns of ministries are shared with its partners before those changes are introduced.
- 6.1.3 In particular, the United Reformed Church is committed to developing a national pastoral strategy with the Methodist Church, with which it already has several hundred united congregations. This commitment needs to be put into practice by arranging an early opportunity to discuss these proposals with Methodist representatives and to be ready to amend them if appropriate.

**Recommendation 13: Formal discussions about the recommendations in this report should be arranged with representatives of the Methodist Church.**

### **6.2 Internal structures**

- 6.2.1 This report has referred in several places to the burden that the internal structures of the United Reformed Church place on local churches and, in particular, on Ministers. This is an important and urgent matter that impacts on the effectiveness of the ministry of the Church and its Ministers. It is not within the remit of this report to consider these structures. However, it has been made clear that they will be considered by the 'Catch the Vision' Review Group.

### **6.3 Buildings**

- 6.3.1 While this subject is beyond the remit of this report, we have been very aware that a number of our 'challenges' in relation to ministry are caused or exacerbated by the number of buildings from which the Church currently chooses to operate. An enormous challenge is presented to the Church both locally and nationally by its

buildings. There are too many buildings that are either no longer needed where they are or that are no longer fit for purpose. This is another important and urgent matter that needs to be addressed for the sake of the ministry of the whole Church and in particular for the sake of those who are currently struggling to maintain these premises and to support the people who use them.

## **7 CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND RESOLUTION: WHAT NEXT?**

### **7.1 Conclusion**

- 7.1.1 Many of our recommendations describe what is already happening in some parts of the Church. There is much good work being done and effective, sacrificial service being offered in the Church and in the world on the Church's behalf. We need to keep learning from each other as we respond locally to God's call to mission.
- 7.1.2 The use of 'changing ministry' in the title of this report is deliberately ambiguous. The ministry of the Church is always changing or adapting to meet new challenges. It is also part of the purpose of that ministry to facilitate change in the Church and the world. But this is not change for the sake of change. We do not propose the creation of any new orders of ministry or any new offices in the United Reformed Church. We do believe that our recommendations demand a radical transformation of the Church's existing patterns of ministries, particularly the way in which it uses Elders and Ministers. The purpose of this transformation is to re-focus the Church on its participation in God's mission to the world and to equip all the members of the Church, the whole people of God, to play a fuller part in the continuing ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7.1.3 Since we began our work, Mission Council has launched a thorough and radical review of the life of the United Reformed Church, now described as 'Catch the vision for God's tomorrow'. This review is expected to make recommendations about the structure of the Church as well as about its ministry. The recommendations in this report are based on the structure as it is. It may disappoint some that this is, in a sense, another interim report. The wording of the recommendations and of the single resolution reflects the need to co-ordinate the work of the two groups and to provide an opportunity for feedback on our recommendations before substantive resolutions are brought to Assembly. Your feedback on these recommendations will be very important. We recognise that we are asking you to respond very quickly in order to meet the timetable for Assembly 2005.

### **7.2 Recommendations**

- 1: (after paragraph 4.4.3) Every local church should be challenged to review its life at all levels with the specific aim of being more supportive and enabling of the dispersed ministry of its members even if this means doing less 'in church' activities. Local churches should look for ways, within the context of worship and otherwise, of affirming the ministries of their members outside the church. This needs to be an inclusive activity from which no one is left out.
- 2: (after paragraph 4.5.2) Every local church should be encouraged to explore new ways of gathering at different times and places – the Church going to meet people where they are rather than the Church expecting people to come to where it is.
- 3: (after paragraph 5.3.7) The appointment and ordination of Elders should involve a commitment to continuing development, including appropriate training. Synods should facilitate this training, working with local Ministers and making full use of available

resources. District Councils should formally acknowledge the call of Elders by local churches and be represented at their ordination and, if they are transferring from another District, their induction.

- 4: (after paragraph 5.4.3) Whilst welcoming the current Local Church Leaders as successful experiments and effective forms of local leadership, the Church should build on this experience to create a flexible framework for the introduction of Pastors of local congregations, a role working from within the Elders' meeting. All Synods could then be encouraged to make use of this as one optional form of leadership available to local churches.
- 5: (after paragraph 5.5.3) The United Reformed Church should adopt the title 'local preacher' in place of 'lay preacher'.
- 6: (after paragraph 5.7.12) The United Reformed Church should re-commit itself to the development of appropriate and effective leadership in every local congregation, whilst recognising that this does not mean that every congregation will have a Minister directly providing their day-to-day leadership. The deployment of Ministers should be determined by the need to make the best use of this scarce resource in equipping, empowering and leading the Church in its participation in God's mission.
- 7: (after paragraph 5.8.5) Churches should be encouraged to work in groups or clusters, wherever possible ecumenically, with Ministers, Elders, Local Church Leaders, Lay Preachers and others offering them collaborative leadership.
- 8: (after paragraph 5.9.4) The Church should develop a new way of classifying its Ministers according to the service being offered that can supersede the existing stipendiary 'Patterns' and non-stipendiary 'Models'.
- 9: (after paragraph 5.9.5) The Church should continue to develop the flexibility of the initial and continuing training of its Ministers and Church Related Community Workers to meet more effectively their varied circumstances and their fast changing contexts and to enable them to more easily transfer between different forms of service.
- 10: (after paragraph 5.9.8) Work should be done on the implications and mechanics of making the remuneration package of all Ministers and Church Related Community Workers more flexible according to their circumstances, such as dependent relatives, within the maximum figures approved each year by Assembly.
- 11: (after paragraph 5.10.2) Detailed consideration should be given to broadening the terms of the Ministry and Mission Fund so that it could be used not just to pay for Ministers and Church Related Community Workers but also to support other forms of leadership within the Church. An attractive annual report on how the Ministry and Mission Fund is spent should be made available to local churches.
- 12: (after paragraph 5.11.13) Area / District Councils should recognise and use the flexibility provided by the *Basis of Union* with regard to presidency at the sacraments to ensure that the needs of each local church are properly met. Where 'situations of pastoral necessity' occur, the Councils should take great care to keep them fully and regularly under review, out of respect to the congregations concerned and to the Church's ecumenical partners.
- 13: (after paragraph 6.1.3) Formal discussions about the recommendations in this report should be arranged with representatives of the Methodist Church.

## 7.3 Resolution

### **RESOLUTION**

#### **General Assembly:**

- (i) welcomes the report *Equipping the Saints*;**
- (ii) challenges every congregation to respond locally to recommendations 1 and 2;**
- (iii) invites comments on recommendations 3 to 13 from churches, Area / District Councils and Synods to be sent to Ministries Committee by 31 December 2004;**
- (iv) requests further work to be done by Ministries Committee in co-operation with the Catch the Vision Review Group and others so that formal proposals can be brought to the 2005 meeting of General Assembly.**

### **Appendix I: Background: Terms of reference, working party membership and method of working, previous work**

#### **1 Terms of reference**

- 1.1 Assembly 2000 received a report following a review into non-stipendiary ministry. Assembly agreed to the convictions and concerns expressed in that report in the following resolution:

**General Assembly instructs the Ministries Committee, in consultation with others, to continue the discussion of present and future patterns of ministries, building on ecumenical insights and designed to enable the church to respond more effectively to the challenge of the mission strategy outlined in *Growing Up*.**

- 1.2 In response to this resolution, Ministries Committee set up a working party to further explore these matters with others inside and outside the United Reformed Church. The working party presented an interim report to Assembly 2002. This report ended with five questions, the responses to which were intended to provide the working party with a better appreciation of the understanding within the wider church of the ministry of the whole people of God. Assembly passed the following resolution:

#### **General Assembly**

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

#### **2 Working party membership and method of working**

- 2.1 A workbook was prepared to help churches consider and respond to the 2002 report. It was based on the report but contained additional material including some

appropriate Bible studies. This workbook was distributed with the 2002 Assembly Record. The working party has received the responses to the 2002 report and has, with some changes of personnel, continued its work. This work has included ongoing consultation with others within and outside the Church. This report is the result of that work and is offered to Assembly and the wider church for consideration, decision and action. The report is presented in a form that can be read on its own but it obviously builds on all the previous work.

2.2	<u>Membership of the working party</u>	<u>from</u>	<u>to</u>
	Revd Christine Craven - executive secretary	2000	2004
	Revd Dr Peter Cruchley-Jones	2000	2002
	Mr John Ellis – convener	2002	2004
	Mrs Wilma Frew	2000	2004
	Revd Graham Long - convener	2000	2002
	Revd John Piper	2000	2004
	Revd Rachel Poolman	2000	2002
	Revd Bill Sewell	2000	2004
	Revd Dr David Thompson	2002	2004
	Revd Kirsty Thorpe - theological reflector	2000	2002
	Revd Dr Sandy McDonald - Church of Scotland	2000	2002
	Revd Bill Snelson - Churches Together in England	2000	2002

## **Appendix II: Feedback: Responses to the Future Patterns of Ministries Report to Assembly 2002**

### **1 The Questions**

1.1 Running through the interim report of the Future Patterns of Ministries working party to Assembly 2002 was the conviction that a fuller understanding and development of the ministry of the whole people of God was of primary importance if the United Reformed Church was to become more effective in mission. In order to test the mind of the Church on this matter, the report asked for feedback on the following five questions:

1.2 Assuming you agree that the 90,000 members of the United Reformed Church should all be engaged in its ministry, what key messages do you have on sections 2 to 7 of this report?

In your experience to what extent are the existing ministries of ministers and elders geared to equip your members to exercise their ministry? In what ways do they hold them back?

What are the main changes to your activities and structures which you believe will develop and support your members' ministries in their daily lives?

From your local experience, describe any innovations in leadership patterns which you feel should be considered for adoption more widely?

As you look at your needs, what would be the most useful changes that could be made to the United Reformed Church as a whole?

### **2 The Responses**

2.1 Written responses were received from 8 individuals, just over 100 churches, 12 Districts and 7 Synods. Oral feedback was received from many others. Members of the working party were involved in discussions of the 2002 report and its questions in churches, Districts, and Synods.

2.2 Some generally shared understandings were:

Every church member should be actively involved in the ministry of the Church, the whole people of God.

Every local congregation needs effective leadership.

Ministers and others need to be trained in collaborative leadership.

Ministers and elders need to be enablers and encouragers as well as 'doers' – bringing out the gifts in others (rather than deskilling them by pretending to be omni-competent).

The representative role of ministers is important.

Local mission should be the main focus and should preferably be ecumenical.

2.3 Some common questions were:

What does the 'ministry of the whole people of God' mean in practice?

What does 'ministry' mean? How do we re-think and re-work the ministry of each local congregation, making best use of the available resources?

We are generally good at welcoming people in our churches but how do we make ourselves better at 'going out' into the world with the Good News?

How do we stop the feelings that ministers are being 'spread to thin' and that the Church 'does not have enough ministers'?

How should we interpret the Basis of Union today when it says that a minister of the Word and Sacraments should be 'readily available to every local church'?

How do we make the Church structures more enabling of local mission and less of a burden?

2.4 The working party is most grateful to those who responded in writing to the questions posed at the end of the 2002 report. We were greatly encouraged by these contributions. The points listed above are inevitably an inadequate summary of the responses received. These were all carefully considered and they have had a significant impact on our subsequent work including the contents of this report.

### **Appendix III: References: Details of important reference documents**

#### **1 Foundational documents**

1.1 The following documents are those that we consider to be foundational in any discussion of ministry within the United Reformed Church. We have deliberately chosen not to repeat their arguments at any length in this report.



The *Basis of Union* of the United Reformed Church.

The section on Ministry in the *Manual* of the United Reformed Church.

*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* published by the World Council of Churches in 1982. ISBN: 2-8254-0709-7. Copies can still be obtained via the United Reformed Church bookshop.

The *Patterns of Ministry* report to Assembly 1995 available from the United Reformed Church.

The *Statement of the Theology of Ministry* presented to Mission Council in October 1997 and accepted by it as a resource of the Church. Available on the United Reformed Church web-site.

The *Guidelines on Presidency at the Lord's Supper* which were re-affirmed by Assembly in 1980. Available on the United Reformed Church web-site.

## 2 Other important references

- 2.1 A bibliography was provided to accompany the interim report of the Future Patterns of Ministries working party to Assembly 2002. These references are also relevant to this report but are not repeated here. In addition, the following publications have been particularly helpful to the working party:

*The Elders, seniority within earliest Christianity* by R.A. Campbell published by T & T Clark, Edinburgh in 1994. ISBN: 0 567 09702 1.

*Ministry for Mission* by David Peel published by Northern College, Manchester in 2003.

*Stating the Gospel* by David Thompson published by T & T Clark, Edinburgh in 1990. ISBN (hardback): 0 567 09508 8.

- 2.2 Many of the Churches in the United Kingdom have been involved in similar reviews of the future of their ministry. In addition to those referred to in our 2002 bibliography, we note in particular:

*Presence and prophecy* produced by the Archbishops' Council with CTBI. Published by Church House Publishing. ISBN: 0-7151-5548-2.

*Mission-Shaped Church* Report to General Synod of Church of England February 2004. Published by Church House Publishing. ISBN: 0-7151-4013-2.

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**MISSION COUNCIL  
19 – 21 March 2004**

**K**

**A Discussion Paper  
Multi Cultural Ministry: Committee Remits and Representation**

A meeting took place in December of conveners and staff secretaries of the Racial Justice Committee, the International Exchange sub-committee, and the Ecumenical Committee with the Deputy General Secretary, to see how the work of Katalina Tahaafe-Williams should be co-ordinated now that she had increased responsibilities to cover areas presently within the remit of Racial Justice, Inter-Faith, Ecumenical committees and the International Exchange sub-committee.

As the Racial Justice committee increasingly seeks to describe its work as 'multicultural ministry', the meeting sought to facilitate this work, while retaining lines of accountability to other committees whose remit included responsibility for some areas within this brief (e.g. Ministries Committee's responsibility for the accreditation of ministers; Ecumenical committee's responsibility for sustaining international partnerships; International exchange sub-committee's role receiving and caring for mission partners to the U.K).

Historically, links with the Ghanaian chaplaincies and congregations have been sustained through the Ecumenical committee, as have connections to Christian groups from Pakistan. The international exchange sub-committee is currently responsible for overseeing a chaplaincy to Taiwanese students and others in the U.K. jointly sponsored by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, the United Reformed Church and the Council for World Mission.

Developing relationships between the United Reformed Church and new migrant congregations is a core aspect of multi-cultural ministry. As congregations seek membership of the United Reformed Church, there needs to be a co-ordinated approach as committees (through their secretaries) work with congregations, district councils, synod moderators, and others to help congregations from non-URC backgrounds relate to the Church, and in order to help the structures and people of the United Reformed Church be more welcoming and aware in an increasingly multi-cultural context.

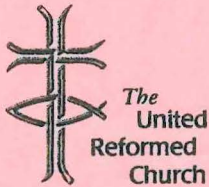
This paper flags up for Mission Council the changing context in which we are the Church, and the requirements for church structures to shift areas of work while at the same time maintaining an overview and ensuring accountability when the whole church (through its committees) is involved, e.g. when introducing new congregations into the United Reformed Church.

The proposals below are far from radical – yet are an attempt to recognise and embrace change through structural realignment.

Mission Council may wish to consider the proposed name change from the Racial Justice Committee to the Racial Justice and Multi Cultural Ministry Committee as a step on the way; and the implications of this change for other parts of the United Reformed Church.

The following steps are proposed:

1. **The Racial Justice Committee be renamed the Racial Justice and Multi-Cultural Ministries' Committee, with secretaries for International Relations and Ecumenical Relations becoming members 'ex officio'.**
2. **The RJ&MM and Ecumenical Committees should work together to develop relations with multi-ethnic congregations, recognising that there may be reallocation of committee responsibilities in due course, but these should evolve gradually through practice. Nominations Committee should be consulted and briefed about the specific gifts and skills required to equip the RJ&MM committee to develop its new role.**
3. **In order to facilitate change and exchange, the Convener of RJ&MM Committee shall be an ex-officio member of the International Exchange Sub-Committee, and the RJ&MM Committee shall be represented on the Ecumenical Committee.**
4. **An inter-committee forum should meet occasionally to discuss issues arising from the United Reformed Church's developing commitment to multicultural ministry. This will help avoid duplication of work, and provide opportunities for mutual accountability.**
5. **The Mission Partners programme will remain within the remit of the International Exchange Sub-committee.**



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L

**Additional Business**

**1. Corrections to the January 2004 Mission Council Minutes**

**04/04 (03/76) Item 4** "proceed with the Hind Report"; **Item 4 a)** "Hind Report".

**04/13 Resolution in anticipation of local and European elections (Paper K)**

Delete second paragraph of resolution:

The United Reformed Church affirms and celebrates the diverse and multi-ethnic nature of our society. We condemn the hysterical scare campaigns against asylum seekers promoted by some sections of the media, noting that they damage our community life and provide fertile soil for the growth of racist political parties and policies.

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**2. Nominations Committee Report**

i. It is proposed that the Convener of the nominating group for Moderator of the Synod of Scotland (on the impending retirement of the Revd John Arthur) be the Revd Graham Cook.

ii. Resolution:

**Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly reappoints the Revd Arnold Harrison to serve as Moderator of the Yorkshire Synod from 1 September 2004 until 29 February 2008.**

iii. Revised paper 'The Appointment of Synod Moderators and the Review of their Appointments'.

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**3. Report of the Resource Sharing Task Group (for inclusion in Mission Council's Report to General Assembly)**

When the Resource Sharing Task Group last reported to the General Assembly (in 2001 – p.28), it was to convey the good news that all the synods had agreed to share 10% of their investment income in the year 2001. Concern had been expressed in the previous year's report (in 2000 – p.28) about the wide variation in manse accommodation standards and, largely through the meetings of the Synod Property, Legal, Administrative and Trust Officers, progress has been made towards the introduction of manse policies in the synods that aim to ensure that ministers of word and sacrament do not experience different standards of accommodation depending on the synod within whose ambit they serve. Last year's General Assembly resolution (no. 24) to adopt manse guidelines greatly assists this objective.

The General Assembly in 2002 resolved, without dissent, to ask the Resource Sharing Task Group to initiate a consultation between the synods on the advisability and possibility of a more complete sharing of the financial resources of the synods, with a view to a more radical and equitable distribution of such resources across the whole church. Representatives of all the synods have consulted together on three subsequent occasions with the purpose of reaching a positive response to the Assembly's challenge. The meetings have not been easy

but, based on the trust that has been developed since 1996 and on the experience which has seen the amount of shared income increase from 2% to 10%, those present at the consultation held in October last year reached the conviction that the synods ought to work more closely together to strengthen each other in mission. This was expressed in a commitment to the objective of sharing all the income received by each synod by the year 2013. It was recognised that a number of difficulties would be faced in achieving this objective and work has continued, and will continue throughout 2004, to overcome remaining obstacles.

At their March 2004 meetings, eleven synods endorsed the principles adopted at the October 2003 consultation (as set out in the previous paragraph), the majority without a dissenting vote. The other two synods will address the matter at their October 2004 meetings but will not allow the delay to interfere with their participation in the ongoing process of resolving outstanding details and working towards an agreement for sharing in 2005. At a time when the United Reformed Church is seeking to clarify its vision of God's purpose for this part of the Church, and is being encouraged to "ensure that power is released to the places where the work of mission is done", the decisions of the March synods are very good news indeed.

At the Assembly, Tony Burnham retires from the convenership of the task group after an extended term of more than eight years. Tony has led the work of resource sharing with characteristic vision and pragmatism. He has chaired the consultations with good humour and wisdom and always in the context of his gifted biblical insights. As the work of resource sharing moves on, the United Reformed Church will want to recognise its debt of gratitude for Tony's contribution to what has been achieved so far.

#### **4. Mission Council appointment required for Convener of the Resource Sharing Task Group**

The Revd Tony Burnham's notification of retirement (see above paragraph above) from the convenership of this Task Group from Assembly 2004 means that a successor should be sought. The Deputy General Secretary having consulted with the Group about the qualities and skills required of a convener for this group at the present time, has led to a preliminary approach being made to the Revd Elizabeth Caswell to consider becoming the Group's convener. She is willing to serve in this capacity if Mission Council wishes to appoint her.

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#### **5. Report of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group (for inclusion in Mission Council's Report to General Assembly)**

1. Resolution 56 of the 2002 Assembly gave a clear steer for work on ethical investment. Mission Council's Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) is able to report progress in each of the main areas it identified.
2. Assembly's first request was for EIAG to examine, in the light of the current United Reformed Church guidelines, the more detailed research and policies of some sister churches. EIAG has studied these and held discussions with Anglican and Methodist colleagues. We are also seeking feedback from Synod Church and Society Committees and others about the subjects of most concern to our members. It is hoped to offer some revised policy guidelines to a future Assembly.
3. Assembly's second request was to consider the scope for greater United Reformed Church participation ecumenically. The EIAG has reassessed the effectiveness of our present engagements. EIAG members have actively encouraged a new approach by the Church Investors Group, which has now been agreed. The Church Investors Group consists of representatives of major Christian denominations. It is a great opportunity for working together in the field of investment, and thus working from a

position of combined strength. The United Reformed Church is represented on a steering group established in 2003, which is reshaping the Group so that it develops both as a forum for sharing ideas ecumenically and as a platform for acting in concert on matters of mutual concern. The changes should make the Church Investors Group the key place for inter-denominational discussion and action.

4. Assembly's third request was to consider giving day-to-day investment decisions to managers explicitly committed to a Christian ethos. At the end of 2003, The United Reformed Church Trust transferred the funds previously managed by a commercial bank into a Charities Investment Fund managed by CCLA Investment Management Limited. The EIAG welcomes this move as being in the spirit of the Assembly request. CCLA's clients include some of the largest Anglican funds as well as large and small charities. They are well aware of Church concerns. Investing in a pooled fund means that the individual investment decisions will be taken by CCLA, but the EIAG will monitor the work of CCLA and offer comment to the Trust.
5. Although individuals are free to make whatever investment decisions they wish, the work of the EIAG has to take account of the legal requirements on Fund Trustees. These are equally important for those making decisions relating to other Trust Funds in Synods and elsewhere in the Church's life.

**6. Convener of the Ethical Investments Advisory Group required:**

Mission Council agreed the appointment of the group (October 2003 – minute 02/61). The Deputy General Secretary has acted as convener in the absence of other suggestions, but the Group (and not least the Deputy General Secretary), would welcome the appointment of a 'permanent' convener.

Members of the group are John Ellis (nominated by the Church and Society), Matthew Previtt, Fiona Smith (URC Trust), Richard Nunn (URC Pensions Trust), Avis Reaney ( Financial Secretary), with the Secretary of Church and Society acting as Secretary.



MISSION COUNCIL  
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M

## Mission Council Advisory Group

### 1. Lay Staff Pension Scheme and the role of the Pensions Executive

The United Reformed Church provides a pension arrangement for lay staff through a pension provider called The Pensions Trust, based in Leeds. At present there is no United Reformed Church committee or group which has responsibility for having an overview of the lay pension scheme or to liaise with The Pensions Trust.

Mission Council Advisory Group on the advice of the Financial Secretary, the General Secretary and the Treasurer (and with the agreement of the Finance and Ministries Committees) agreed with their proposal that the Pensions Executive should take on the additional responsibility of having an overview of the lay pension scheme and liaising with The Pensions Trust, reporting to the Finance Committee in respect of Lay Pension Scheme matters.

This is a matter of report to Mission Council.

In discussing the membership and terms of reference of the Pensions Executive, MCAG became aware that this group, though authorised by Mission Council, had not been appointed for a specific term of service. One consequence of this is that its convener and one of its members had served since before 1990.

To make appointments to the Pensions Executive consistent with other Assembly committees, sub-committees and advisory groups of Mission Council, MCAG agreed that the membership of the Pensions Executive should be reviewed, and members should serve under termed appointments.

This is a matter of report to Mission Council.

### 2. Progress report on the Resolutions concerning the Assembly Commission's Report to the March 2003 Mission Council

MCAG accepts that the special Assembly process agreed by March 2003 Mission Council has come to an end, and in the absence of there being any other Assembly procedures in place at the present time for determining fitness for ministry except on disciplinary grounds, there is no process available to Mission Council for examining further the outstanding issues concerning a minister who is in a long-term dispute with the councils of the United Reformed Church. The minister's future relationships with the Church will have to be handled through the normal processes of the Church. Mission Council is at the same time committed to reviewing the wider issues of this case.

In fulfilment of Resolution 5 (March 2003 Mission Council) which stated that *Mission Council instructs the Mission Council Advisory Group to establish terms of reference for a review to consider the lessons for the United Reformed Church from this case and to appoint a review group. Mission Council further undertakes to consider all recommendations emerging from this review.*

MCAG agreed terms of reference (issued at the January Mission Council) and has appointed a review group, consisting of Dr Lesley Orr (convener), the Revd Carla Grosch-Miller, and the Revd Peter Poulter. It is hoped that this group will report early in 2005.

### **3. Paper on the Ecclesiology of the United Reformed Church**

MCAG has received a paper from the Doctrine Prayer and Worship Committee on the ecclesiology of the United Reformed Church, which is a reworking of a section of the report on Personal and Conciliar Leadership and Authority in the United Reformed Church, and which Mission Council discussed extensively in 2003. MCAG has asked the DPW committee to revise the paper in the light of further comments, and to bring a final version to the October Mission Council. MCAG is aware of the careful and extensive work which has gone into this paper's preparation, initially by the task group on Personal and Conciliar Leadership, and subsequently by the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship committee. It is anticipated that the finished document will be a valuable resource for those engaging in discussions with ecumenical partners.

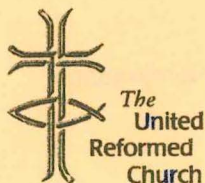
### **4. MCAG as Charity Trustee**

MCAG, as the Charity Trustee of the Church, has been reviewing its responsibilities for risk management, which involve reviewing regularly areas of governance, operational, financial, and external risks, compliance with the law and regulation. While there are existing procedures to mitigate risk in many of these areas, e.g. the Good Practice document, financial monitoring, etc. MCAG has agreed that an action plan and timetable be drawn up to drive a more systematic process of monitoring, reporting and reviewing risk management procedures.

Members of MCAG and others are aware that the Mission Council Advisory Group was designed to be just that: an advisory group planning Mission Council's agenda and offering personal support and counsel to the Assembly Moderator and to the General Secretary. As members appointed by Mission Council can only serve on MCAG for as long as they are members of Mission Council (which is determined by the synods which appoint them), and the convener is the Moderator of General Assembly, the only 'permanent' members are the General Secretary and the Hon Treasurer (with the Deputy General Secretary acting as secretary). This is neither a satisfactory basis for the appointment of trustees, nor their operation. There is insufficient continuity of service, and there is no policy of appointing people to cover specific areas of 'expertise', as would otherwise be the case when appointing trustees. MCAG also meets only three times a year.

For these reasons, further thought needs to be given to governance in this area. Although no radical alternatives are likely to be proposed before the present review of the Church has been completed, Mission Council ought to be aware of the trustee responsibilities which MCAG holds at the present time and the need for some adjustment to be made either to its composition of membership, the terms under which people are appointed, or that another group become charity trustee.





MISSION COUNCIL  
19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> March 2004

N

## Nominations Committee

### **The Appointment of Synod Moderators and the Review of their Appointments**

#### **The Guidance**

#### **A: New appointments**

##### 1. Preparing for meeting

1.1 The Nominating Group for an initial appointment by General Assembly will consist of eight people. Four people, including the Convener of the Group, will be appointed by the Nominations Committee from a panel elected by the General Assembly. Four people will be appointed by the Synod where the vacancy exists and will be responsible for ensuring that the views of church members throughout the area of the Synod are given proper consideration.

1.2 The General Secretary will normally act as secretary to the Group and will arrange the dates and places of meetings. The beginning of the process will most probably be in the September prior to the Assembly at which the appointment will be made.

1.3 All costs will be met by the synod to which the appointment is being made, except the out of pocket expenditure of those appointed by the Nominations Committee, which will be a charge on the General Assembly. The services provided by the General Secretary and his office shall not be a charge on the Group.

1.4 The Synod Clerk will ensure that a comprehensive process of consultation is carried out within the Districts and churches of the Synod and among ecumenical partners before the Group holds its first meeting. The Synod Clerk may serve as a voting member of the Nominating Group

1.5 The Convener of the Group and the Synod Clerk will circulate to members of the Group a draft job description and person profile, incorporating the appropriate national and local requirements. The Group will normally approve these by correspondence and will only meet to consider these documents when the Convener judges there is a serious disagreement. The Synod Clerk will advertise the vacancy in *Reform* and within the synod. The advertisement should also be posted on appropriate web sites. The Synod Clerk will oversee the process of issuing details to enquirers. Where the Synod Clerk is advised of a nomination the nominee will be contacted by letter and invited, if willing to be considered, to supply appropriate documentation. All nominees shall receive what is essentially the same letter and be advised who has made the nomination. The closing

date for applications will allow details to be circulated to members of the Nominating Group before the short-listing meeting.

## 2. The meetings of the Nominating Group

2.1 The Nominating Group will agree a short list of applicants to be interviewed. If, in the judgment of the Group, there are no suitable applicants, the Group may re-advertise the post and invite applications from people not yet considered.

2.2 The second meeting will carry out interviews with the short-listed candidates and arrive at a name for nomination to the General Assembly. In the event of failure to reach unanimous agreement the support of three Synod and three General Assembly members of the Group is an acceptable basis for a nomination but a simple majority decision is not.

2.3 The Nominating Group will normally bring its recommendation to the Nominations Committee for presentation to the Mission Council in March, there to be confirmed or not. This will enable the General Secretary to arrange preparation for the Moderator-elect and a formal reception at the July General Assembly. However, circumstances may require a different time-table.

## **B. The re-appointment of a serving Synod Moderator**

### 3. Preparing for meeting

3.1 Before a Review Group is appointed the General Secretary will ascertain from the Moderator concerned whether she/he wishes to be considered for a further period of service. This consultation should take place in time for a Review Group to be formed, consider the matter and reach a conclusion no later than eight months before the end of the current appointment. The Review Group, appointed by the Nominations Committee, will consist of five people from outside the synod concerned. The General Secretary or, in his absence, the Deputy General Secretary, will provide services to the Group.

3.2 The synod will appoint its own internal Review Panel, consisting of one representative from each District or equivalent structure under the convenorship of the Synod Clerk. The members of this group would be charged to consult as widely as possible within their constituency. They should meet with the synod Moderator to discover the Moderator's view of the way his/her work has developed and her/his vision for a possible further period of service. The records of any appraisal system should be made available for such a meeting. The panel will then arrive at the synod's view of whether an invitation should be issued for a further time of service.

### 4. The meetings of the Review Group

4.1 The Review Group will receive written submissions from the Moderator and the Review Panel. They will then meet separately with the Moderator and the Review Panel, or its representatives, and interview them on the basis of their submissions. The Review Group will then reach a conclusion on the re-appointment and inform the Nominations Committee who will bring it to Mission Council no later than six months before the conclusion of the appointment.

4.2 If either the synod or those appointed to act on its behalf between meetings (e.g. an Executive Committee) or the moderator concerned wishes to challenge the decision of the Mission Council they must enter an appeal within one month of the decision being made. The Mission Council shall then appoint a group of five people to hear the appeal and a member of its staff to provide services. The decision of that group will be final.

**Resolution:**

**Mission Council accepts the report of the Nominations Committee containing new guidelines for the appointment and review of synod moderators, and invites the committee (a) to propose to Assembly 2004 any consequent changes to the Rules of Procedure, and (b) to inform that Assembly that the new guidelines have replaced those reported to the Assembly of 1986.**

## DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2005

	Actual 2002	Actual 2003	Budget 2003	Budget 2004	Draft Budget 2005
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
<b>MINISTRY</b>					
Local and special ministries and CRCWs	14,835	14,876	15,097	15,610	15,754
Synod moderators - stipends and expenses	505	526	513	533	550
Ministries committee	235	223	239	252	251
	15,575	15,626	15,849	16,395	16,555
<b>TRAINING</b>					
College training for stipendiary ministry	1,053	990	1,115	1,145	1,190
Other training for stipendiary ministry	225	166	201	220	224
Training for non-stipendiary ministry	161	150	140	147	140
Central cost of Youth and Children's Work trainers	178	193	259	268	248
Lay training costs	45	57	98	110	89
Training committee	99	102	137	114	128
	1,760	1,658	1,950	2,004	2,019
<b>OTHER MISSION ACTIVITIES</b>					
Grants	314	318	317	301	305
Ecumenical committee and international	306	272	295	268	272
Council for World Mission	47	50	50	50	50
Church and Society committee	91	77	81	85	87
Racial Justice programme	74	67	83	83	89
Life and Witness committee	91	88	100	106	107
Windermere Centre	78	82	40	40	57
Youth and Children's Work committee	132	137	192	172	233
Yardley Hastings	120	142	100	125	0
Pilots Development	64	74	72	80	83
Other committees	17	12	15	16	15
	1,334	1,319	1,346	1,326	1,298
<b>SUPPORT ACTIVITIES</b>					
General Assembly and Mission Council	308	199	204	235	303
Communication and Editorial	266	233	310	290	295
Finance office	287	301	323	348	384
Central secretariat	232	235	220	229	241
Professional fees	64	48	92	93	84
Computer network	45	47	55	56	60
URC House costs	247	221	217	234	249
Depreciation on buildings	90	86	75	0	0
General church costs	105	76	112	107	96
	1,644	1,447	1,607	1,592	1,711
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>20,313</b>	<b>20,050</b>	<b>20,751</b>	<b>21,317</b>	<b>21,582</b>

## DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2005

	Actual 2002	Actual 2003	Budget 2003	Budget 2004	Draft Budget 2005
<b>INCOME</b>					
<b>MINISTRY AND MISSION FUND CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	18,687	19,312	19,454	20,077	20,375
<b>INVESTMENT INCOME</b>					
Dividends	245	269	257	180	230
Interest	68	14	50	0	0
	314	283	307	180	230
<b>GRANTS RECEIVABLE</b>					
Memorial Hall Trust	350	280	280	280	280
New College London Trust	344	286	300	290	290
	694	566	580	570	570
<b>LEGACIES</b>	656	196	0	0	0
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>					
Donations	321	50	50	50	0
Sundry	21	20	10	10	10
	341	70	60	60	10
<b>PROFIT ON SALE OF PROPERTIES</b>	425	40			
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	21,117	20,467	20,401	20,887	21,185
<b>NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCE</b>	804	417	(350)	(430)	(397)

*The following statement on religious offences has been received from the Steering Group of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. A Bill on religious offences is about to begin its journey through Parliament. The statement has been drawn up by Muhammad Abdul Aziz. The Steering Committee noted that the Churches' Commission on Inter-Faith Relations's Moderator, Revd Baroness Kathleen Richardson, would be signing the statement on CCIFR's behalf, as it is fully in accord with the Commission's settled policy. The Committee asked that it now be circulated to all our member Churches, so that those church leaders who felt it accorded with their own denominational policy could, if they chose, add their own signatures.*

### Joint Statement by Community Leaders of Faith Communities

As community leaders of faith communities, we believe that we are enriched by the multi-faith nature of British society in many ways. We believe, therefore, that all British citizens, whatever their religion or belief, must be protected by law from religious hate crimes.

The report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Religious Offences suggests that there is a clear gap in the law with regards to incitement to religious hatred—a view shared by the Government in its response to the report. We believe that such a gap provides the potential for undoing the good community relations painstakingly developed by ethnic and faith communities over the years. Failure to provide protection from prejudice and bigotry cost millions of lives in Europe in the last century. We must always seek to ensure that such levels of hatred are eliminated at a very early stage in their development.

We, therefore, urge the Government to legislate against incitement to religious hatred as soon as possible. We note the support this proposal has from law enforcement and criminal justice agencies across the board—the Police, the CPS, the Home Office and the Attorney-General, who believe that such legislation will greatly assist to tackle certain public disorder and safety issues, and in the long term, help to enhance community cohesion.

There is some concern that such legislation would result in unacceptable infringement of the right to free speech. It is clear from the report of the Select Committee on Religious Offences and the Government's response to that report, however, that whilst the body of international, European and national law on human rights seeks to strike a balance between the right to free speech and the right to religion, in this case, it strikes that balance in favour of concrete laws against incitement to religious hatred. In fact, in recent years, there have been calls from numerous international, European and national human rights bodies, entrusted with monitoring and upholding human rights treaties and laws, for such legislation to be introduced across the UK.

By acting now, the Government will not only eliminate a gap in our law and provide urgently needed protection to some of the most vulnerable minority communities in Britain, but will also eradicate a legal anomaly that currently exists, where some faith communities in Britain are protected from incitement to hatred whilst others are not. According to the report of the Select Committee, not only is this divisive between faith communities but it also places the UK in breach of its commitments under the European Convention of Human Rights, which requires that any such protection be equally provided across all religions.

We note that the Government has shown a desire to legislate in this matter in the past—not least during the passage of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime & Security Bill 2001. In light of the Select Committee's findings, we urge the Government to revive that initiative, and beseech members of both the Houses of Parliament to support this move. In the end Parliament must be seen to be protecting faith communities and all people equally.

Resolutions to General Assembly from Assembly Committees

**Ministries Committee resolutions**

**Resolution M1**

**Reinstatement of Ministers**

General Assembly approves the following procedure regarding applications for reinstatement to the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church.

- i Ministers who have been deleted from the Roll of Ministers by resignation or by Assembly decision, and who wish to apply for re-instatement, shall in the first place consult the Moderator of the Synod of the area where they reside. The application procedure may not normally commence until five years have elapsed from the date their name was removed from the Roll.
- ii The Secretary for Ministries shall be informed by the applicant, who will be advised of the procedure to be followed.
- iii The Secretary for Ministries will notify the relevant Synod officer where the applicant resides of the application, and will ask the Synod and District to arrange an interview with the applicant. The Secretary for Ministries will ask the Synod that the following documents be obtained by them :
  - A) A personal statement from the applicant which covers :
    - the reason(s) for the deletion or resignation, and a reflection on the circumstances surrounding it
    - an outline of the applicant's personal development and journey of faith since the deletion or resignation
    - current employment
    - the reasons for seeking reinstatement, including their current conviction of call to the ministry.
  - B) At least two personal references in support of the applicant
  - C) A commendation from the applicant's local church
  - D) A statement from the Moderator of the Synod where the applicant resides, or an equivalent officer in an overseas church, where appropriate
  - E) A medical report
- iv The Synod will forward these papers (except the medical report) to the District or Area Council where the applicant now resides, and ask them to interview him/her and report their observation as to his/her suitability for re-instatement.
- v It should be noted that where the applicant has moved into a different Synod or Area/District since their name was removed from the Roll, the Synod handling the application will seek the observations of the present Moderator of their previous Synod, and of their previous District. The purpose of this enquiry is to place the present application in the context of the exercise of the applicant's last ministry.

- vi All these papers (except the medical report) will be sent to the Ministries Committee of the Synod where the applicant now resides, who will interview him/her, and report to the Secretary for Ministries.
  - vii All these documents, including the medical report at this stage, will be made available to the Accreditation Sub-Committee, which will interview the applicant. Following this final interview the Committee will decide whether or not to re-instate. The Secretary for Ministries will inform the applicant and his/her Synod of the decision as soon as possible.
  - viii On receipt of the decision of the Accreditation Sub-Committee, it shall be open both to the applicant and to the Synod to request a further hearing by the Ministries Committee. This hearing will be before a group from the Ministries Committee composed of those who have had no previous involvement with the reinstatement request. Such an application must be made to the Secretary for ministries not more than 21 days after the date of the notification of the decision of the Accreditation Sub-Committee to the applicant. There shall be no appeal from the decision of the Ministries Committee.
- 1 A small number of ministers are removed from the Roll of Ministers as a result of a disciplinary process or because they resign. These people cease to be ministers of the United Reformed Church and can only return to the Roll of Ministers if they apply successfully through a reinstatement procedure. This resolution relates to that procedure.
  - 2 Other ministers leave the roll as a result of asking for a transfer to another denomination. If they seek to transfer back onto the United Reformed Church roll at a later date they may be asked to work through this procedure although we expect that in some cases the Accreditation Sub- committee would decide that this is unnecessary.
  - 3 The current reinstatement procedure predates the introduction of the Section O process for ministerial discipline. It has therefore been reviewed by the Ministries Committee and we seek Assembly approval for a revised process as set out in the resolution. The principal change is to introduce an interview with the Accreditation Sub-Committee.

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## Resolution M2

## Entry Qualifications for candidating: Upper Age Limits

- i) Assembly reiterates its belief that ordination to the stipendiary Ministry of Work and Sacraments should take place by the age of 55 and to non-stipendiary Ministry of Word and Sacraments by the age of 60. The same ages should apply to the commissioning of Church Related Community Workers.
- (ii) Assembly notes that given the current candidating and training procedures, these maximum ages imply that the large majority of candidates will need to have made formal application five years before. Thus normally the latest date for application for stipendiary service will be age 50 and for non-stipendiary service age 55.
- (iii) Assembly nonetheless recognises that occasionally candidates have prior qualifications and experience that might shorten training. If any Synod wishes to



present an application from a candidate who is already less than five years from the maximum age of ordination, Assembly requests that the Synod contacts the Secretary for Training before doing so, in order to gain an indication of whether a shorter period of training is a realistic option.

**(iv) Assembly, having set minimum ages for commencing training for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments, confirms the minimum age for commencing training for Church Related Community Work ministry shall be 21 years.**

1. After full discussions at its 1996 and 1997 meetings, Assembly agreed age limits for candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments. The minimum age for training for stipendiary service was set at 18 while for non-stipendiary service it was decided it should normally be 25. The maximum ages for ordination were set at 55 for stipendiary service and at 60 for non-stipendiary service.
2. Given these maximum ages, and the normal length of time taken from first candidating to the completion of training, Assembly also set the maximum ages for candidating at 50 for stipendiary service and 55 for non-stipendiary service. In practice a few candidates with qualifications and experience which could shorten their training have come forward after the maximum age set by Assembly for candidating and there has been uncertainty about their treatment.
3. The Ministries Committee believes that there should be some flexibility in the maximum age for candidating to take account of such people. The first purpose of our resolution is therefore to make clear that such flexibility exists.
4. However, we need to emphasise that the normal routes through training mean that it will take five years and exceptions are likely to be few. To avoid generating false hopes and the possibility of deep disappointment later, we would want Synods to consult the Secretary for Training at the earliest possible stage if they were contemplating putting forward a candidate who was above the normal maximum age for candidating. In some cases a conversation with the Secretary for Training may make clear that an accelerated route is not a realistic possibility. Of course, no guarantees about training could be given at this stage. Nonetheless, the second purpose of the resolution is to underline the importance of this informal discussion.
5. Assembly has never set explicit ages for the ministry of Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs), although informal guidelines have developed in practice. We believe the opportunity should be taken to remedy this anomaly. Setting clear ages for CRCWs is the third purpose of the resolution.

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## **Resolution M3**

## **Equipping the Saints**

### **General Assembly:**

- i) **welcomes the report Equipping the Saints: Changing Ministry for the Challenge of Mission.**
  - ii) **challenges every congregation to respond locally to recommendation 1 and 2.**
  - iii) **invites comments on recommendations 3 to 13 from churches, Area/District Councils and Synods to be sent to Ministries Committee by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004.**
  - iv) **requests further work to be done by Ministries Committee in co-operation with the Catch the Vision Review Group and others so that formal proposals can be brought to the 2005 meeting of General Assembly**
-

General Assembly amends the Plan for Partnership by inclusion of the words in italics, as follows:

Para 6.1.4 Pulpit supply fees: when the Maintenance of Ministry Office has been advised that a minister remunerated under the Plan is unable to work due to ill-health or is on maternity leave or is absent on a sabbatical term which lasts for a period of more than *four weeks or is suspended under the Section O Process* or is the Moderator of General Assembly, the actual pulpit supply costs incurred by the church arising because of the absence will be reimbursed to the limit shown in Appendix A. In group pastorates and part time pastorates, reimbursement will only be in respect of services which would have been conducted by the absent minister. Claim forms for the reimbursement of pulpit supply costs can be obtained from the Maintenance of Ministry Office.

Para 6.3.4.5 Where, following an introduction by a Synod Moderator, a minister / Church Related Community Worker visits a church or community post in vacancy other than in connection with a preaching engagement, the cost of travel shall be paid by the church visited. The church shall be reimbursed from the Ministry and Mission Fund *the actual costs of travel, not exceeding the recommended lower Inland Revenue mileage rate*, of the minister / CRCW and spouse within the UK for a maximum of two visits.

Para 7.1 (currently Para 7) Ministers / Church Related Community Workers are entitled to 5 weeks holiday in each calendar year and one further Sunday away from the pastorate. When a minister / Church Related Community Worker only serves for part of a year the holiday provision should be pro rata. One week of holiday may be carried forward to the following year. Holiday entitlement is not affected by sick leave, in-service training courses or sabbatical leave. *Such periods of leave / absence may result in more than one week's holiday being carried forward into the following year.*

Para 7.2 *If a minister / Church Related Community Worker resigns from a pastorate or post immediately following any such period of leave / absence, stipend should be paid for any outstanding holiday entitlement untaken at the date of resignation, which may include outstanding holiday entitlement from the previous year, always provided that District Council concurs with the arrangements.*

Para 9.1.2 Except at the time of a minister / Church Related Community Worker's initial induction (when a full resettlement grant is payable) where the pastorate is part-time the grant shall be pro rata according to the scoping of the pastorate to be served. A full retirement resettlement grant will be paid to ministers / Church Related Community Workers who have completed 10 years service up to their retirement date, *whether this is at the age of 65 or earlier*. The grant will be reduced *pro rata* where the minister / Church Related Community Worker has not been in stipendiary service for 10 years, or the years of service have not been full-time.

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## **Training Committee resolutions**

### **Resolution T1**

### **Sabbaticals**

**General Assembly resolves to rescind restrictions on Ministers undertaking a sabbatical after the age of 60. Applications will be processed as with most CME requests, via the synod-training officer who will assess the proposal.**

The CME sub Committee considered the resolution of General Assembly 2003 asking that they reconsider the restriction on ministers over the age of 60 undertaking sabbaticals. The Training Committee has agreed with the CME sub committee's recommendation that we rescind this rule bearing in mind the following factors:

- The importance of equal opportunities for serving ministers whatever their age
- The fact that a number of ministers continue to serve the church in retirement
- The fact that both the Training Committee and CME sub Committee had earlier considered rescinding this rule. Concern to let the CME programme bed down before making any alterations - and then changes of staff in the Training and CME offices had delayed action. But the Training Committee is happy to accept the recommendation of the CME sub Committee

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### **Resolution T2**

### **David A.L.Jenkins**

**General Assembly acknowledges the enormous debt that it owes to the Revd David Jenkins for his services to TLS offered over the past 10 years and records its gratitude to him.**

David's service has been a gift to the church of incalculable value. His energy, dedication and skill have taken a project, established by the Scottish Churches Open College and rooted it successfully in the URC. It has grown and flowered under his care to become a dynamic lay training programme being the main route for the training of lay preachers but offering access training for all in the Church. Now owned by the URC and validated by the University of Wales, Bangor it is proving increasingly flexible in offering training in different fields and at different levels. This is in very large part due to David's indefatigable energy, tireless capacity to work and commitment to the programme and its worth. He is an administrator par excellence with great attention to detail, a teacher of skill, a dedicated pastor, an organiser and educator and the church has benefited hugely from the generosity of his life and service in this capacity amongst us

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### **Resolution T3**

### **Training Review**

**General Assembly encourages the Training Committee in its review of training needs, to explore further the pathways it has identified in the light of the assembly debate and to sample opinion and consult widely before returning with proposals to Assembly 2005.**

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## **Resolution T4**

## **Education and Training for Ministry**

**General Assembly agrees that all training for Ministers & CRCWs be reconfigured in a single framework called Education and Training for Ministry with initial ministerial training as ETM 1, Post Ordination Education and Training as ETM 2 and Continuing Education and Training as ETM 3.**

*The Committee is still considering whether to further abbreviate the title to EM i.e. Education for Ministry*

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## **Resolution T5**

**General Assembly agrees that ETM 1 and 2 be reconfigured as a coherent programme, with the learning of ministers and CRCWs in ETM 2 remaining under the care of Synods and the Training Committee's Studies Panel until the completion of ETM 2.**

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## **Resolution T6**

**General Assembly accepts the consequences of the Post Ordination Education and Training Review as set out in the Training Committee report and encourages the Training Committee to pursue the development of the programme along those lines.**

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## **Church and Society Committee resolutions**

### **Resolution CS1**

### **International Finance Facility**

**General Assembly notes with approval plans to create an International Finance Facility and pledges its support for ecumenical campaigns calling for its introduction.**

Reflecting its concern for global justice General Assembly 2003 formally endorsed the Millennium Development Goals. These Goals have been adopted by the global community and set targets to ensure that, by 2015, every child has schooling, avoidable infant and maternal mortality is prevented, more people have access to clean water and poverty is halved.

Progress toward these Goals has been made but much more remains to be done. The United Nations has estimated that, if the Goals are to be achieved, aid must be increased from the current level of just over \$50 billion per year to \$100 billion each year until 2015.

The UK Government is committed to reaching the target of spending 0.7% of national income on aid, but to halve poverty donor governments need to double aid. Further, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals money needs to be available to spend now. For this reason a new way to obtain a big increase in aid worldwide now - when it can have the most impact on tackling poverty - is being proposed.

With other developed countries the UK Government is creating an International Finance Facility (IFF), designed to double global development aid from US\$50 billion today to US\$100 billion a year in the years to 2015. The Facility would use donors' long-term commitments to borrow more money now for longer-term benefits. This would mean larger amounts of aid would be available between now and 2015 to spend on achieving the Millennium

Development Goals. None of the existing multilateral donor institutions can frontload aid in this way. The Facility would also move the developed world closer towards the international target of spending 0.7% of national income on aid and help to improve the way aid works.

Support for the IFF encompasses a concern to see fairer rules governing global trade. Aid is needed to build the infrastructure, create an educated and healthy workforce, develop systems to deter corruption, and to create an environment where trade can be increased. The benefits of trade can be realised if aid is increased effectively.

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## Resolution CS2

## Israeli Separation Barrier

### General Assembly:

- i) views with deep indignation the Separation Barrier currently being constructed by the Government of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
- ii) believes that the Barrier is causing profound social and economic problems for the Palestinian population as well as seriously hampering efforts to find a just and long lasting peace in the region.
- iii) condemns unreservedly terrorist attacks upon innocent civilians but believes that the best way for Government of Israel to provide long-term security for its people is to engage in a peace process that will result in the end of the occupation in accordance with long-standing UN resolutions.
- iv) calls upon the UK Government to use its influence to see that construction of the barrier is halted, that existing sections are dismantled and that confiscated land is returned to Palestinians along with compensation for any damage caused.
- v) pledges itself to support the work of peace groups within Israel and the Occupied Territories and UK based advocacy groups, such as Christian Aid and EAPPI in their work in the Occupied Territories.

**1.1 Background.** The building of a barrier was originally proposed by the Labour Party in 1989/90 and opposed by Ariel Sharon, then in opposition. The idea was for a barrier to follow the Green Line, thus demarcating the border, and for settlements to be dismantled. In April 2002, the Israeli Cabinet approved a plan to 'improve and reinforce the readiness and operational capability to copy with terrorism'.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, Prime Minister Sharon approved construction providing the barrier did not follow the Green Line, so as to avoid legitimising the border. Many Palestinians see the Barrier as creating a *de facto* border between Israel and a future Palestinian state.

**1.2 The route of the barrier.** The barrier rarely follows the Green Line demarcating the West Bank from Israel. By deviating from the Green Line, the barrier has cut off communities from their land and Palestinians from their villages, even snaking into Palestinian territory to encompass Israeli settlements. Of the proposed 350km, 140km has been completed. The mainstream Israeli press has revealed plans to extend it to the Jordan Valley, one of the region's most fertile agricultural centres and the heartland of Palestinian agricultural production and exports, and to restrict travel to neighbouring Jordan.

**1.3 The cost of the barrier.** It is estimated that the cost of the wall is £1 million per mile.

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<sup>1</sup> Chris McGreal, 'Barricade or prison? A journey along Israel's security fence' *Guardian*, September 2003.

**1.4 Impact on the Palestinian Population.** The barrier is devastating every aspect of Palestinian life already many communities have experienced the loss of land, water, and resources which provide their sustenance as well as the destruction of community and personal property. Palestinian villages and towns near the barrier have become isolated ghettos where movement in and out is limited, if not impossible, thus severing travel for work, health, education, and visits to friends and family. For instance, in the 18 communities surrounded into an enclave in the Tulkarem district the inability to travel due to the Wall and Israeli military "closures" has brought the unemployment rate up from 18% in 2000 to an estimated 78% in the spring of 2003. In Qalqiliya, where the barrier seals the city with one Israeli military controlled checkpoint, it is estimated that nearly 10% of the 42,000 residents have been forced to leave due to the city's imprisonment, closure of the market, and inability to find work. In the future the situation will get much worse. B'Tselem, a leading Israeli human rights organisation, calculates that over 210,000 Palestinians living in 67 towns, villages and cities will be directly harmed by it. Almost 12,000 people living in thirteen communities will be imprisoned in isolated enclaves to the west of the Wall, with another 128,500 residents cut off on the east side. Tens of thousands of Palestinians will be separated from their farms. Not only is the barrier carving out Palestinian land while incorporating settlements on the Israeli side of the barrier, but it has psychological consequences. As Alison Kelly, Head of Christian Aid's Middle East team, wrote last October, 'the Wall is effectively making the area into a giant prison camp'.

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## **Communications and Editorial Committee resolutions**

### **Resolution CE1**

**General Assembly recognising that Communication is at the heart of the Gospel reaffirms the commitment of the United Reformed Church to openness and accessibility in all its discussions and decisions. Accordingly General Assembly instructs the Communications and Editorial Committee, in co-operation with the other committees of General Assembly to work towards:**

- i ) providing open access to all documents and resources not considered to be confidential**
- ii) the facility for interest groups within the church to engage in discussions at a distance**
- iii) a framework of common email addresses throughout the church.**

*There will be supporting text*

### **Resolution CE2**

**General Assembly recommends to the churches the leaflet "Get Noticed" as a basis of enhancing their visibility in the community.**

*There will be brief supporting text.*

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# **Assembly Arrangements Committee**

## **Report to Mission Council – March 2004**

### **Introduction**

The Committee continues with its routine work of preparation for the General Assemblies to be held in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. A booking has already been made for 2006 on the basis of the numbers expected at General Assembly 2004, although an option has been obtained for a limited time, to enable us to reduce the accommodation required – within certain limits - if necessary. A provisional booking has already been made for 2007; for this year the option of a significant reduction in numbers has been factored into the arrangements.

In addition to that routine work, the Committee has been considering the future of General Assembly. This can be very simply divided into two areas:

- (1) the financial cost, and
- (2) the shape, size and form of General Assembly.

### **Future Assemblies**

As before, the committee continues to assert that the shape, size and form of General Assembly is not to be determined exclusively, or even primarily, by financial considerations. Neither is General Assembly to be designed in isolation from the remaining components necessary for the governance of the church.

The Committee is firmly of the view that this is only capable of satisfactory resolution through radical change. The proposals that the Committee is making to the Review group will require consideration under the 2-year rule as amendments to the Structure of the URC.

### **The cost of future Assemblies**

In the meantime, it is possible to ameliorate the cost of General Assembly. The major factor is the number of people participating (whose costs are borne by the church); the fewer the people, the less the cost. Indeed there is likely to be a further saving as a consequence of reducing the number of people attending assembly: there are many more venues that offer facilities for meetings of 250 people than offer facilities for 650 people; as a consequence, competition is greater and the price often reflects this advantageously, compared with the rate that we currently have to pay.

You will recall that at the January 2004 meeting of Mission Council we agreed to these two proposals:

- (a) Mission Council requests district councils not to avail themselves of the right to fill vacant places in the General Assembly by making appointments from other districts within the province or nations; and*
- (b) Mission Council requests Synods to give careful consideration as to the necessity of filling all their allocated places in the General Assembly.*

As we have not yet received details of the representation from Districts and Synods, the results of these resolutions are as yet unknown.

Now the Committee is considering a proposal to General Assembly 2004 that would return us at least to the ratio of representation that the URC started with in 1972.

This will be a proposal which is legally capable of taking effect at General Assembly 2005 – that is, it does not require consideration under the 2-year rule as an amendment to the Structure of the URC. This could therefore produce another immediate financial saving for the church.

## Proposal for General Assembly 2004

We suggest as the resolution:

General Assembly amends Section B of the Structure of the URC, paragraph 2.(5)(a), substituting for "one representative per eight churches" the words "one representative per ten churches" and substituting for "plus one per 800 church members" the words "plus one per 1,000 church members". This resolution is to take effect from the conclusion of General Assembly 2004.

### Rationale

#### *Numbers and cost-saving*

From the preliminary work that has been done on the statistics, it appears that adoption of the ratios set at the start of the URC would result in a reduction of approximately 64 members of Assembly. At 2005 costs this could save the church approximately £23,000.

This might be regarded as only nipping at the edges of the issue of General Assembly. However, it does produce real savings at an early opportunity. More radical proposals could not take effect until 2007. By then, this measure alone could have saved the church about £50,000 – and our earlier measures could also be contributing additional financial savings.

#### *Membership of the United Reformed Church*

The number of members of General Assembly shows a net increase over the period 1972 to 2001 through the addition of further categories of members. At the same time the diminution in church membership has slightly reduced the number of members of General Assembly. The reduction has been slight because the formula is linked also to the number of churches, which has not declined at anything like the same rate. The net result has been only a small total reduction in the number of those attending General Assembly at the expense of the church.

Over the same period, membership of the United Reformed Church has declined from 192,000 members (1973) to 85,000 members (2003).

#### *Ratio of representation*

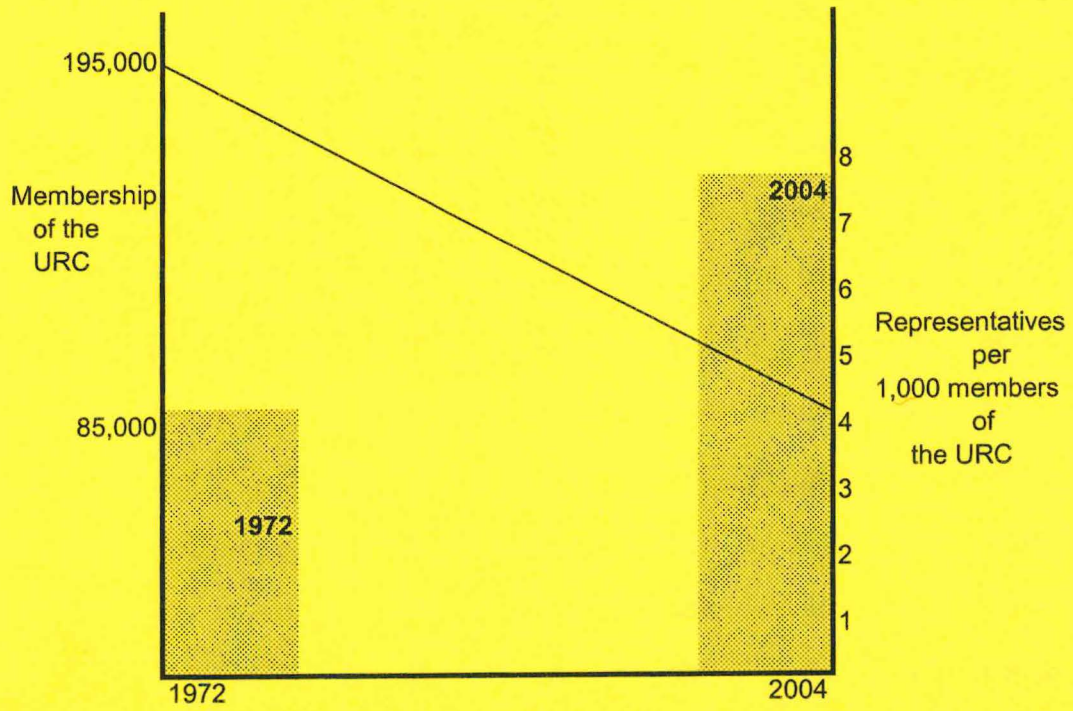
Representation, which started at 3.65 per 1,000 church members, now stands at 7.65 per 1,000 church members.

#### *Questions*

What justification is there for this inflation in representation? In an era where communication is (literally) light years quicker and more widespread than in 1973, is double the physical presence a sustainable argument? Where is our sense of responsibility for the resources which are thus used? What additional benefit is demonstrable? Should we even be looking at a more radical change in the ratio – perhaps to 1 to 12?



**Representation at General Assembly**  
number of representatives  
per 1,000 members of the church



### Membership of General Assembly

based on the current rules (x8), the original 1972 rules (x10)  
and other theoretical extrapolations (x12) and (x15)

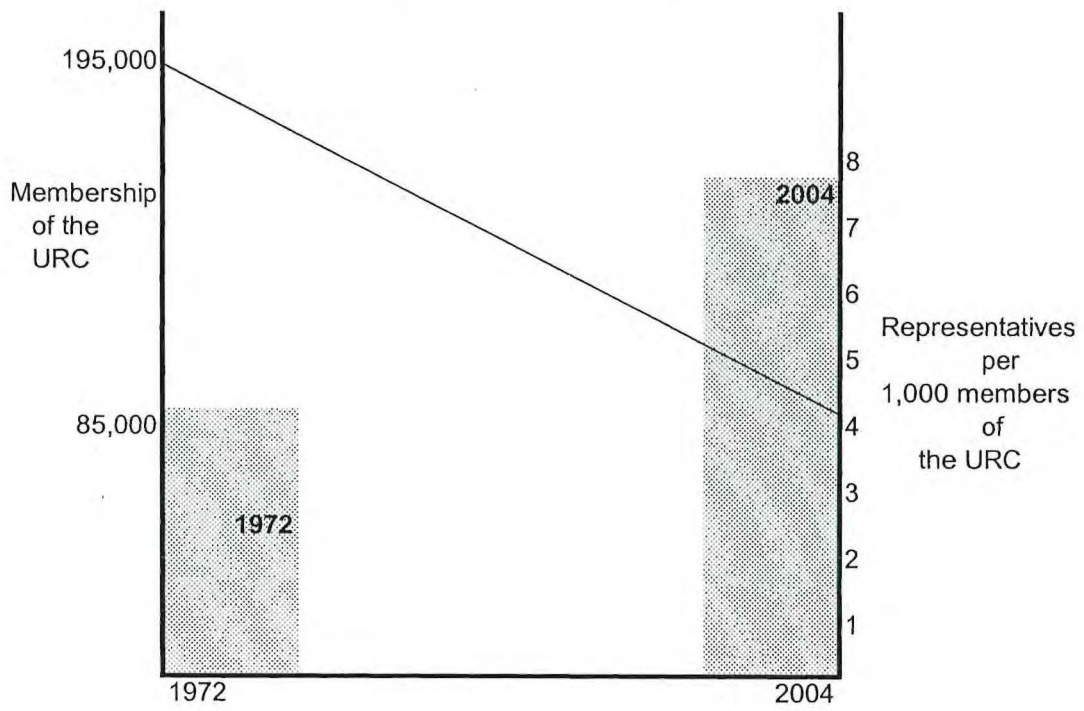
		x8	x10	x12	x15
Synod	1	24	20	18	16
Synod	2	42	32	30	26
Synod	3	24	22	20	16
Synod	4	30	26	22	22
Synod	5	32	28	24	24
Synod	6	36	30	28	26
Synod	7	36	30	28	24
Synod	8	34	32	30	26
Synod	9	38	32	28	24
Synod	10	38	32	28	26
Synod	11	48	40	36	30
Synod	12	28	26	24	22
Synod	13	22	18	14	14
		<u>432</u>	<u>368</u>	<u>330</u>	<u>296</u>

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# Assembly Arrangements Committee

## Report to Mission Council – March 2004

### Introduction

The Committee continues with its routine work of preparation for the General Assemblies to be held in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. A booking has already been made for 2006 on the basis of the numbers expected at General Assembly 2004, although an option has been obtained for a limited time, to enable us to reduce the accommodation required – within certain limits - if necessary. A provisional booking has already been made for 2007; for this year the option of a significant reduction in numbers has been factored into the arrangements.

In addition to that routine work, the Committee has been considering the future of General Assembly. This can be very simply divided into two areas:

- (1) the financial cost, and
- (2) the shape, size and form of General Assembly.

### Future Assemblies

As before, the committee continues to assert that the shape, size and form of General Assembly is not to be determined exclusively, or even primarily, by financial considerations. Neither is General Assembly to be designed in isolation from the remaining components necessary for the governance of the church.

The Committee is firmly of the view that this is only capable of satisfactory resolution through radical change. The proposals that the Committee is making to the Review group will require consideration under the 2-year rule as amendments to the Structure of the URC.

### The cost of future Assemblies

In the meantime, it is possible to ameliorate the cost of General Assembly. The major factor is the number of people participating (whose costs are borne by the church); the fewer the people, the less the cost. Indeed there is likely to be a further saving as a consequence of reducing the number of people attending assembly: there are many more venues that offer facilities for meetings of 250 people than offer facilities for 650 people; as a consequence, competition is greater and the price often reflects this advantageously, compared with the rate that we currently have to pay.

You will recall that at the January 2004 meeting of Mission Council we agreed to these two proposals:

- (a) *Mission Council requests district councils not to avail themselves of the right to fill vacant places in the General Assembly by making appointments from other districts within the province or nations; and*
- (b) *Mission Council requests Synods to give careful consideration as to the necessity of filling all their allocated places in the General Assembly.*

As we have not yet received details of the representation from Districts and Synods, the results of these resolutions are as yet unknown.

Now the Committee is considering a proposal to General Assembly 2004 that would return us at least to the ratio of representation that the URC started with in 1972.

This will be a proposal which is legally capable of taking effect at General Assembly 2005 – that is, it does not require consideration under the 2-year rule as an amendment to the Structure of the URC. This could therefore produce another immediate financial saving for the church.

## **Proposal for General Assembly 2004**

We suggest as the resolution:

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### **Rationale**

#### *Numbers and cost-saving*

From the preliminary work that has been done on the statistics, it appears that adoption of the ratios set at the start of the URC would result in a reduction of approximately 64 members of Assembly. At 2005 costs this could save the church approximately £23,000.

This might be regarded as only nipping at the edges of the issue of General Assembly. However, it does produce real savings at an early opportunity. More radical proposals could not take effect until 2007. By then, this measure alone could have saved the church about £50,000 – and our earlier measures could also be contributing additional financial savings.

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The number of members of General Assembly shows a net increase over the period 1972 to 2001 through the addition of further categories of members. At the same time the diminution in church membership has slightly reduced the number of members of General Assembly. The reduction has been slight because the formula is linked also to the number of churches, which has not declined at anything like the same rate. The net result has been only a small total reduction in the number of those attending General Assembly at the expense of the church.

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William M McVey  
Convener of Assembly Arrangements Committee

18 March 2004