



# MISSION COUNCIL

2 ~ 4 MARCH 1993

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Minutes of the Mission Council, held at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesden, from 2nd to 4th March 1993, which was constituted by the Moderator, Mrs Ruth Clarke, who presided. Worship throughout the Council was led by the Chaplain, the Revd Paul Quilter, with the assistance of members of the Council. Bible Studies on "Persistence in Prayer" had been prepared, at the invitation of the Moderator, by Janet Lees, joint co-ordinator of SPIN, in recognition of the fact that it was the mid-point of the Ecumenical Decade for Churches in Solidarity with Women. Janet Lees and Peter Colwell introduced the material which formed the basis of three periods of Bible study.

- 93/25 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES The Moderator welcomed members to the meeting. A particular welcome was given to the Revd Victor Premasagar, a Presbyter of the Church of South India, who had been invited to give his comments on the Council at the end of the meeting. The Moderator reminded the Council that at the January meeting there had been disagreement on how the Council should carry out its tasks. Much follow-up work had been done since then. We would bring the richness of our diversity and the unity of our purpose to the Council's deliberations.
- 93/26 ATTENDANCE There were 61 voting members present, with 9 staff in attendance, the Revd Victor Premasagar, the Revd Paul Quilter, Chaplain, and Mrs Sheila Tull, Minute Secretary. Apologies for absence were received from the Revds Jessie Clare and David Morgan, Mr Michael Healey and Mr William McVey.
- 93/27 THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT The Revd Tony Burnham outlined the Agenda and presented the proposed timetable, which were approved.
- 93/28 THE REVD VICTOR PREMASAGAR brought greetings from the Church of South India, where he had served until recently. He gave a brief account of the recent history of the Churches in India, including attempts at closer unity. Current priorities were to ensure that congregations were mission-orientated. However, it was not easy to persuade congregations, councils, and the Synod to answer a series of uncomfortable questions which had been put to them.
- 93/29 BUDGET 1994 A paper from the Financial Resources Committee, previously circulated, was presented by the Treasurer, Mr Alistair Black. The actual outcome for 1992 included a surplus on M of M Fund of £199,000 and an overall surplus of £55,000. The estimated outturn for 1993, allowing provision for a likely deficit of £23,000 for Yardley Hastings, was a shortfall of £13,489. The Financial Resources Committee had been made aware of a likely shortfall of £516,210 in 1994. The Financial Resources Committee was looking for an increase of 8% but this was not likely to be achieved: offers from Provinces for 1994 had so far averaged an increase of 4.24%. The level of giving did not always reflect the ability to give, but may reflect commitment to the decisions of Assembly. The paper set out items where savings might be made, as well as possible improvements in income and a campaign to encourage legacies. Possible reductions in expenditure in 1994 included: Retirement of full time stipendiary ministers at the age of 65; limits on stipends and pensions paid to ministers aged over 65; lowering the maximum entry

age of stipendiary ministers; limitation on ministers transferring from other denominations; reduction in trainees for the stipendiary ministry and CRCWs; reduction of grants in ecumenical situations; reduction in costs of committee meetings; reduction in central staff; CWM contribution not to be increased by the proposed 2.5% over 1993; cancellation of General Assembly 1994; training college costs to be rationalised; stipends - options (a) increase stipends to £13,200 in July 1993, but defer the next possible increase until January 1995; (b) increase stipends to £13,000 in July 1993, and increase in July 1994 by RPI (estimated at 4%) ie to £13,520; (c) increase stipends to £13,000 in July 1993, but defer the next increase until January 1995; stipend supplements and additional earnings - ministers to be encouraged to give the Church (by Gift Aid or under deed of covenant) all additional earnings such as supplements, chaplaincy payments, fees, etc.

It was noted that some of the additional giving by Provinces had been linked with the assurance of the proposed increase in 1993 of ministerial stipends to £13,200.

These suggested options were discussed among 7 groups, each of which was given a convener and a reporter: these were also the groups for Bible study and other discussion.

93/30

MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 - 7 January 1993, which had been circulated, were approved subject to the deletion of some redundant words and to the following amendments:  
in 93/9, page 3, line 11 amend to: "Church and Society representatives of Mission Council: the Revd Raymond Singh and the Revd David Morgan";  
in 93/10, page 4, under "Appointment of Directors" add: "the Revd John Maitland was appointed a Director of URC Thames North Trust Ltd. and of Hertfordshire Congregational Union (Incorporated). At a later session and ...."  
in 93/12 amend "3rd to 5th July" to "3rd to 7th July".  
on page 5, line 4 amend "Mark 3, 1-25" to "Luke 3, 1-21". on page 7, renumber 2nd and 3rd paragraphs 93/15/3 and 93/16.  
on page 8, renumber 1st paragraph 93/17/1; line 21, delete "abstention"  
in 93/21, 3rd line, delete "of Provincial Synods and District Councils" and replace by "organised by Central Committees of the church".

93/31

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (93/7.1) referring to a paper on resource sharing. This matter was referred to the Mission Council Advisory Group with power to establish a consultative group. (93/23) It was noted that the Mission Council should keep in mind the comments made by the Revd Ronald Blakey and perhaps further discuss them.

93/32

MISSION COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP REPORT The General Secretary indicated the contents of the Reports to General Assembly 1993. MCAG had decided that reports to Assembly from committees should not be presented to the Mission Council. Synods should not be asked to report to the Assembly in 1993 on their work, but guidelines could be given by the Mission Council as to the possible content of their reports in 1994. It was proposed that time should be allocated at the Assembly for the retiring Moderator of General Assembly to report on his/her experiences and reflections of the year of office. This was agreed.  
Children's Advocate. MCAG thought that the matter of the appointment of a National Children's Advocate should be reconsidered as the matter

had not been faced squarely in relation to the 1992 Assembly's recommendation about priorities. If possible it should be contained within a balanced budget. It was therefore resolved to suspend standing orders, so far as necessary, in order to reopen the matter of a Children's Advocate. The resolution was carried by 33 votes in favour, with 4 against.

A resolution that "Mission Council resolves to add the cost of the post of Children's Advocate to the budget of 1995 even if the training review is not complete" was deferred until the matter of the budget for 1994 had been decided.

Regarding the review of training policy, staffing and finance, MCAG proposed that "Mission Council resolves to appoint three people to meet and to advise the Council on how the review of training policy, staffing and finance might be undertaken."

An amendment proposed by Ivan Andrews to include the words "at least one of whom is or has been involved in training work within the URC" was not carried and the original resolution was agreed. Nominations with proposer and seconder were to be handed to the Clerk by Wednesday evening so that a vote could be taken on Thursday morning.

MCAG recommended that the general review of Assembly appointments be not undertaken until the future structure of Committees was clearer. Representation at Mission Council - election of members by Synods: MCAG considered that it was too soon in our life to consider this kind of change, taking from Synods their freedom to choose their own method; this matter had been passed to the group on Authority in the URC (Mersey Province and Doctrine and Worship); when asking Synods to appoint new members their attention would be drawn to the possibility of an election at Synod.

Mission Council future meetings - venues. It was noted that the meeting on October 1-3 1993 would be at Upholland; the one day January 1994 meeting would be either in central London or Birmingham; and for the March 18-20 1994 meeting it was hoped to book High Leigh.

The General Secretary also reported the results of a consultation held on 5th February 1993 with the executive staff working in Church House, with two advisers, David Lawrence and David Brain and with David Butler, as a provincial officer, on information and technology. The objective was to provide the best possible means to help the church to generate, gather, store, share, manage, disseminate and make accessible appropriate information throughout the URC and to do this economically, effectively and ecumenically. It was agreed that in the medium term, in-house databases would be created using DATA EASE and that the AMI PRO system using Windows would be used for word processing. A full report would be made and a policy paper circulated.

93/33 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE MCAG had prepared and circulated a paper for the information of the Mission Council. A report should be brought to the October 1993 meeting of the Council.

93/34 BUDGET 1994 (2) At the request of the Moderator group scribes reported on the views of the 7 groups on the items which they had been asked to consider.

93/35 GENERAL ASSEMBLY - RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS The General Secretary reminded the Council of its tasks - to look at all resolutions, the supporting papers and to recommend to committees any alterations suggested in the light of the Council's discussions. The

Mission Council could express a view to the General Assembly. Resolutions had been set out on green paper: The Structure of the URC; the reception of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Battlehill, Newcastle, as a local church of the United Reformed Church; the reception of Oakwood, Derby, as a local church of the United Reformed Church;

the reception of Christ Church Chineham, near Basingstoke as a local church of the United Reformed Church; the reception of Peachcroft Ecumenical Centre, Abingdon, as a local church of the United Reformed Church;

11 resolutions from the Finance Committees set out on blue paper; from the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee resolutions on Mission Projects - Recognition; Multiple Congregations forming one local church; "Church planting"; a report and resolution from the Multilateral Church Conversation in Scotland, 1992; from the Mission and Other Faiths Committee a resolution inviting leaders of other faith communities to the 1994 and subsequent Assemblies; from the Vocations Committee a resolution regarding entry qualifications to the stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministries; from the Ministries Committee a resolution on the report "Enhancing Effective Ministry";

resolutions arising from the proposed Europe report: Direct links; public policy, URC involvement; Faith and Order developments; from Doctrine and Worship Committee: review of Schedule C; a paper prepared by the Revd Martin Cressey at the request of the Mission Council on the roles of the Assembly Arrangements Committee, "the Officers of the Assembly" and the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee with a proposed resolution in two parts; from FURY Council a resolution on the Fairtrade Mark products.

The General Secretary also pointed out to the Council that the Urban Rural Mission Group had requested time for presentation of its final report and resolutions. Requests for presentation time on Disability, on New Resources for Developing Faith, on the URC as a Receiving Church and a presentation on "Europe" prepared jointly by Church and Society, World Church and Mission and Doctrine and Worship with action-orientated resolutions, also required consideration by the Council and should be put in some order of priority.

93/36

ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES A revised Standing Order would be needed on the length of time for speeches. Regarding the number of representatives from churches a new sentence would have to be proposed concerning churches with exactly 200 members; this would have to be brought back to the Assembly in 1994.

The Clerk reported that The Manual when written before 1992 had purposely omitted detailed procedures for disciplinary matters. We were now facing difficulties in this area, which meant that we would be having appeals to the Assembly. There could be no appeal arising from decisions of the Assembly (Manual, page 35). The appellants would be asked whether they would prefer the hearing to be initially before a committee meeting during the Assembly or the whole Assembly. A committee of the Assembly would be asked to see whether a solution could be found, but the decision on the appeal would have to be made by the whole Assembly.

Wednesday 3rd March

- 8.0 am Prayers were conducted by the Chaplain, with reflections on the readings given by the Revd Graham Cook.
- 9.15 am The Council met in 7 groups to continue discussion of Budget 1994 and also the proposed presentations and resolutions for General Assembly. All were asked to discuss "Europe" in addition to specific items.
- 11.30 am  
93/37 STAFFING ADVISORY GROUP The Revd Angus Duncan presented the report of the Staffing Advisory Group relating to Westminster College staff. In February the group had met the Principal, the Convener of the Board of Studies and the Secretary of the Training Committee and were reminded about the terms of appointment of present staff, and the vulnerable position of Old Testament studies within the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges, which were largely dependent on the post at Westminster. The group recommended that the General Assembly, before the retirement of the present Principal, should determine a policy regarding the use made of Westminster College. In that setting, it further recommended that the post of Director of New Testament Studies be continued for a further five years until 1998 and that, in the event of the resignation of the present Director of Old Testament Studies, a new appointment may be made for four years but not beyond 31st August 1998, without the approval of Mission Council. The Mission Council resolved that the post of Director of New Testament studies be continued for five years to 31st August 1998. The Mission Council resolved that, in the event of the resignation of the present Director of Old Testament studies, the post may continue for a further four years or for a period until 31st August 1998 whichever is the lesser. The Mission Council recommended to the General Assembly that the Council be authorised to take such steps as are necessary to recommend to the General Assembly a future policy regarding the use made of Westminster College and to report to the Assembly not later than 1995.
- 93/38 DIRECTOR OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES, WESTMINSTER COLLEGE The Revd Keith Forecast proposed on behalf of the Training Committee Review Group: The Mission Council, acting as a matter of urgency for the General Assembly, resolves that the Revd John Proctor shall on the completion of his first seven years as Director of New Testament Studies at Westminster College on 31st August 1993, continue in office for a further five years, to 31st August 1998. This was agreed.
- 93/39 DIRECTOR OF WINDERMERE CENTRE The Windermere Policy and Planning Committee had pointed out that the Centre, being residential, employing a number of staff and offering a variety of short courses, would be in serious difficulties if the present Director were to move and a vacancy existed. The Staffing Advisory Group recommended that to avoid administrative delays in dealing with this, the responsibility of the Mission Council be devolved in matters of urgency to MCAG. After questions, answers and discussion, it was resolved: The Mission Council, in the matter of the posts of Director of the Windermere Centre and the Chaplain of Yardley Hastings, , authorises the officers of the General Assembly to act on its behalf in matters of urgency.

- 93/40 PROVINCIAL MODERATORS The Staffing Advisory Group did not believe that it was competent to review the post of Provincial Moderator and therefore informed the Council that it did not intend to review the posts of five Provincial Moderators due for review before 1994.
- 93/41 SIZE OF STAFFING ADVISORY GROUP The group consists of three persons not currently officers of standing committees and in the event of one person being absent, the group is small. It was therefore agreed that:  
The Mission Council recommends to the General Assembly an increase in the Staffing Advisory Group to four persons not currently officers of standing committees, appointed by the Mission Council.
- 93/42 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE A question was asked as to whether nominations should be dealt with by the Mission Council or be taken to the General Assembly; it was reported that the current intention is that where there are routine replacements the Mission Council should be informed of nominations but the decision be taken at the General Assembly.  
Training Committee Convener - the Revd Dr John Morgans (12) had declined to serve.  
Christian Education and Stewardship: Revds R. Maitland (10), S. Thornton (1), L. Charlton (11), Mrs J. Hillier (9), Mr M. Wood (2), Mr K. Webster (10), Mr S. Griffiths (11), 1 vacancy to be filled from a list of alternatives.  
Christian Education Convener: Tony Ewens (2) or Jim Wilkinson  
New College London Foundation: The Mission Council approved the reappointment of the Revd John A. Pugh as a Governor for a further four years to March 1998.  
Advocacy and Stewardship Secretary Review Group. The following were nominated: Convener, The Revd Jessie Clare, Secretary, Mr Hilary Gunn; the General Secretary, the Revd Julian Macro, Mrs Barbara Martin, Mr Malcolm Johnston.  
It was suggested that the Nominations Committee should ask the General Assembly which appointments should be made by the Assembly, which by the Mission Council and whether some might be made by the Nominations Committee.
- 93/43 MINUTES OF APPRECIATION Mrs Mary Marsden requested that, since the World Church and Mission Department no longer existed to record Minutes of Appreciation of retiring missionaries, these be received by the Mission Council.  
The Mission Council endorsed the Minutes of appreciation of the Revd Robin and Mrs Muriel Sleigh, of Mr Anthony and Mrs Susan Gay, of Mr Peter and Mrs Agnes Storey, of the Revd Jim and Mrs Pamela Pelling, passed by the World Church and Mission Personnel Committee; and instructed that a copy be attached to the Mission Council Minutes.
- 93/44 CLERK TO THE ASSEMBLY The General Secretary and the Clerk had discussed the matter raised at the January meeting of the Mission Council regarding a deputy for the Clerk at Mission Council meetings. The Mission Council agreed not formally to create another office but that, in the event of the Clerk's absence, Mrs Wilma Frew be asked to deputise during her membership of the Mission Council.
- 93/45 APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS The Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly, resolved that the following be appointed as Directors

of the Sussex Congregational Union Inc.: Mr I.F. Sinclair, Mr D.R. Curry, Mr D.F. McKee, Mr A. Hamilton, Revd K. Chambers, Mr L. Popley, Mrs M. Elliott.

2.30 pm

93/46

PENSIONS Mr Victor Hughff, Convener, Pensions Sub-Committee and the Rev Michael Harrison, newly appointed Convener of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, were present. Mr Hughff reported that a video of the speech he had made to the Mission Council in October 1992 had been made and 100 copies made for use at Provincial and District level. He was also holding two teach-ins to which one person from each Province was invited who would become the expert on the general rationale and able to answer questions from individuals. Towards the end of March each member of the Pension Fund would receive a leaflet on the proposed pension changes, setting out the objective, the proposals and asking for a provisional response by 31st May 1993. After the Assembly each member will then be able to say whether he or she wishes to stay with the old rules or be included under the new rules. At the October meeting there were three crucial matters: we should aim to give a pension of 1/80th at retirement for each year of service; any rises should be linked to RPI limited to 5%; if there is any rule change people could opt out. Linking pensions to RPI rather than to stipends should mean a lower liability to the Pension Fund. The Retired Ministers Fund is a completely discretionary fund to raise the pension of those on a lower scale; there are some people who do not receive a pension, therefore it is necessary to keep the Retired Ministers Fund in being. Pensions would rise to 1/80th for each year of service from 1978 to the present time and pensions before 1971 would be raised by 10%. If we do that we can keep the liability of the Pension Fund within what we do envisage. If everybody switches we may even have a slightly smaller deficit. We cannot do all that we wanted to do. Rule 34; anyone who wishes to remain under the old rules can do so, by rule 34. At present there is no time limit for such opting, but when the rules are changed there will be choice within three months of the date of the change of the rule, both in an amended old rule 34 and in the new rules. Mr Hughff answered questions from members of the Council.

93/47

BUDGET (CONTINUED) Reports were received from the groups and comments were noted. It was agreed that a small group chosen by the Treasurer be asked to prepare a paper based on these comments for decision by the Council at the plenary session on the following day.

93/48

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS - REPORTS FROM GROUPS  
Comments on resolutions from Committees were noted by the Conveners responsible for drafting them.  
Mr Hartley Oldham spoke about the proposed indemnity for Trustees of the URC Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd and of the URC Trust.  
Comments were made on the report "Who goes where?" from the Multilateral Church conversation in Scotland, 1992; the Mission Council generally approved the response drafted by the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee and proposed that Assembly make such a response and give authorisation to the Multilateral Church Conversation to continue its work, reaffirming the URC's 1986 encouragement for the preparation of a Plan of Union. The Convener

and Secretary of the World Church and Mission Committee were requested to renegotiate the form in which the report and resolutions would appear in the Reports to Assembly.

The Vocations Committee was requested to withdraw the paper regarding entry qualifications - age of entry to the stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministries for further consideration by the committee in the context of "Patterns of Ministry".

It was suggested that the Ministries Committee response to the Northern College proposed future programme 'Enhancing Effective Ministry' be incorporated in the Book of Reports but without a resolution.

Doctrine and Worship Committee resolutions on the revised version of Schedule C. It was recognised that a number of people might want to amend the wording of the proposed revised version of Schedule C and the Committee might be wise to offer a range of options on which the Assembly could take decisions. The Districts looked for minimal changes but individuals may have strong views on major changes. It was suggested that people speaking on behalf of the Mission Council might propose alternatives.

Standing Orders. The Clerk said that a resolution near the beginning of Assembly would be needed so that Standing Orders could be waived as necessary. The indulgence of the Assembly would be needed while the Mission Council worked out new ways of presentation of reports.

93/49

THE ROLE OF ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE, "THE OFFICERS OF THE ASSEMBLY" AND THE CONVENER OF THE ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE The Mission Council accepted the report prepared at its request by the Revd Martin Cressy and revised after a Committee discussion on 17.12.92. It was agreed that a brief report and the following resolutions be included in the Mission Council report to Assembly:-

The General Assembly acting under its powers to elect officers (URC Structure 2(5)-general description of elections and appointments) and to add such of them as it determines to its membership (URC Structure para. 2(5)(b)),

(a) elects the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee of the Mission Council to be an officer of the Assembly and grants to the Convener membership of the General Assembly under para. 2(5)(b) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church, with the duty of advising the Assembly and its Moderator on questions of how, when and for how long items of Assembly business shall be considered: (b) confirms that the Deputy General Secretary is an officer of the Assembly with membership of the General Assembly under para. 2(5)(b) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church, with the duty of deputising for the General Secretary, in close consultation with the other officers of the Assembly, in any emergency which made it impossible for the General Secretary to carry out Assembly duties.

8.0 pm

The groups met to discuss the possible contents of the Mission Council Report to Assembly.

93/50

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS - REPORTS FROM GROUPS (CONTINUED)

The Urban Rural Mission Group report layout was found to be helpful. It was agreed to allow a total of 45 minutes for presentation and discussion of this report and resolution.

"Europe" at 1993 Assembly. Warm appreciation was expressed for all the work which had been done on this proposed presentation. A request



had been made for three hours of Assembly time. After discussion, comments and further information it was suggested that the time might be divided into four half-hour periods. The URC as a Receiving Church - a proposed discussion point for the 1993 Assembly was received from the Personnel Committee. It was suggested that this matter should come first to the Mission Council. The Convener agreed to this proposal.

Proposals from Faith and Life for presentations on Disability and on New Resources for Developing Faith were accepted with the suggestion that 30 minutes be allocated to each, possibly pointing to fringe meetings later in the Assembly.

The Europe Co-ordinating Group brought a resolution to the Mission Council on "Direct Links", amended as follows: "Mission Council requests the Missionary and Ecumenical Work Abroad committee, in consultation with the Doctrine and Worship committee if necessary, to consider the implications of requests by people seeking to transfer their church membership between churches in different parts of Europe and how such transfers might most simply and easily be carried out." After discussion, the Revd Malcolm Hanson moved that the motion be not put. The motion was carried.

Thursday 4th March

After prayers, with reflections by Mrs Maureen Buxton, the Mission Council resumed its business at 9.45 am.

- 93/51 VOTING PAPER The Clerk had prepared a voting paper in accordance with nominations received. The paper was distributed by the Tellers to members entitled to vote.
- 93/52 BUDGET 1994 (CONTINUED) Mr Alistair Black reported on the views of the small group consisting of the Revd David Helyar, Mrs Mary Stacy, the General Secretary, the Financial Secretary and himself. There was likely to be a deficit of £516,210 to which was to be added £10,000 for Yardley Hastings.
- Legacies have usually been kept to cover contingencies therefore it was considered best not to include a sum for legacies in the income total. It was important that support be given to advocacy on the proposed work to be done in seeking further legacies. A Provincial contribution of £78,000 was thought to be an appropriate sum.
- Costs. In the light of the feelings expressed by Mission Council the group suggested opting for 28.a): "increase stipends to £13,200 in July 1993, but defer the next possible increase until January 1995" (a possible saving of £238,000).
- On 2.9 - stipend supplements and additional earnings - the group thought that it was important to start considering the method by which this proposal might be pursued, but that it was not appropriate to incorporate a figure in the 1994 Budget. Maintenance of the Ministry should initiate that work as soon as possible.
- Regarding 2.2.1 "retirement of full time stipendiary ministers at the age of 65" - the group agreed to incorporate £50,000 as a possible saving; on 2.2.2 - "stipends and pensions paid to ministers aged over 65" - more work was needed; 2.2.3 "lowering the maximum entry age of stipendiary ministers" - would be further considered by the Vocations Committee, therefore no sum should be included.
- On 2.2.4 - "limitation on ministers transferring from other denominations" - we should not deprive ourselves of the services of such ministers. However, if 10 ministers were transferred as was

likely, it would increase the deficit. 2.2.5. - "reduction in trainees for the stipendiary ministry and CRCWs" - again the clear message from Mission Council was that we should not curtail the number of trainees. 2.2.6. - "Ministries in Ecumenical Situations" - if the number of grants made were reduced there would be a possibility of a saving of up to £40,000. 2.3. - "reduction in costs of committee meetings" should be made by holding fewer meetings in 1994, not by smaller committees. Under 2.4 - "reduction in central staff" it would seem appropriate to seek a saving of 4% of central costs, together with a £10,000 reduction of the CWM contribution to make up the balance. If additional income did not come, there would be a deficit of £78,000.

After comments from the General Secretary and other members of the Council on ministers from overseas, the possible reinstatement in 1995 of postponed work, ecumenical grants, the potential danger of curtailing work at central offices, the provision for new technologies at the central offices, the need for encouragement of the wider use of our Advocacy Group and replies from the Treasurer, the Mission Council voted on the decisions to be made.

On item 2.8: there were 21 votes for 2.8.(a) and 32 votes for 2.8(c), the latter giving a possible saving of £418,000 in 1994.

On 2.2.1.: there were 39 votes in favour and this was carried.

On 2.2.6.: it was agreed not to reduce these grants.

On 2.3. and 2.4.: it was agreed to seek a saving of £20,000. On 2.5.: it was agreed not to reduce the budgeted figure from £590,400.

2.6. was referred to the Mission Council Advisory Group for reconsideration of an earlier discussion on biennial Assembly meetings.

2.9. It was proposed by the Revd W. Gathercole that resolution 5 of the proposed resolutions from the Finance Report to Assembly should be incorporated in the Mission Council report in an amended form: Assembly believes the continued payment of special stipend supplements by some churches is no longer justified, calls upon ministers and churches to bring to an end their payment, and agrees to discontinue the payment of these supplements through the central payroll as from 1st October 1993.

Improvements in income in 1994 It was agreed that Provinces should still be asked for further contributions. The positive thrust for advocacy must come from the Provinces.

It was proposed by Mrs Mary Marsden, seconded by the Revd G.H. Thomas, that

Mission Council encourages local churches to make use of the materials prepared by the Advocacy Group as they consider their mission and purpose, and raising the necessary resources to fulfil them. The resolution was carried.

93/53

RESULT OF THE VOTE FOR THE PLANNING GROUP The Clerk reported that 50 paper had been returned, 143 votes cast and the following were elected:

The Revd Julian Macro, the Revd Eric McDonald, Mrs Mary Jefferson. The next highest votes were for the Revd Peter Poulter, the Revd Dr David Cornick and the Revd Dr Lesley Hesselbee, who would be alternates for the group. It was agreed that the Revd Julian Macro be invited to act as Convener and Mr Macro accepted.

- 93/54 PROPOSAL FOR DEALING WITH THE PRESENTATION OF AMENDMENT TO SCHEDULE C  
(See also 93/35 above). The Revd Martin Cressey suggested that alternatives should be provided for decision by the Assembly and that the Revd Malcolm Hanson be asked to present these. The Assembly should go into Committee as it were and take some straw votes. The suggestion was accepted by the Mission Council.
- 93/55 THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE The Mission Council had resolved to suspend Standing Orders in order to reopen the matter of the Children's Advocate (see 93/17/1).  
The Mission Council resolved to add the costs of the post of Children's Advocate to the budget of 1995 even if the training review is not complete. This resolution was carried by a considerable majority.
- 93/56 RESOLUTION FROM FAITH AND LIFE ON CWM AND ALL-AGE WORSHIP  
Mission Council, noting that the concern for the integration of children into the whole life of our church is shared by some of our partner churches in CWM, enthusiastically supports the proposed visit to them by the Revd Stephen Thornton, to discover their thinking and practice and provide a resource for all the churches.  
Mission Council encourages CWM to enable this project to happen, gives thanks for generous offer made by Stephen Thornton of his time and energies, and looks forward to receiving a report and the resource which will follow the visit.  
It was noted that Mr Thornton would not be incurring any expenses to the URC apart from the normal expenses for a sabbatical. The Northern Province would be giving some financial support. It was suggested that "the place of children in society" might be added to Mr Thornton's brief if possible.  
The resolution was carried.
- 93/57 PAYING FOR MEMBERS TO ATTEND GENERAL ASSEMBLY The Revd Christopher White had collated replies from all the Provinces on their current method of paying all or part of members' expenses in attending the General Assembly.  
1. The report was received for debate and Mission Council thanked the provinces for the replies.  
On the proposed resolution  
2. "Mission Council shares the concern in the replies about the variations in the financial contribution expected of members of General Assembly, affirms that need to adopt a national policy in this matter and therefore asks the responsible Assembly committee to bring such proposals to the October meeting of this Council",  
the Mission Council agreed that this resolution be not put.  
On the proposed resolution  
3. "Mission Council supports the resolution of Eastern Province (Synod 10/10/92) that the responsible Assembly committee be asked to include the future accommodation costs of members of residential assemblies in the central budget of the church, rather than concealing them in the budgets of individual provinces",  
the Mission Council agreed that this resolution be not put.  
To the proposed resolution  
4. "Mission Council recognises that the variety of practice in this matter reflects varied views of the purpose of province and district funds and an imbalance of financial resources across the country, and resolves to review the total financial situation within the mission purposes of the church"  
the Mission Council gave its approval.

It was agreed to refer the proposed resolutions 2 and 3 to the Financial Resources Committee and consider them further in the Mission Council. It was noted that AGOGAL was already looking at the matter of imbalance in provincial and district funds.

93/58

THE REVD VICTOR PREMASAGAR gave his views about the meeting of the Mission Council in which he had enjoyed the friendship and fellowship, the prayers and worship, as the Council prepared for the General Assembly. He commented that the agenda of the Council was much taken up with financial matters and did not reflect the mission of the church. Mission not finance should set the agenda. The Mission Council should be the uncomfortable edge of this church, always helping the church to fulfil its mission. There should be a certain important theme when the Council meets - mission itself can be an excellent theme.

It is important that the Assembly becomes part of the life of the churches. In the Church of South India this is done through prepared prayers, hymns or songs on the theme.

Mr Premasagar also gave his views on ministry in relation to mission, the proposed "Europe" presentation, the theology of mission, unity and mission, on questions to be asked not only of ministers at ordination and induction, but of their spouses too; communication of actions taken by the Council; and liberation theology - first action and then reflection.

The Moderator thanked Mr Premasagar for providing the Council with a mirror in which we could see ourselves, even if we did not like all we saw. He had challenged us with what it means to be a Mission Council. We were still struggling to understand what this meant for us.

93/59

THANKS The Moderator thanked those who would not be members of the Council at its next meeting.

The Revd Malcolm Hanson expressed thanks to the Moderator on behalf of the Mission Council for her chairing of the Council, a very different task from that of chairing the closely organised Executive Committee. The Council was grateful for her grace and patience in the Council's first three meetings.

The Moderator expressed her personal thanks to the Chaplain, the Revd Paul Quilter, to Mrs Carol Rogers for providing the music for worship and also for taking on extra duties at this meeting; and to the General Secretary for co-ordinating the work of the Council.

93/60

CLOSURE The Moderator requested the Chaplain to close the Council in the context of worship but without Communion as there was insufficient time available. This was done.



# MISSION COUNCIL

6 - 7 JANUARY 1993

Minutes of the Mission Council, held at Muswell Hill United Reformed Church, London, from 6th - 7th January 1993, which was constituted by the Moderator, Mrs Ruth Clarke, who presided. Worship throughout the Council meeting was led by the Chaplain, the Rev. Paul Quilter, with the assistance of members of the Council.

1.45 PM

Day One : 6th January

93/1

## MODERATOR'S REMARKS AND WELCOME

The Moderator welcomed members, including those who had been absent from the first meeting in October 1992, especially Paul Ashworth and Michael Healey, representing FURY; she also greeted the Revd Ronald Blakey, Secretary of the Assembly Council of the Church of Scotland, who had been invited to reflect on the Mission Council at the end of the meeting.

The Moderator reminded the Council of the Revd Brian Bailey's key words at the end of the October meeting ("enable, decide, encourage, listen, serve, ask"); she suggested that his remarks would help the Council to carry out its work. Mrs Clarke said that the views of every member were important and encouraged those who might otherwise be hesitant to give their views.

Mrs Clarke expressed the Council's gratitude to the Revd Bert Baker, Mrs Mary Stacy and members of Muswell Hill Church for their hospitality.

93/2

ATTENDANCE There were 60 members present, together with 7 staff in attendance, the Revd Paul Quilter, Chaplain, Mrs Sheila Tull, Minute Secretary and the Revd Ronald Blakey, Church of Scotland. Apologies for absence were received from Miss Pamela Harvey, Mr William McVey, Mr Christopher Wright, the Revds Sheila Maxey and John Waller.

93/3

GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTRODUCTION The General Secretary, the Revd Tony Burnham, gave details of some of the important tasks before the Mission Council. The Agenda and time-table as set out were accepted.

93/4

MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th-8th October 1992 which had been circulated, were approved subject to the following amendments:  
In 92/8 after "final paragraph of the paper" add in brackets " (on a review of the Centre's work by a group from the Mission Council)". At the top of p. 4 after "At 10.00 am, questions" add "arising from members' concerns".  
At the top of p. 6, in the fourth line after "the moderator ruled" add "on a suggestion by the Revd John Waller".  
In 92/19 read "The discussion paper" (singular).  
In 92/21 after "O'Neill" add "on the methods used by Synods in providing their representatives on the Mission Council".  
In 92/24.1 in the last line read "appointments".  
In 92/28 in the second line after "help" insert "of" and in the fifth line after "International Personnel" add "Exchange".  
In 92/29 for "Hann" read "Ham".  
In 92/36 where the elections are noted simply by stating that a majority was in favour of those named in each case add in the third line, after "nominee", "The nominees noted in minute 92/25 were all declared elected."  
/k

93/5

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (1) The General Secretary reported that the next Council meeting would be held from Tuesday 2nd March at 12 noon to Thursday 4th March 1993 at 1.30 pm at Hoddesden; the following meeting from Friday 1st October at 12 noon to Sunday 3rd October 1993 at

- 1.30 pm at Upholland, Skelmersdale (not far from the motorway network).
- (2) It was noted that the proposed date of Saturday 15th January 1994 would clash with FURY Assembly. After discussion it was agreed that the Council should meet on Saturday 22nd January 1994 (one day only).
- (3) Dates of 1994 meetings would be: Friday 18th March to Sunday 20th March; Friday 30th September to Sunday 2nd October.
- (4) on a national policy for financing representatives to the General Assembly, (92/24.4) letters detailing present practice were still awaited from West Midlands and Eastern Provinces.
- (5) Time scale for consultation and discussions of Assembly resolutions at local level (92/32). The General Secretary reported that it was hoped that the book of Reports to the Assembly 1993 would be posted ~~in~~<sup>in</sup> the first week of May, allowing 8 weeks for Synod, District and local discussions. The General Secretary said that if, in the light of experience, the full period of 8 weeks is considered unnecessary it would relieve the pressure on preparation and printing time.
- (6) Assembly appointments and church affiliation. A comment from Westminster College had been noted. No other comments had so far been received.

93/6

DEPUTY CLERK. The Clerk regretted that in view of his proposed sabbatical from Westminster College he might be unable to attend one of the meetings now arranged for early 1994 and requested that consideration be given to the appointment of a deputy clerk when necessary. This matter was referred to the Advisory Group.

93/7

MISSION COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP REPORT (Meeting on 16.11.92)

1. It had been agreed that the method of handling important papers in the October Forum session had not been successful. In order that matters of importance were not lost, it was decided that the four papers should be referred back to the originating committees. There followed some discussion as to how such matters ought to be dealt with in future.
2. Overlap (92/23.6) The General Secretary had been asked to consult Departmental Conveners and Secretaries and prepare a paper for discussion. An organisation chart would also be prepared. It was noted that two separate infrequent in-house staff meetings were being replaced by one monthly meeting. One purpose of this was to monitor areas of overlap. This report was noted.
3. Central Committee Structure. The General Secretary had been asked to prepare a paper for discussion on a revision of Committee structure in the light of the ending of the central committees of departments and the creation of the Mission Council. He said that the reorganisation had left wide areas of uncertainty; it was hoped that a paper would be ready for the March meeting.
4. The Southern Province proposal (92/24/6) requesting a review of all Assembly appointments would be considered in the light of proposals for a review of the Assembly's committee structure.
5. The Mersey Province proposal (92/24/3) asking for a consideration of authority in the URC had been referred to the Doctrine and Worship Committee. The Convener of Faith and Life, the Revd Dr Philip Morgan, reported that the Doctrine and Worship Committee would meet with members of the Mersey Province; he asked whether this matter should be brought to the Mission Council before going to the General Assembly. The Revd David Lawrence suggested that much consideration might be needed before the question was put before the Assembly. The Revd Peter Brain suggested that the constitution of the Mission Council should also be considered under the discussion on authority.
6. The mode of Synod provision of Mission Council representatives (92/21) would be considered at the March meeting.

93/8

CORRESPONDENCE. The Moderator reported that a letter sent after the October meeting to the Prime Minister about Overseas Development Aid had received only an interim reply. Members of the Council reported on replies to letters sent to the ODA. Mr David Butler reported that Government action had been taken in the 1993 Budget by which the level of aid for 1993/94 had been sustained. There was no doubt that the thousands of letters sent had had ~~had~~ some effect.

MKC

93/9

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE The Revd Jessie Clare, Convener, presented the report of the Nominations Committee. The following nominations were approved:

1. Church and Society representatives to Mission Council: the Revd Raymond Singh and the Revd David Morgan.
2. Homerton College. Dr David Thompson was reappointed from 1.1.93 as Governor.
3. Northern College. The Revd Brian O'Neill had agreed to serve.
4. World Church and Mission. The Revd Sheila Maxey had agreed to serve (The Revd Dorothy Spence had declined to serve.)
5. Finance - (Government Employment Legislation Adviser 92/30). Five names had been passed directly to Mr Clem Frank.
6. Windermere Centre. The re-structuring of the three committees had been agreed. Advice was awaited from Policy and Planning on membership changes.
7. Representatives to Other Assemblies - additional appointments: Church of Scotland; Mr Alistair Black and the Revd David Jenkins. Congregational Union of Scotland 1993 - The Revd David Jenkins - for two meetings of the Union in 1993. Presbyterian Church in Ireland - 1993 - the General Secretary Presbyterian Church in Ireland - 1994 - the Revd Donald Hilton Methodist Conference 1993 - the Revd Ken Wilkinson as a member of Conference. For future appointments it was suggested that the Moderator of Assembly or a past Moderator might be sent; the Revd Malcolm Hanson reported that he had been invited to attend the Methodist Conference in 1993 and would take URC greetings on the Sunday.
8. St. Andrew's Hall Council. Mrs Betty Vickerton had resigned; it was agreed to nominate Mrs Mareke Arthur, of Weoley Hill; as an alternative Anne Schofield also of Weoley Hill.
9. Provincial Moderators' Review Groups - Conveners. The Nominations Committee recommended to Mission Council that Conveners be drawn from a larger constituency. The Mission Council agreed and the following nominations were approved:
  - Northern Province: Mrs Marion Weedon
  - Mersey Province: The Revd Jessie Clare
  - Yorkshire Province: The Revd Tony Ritchie
  - South Western Province: Mr Bernard Stonehouse
  - Southern Province: The Revd John Johansen-Berg
10. Churches Commission for Racial Justice. On the recommendation of Church and Society it was agreed to nominate Mrs Sandra Ackroyd.
11. Congregational Fund Board. The Revd John Taylor was invited to serve for a further four years to 31.12.96, and the Revd Aubrey Lewis to replace the Revd Douglas Smith who had resigned.

12. Faith and Life - Appointment of Secretary. The Nominations Committee presented the report of the Appointment Group:
  - a. The Appointment Group unanimously recommends the re-appointment of the Revd Terry Oakley as Secretary for Faith and Life for a further term of five years with effect from 1 September 1993.
  - b. At this stage, the Group does not envisage a further period of service in the post and this statement will be included in the re-appointment letter.

c. The Appointment Group recommends that the Revd Terry Oakley takes in 1993 his due sabbatical leave as distinct from any period of in-service training.

The Mission Council recommended that the report of the Appointment Group be transmitted with its support to the General Assembly.

13. Standing Committee Vacancies. The following recommendations were made to fill current vacancies:

a. Vocations Committee: 1. Mrs Margaret Carrick-Smith (Prov. 9);  
2. Revd Jean Hall (4).

b. Training Committee: 1. Revd Dr Catherine Middleton (8) or the Revd Rhona Jones (1). 2. Miss Ruth Williams (11) or 3. Mr Tony Ewans (2) or Mr Roy Smith (9).

Convener - Revd Dr John Morgans (12).

c. Faith and Life: Doctrine and Worship:

1. Revd Alan Gaunt (2) 2. Mrs Elspeth Smith (2) or Revd Wendy Baskett (6)  
3. Revd Donald Norwood (9) Secretary: Revd Alan Sell (12) (In reply to an inquiry, it was noted that Mr Sell is a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Wales and a member of a joint URC/PCW Church.)

Health and Healing: 1. The Revd Daphne Williams (5) 2. The Revd Brenda Denvir (10) 3. The Revd Sue Henderson (8)

d. World Church and Mission:

MEW at Home: 1. The Revd Peter Arthur (1) or 2. Mrs Olive Bell (1)

MEW Abroad: 1. The Revd Gwen Thomas (3) 2. The Revd Norman Healey (11) or Mrs Olive Bell (1)

Mission and Other Faiths: 1. Mrs Cynthia Bailey (5)

Personnel: 1. The Revd David Helyar (nominated by Provincial Moderators)  
2. The Revd Ken Graham

e. Finance:

Management: 1. Mrs Edwina Rockley (8) 2. Mr Gordon Bannerman (10) or Mr Graham Stacey (10)

Welfare and Emergencies: 1. Mrs Ann Tomlinson (2) 2. Mrs Jackie Harris (1) or Mrs Avril Nicol (1) or Mrs Norma Bradshaw (5)

f. Reform Editorial Board: 1. The Revd Brian Baker

14. Maintenance of the Ministry - Convener

Mr Alistair Black wished to resign as Convener. The Nominations Committee had received from the Finance Committee the name of Mr Michael Harrison, Treasurer of the East Midlands Province. This appointment was agreed.

The Mission Council accepted the report of the Nominations Committee and approved its recommendations. There was discussion of the timing of appointments; the Nominations Committee was invited to report on this and on whether in some cases the Nominations Committee should appoint rather than nominate. The Assembly Clerk reminded the Mission Council that if the the Nominations Committee made appointments such as those just agreed by the Mission Council it would be a further change in procedure, in that such appointments had usually been made by the General Assembly, except in case of emergency.

*The Revd Jean Maitland was appointed a Director of URC Finance North Trust and of Hertfordshire Congregational Union (Incorporated). At a later session and*

93/10 SYNODS - APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS at the request of Northern Province Synod on 6.11.92 the Revd Peter Poulter was appointed Director of the URC (Northern Province) Trust Ltd.

In response to an inquiry, the Assembly Clerk was requested to consult with the URC Legal Adviser to determine whether it was necessary for such appointments to be brought to the Mission Council.

93/11

STAFFING GROUP The Convener, the Revd Angus Duncan, tabled a report and asked members of the Council to read it overnight so that it could be discussed at the afternoon session the next day.



93/12 ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE The Convener, Mrs Wilma Frew, reports that thanks to Southern Province, the 1995 Assembly would be held at Devonshire Park Centre, Eastbourne, from 3rd to ~~5th~~<sup>7<sup>th</sup></sup> July.

3.30 pm Worship and Bible Study (Mark 3, 1 - 25) was led by the Chaplain, and followed by group study and discussion.

5.0 pm

93/13 PREPARING FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY The General Secretary outlined the proposed format of the Reports to Assembly as follows:  
1. Reports on the past year by the Standing Committees. These would not be presented verbally but would be open to questions from the floor.  
2. Issues from Provincial Synods, with recommendations and background information/supporting papers.  
3. Papers on special issues about which decisions or major discussions were necessary.  
4. Appendices to include accounts and committee lists.  
5. For the Mission Council Report a decision on whether to have one major theme for Assembly was necessary at the present meeting.

93/14 POSSIBLE THEME Suggested themes were: A. The Family - 1994 is designated the UN Year of the Family;  
B. Europe: (i) links between URC (including Synods) and continental churches and organisations; (ii) particular pieces of work and events such as Conference of European Churches, Moderator's visit to Strasbourg the Leuenberg Assembly; (iii) discussion and debate on European Community, the role of Britain in Europe and the kind of Europe we want.  
C. Environment - including e.g. ethical purchasing, church owned cars, the Government's promises at Rio compared with action taken, "waste" church land, energy policy, commitment for life.  
After general discussion, which included such questions as the real purposes of the Mission Council and the importance of mission as our priority, the Council met in small groups to consider an overall theme or themes, the Moderator requesting that groups should report back very briefly at the 10.15 am session on the following day.  
The Chaplain led the Council in worship.

Day Two: Thursday 9th January

9.30 am Worship and Bible study were led by the Chaplain, the Revd Paul Quilter, to which members contributed comments and prayers.

10.15 am

93/14 POSSIBLE THEME (continued) The Moderator asked the ten groups for their reports and summarised these as follows:  
1. There should be no dominant theme; 2. The emphasis should be on mission; 3. a celebration of the 21st birthday of the URC to be included; 4. there should be greater participation from the floor of Assembly; 5. should we set up a working party on the General Assembly?

The Clerk reminded the Council that The Manual states the purpose of Assembly and it is still the set of "marching orders". The Council may well seek ways of carrying out those tasks better.  
The Revd Eric Allen said that The Manual was a real source of wisdom. The definition of the URC's responsibility (paragraph 11 of the Basis of Union, Manual page 4)) could well be the best form of words for a definition of mission. It could be interpreted by the Assembly and

individuals in the light of their own perspectives. The idea of presenting "stories" from Provinces and local churches found favour with many members of the Council; it was stressed that "failures" should be included as well as "successes". It was suggested that agenda might be agreed for the next 5 years. Expectations had been raised through the formation of the Mission Council and it was important that people should not be disappointed. Mrs Wilma Frew said that suggestions coming to the March meeting of the Council, e.g. practical arrangements for meetings of small groups at the Assembly, should be in consultation with the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

In March the Council would look at the matter of prioritisations and it may be that some matters could be carried forward to the 1994 Assembly. The Moderator said that the 1993 Assembly would be a different Assembly. We needed to work out how the Mission Council was going to report to the Assembly; how we point the way ahead from any Assembly; and whether to use the mission statement in the Basis of Union.

The Revd Dr Philip Morgan said that one of the tasks is to ask how the Assembly can be the servant of the Church; he asked how we can be sure of sending to the Assembly those who should be there.

11.55 am

93/15

PREPARING FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY The Moderator reported that, in the Minutes of the Executive Committee a decision was recorded that there would be no great emphasis on the 21st birthday of the URC; instead there should be forward planning for the 25th anniversary.

93/15/1

The Revd Donald Hilton, Moderator elect, said that Wessex Province was already making plans for the "celebration" at this year's Assembly and it would be unfair to ask them to change their ideas to fit in with the Mission Council's ideas. As far as his address to the Assembly was concerned, it could be revealed that the banners for the platform would have the words "Glory to God"; but the theme of the address was not usually publicised in advance. The Provincial office would be making his engagements. The Revd John Sutcliffe would be conducting the Bible study. The Chaplain to Assembly would be the Revd Duncan Wilson and the worship and Bible study would interlock as appropriate. Paragraph 11 of the Basis of Union was again mentioned as the starting point for a discussion on mission. It was hoped to provide a mission statement for people to take as their own. It was agreed nam con that the Advisory Group would work on the basis that Paragraph 11 would be the framework for the Mission Council report to Assembly 1993.

It was also agreed that paragraph 2.1 of the 1992 Assembly paper on the "Mission Council and Related Matters" (Reports p. 57) should be quoted, on "The work of the Mission Council." Priorities would also need to be agreed.

93/15/2

The Committee Conveners reported on the concerns which would be included in their reports to Assembly:

World Church and Mission: Europe (Church and Society also involved); multi-lateral conversations; urban/rural mission group report on completion of its work; presentation on racism from Mission and Other Faiths; the URC as a receiving church - receiving not only people but ideas from overseas (perhaps not a priority for 1993).

Church and Society: there would not necessarily be major themes in 1994. However, there were some matters under "special issues" such as the environmental follow-up to the Rio conference.

Ministries: there would not be any major matter coming forward this year. Much of the current work was dependent on the response of the Church to "Patterns of Ministry", which would be a major theme in 1994 or 1995. There were some matters under "special issues": the "year of residential training" rule; students' grants while in training; Northern College report - "Enhancing Effective Ministry" - the Assembly needs to give approval to the proposed style of training of URC ministers; "criteria for ministry" - selection of ministers for training and assessment; procedure for appeals by candidates - a revised resolution from last year.

Finance: Items to be brought forward included: trust re-organisation; budget for 1994 - presentation for decision; Pension Fund - some change since October 1992 - the Finance Committee may not be able to make improvements described then; it would be necessary to make a break in the relationship of stipends to pensions. A video had been prepared by Mr Victor Hughff on the presentation he made in October. The Assembly would need to receive information on the attitude of members of the Pension Fund to the changes.

Faith and Life: the following matters would be presented to Assembly: integrated training - is the work done so far, moving in the right direction?; Doctrine and Worship - proposal to change schedule C needs to be discussed and sent down under constitutional amendment procedure; Kaleidoscope - launch of ecumenical material for children's workers; Members Together - material for membership groups; SPIN - we are halfway through the Decade of Solidarity with Women.

93/18/13  
5/11/92

It was suggested that there might be two great general discussions - on the Mission Council report and on the Provincial Moderators' report - could they be related to the matters brought by the Committees? Could there be a cluster of issues grouped, say, under "Europe"? The Council agreed that there would be no cluster of items around "the family" or "the environment" but there would be a cluster of items around "Europe".

2 pm

93/17/6  
A/KC

#### REVISED WORDING OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Mr Alistair Black presented a paper from the Financial Resources Committee and asked the Council to amend the wording of that Committee's own resolution, as follows:

"Having received the response from Provinces towards the challenge, given by the 1992 Assembly, the Financial Resources Committee advises the Mission Council that commitments amounting to £14.954m had been made by Provinces towards the budget requirement of £15.154m. (The shortfall is 1.32% of the total requirement). Nevertheless the Committee encourages the Mission Council to amend the 1993 budget so that the level of stipend supported by General Assembly of £13,200 per annum may be paid from 1.7.93. At this stage the Financial Resources Committee can give no indication of any increase in stipend/salary level in 1994. The Financial Resources Committee has confidence that this requirement will encourage further churches to respond to the Assembly challenge".

The Treasurer then moved on behalf of the Committee:

"The Mission Council amends the 1993 budget of the United Reformed Church to a total of £15.154m. so that the level of annual ministerial stipend supported by General Assembly, namely £13,200, may be paid from 1st July 1993."

This was agreed with two votes against and three abstentions.

93/18/1 <sup>by mee</sup>

STAFFING GROUP The Chairman, the Revd Angus Duncan, presented the report of the Staffing Group on the posts of Children's Advocate and Secretary for Advocacy and Stewardship.

The Council then discussed the proposed post of a Children's Advocate; in the view of the staffing group, the case for this had been made, but the funding of it could only be made through new money, whilst carrying out an exploration of long term training policy.

The Staffing Group recommended:

that the post of Children's Advocate be established for five years, and that a review of the URC's policy, staffing and funding in the field of training be undertaken;

that this review, taking account of Synod and District as well as Assembly provision, should take place during the next 18 months; that Mission Council should resolve whether the new post should begin before or after the conclusion of this review, noting that the post will require the provision of new money.

The Clerk said that in view of the budget decision just made by the Council (93/17) <sup>by mee</sup> the post of Children's Advocate could only begin when money was available from a 1994 budget including provision for the post.

<sup>by mee</sup> After a long discussion, the Council decided by a large majority abstention, that the post of Children's Advocate should not be established before a review of the policy, staffing and funding in the field of training had been carried out.

In view of this negative vote and the statement from the Faith and Life Convener that the review would take a considerable time, the Moderator ruled that a motion to add the cost of a Children's Advocate to the 1994 budget would be out of order as negating the previous decision.

The Revd David Helyar reminded the Council that the Southern Province had asked for an overview of staffing and not just a review of individual posts or policies.

The Chief Accountant indicated that in his discussion of the 1994 budget with Provincial Treasurers he would explore the possibility of funding any additional post.

A further report would be made to the March meeting of the Council.

93/17/2

Secretary for Advocacy and Stewardship. It was noted that the Revd Bill Wright would not wish to continue after his present appointment.

The staffing group recommended that the post of Secretary for Advocacy and Stewardship be continued for a further five years beginning in 1994 because it was agreed (i) there was evidence that the work undertaken so far had been effective (ii) so far only a small proportion of our churches had adopted a stewardship approach therefore the original task was not yet completed (iii) while this seemed to be a service aiming at raising central funds it was primarily directed at local churches and their opportunities for mission. This recommendation was accepted by the Mission Council, with 6 contrary votes and 5 abstentions.

93/18

INTEGRATED TRAINING A paper from the Integrated Training Working Group to the Mission Council set out plans for a "Developing Discipleship" course to be presented to the 1993 Assembly. The course was outlined under the following headings: Being, Believing, Belonging, Worshipping, Serving, and would use a variety of methods, e.g. individual study, group study, involvement of tutors. 1993 would be a pilot year and the course would begin in September 1994.

After discussion and questions, it was agreed that the project should be presented to the 1993 Assembly.

- 93/19 RESTRUCTURING OF URC TRUST Mr Alistair Black presented a paper on the restructuring of the URC Trust. He reported that the law was likely to be changed after the Maxwell pension scandal. It was clear to the Finance Committee that it would be necessary to form two Trusts, one covering the Pension Fund and its investments and the other continuing to look after the remaining URC investments. There are 16 trustees at present, some of whom may wish to resign or transfer to the new Pensions Trust. Mr Hartley Oldham was preparing the necessary documentation, including the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Full details of restructuring would be submitted to Mission Council in March and General Assembly in July 1993 for approval. The annual accounts relating to Trust activities would be approved by each Trust and presented to the General Assembly. The Nominations Committee would be asked to nominate trustees for General Assembly approval. The URC should provide an indemnity to each trustee.
- The Mission Council asked the Finance Committee to proceed with these proposals.
- 93/20 ADVISORY GROUP ON GRANTS AND LOANS The Revd Tony Burnham said that this group was responsible for giving advice on grants and loans to committees. He reported that a request had been received from East Midlands Province for a block grant rather than a series of grants. The group had agreed that it was necessary for there to be a full disclosure of Province funds in order that the group could do its work effectively.
- 93/21 SYNOD MATTERS - WEST MIDLANDS An inquiry had been made by West Midlands as to the way in which the Provinces were asked to pay representatives' travel and other expenses of meetings of Provincial Synods and District Councils and suggesting that such expenses should come under the central budget of URC. This matter was referred to the Advisory Group.
- 93/22 SUNDAY TRADING A paper from Church and Society was presented to the Mission Council, setting out the current position, stating that the Private Member's Bill of Mr Ray Powell MP, the Shops (Amendment) Bill, would receive its Second Reading on 22 January. It was crucial that a large number of MPs were present if this Bill was to proceed to the Committee stage.
- After discussion it was resolved: the Mission Council on behalf of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom: 1. supports the REST proposals; 2. encourages Members of Parliament to give their support to the Second Reading of the Shops (Amendment) Bill on January 22, 1993; 3. resists any fresh legislation that would so deregulate trading as to jeopardise the distinctiveness of Sunday. Members of the Mission Council were requested to ensure that this opinion was transmitted to local MPs. The resolution would also be transmitted to the Government and others.
- 93/23 THE REVD RONALD BLAKEY The Moderator invited the Revd Ronald Blakey, Secretary of the Church of Scotland's Assembly Council, to comment on the Mission Council meeting. Mr Blakey said there were some similarities and some differences between the Councils. The Assembly Council's remit was "to advise the Assembly on what work should have priority or priorities". This could mean cuts but could also mean new work and therefore perhaps leaving present work. The Council had an overview of the work of each of the 13 Departments, reviewed in depth what they were doing and was able to identify any overlap. Staffing proposals had been difficult. Power was given to the Council to determine which posts should be maintained or set up. Separation of funding from post was one

of the Council's early mistakes. Church Office administration was also one of the Council's remits.

Mr Blakey said that the Mission Council would probably pass through four or five meetings or two or three Assemblies before a good working arrangement was found. It had taken the Assembly Council time to earn the trust of the General Assembly and the Mission Council needed to listen to what Provinces and congregations and the General Assembly were saying.

Commenting on the Mission Council Mr Blakey remarked on the large size of the Council. The Assembly Council has no Provincial representation nor any staff members, who have their own management group. The Mission Council would need patience - the Church does not move quickly. Mr Blakey said he would be interested to learn how the Mission Council progresses.

93/24

THANKS The Moderator thanked Mr Blakey for his helpful comments and hoped that a reciprocal arrangement with the Assembly Council might be made in the future. She also thanked the members of Muswell Hill at lunch-time and repeated the Council's thanks at the end of the meeting.

The meeting was closed with worship.

*Ruth Clarke*  
2nd March 1993

# MISSION COUNCIL AGENDA

MARCH 2ND- 4TH 1993

## TUESDAY

12.00	Arrivals and check in		
1.00	Lunch	1.00	Lunch
2.00	Welcome and Apologies		Depart
2.10	Our Agenda		
2.20	Members concerns, approval of agenda	2.30	Pensions
2.40	Victor Premasager- a greeting		
2.55	Worship & Bible Study	3.00	Budget 1994 - plenary
3.55	Budget 1994	3.45	Bible Study Groups
4.15	Tea	4.15	Tea
4.45	Budget 1994 - groups (1)	4.45	G.A. resolutions & presentations - plenary
5.30	Business Agenda	6.30	Close
6.45	Close		
7.00	Dinner	7.00	Dinner
8.00	Introduction to G.A. resolutions and presentations	8.00	M.C. Report to G.A. - groups
8.45	Prayers	8.45	Prayers
9.00	Evening Drink	9.00	Evening Drink

## WEDNESDAY

8.00	Prayers	8.00	Prayers
8.30	Breakfast	8.30	Breakfast
9.15	Budget 1994 Groups (2)	9.15	Mission Council Report to Assembly - Plenary
9.45	G.A. Resolutions & Presentations - Groups	10.15	Reflections: Victor Premasager
11.00	Coffee	10.45	Coffee and Synod Groups
11.30	Business Agenda		
12.45	Close	11.45	Worship including Communion
1.00	Lunch	12.45	Close
		1.00	Lunch

## THURSDAY

8.00	Prayers	8.00	Prayers
8.30	Breakfast	8.30	Breakfast
9.15	Budget 1994 Groups (2)	9.15	Mission Council Report to Assembly - Plenary
9.45	G.A. Resolutions & Presentations - Groups	10.15	Reflections: Victor Premasager
11.00	Coffee	10.45	Coffee and Synod Groups
11.30	Business Agenda		
12.45	Close	11.45	Worship including Communion
1.00	Lunch	12.45	Close
		1.00	Lunch

BUSINESS AGENDA

Minutes of Meeting 6-7 January 1993  
Matters arising

-

1. MCAG Report (1)
  - Reports to Assembly
  - Synod Reports to Assembly
  - Past Moderator of Assembly
  - Children's Advocate
  - Review of training
  - Review of Assembly appointments
  - West Midlands letter
  - Representation at MC
  - MC future meetings
2. General Secretary's report - for information
3. (a) MCAG Report (2)
  - Assembly Committee Structure
- (b) Staffing Group
4. Nominations Committee
5. Minutes of Appreciation
6. Clerk to the Assembly - deputy
8. Financing of representatives to GA
9. Appointment of Directors
11. Role of the Assembly Arrangements Committee
10. CWM and all-age worship
7. The Europe Co-ordinating Group

For information : Paper from Wessex on ecumenical boundaries





# MISSION COUNCIL

2 ~ 4 MARCH 1993

Misc. Business

1. MCAG report (1)
2. Gen Sec's report
3. MCAG report (2)
4. Nominations Committee report
5. Minutes of appreciation from the Personnel Committee
6. Clerk to the Assembly. The General Secretary and the Clerk have discussed the matter raised at the last MC regarding a deputy for the Clerk. They recommend that MC does not formally create another office but that, in the event of the Clerk's absence, Wilma Frew, the present Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee be asked to deputise.
7. The Europe Co-ordinating Group wishes to bring a resolution on a European item which cannot go to Assembly without preliminary work:  
  
"Mission Council requests the Doctrine and Worship committee, in consultation with Missionary & Ecumenical Work Abroad committee, to consider the implications of requests by people seeking to transfer their church membership between churches in different parts of Europe and how such transfers might most simply and easily be carried out."  
  
The background to this resolution is set out under the heading 'Direct links' in the papers appended to the Assembly resolutions on Europe.
8. The Financing of representatives to GA-a report from Christopher White.
9. Appointment of Directors  
  
Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly, resolves that the following be appointed as Directors of the Sussex Congregational Union Inc :  
  

Mr I.F.Sinclair	Mr D.R.Curry
Mr D.F.McKee	Mr A.Hamilton
Revd K.Chambers	Mr L.Popley
Mrs M.Elliott	
10. CWM and all-age worship. Faith and Life intend to bring a resolution on this subject.

MCAG Report (1)  
and  
General Secretary's Report

From MC Advisory Group

1. Reports to Assembly. These are the Standing Committees' reports of their past year's work and will be quite separate from papers written in support of resolutions. It was agreed that for 1993, these reports would not be submitted to the MC.
2. Synod Reports to Assembly. It was agreed that these should not be attempted in 1993. MCAG would consider how these should be presented in 1994 at the meeting on 10th May 1993.
3. After a discussion about the work of the Assembly Moderator in relation to a report on the year in office, it was decided to recommend to MC that the past Moderator should speak on the year at the October meeting. It was noted that this ought not to be a travelogue but an analysis of and a reflection on the experience.

Resolution

MC resolves to invite the past Moderator of Assembly to report on the experience of the year in office at the October meeting.

4. Children's Advocate. It was agreed to suggest to MC that the decision taken at the January meeting ought to be reconsidered on two grounds:
  - (i) it is now realised that a review of training policy, staffing and finance is seen likely to take longer than was anticipated;
  - (ii) the question put to MC was not primarily about budget priorities as was intended by the GA.

(The agreed resolution was : Assembly, seeking to create the post of National Children's Advocate, instructs the MC, as it reviews its budget priorities, to consider how this might be achieved as a matter of urgency).

It was also agreed that if it could not be placed in the 1994 budget then it be placed in the 1995 budget.

Resolutions

1. MC resolves to suspend standing orders, so far as necessary, in order to reopen the matter of the Children's Advocate.
2. MC resolves to add the costs of the post of Children's Advocate to the budget of 1995 even if the training review is not complete.

5. Review of training policy, staffing and finance. It was agreed to suggest that three people be invited to report to MC on how this could be done. It was agreed that a member of MC (e.g. Julian Macro), Eric Macdonald (Minister of Grantham URC, a District Secretary and formerly an HM Inspector) and an ecumenical representative (perhaps a Methodist) be appointed.

#### Resolution

MC resolves to appoint three people to meet and to advise the Council on how the review of training policy, staffing and finance might be undertaken.

6. Review of Assembly Appointments. It is recommended that the general review be not undertaken until the future structure of Committees is clearer.
7. Discussion of the West Midlands letter raising the issue of Committees organising meetings and conferences and asking Synods to pay the representatives' expenses was deferred to the next meeting.
8. Representation at MC. The issue raised by Brian O'Neill regarding the election of members by Synods was discussed. It was agreed that:
- (i) it was too soon in our life to consider this kind of change, taking from Synods their freedom to choose their own method;
  - (ii) this matter be passed to the group on Authority in the URC (Mersey Province & Doctrinal and Worship);
  - (iii) when asking Synods to appoint new members to draw their attention to the possibility of an election at Synod.
9. MC future meetings - venues. It was noted that the meeting for October 1-3 1993 would be at Upholland. It was agreed that the one day January meeting would be either in central London or Birmingham. It was also agreed to book High Leigh, Hoddesdon for March 18-20, 1994.

#### From the General Secretary

10. Information and Technology. After consultation with the executive staff working in Church House, a meeting was held on the 5th February 1993. In attendance were two advisers. David Lawrence and David Brain. David Butler, as a provincial officer, was also present.

The unconfirmed record of the meeting describes the objective as to provide the best possible means to help the church to generate, gather, store, share, manage, disseminate and make accessible appropriate information throughout the URC and to do this economically, effectively and ecumenically.

It was agreed that in the medium term, in-house databases would be created using DATA EASE and that the AMI PRO system using Windows would be used for word processing.

David Brain has been asked to prepare a survey of all existing equipment plus an identification of each user's needs. This survey will include Windermere, Yardley Hastings, Westminster, staff working outside the house and, we hope, the other Colleges and Provincial Offices.

There is much more to be done and eventually a full report will be made and a policy paper circulated. However, it is important that in the light of possible future developments in technology, we prepare now and lay the foundations for sensible and economical change.

## MINUTES OF APPRECIATION

### **The Revd Robin and Mrs Muriel Sleigh**

Robin was first appointed to serve in the Mysore District of the CSI between 1953 and 1961. He was ordained a presbyter of the CSI in 1954. After a period of sixteen years back in the UK he was reappointed to the Karnataka Diocese as a community development worker. Although professionally Robin has concentrated upon community organisation and rural, nutritional, health and informal education programmes for village people, his work has always been carried out alongside a deep concern for spiritual growth.

Robin's marriage to Muriel Harrison in late 1984 at Bellary brought great happiness. Muriel had already served for twenty years in CSI in the area of women's work and training programmes. Together they continued to enable and empower sanghas and associations in the Kavutalam area until they returned to the UK in June 1992. They have both been committed to working with local congregations; their home has always been open to many visitors and their regular letters over the years have been a source of information and inspiration.

We wish Robin well in his retirement and we hope Muriel will find employment once they have settled in their own home.

### **Mr Anthony and Mrs Susan Gay**

Tony Gay was appointed for service overseas in UCPNGSI in June 1985. Tony and Susan both completed the Certificate in Mission course. Tony's position was as financial adviser to the Assembly institutions and as treasurer of the New Guinea Islands Region. He offered invaluable oversight to the finances of the Theological College, the Teachers' College and to the Christian Education and Communication Centre, and his contribution to the Region was much appreciated.

The children settled into the education system although it became necessary for Matthew to remain in the UK at Caterham School from September 1988. Regrettably it quickly became apparent that Sue had difficulties in adapting and settling in Rabaul. This led to separation from the family as Sue found an alternative life-style in the US. As reconciliation has not yet been possible the UCPNGSI was unable to invite Tony to return for a further term of service. The URC and CWM concurred with the termination of service of Mr Anthony Gay as from September 30 1992.

### Mr Peter and Mrs Agnes Storey

Peter and Agnes Storey completed twenty-nine years of missionary service through CWM. Peter's first appointment was as an agriculturalist with PCT from 1964-79. Following a year of study he was reappointed to Nepal in July 1980 and remained with UMN until returning to the UK in 1990. Peter and Agnes had hoped for another overseas appointment. This did not prove possible; Peter completed his service in June 1992 after extended leave.

Peter worked diligently, sometimes under difficult circumstances, to encourage others to see the value of his fieldwork which was often of an experimental nature. Agnes readily gave support and encouragement. The children accompanied them in the earlier years of service but remained in England for secondary education.

Sustained by his faith, Peter is committed to writing up his broad agricultural experimentation covering many areas of agricultural development. We wish him well as he continues to produce handbooks for farmers and searches for employment. Our thoughts are with Peter, Agnes and the family.

### The Revd Jim and Mrs Pamela Pelling

Following their marriage in April 1954, the Revd Jim and Mrs Pamela Pelling left the UK for service with the LMS in Rhodesia. Africa and the UCCSA have been their home for more than 38 years. Their first 25 years of service were spent in Matabeleland and since 1979 Jim and Pam have lived and worked in Harare.

In the early days Jim's work as a district missionary of the LMS involved much travelling; his work was to lead worship in 22 churches and to administer as many primary schools. From 1960 he was in charge of the revision of the Ndebele version of the New Testament and Psalms; they were completed in 1965. Jim was then appointed Literature Officer and began the main task of translating the Old Testament with African colleagues. Pam was always very supportive and together they produced a grammar of the Ndebele language.

In the 70s, during the bush warfare, Jim and Pam lived in Bulawayo. As a UCCSA minister Jim's job was to care for several congregations. The translation of the whole Bible into Ndebele was completed. In 1979, the eve of an independent Zimbabwe, Jim and Pam moved to Harare. Jim was appointed lecturer at the United Theological College helping to train pastors from five denominations. Pam went back to teaching French in Government schools until her retirement. For the last two years she has been helping in the College.

Jim and Pam have given long and faithful service to the UCCSA. At times their journey has been far from easy. Their children have settled in Australia and it is their intention to retire to Canberra.

We wish them God's richest blessings for a happy and active retirement and resettlement.



### ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

In the light of developments due to the ending of departmental central committees and the creation of a Mission Council, it is necessary to give some thought to a revision of our committee structure.

This paper is a summary of the present thinking of MCAAG and is offered to MC for information and comment.

#### Some Principles

1. The objective is to create an integrated, flexible and effective committee structure that serves the local church, District Council, Synod and General Assembly in their mission; within the contexts of our ecumenical life in the United Kingdom and in the world.
2. We ought not to change the remaining structure unless it can be improved.
3. We ought not to re-invent the wheel. Therefore there is the preliminary task of considering the following:
  - (i) Bernard Thorogood's original proposals on Central Re-Organisation. The Executive did not reach a common mind on these;
  - (ii) the Clarke Report was made to the Executive by a group set up to look again at the issues raised in Central Re-Organisation. It was convened by Raymond Clarke and as a result, agreement was reached to create the MC;
  - (iii) a Forward Policy Group's report;
  - (iv) information gathered on overlaps in the present structure;
  - (v) present ecumenical patterns in CTE, CCBI etc;
  - (vi) information about the re-organisation of Methodist central committees;
  - (vii) experience of certain CWM partners (eg the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman, the Church of North India);
  - (viii) the outcome of the Coleraine Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

#### 4. Starting Points

Noting the principle mentioned in para 2 and also the information gathered from the sources listed in para 3, we should have in mind the following possible starting points:

- (i) the local church noting its functions in the Basis of Union para 9(1) and recognising that out of a total of 1832 churches, more than 700 have a membership of less than 50. The number of churches with 30 members or less is in the region of 500, almost one third. (Moderators' Report to Assembly 1989);
  - (ii) the extra dimension added by the needs of District Councils and Provincial Synods to carry out their functions, including their mission and a concern for unity in their areas;
  - (iii) the work of the General Assembly exercising its mission through its national (in England, Wales Scotland) and world wide responsibilities;
  - (iv) our ecumenical relationships.
5. The structure should reflect the reality of our strength and not only our aspirations.
6. Flexibility will require a limited number of standing committees and a greater use of short term or ad hoc working parties.
7. There must be a theological overview so that any changes are not simply a pragmatic response to present needs.

#### 8. Procedure

- (i) MCAG has asked David Butler, Mary Marsden and Tony Burnham to collate and consider the information listed in para 3 and report to the next meeting of MCAG on the 10th May;
- (ii) MCAG hopes then to begin work on the next stage, with the intention of reporting to the October MC.

#### 9. Timetable

It is recognised that the bigger the change, the more time will be needed to carry out the work and to consult widely. At this stage, therefore, it would be unwise to guess at the likely timetable. It ought to be possible to bring a detailed timetable to the October MC.





2 ~ 4 MARCH 1993

Reports of the  
Staffing Advisory Group  
and  
Nominations Committee

Westminster College

1. The Group had been advised about the vulnerable position of Old Testament studies within the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges, which were largely dependent on the post at Westminster. It was agreed to meet representatives to discuss this, the review of the post for New Testament Studies and the total provision of teaching posts at the College.
2. On the 12th February 1993 the Group went to Cambridge and met the Principal, the Revd Martin Cressey, the Convener of the Board of Studies, the Revd Dr Stephen Orchard, and the Secretary of the Training Committee, the Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee.

3. **Background:** In a written submission the Principal stated that :

"In 1967 the teaching staff of the Presbyterian Church of England College consisted of four Professors, appointed with the same tenure and inducted in the same way as a Minister in pastoral charge, together with a tutor, normally an ordinand who stayed at the College as a licentiate for one or two years, assisting with teaching and developing his own studies. The Professors covered four classical areas of theological teaching: (i) Old Testament; (ii) New Testament; (iii) Church History and Worship; and (iv) Systematic Theology and Apologetics (including Ethics). Pastoral Studies (not well developed) were covered by whichever Professor was Principal.

After 1967 Cheshunt College gradually merged its teaching with Westminster and from 1975 has become the Cheshunt Foundation. The tutorship ceased, a Cheshunt Chair of Pastoral Studies was added and the Cheshunt Foundation agreed fully to fund one of the five teaching posts. The Professors became normally known as 'Directors of Studies' ...."

4. **The Federation:** There is a significant co-operation through the Federation (Westminster, Westcott, Wesley and Ridley) and all the main teaching courses are ecumenical. It is hoped that the Federation will soon be enlarged by a Roman Catholic presence and by the entry of the East Anglian Ministerial Training Course.
5. All five staff members have additional administrative duties in the College and the Federation. All are active in different ways in the general life of the URC.
6. In recent years a half-time Bursar, a quarter-time Librarian, and a part-time Chaplain have been appointed. The Federation also employs one additional staff member.

...../

7. The number of students in the current year is 37 (last year 40), 2 of whom are taking degree courses supervised in the University. Of these 27 are training for the UR Ministry.
8. It was noted that this is a generous staff/ratio. However, if the policy is to provide teaching in all major disciplines within the College, then this ratio is not important. It was also noted that the educational background of the students is so diverse that some require individual tuition.
9. Terms of Appointment

Principal	Tenured	Age of Retirement	1996
OT Studies	Tenured		
NT Studies	Review 1993 after 7 years, re-appointable 5 + 5 etc		
Pastoral Studies and Mission	5 years Review 1995, re-appointable 2 years until 1997		
*Church History and Worship	Review 1999, re-appointable 5 + 5 etc.		

\* funded by the Cheshunt Foundation which is a Trust not controlled by the URC.

#### Conclusions

10. Recognising the high cost of all forms of ministerial training, questions need to be asked about the number of full-time staff at Westminster. Since 1967 there has been the development of ecumenical co-operation through the Federation. There are also other possibilities for ministerial training at Mansfield and Northern, the recognition of Queens and the development of the Courses, to balance the loss of Overdale. Overall there is also a reduction in the number of students. However the Staffing Group do not believe that it would be sensible at the present time to respond by reducing the members of staff on an ad hoc basis.
11. The Group recommends that the General Assembly, before the retirement of the present Principal, determines the policy regarding the use made of Westminster College. In the light of that, it further recommends that the post of Director of NT Studies be continued for a further five years until 1998 and that, in the event of the resignation of the present Director of OT Studies, a new appointment may be made for four years but not beyond 1998, without the approval of Mission Council.

...../

### Resolutions

- A. The Mission Council resolves that the post of Director of New Testament studies be continued for five years to 31st August 1998.
- B. The Mission Council resolves that, in the event of the resignation of the present Director of Old Testament studies, the post may continue for a further four years or for a period until 31st August whichever is the lesser.
- C. The Mission Council recommends to the General Assembly that the Council be authorised to take such steps as are necessary to determine a future policy regarding the use made of Westminster College and to report to the Assembly not later than 1995.

### Director Windermere Centre

- 12. The Windermere Policy and Planning Committee has pointed out that the centre, being residential, employing a number of staff and offering a variety of short courses, would be in serious difficulties if the present Director were to move and a vacancy existed.
- 13. The Group recommends that to avoid administrative delays in dealing with this, the responsibility of the Mission Council be devolved in matters of urgency to MCAG.

### Resolution

- D. The Mission Council, in the matter of the post of Director of the Windermere Centre, authorises MCAG to act on its behalf in matters of urgency.

### Provincial Moderators

- 14. The Group is aware that a strict interpretation of our task means that the posts of the five Provincial Moderators to be reviewed before 1994 should be considered by us.
- 15. We do not believe that one Provincial Moderator's post can be reviewed without a review of the office itself. We do not believe that this Group is competent to do that. Therefore the Mission Council ought to be aware that we do not intend to review the five posts.

### The Staffing Group

- 16. The Group consists of three persons not currently officers of Standing Committees, appointed by the Mission Council, reporting to the Mission Council, serviced by the General Secretary. (Report GA1992 6.1D p63)

In the event of one person being absent, the Group is small. Therefore we invite the Council to appoint a fourth member. As yet periods of service have not been defined. It is our intention to bring a recommendation to the Council's next meeting, after the matter of an additional member has been resolved.

### Resolution

- E. The Mission Council resolves to add to the Staffing Group an additional person not currently an officer of a Standing Committee.

## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Training Committee - Convenor - Revd. Dr. John Morgans (12) has declined.  
It was agreed to ask the Ministries Dept. to give a detailed job/person specification and to circulate this to all Synod Clerks and Nom. Comm. members.

Christian Educ. & Stewardship and Advocacy & Stewardship.  
Following the changes to these two committees the following changes in membership were agreed -

### Advocacy & Stewardship

Rev. Bob Maitland	Aylesbury
Rev. Stephen Thornton	Newcastle upon Tyne
Rev. Lesley Charleton	Carshalton
Miss Margaret Atkinson	Huddersfield - declined
Mrs Jackie Hillier	Winchester
Mr Marshall Wood	Wilmslow
Mr Keith Webster	Berkhamstead
Mr Stanley Griffiths	Kenley

also 5 other names as alternatives

Mrs Barbara Martin	Wirral
Rev. David Netherwood	Walton-on-Thames
Mr Geoff Lunt	Wotton-under-Edge
Rev. David Wiseman	Bournemouth
Dr Alun Jones	Cardiff

The officers are empowered to consult with the Advoc. & Stewardship as to whom to approach if any in the primary list decline.

### Christian Education

The following names were proposed for the Convenor  
Tony Ewens or Jim Wilkinson

It was agreed to circulate Synod Clerks with a specific request for those with experience in the field of tertiary education.

### Provincial Moderators' Review Groups

Convenors having been agreed, the process of inviting other Group members is under way.

### New College London Foundation

Revd. John A. Pugh completes his term as Governor March 1993. He is willing to continue for a further 4 years.

### Advocacy & Stewardship Secretary - Review Group

This appointment to take effect from 1st April 1994

The following were nominated -

- Convenor - Revd. Jessie Clare
- Secretary - Mr Hilary Gunn
- 1 General Secretary
- 2 Rev. Julian Macro
- 3 Mrs Barbara Martin
- 4 Mr Malcolm Johnston



2 ~ 4 MARCH 1993

Misc. Business (2)

Resolution:

Mission Council, noting that the concern for the integration of children into the whole life of our church is shared by some of our partner churches in CWM, enthusiastically supports the proposed visit to them by the Revd Stephen Thornton, to discover their thinking and practice and provide a resource for all the churches.

Mission Council encourages CWM to enable this project to happen, gives thanks for generous offer made by Stephen Thornton of his time and energies, and looks forward to receiving a report and the resource which will follow the visit.

It has emerged from meetings with members churches of CWM, as well as with contacts with other churches in Europe and the United States of America, that there is interest in and concern for the church as an all age community. Individuals and groups within partner churches of CWM are working to integrate worship, learning and mission for people of all ages within the church. At present this work is being done by people who are often unaware of others with similar concerns across the world. They often struggle against the resistance of the weight of tradition.

Although the principles of 'Family Church' and of 'all-age worship and learning' have been advocated in the URC for many years, there is still much that perpetuates the division of our worship, learning and mission into age groups, or even excludes some of the church participating at all. The URC and the whole of CWM, could gain much, therefore, by a sharing of experience across the different cultures.

The Revd Stephen Thornton is willing to use a sabbatical period to visit CWM churches in order to help an exchange of experience to happen, and also hopes that a resource might be produced to help local churches.

CWM has indicated that it is willing to support such a project, but acts in response to requests from member churches. The Children's Work Committee, therefore, urges Mission Council to support the resolution and inform CWM of its enthusiasm for the project.

Terry Oakley - Secretary, Faith and Life  
24.2.93

**Paying for Members  
to attend  
General Assembly**

synopsis of replies from provinces

collated by Revd Christopher White on 22 Feby 1993  
79 Nottingham Road, Keyworth, NOTTINGHAM NG12 5GS  
*Home: Plumtree(0602)373769; Church: Nottm(0602)215502 - 24hrs answering*

Province	Residential Assembly	Non residential Assembly
I Northern	Prov pays in full + £25 expenses	£20 - £50 paid by Dists
II North West	Reps pay £25 (if able), Prov £25, Dists balance	£7 a day
III Mersey	Prov pays	£7-50 a day if claimed
IV Yorks	Prov pays but Dists contribute	£4 a day from Prov + £x from some Dists
V E Mids	Reps asked to pay up to half cost Prov meets balance	Nothing
VI W Mids	Prov £56, Dist £25, Rep £31	£15
VII Eastern	Prov to pay in '93 = £2,600	?
VIII South West	Prov pays but 7/45 Reps contributed	£30 - £35
IX Wessex	Prov pays	3 Dists nothing; 3 Dists offer (but claims not encouraged)
X Thames N	Prov pays with small contrib from Dists	£5 - £10 a day from Dists (if claimed)
XI Southern	Prov paid 57%, Reps (or Chs) 43%	up to £50 if needed (apply to Dist Secs)
XII Wales/Cymru	Prov etc £85, Reps £25	£5 a day

RESOLUTIONS (some possibilities to start with)

1. The report is received for debate and Mission Council thanks the provinces for the replies.

2. Mission Council shares the concern in the replies about the variations in the financial contribution expected of members of General Assembly, affirms the need to adopt a national policy in this matter and therefore asks the responsible Assembly committee to bring such proposals to the October meeting of this Council.

3. Mission Council supports the resolution of Eastern Province (Synod 10/10/92) that the responsible Assembly committee be asked to include the future accommodation costs of members of residential assemblies in the central budget of the church, rather than concealing them in the budgets of individual provinces.

4. Mission Council recognises that the variety of practice in this matter reflects varied views of the purpose of province and district funds and an imbalance of financial resources across the country, and resolves to review the total financial situation within the mission purposes of the church.



2 ~ 4 MARCH 1993

THE ROLES OF THE ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE, "THE OFFICERS OF THE ASSEMBLY" AND THE CONVENER OF THE ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE-A paper prepared at the request of the Committee by the Revd Martin Cressey and revised after a Committee discussion on 17 December, 1992.

1. These notes bring together material from the Assembly Executive Committee reports of 1991 and 1992. The questions to which they respond arise from consideration of section 6.2 of the 1992 report on the Assembly's Mission Council and related matters.

(i) To whom is the AAC responsible? Is it to the Mission Council or to the General Assembly?

(ii) What is the relation of the AAC to "the next Assembly" (6.2.A) and to "the Assembly immediately ahead" (6.2.C)?

(iii) Who are "the officers of Assembly" mentioned in 6.2.C?

(iv) What is the role of the Convener of the AAC?

(v) Who at Assembly is to undertake the role formerly carried out by the Convener of the Business Committee?

2. The 1991 report, Appendix 2 from the General Secretary Nominating Committee, envisages that there will still be an Assembly Business Committee and argues that its Convener is the person to advise on questions of how, when and for how long a piece of Assembly business shall be considered. It is pointed out that there could be a conflict of roles between the Clerk's duty to maintain the constitutional rights of members and the Business Committee Convener's duty to ensure a speedy dealing with the agenda; on this ground the offices of Clerk and Business Committee Convener were deliberately not merged.

3. It is therefore wrong to answer question (v) "The Clerk". Who else is there? "The officers of the Assembly" are to "deal with variations of the programme as they become necessary" - and they would seem to be the Moderator, the Clerk and the General Secretary. So a possible answer to (v) is "The General Secretary". But that would be a responsibility that could inhibit the "more creative and agenda-developing" (not agenda-timing) role sought for the General Secretary in the 1991 report (para. 25).

4. We therefore conclude that the AAC Convener should be made an officer of the Assembly and be given the role of advising the Assembly on its timetable (in consultation with the other officers). That answers questions (iii) and (iv).

5. On question (ii) we think that the drafter(s) of 6.2.A and C intended different meanings for the phrases "the next Assembly" and "the Assembly immediately ahead" (though the phrases refer to the same actual Assembly). We shall assume this and that what was intended was that the AAC (which includes the local planning group representative from the Province where the next assembly is to be held) is to plan it in general along with planning for subsequent Assemblies but that after the last meeting of the AAC before any particular Assembly (and only then), the Mission Council acts directly through the General Secretary, the Moderator-Elect and the Office and Personnel Manager to deal with what is by then "the Assembly immediately ahead". Such an answer to question (ii) has in effect already been agreed by the first meeting of the AAC, minute 4(ii). The three named

persons have stated that it is their intention to consult the other members of the AAC as appropriate even after the last Committee meeting. The local planning group for each Assembly will liaise throughout the year before that Assembly with the same person, namely the Office and Personnel Manager, who will take local concerns, suggestions and questions either to the AAC or to the General Secretary and the Moderator-Elect according to the time in the Assembly year.

6. If the above answers to questions (ii) through (v) are agreed, then the answer to (i) can be that the AAC is a sub-committee of the Mission Council: this would seem to have been the intention of the 1992 report, since otherwise the Assembly Business Committee would not have been "concluded" but simply amended. The Convener of the AAC, however, should be an officer of the Assembly, and it is therefore necessary that the Convener (having been appointed by the Mission Council) should be recognised by the Assembly as one of its officers under its power to appoint "such... officers as it shall from time to time think desirable" (URC Structure 2(5)-general description of elections and appointments); the Convener should also be accorded membership of the Assembly under para. 2(5)(b) of the URC Structure. A resolution is appended for the Mission Council, if it approves this report, to bring to the General Assembly.

#### APPENDIX TO THE REPORT ON THE AAC, PRESENTED BY THE CLERK, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE AAC.

Para. 6 of the above report leads me to add a note on the relation of the Deputy General Secretary to the Assembly. Neither I nor the Office and Personnel Manager can find any record of the DGS being given membership of the Assembly ex officio, though the DGS appears on the Assembly Roll in 1981 and ever since. The role of the DGS was reviewed and more closely defined in the 1991 Executive Committee report: "between Assemblies... a senior member of the Church House staff, with other primary duties," (appointed as) "Deputy General Secretary" (is) "ready to guide matters in the absence of the General Secretary and in emergency act for the General Secretary"; "in the absence of the General Secretary, the deputy will have a particular responsibility (a) to consult relevant Departmental Officers before acting in matters which concern departments, (b) to consult the Moderator of Assembly before responding to any request or need for a statement on URC policy" (Reports 1991, pages 11 and 12). It may be well to ask the Assembly to make a confirmatory decision (or perhaps it is just "a decision"! ) on the Assembly membership and Assembly responsibilities of the DGS.

A short discussion in the AAC raised the question whether the deputising function of the DGS in relation to the work of Church House would extend also to the circumstance of the General Secretary being unable for some reason, e.g. illness, to function at the General Assembly. The 1991 Executive Committee report did not address this question. It seems reasonable, however, to deduce from the way in which that report defined the DGS' role, that he or she would indeed deputise for the General Secretary in emergency at the Assembly but that this would be done in close consultation with the officers of the Assembly other than the General Secretary, i.e. the Moderator, the Clerk and, if the Assembly approves this report, the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee. This approach avoids the necessity of the DGS being required to "understudy" the General Secretary in a time-consuming way.

MARTIN CRESSEY, Clerk, 31. 12. 92



DRAFT ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE MISSION COUNCIL. The two parts of the resolution could be separately voted upon at the Assembly.

The General Assembly acting under its powers to elect officers (URC Structure 2(5)-general description of elections and appointments) and to add such of them as it determines to its membership (URC Structure para. 2(5)(b)),

(a) elects the Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee of the Mission Council to be an officer of the Assembly and grants to the Convener membership of the General Assembly under para. 2(5)(b) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church, with the duty of advising the Assembly and its Moderator on questions of how, when and for how long items of Assembly business shall be considered:

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

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Notice of Assembly resolutions (1)

This is from the FURY Council but will have to be proposed by two members of the Assembly.

"This Assembly welcomes and supports the work of the Fairtrade Foundation in launching the Fairtrade Mark in 1992 and urges its members to -

1. Encourage wherever possible local supermarkets to stock cafe direct and future Fairtrade mark products.
2. Encourage the purchase of these products".

Paul Ashworth, FURY Chair.

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Notice of Assembly resolutions (2)

1. Assembly receives Christchurch Chineham nr Basingstoke as a local church of the United Reformed Church.

Proposer ..... Secnder .....

(A brief description will be included)

2. Assembly receives Peachcroft Ecumenical Centre, Abingdon, as a local church of the United Reformed Church.

Proposer ..... Secnder .....

(A brief description will be included)

FINAL REPORT, PRESENTATION AND PROPOSED RESOLUTION FROM THE URBAN RURAL MISSION GROUP TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 1993

1) Final Report

The text of the Final Report is attached.

2) Presentation

The Urban Rural Mission Group requests Mission Council for a 45-minute slot in the Assembly programme to present its Final Report. When it was decided in 1990 that the Group would complete its work at Assembly 1993, they were promised a major opportunity to report to Assembly this year.

A small planning group met on 22 February 1993, and has produced an outline programme for the presentation:

- i) A brief summary of the Final Report by way of introduction.
- ii) A short, humorous dramatic sketch, bringing out the difference between mission to the poor and mission with the poor. The text of the sketch to be distributed to Assembly members so it can be repeated when they report.
- iii) Review of development in the URC which exemplify the Urban Rural Mission approach, including situations featured in the book being published by WCM at Assembly 1993, "Sightings of Hope".
- iv) A look to the future. Assembly members have a responsibility to communicate these insights. Buzz groups.
- v) Presentation of Resolution and (it is hoped) its acceptance.

3) Resolution

The Assembly

- a) receives the Final Report of the Urban Rural Mission Group,
- b) notes the requests addressed to Assembly and urges the Mission Council and local churches to take up the concerns indicated, and
- c) discharges the Urban Rural Mission Group.

# Final Report of the Urban/Rural Mission Group

## What we set out to do in 1987:

(Numbers in brackets refer to the report we made to Assembly in 1990.)

**Our broad aim** - "to promote the liberation of poor people in urban and rural Britain through and within the life of the United Reformed Church" (18.1)

**Our objectives** were "to help the people of the United Reformed Church to engage in mission which addresses poverty and division and their causes" (20)

We saw that "any future strategy must take further the willingness of the United Reformed Church as a whole to move its gifts and resources to the frontiers of mission engagement" (21.1)

We set ourselves *two tasks*:

- 1 "to provide a listening post for the concerns of people about poverty and deprivation", and
- 2 "to act as a pressure group that works for the achievement of the set objectives" (22.1)

## In our interim report to Assembly in 1990 we linked these tasks to specific areas of central church work:

**Integrated Training:** "working with Faith and Life on how mission beginning with the poor can inform the equipping for membership and eldership" (22.2.1)

**Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation:** "working with Church and Society on the idea of the Just Peace church" (22.2.2)

**Mission Pursuit:** "to provide complementary materials, chiefly by way of giving a relevant account of local church work that begins with the poor" (22.2.3)

**Ministerial Training:** "assisting Ministries in its quest to provide opportunities for ordinands to experience work in deprived areas and to receive education in social and economic analysis, community organising and racial awareness" (22.2.4)

**Decade of Evangelism:** "to place special emphasis on 'being with' rather than 'doing for', i.e. to share with and to learn from the poor as far as possible and to let the gospel be heard through them" (22.2.5)

## What we have been doing:

**Against our broad aim** we have sought to engage in a wide-ranging dialogue, giving encouragement, stimulating new approaches, sharing insights.

### *More specifically:*

We have contributed to the Integrated Training programme and 'Members Together'.

We made a significant contribution to the planning for and conduct of the February 1992 consultation on Mission/Community convened by Church and Society.

We sponsored the production of the 'Sharing Resources' paper.

We have produced for publication at Assembly 1993 a book of case-studies called 'Sightings of Hope'.

We held a consultation with the teaching staff of the church's theological colleges.

We made an input into the Mission Pursuit programme.

***And in the spirit of our broad aim we welcome:***

- the publication of 'Faith in the Countryside', the report of ACORA (the Archbishop's Commission on Rural Areas).
- the establishment of the Mission Expenses Support Fund.
- the creation of Mission Council and its apparent appreciation of our broad aim as its own.
- the production of a 'Charter for the church' by the (London-based) Urban Churches Support Group.
- the formation of a few Broad-Based Organisations (such as Congregations Organised for a Greater Bristol).

**We are therefore asking Assembly and its Mission Council:**

- to formulate the priorities of the church in line with the broad aim and objectives of the U R M Group.
- to ensure that the process evidenced at the Mission/Community consultation is developed further to enrich the whole church.
- to press the Integrated Training working team to continue to evaluate its work against the broad aim and objectives of the URM Group.
- to make proper provision to review the work already done on 'Resource Sharing' and 'Priorities for Mission' and to bring proposals for implementation to Assembly.
- to promote 'Sightings of Hope' in a way that will stimulate all our churches to discover for themselves what it means to 'come alongside the poor'.
- to press the Training Committee to continue the dialogue with college staff initiated by the URM Group.
- to share in the work arising from ACORA and any appraisal of the earlier 'Faith in the City' in the light of rapid change in British society, rural and urban.

**We are therefore asking local churches:**

- to consider what it might mean for them to see local mission and ministry in the light of the broad aim of the URM Group, quoted above.
- to keep the values of a church dedicated to the pursuit of Justice Peace and the Integrity of Creation central to their agendas.
- to continue to explore, and to demand, ways of improving their basic mission skills.
- to recognise their role as central contributors to the ongoing debate about the church's ministerial training programme.
- to explore what it means to be involved in the evangelism/evangelisation process, in particular the 2-way process that seeks to 'learn from' as well as to 'declare to' the community, and seeks ways of enabling the fulfilment of the broad aim of the URM Group.

*in this box will go a list of half a dozen resources for local churches*



# MISSION COUNCIL

2 ~ 4 MARCH 1993

FOR INFORMATION

FROM THE

WESSEX PROVINCE

## Ecumenical Boundaries - Progress report

(A summary of the replies received and of discussion in two Church Leaders' meetings)

Most of the personal replies were mainly encouraging, acknowledging the magnitude of the problem and welcoming the fact that it was being aired. There was general agreement, both in the correspondence and the discussion, that the present tangle of boundaries presented very real problems and constituted a hindrance to our work and for all except the Anglicans, made for considerable overlap and proliferation of ecumenical responsibilities. The general feeling, however, was that procedures in changing boundaries were too costly and complex to make this worthwhile. For the Roman Catholics, it would involve consultation not just with the Bishops' Conference, but with Rome. For the Anglicans it would mean lengthy and costly legal processes, including major parliamentary legislation. The Baptists explained that their bodies are voluntary associations of local churches, most of whom would be loath to make changes in these associations because of their historical roots and also because of the contemporary relationships between churches which they embody. Despite all this, there was a general feeling that it had been good to raise the issue and that it ought to be kept on our agenda.

On one point there was clear agreement. The County Ecumenical bodies were accepted as the basic unit for ecumenical co-operation. Consequently it was accepted that County boundaries also provide broadly the basis for our boundaries and that these should be accepted as a guide in any changes which are contemplated.

Particular interest was shown in the passing reference in the paper to the smaller groupings of churches. It was acknowledged in several quarters that there was a need to look at the boundaries of Deaneries, Circuits and their equivalent. Others spoke of encouraging informal groupings of parishes or churches. It was felt that in considering any such groupings or re-organisation, we must avoid cutting across each other's boundaries and that this was generally a most helpful place to start the co-ordination exercise.

It is hoped that these various matters will be of interest and that we will be able to take them up as appropriate, either in our Church Leaders' and County Ecumenical meetings, or in developing our own denominational strategy in co-operation with others, in the coming months and years.

## Ecumenical Boundaries - A Way Forward

(A paper circulated on behalf of the Wessex Province Strategy Group to Church Leaders and County Ecumenical Officers in the "Wessex" area)

In the Wessex Province of the URC we have been giving some careful thought to the vexed issue of ecumenical boundaries. Perhaps the URC is more afflicted than most of its ecumenical partners by the difficulties that our geographical structures impose, but we suspect that all would share some of our concerns. The matter is repeatedly set aside from the main ecumenical agenda because it seems too difficult or of sufficiently little importance in our present journey together. We too feel that this is not a burning issue, but we also believe that it is one of strategic importance to the mission of the Church as we seek to deploy limited resources in a responsible way through ecumenical sharing.

We have already spent many hours discussing the issues and formulating some thoughts for the future. We want to share these thoughts more widely now and have chosen to do so within an ambit where ecumenical commitment is already established and where an openness to each other has created an environment in which longer term thinking and planning is relevant. Our hope is that we might first consider the following questions together:

- Is it true that incongruous boundaries are a potential barrier to effective ecumenical co-operation?
- In particular, could resources of leadership, trainers and administration be significantly improved if our boundaries at the 'county level' were harmonised?
- If so, are there ways in which any barriers could be circumnavigated without a change in geographical boundaries?

In our discussion, we have not found a satisfactory answer to these questions and have come back to the view that we must take steps which will enable a strategic harmonisation of boundaries. Specifically, we would propose the following steps:

- Endorsement of the 'county' as the intermediate level of ecumenical administration and strategic co-operation in such matters as church planting and LEP support.
- Establishment of a 'commission' which would clarify, as far as possible, the precise boundaries of the 'county' for the purpose set out above. It is already clear that the secular county boundary is both inappropriate in some places and subject to change in a way that is unhelpful for ecumenical purposes. If we are to plan strategically for denominational boundary harmonisation, we must be as clear as we can at the outset where the lines will be drawn on the ecumenical map.
- Denominational consideration of the changes needed in their own boundaries. The objective here would be to re-align boundaries in such a way that 'county' ecumenical boundaries would not pass through smaller denominational units such as Deaneries, Circuits and Districts (URC). At the same time, the boundaries of the larger denominational units such as Diocese, District (Methodist) and Province should coincide with the ecumenical 'county' boundaries; although one Province, say, may well embrace a number of (whole) counties.

Finally, it may be helpful to share our own thoughts as to how the last of these three steps might be achieved as far as the URC is concerned. This is firstly to give reassurance that we believe we have the means to go down this path and secondly to suggest a model which might help others to see a way ahead.

What we have in mind is to create smaller groupings of churches than the present District. On average, our Districts in the Wessex Province comprise about thirty congregations. The smaller group we have in mind would average about one-fifth of that size. The smaller group would not be part of the structure of the URC, but would encourage local co-operation both denominationally and ecumenically and would assist in the sharing of resources, particularly in the area of lay training. But most significantly, the smaller groups would be established in a way that they were not crossed by the strategic 'county' ecumenical boundaries. Having built up a sense of co-operation and even commitment in these small groups, they could then be amalgamated to create new denominational units within the ecumenical 'county'. In other words, we would have achieved a sensitive re-alignment of our District and Province boundaries to fit the ecumenical map.



# MISSION COUNCIL

2 ~ 4 MARCH 1993

## Resolutions for Assembly

This bundle of papers contains the resolutions Committees would like to take to Assembly. Each resolution is accompanied by a supporting argument.

In addition there are the following three resolutions:

1. The Structure of the URC

Following the first approval at the 1992 Assembly and the absence of any objections from Synods and District Councils, Assembly resolves to amend the Structure of the URC as follows:

6.1 2(3)(d) Representatives of the local churches within the District who shall normally be members of the elders' meeting of a local church and who shall be appointed by the church meeting of such local church, the number of such representatives to be decided by the Provincial Synod according to the needs of each District and in consultation with the District Councils, provided that the range for each local church be from one to three."

6.2 2(4)(c) Representatives of the local churches within the Province who shall normally be members of the elders' meeting of a local church and who shall be appointed by the church meeting of such local church, the number of such representatives to be, under 200 members 1 representative; over 200 members 2 representatives."

2. Assembly receives the Church of the Good Shepherd, Battlehill, Newcastle, as a local church of the United Reformed Church. Proposer.....Seconder.....  
(A brief description will be added).

3. Assembly receives Oakwood, Derby as a local church of the United Reformed Church. Proposer.....Seconder.....  
(A brief description will be added).

## Presentations at Assembly

The GREY paper offers suggestions for these.

NOTE The BLUE paper from Finance also has attached a leaflet regarding pensions. This is not for the Assembly but to aid MC's own discussions on pensions.

## FIRST DRAFT OF THE FINANCE REPORT TO ASSEMBLY 1993

### FINANCE

**Convener: Mr Alistair Black**  
**Secretary: Mr Clem Frank**

#### URC Annual Accounts for 1992

1. The full set of audited annual accounts covering URC central funds for 1992 are given in Appendix ...

#### Ministry and Mission Fund

2. It is pleasing to note that a break even result was achieved in 1992 despite a number of adverse variances. These were offset by reduced costs mainly arising from the number of ministers falling below estimates coupled with lower Community Charges.

3. Once again there was a heartening response from the Provinces, Districts and local churches in raising their contributions in 1992 by ...% and we are grateful for their efforts.

### FINANCIAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**Convener: The Revd Alasdair Walker**  
**Secretary: Mr Clem Frank**

#### Budget 1993

4. General Assembly's endorsement of the challenge to churches to raise contribution levels to the Ministry & Mission Fund budget in 1993 to enable stipends to be increased to £13,200 in July, led to the Financial Resources Committee reviewing the situation at its end year meetings.

5. In its review the Committee noted that although the Provincial responses had risen, they fell well short of meeting the challenge budget. However, it was also noted that the significant fall in the number of ministers, as compared with budget estimates, had materially reduced anticipated costs in 1993 and as a result the budgetary requirements attached to a £13,200 stipend, appeared to be within reach.

6. It was also understood that several of the Provinces and many of the churches had made their increased contributions, conditional upon the attainment of a stipend of £13,200 in 1993 and a number of churches were still in the process of challenging members to increased giving to achieve this target.

7. In the circumstances, the Financial Resources Committee were convinced that it was right to make the appropriate adjustments to the 1993 budget to provide for the payment of a stipend of £13,200 and to recommend this course of action to the Mission Council. The Mission Council agreed and the amended budget for 1993 is shown on page .....



## Budget 1994

8. The budget for 1994 calls for a contribution from the churches of f....., ie, an increase over the revised budget for 1993 of .....%.

## MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Convener: Mr Michael Harrison  
Secretary: Mr Alan Taylor

### Personalia

9. Mr Alistair Black, who had served as Convener since May 1990, resigned in March 1993 following his appointment as Treasurer. The Committee is pleased that Mr Michael Harrison agreed to take over as Convener.

### Ministers holding Assembly appointments

10. Details of stipends and conditions of service from 1st July 1992 were circulated at last year's General Assembly, and for ease of reference are shown in Appendix .....

### Stipend 1993

11. As already reported, stipends are to increase to £13,200 per annum with effect from 1st July 1993.

12. The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee considers that the attainment of this stipend level removes the necessity for local churches to pay extra supplements to ministers and believes, therefore, that they should be discontinued as from 1st July 1993. Consequently, it is proposed to end the present practice of allowing these supplements to be paid though the central payroll from 1st October 1993.

### Plan for Partnership

13. It is proposed to amend the Plan for Partnership by deleting Clause 6.4 relating to Community Charges. Resettlement Grants, Ordination Loans and the maximum weekly payment to students, have been increased as detailed in Appendix .....

### Stipends 1994

14. It is proposed to increase stipends on 1st July 1994 by the level of annual inflation prevailing at that time, which is currently estimated at 4%.

### Alteration to date of annual stipend increases

15. It is proposed to alter the date of annual stipend increases from 1st July to 1st January so as to enable General Assembly to participate in more meaningful discussions in advance of stipends being raised. Also, it appears that this change of date would assist local churches by confining the impact of each stipend increase to one financial year rather than straddling two years, as at present.

16. This change is planned to take effect on 1st January 1995, with a six months inflation percentage increase being introduced at that time. Thereafter, increases would be made on the 1st January of each year.

#### **Proposed changes in URC Ministers Pension Fund Rules**

17. Last year's report to General Assembly drew attention to the uncontrollable leap of £8 million in URC Pension Fund liabilities, which occurred in 1992, due to the unusual Rule which links pensions to stipends. The report also alluded to our desire to raise the accrual rate for starting pensions from 1/100ths to 1/80ths for each year of service and at the same time to delete the Rule (Clause 34), which allows any member to set aside a Rule change which is likely to affect them adversely.

18. Extensive discussions over the past six months have reaffirmed the Committee's view that it is important for the URC to break the automatic link between pensions and stipends. However, it transpires that it would be too costly at the present time to introduce 1/80ths for all past and future service. Whilst this remains our goal, it is only possible to introduce it on a partial basis now. At the same time we believe it is important that everyone receives an improvement in their pensions.

#### **Clause 34**

19. After legal advice it has been decided to retain within the new Rules current members existing rights to set aside a Rule change if the member considers their "pecuniary rights are adversely affected to an appreciable extent". However so as to remove the ambiguity in the present wording as to when the right has to be exercised, it is intended to amend the Clause to clarify the situation.

20. In respect of ministers qualifying for membership after 10th July 1993, it is proposed to offer modified rights.

21. In brief, the proposals now brought to General Assembly for a decision are:-

#### **Pension benefits**

i) for those with service after 1st April 1978 - to raise their starting pension from 1/100ths to 1/80ths of the stipend in payment at the time of their retirement for each of these years of service. Those already retired, who have service within this period, will have their pension adjusted based on the new stipend of £13,200.

ii) for those with service before 1st April 1978 - to raise their starting pension or their existing pension, for those already retired, by approximately 10%, for each of these specific years of service, except for any years for which they may already qualify for 1/80ths.

#### **Pension increases**

Annual pension increases will no longer automatically be linked to stipends, but will match the UK annual rate of inflation, ie, RPI, subject to a maximum of 5%. This is in line with obligations usually applicable in the commercial sector.

22. Individual letters have been sent to each Pension Fund member in order to i) enclose an explanation of the proposed changes, ii) provide personal details of the effect of the changes and iii) seek their provisional views by 31st May as to whether they are in favour of the pension changes (see Appendix ....). Members have been informed that the provisional views they give will not replace the need to make a final personal decision by 12th October 1993, if General Assembly approve the changes, as to whether they wish to remain under the Old Rules, if they consider their "pecuniary rights are adversely affected to an appreciable extent". However, it was felt that General Assembly would like to have some feed back as to the views of Pension Fund members before a decision is taken.

23. The new Rules, embodying the proposed changes are shown in Appendix ....

#### **Retired Ministers' Fund**

24. Discretionary grants paid from the Retired Ministers' Fund, which are not covered by Pension Fund Rules will increase by 5% in July 1993. In addition, a special increase of 10% will be paid in November 1993, providing the New Rules are adopted.

#### **Old Rules - Clause 34**

25. As there is a possibility that some ministers may choose to be covered by the old Rules rather than the new Rules it is proposed to amend Clause 34 to conform to the revised edition in the new Rules.

#### **Pension Fund liabilities**

26. Last year, General Assembly were informed that the link between pensions and stipend had resulted in an exceptional increase of £8 million in the Pension Fund deficit due to the rise in stipends to £11,508 and that this increases to £10 million with the rise in stipends to £13,200.

27. The changes in Rules, outlined in paragraph 20, do not affect these levels of liability but will ease the situation in future if adopted.

#### **Restructuring of URC Trust**

28. Following on the Maxwell pension scandal there is a growing recognition throughout the country of the need to ensure that Pension Fund investments are properly controlled by Trustees, who should include Trustees appointed to represent Pension Fund members. The most effective way of the URC achieving this is to operate two Trusts. A new Trust would be established covering the Pension Fund and its investments and leaving the present Trust responsible for URC property and non Pension Fund investments.

29. So far as the new URC Pension Fund Trust is concerned, it is intended to appoint the General Secretary, Treasurer, Chief Accountant, Convener of Maintenance of the Ministry Committee and the Convener of the Pensions Sub-Committee as ex-officio Trustees. In addition four Trustees are to be appointed from retired and serving Pension Fund members and four Trustees from Church members, with the Trustees electing the Convener. A Secretary will also be appointed.

30. The term of office for the Trustees will normally be six years, although the initial terms will be staggered to provide continuity.

31. United Reformed Church Trust has sixteen existing Trustees including the General Secretary, Treasurer, Chief Accountant and Secretary of the Retired Ministers' Housing Committee in an ex-officio capacity. The other Trustees, including the Convener and two Joint Secretaries, are prepared to continue as Trustees, but will stagger their retirements over a period between, 1997 and 2002.

32. The present and new Trustees have been advised in writing of the important legal and moral responsibilities they bear, both individually and collectively. These are sufficiently onerous for many Trust Bodies to ensure that the Trustees are given some measure of protection except in the event of fraud. This protection may be obtained through costly specially insurance cover through a suitably worded indemnity within the Trust Deed. Following consultation with our Lawyers, we are adopting the latter course as being the more cost effective and appropriate method for the church.

33. It is intended that both Trusts will in future provide a report to General Assembly and that the Pension Fund Trust will also make a report annually to Pension Fund members.

34. The revised documentation for United Reformed Church Trust and the new Pension Fund Trust Company have been drawn up by the URC Lawyers, Towns Needham & Co, and copies are available for inspection.

General Assembly Resolutions 1993

**FINANCE**

1. Assembly receives the Report (for debate?).
2. Assembly adopts the Accounts for 1992.
3. Assembly gratefully acknowledges the giving of the churches in 1992 to the Ministry & Mission Fund.
4. Assembly notes the new budget for the Ministry & Mission fund for 1993 and approves the budget for 1994, which calls for total contributions from the churches f..., an increase of ....% over 1993.
5. Assembly believes the continued payment of special stipend supplements by some churches is no longer justified and agrees to discontinue the payment of these supplements through the central payroll as from 1st October 1993.
6. ~~Assembly amends the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration by deleting Clause 6.4 relating to Community Charge supplements and by also increasing allowances as set out in Appendix .....~~
7. Assembly agrees to alter the date for annual changes in stipends from 1st July to 1st January to take effect with an increase on 1st January 1995.
8. Assembly adopts the new Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund in as set out in Appendix ..... which will apply,
  - a) to those members who do not elect to by 12th October 1993 to be covered by the old Rules, and
  - b) to all ministers qualifying for entry to the URCMPF after the 10th July 1993.
9. Assembly agrees to clarify the first paragraph of Clause 34 of the "Old" Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund by amending it to read,  
.....
- \*10 Assembly amends the first paragraph of Clause 34 of the "Old Rules" of the URCMPF for all ministers qualifying for entry after the 10th July 1993 to read,  
.....
11. Assembly agrees to the establishment of the new URC Pension Fund Trust to take over responsibility for the URC Ministers' Pension Fund and its investments with the URC Trust continuing its responsibility for property and other investments.

\* NOTE: Resolution 10 will be withdrawn if resolution 8 is passed by Assembly.

12. General Assembly recognising the personal commitment to the Church of those who served as Directors of United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Trust Limited and of United Reformed Church Trust, resolves as follows:-
1. That the Church will not hold any Director of either Company personally liable for any loss suffered to the assets of the Church in the hands of the Company, provided that that Director has not been guilty of fraud and,
  2. That the Church will indemnify any such Director and his or her estate in respect of all actions claims costs and expenses made against or falling upon that Director in his or her capacity as Director of either Company, or against his or her estate, provided that he or she has not been guilty of fraud.
  3. That the General Secretary and the Moderator of the General Assembly shall on behalf of the Church execute a Deed of Indemnity in favour of present and future Directors of each of the Companies in the form attached to this resolution.

## TO PENSIONERS RECEIVING DISCRETIONARY GRANTS FROM URC FUNDS

### Revision of Grants 1993

The Pensions Sub-Committee is asking Assembly 1993 to amend the Rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund varying the pensions paid to members and members' widows providing for an increased pension in 1993.

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The Committee feel it appropriate, if pensions paid from the URCMPF are increased, to increase discretionary grants paid from the funds within their care.

These increases will be in addition to a 'normal' increase of 5% now to be paid from the 1st July 1993.

If the Rules of the Pension Fund are altered by Assembly, discretionary grants payable will be increased by 10% from the 1st November 1993.

Enclosed is a personal statement showing your current grant, and the increases.

- 2) Consider other relevant factors, looking far into the future, ie
- a) how often UK annual inflation is likely to exceed 5%, and
  - b) the URC's future stipend policy and practices, after the increase in July 1993, if the pension linked commitment remains.
- Factors 2a) and 2b) are the uncertainties which no one can reliably predict.

**THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION FUND**

**6. IF YOU HAVE A QUERY WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?**

**PROPOSED PENSION CHANGES**

- i) If your query concerns the attached statement of your own personal benefits, please write to Mrs Judy Stockings at 86 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RT.
- ii) If your query concerns the proposed rule changes please contact your Provincial Representative, whose name appears on the attached list.

**7. WHAT HAPPENS ABOUT DISCRETIONARY GRANTS?**

Those who are receiving discretionary grants which are not governed by the Pension Fund Rules will receive separate advice on their situation.

REF: URCMPPF  
March 1993

The Maintenance of the Ministry Committee  
The United Reformed Church  
86 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RT



## 1. THE OBJECTIVE

Assembly 1992 gave us the task, following the creation of a large deficit of £8 million in the Pension Fund as a consequence of the stipend change in July 1992, to "minimise the possibility of similar levels of liability automatically arising in future years." We are hoping to use this opportunity also to improve starting pensions.

In the proposals set out below we are seeking to:-

- Remove the link between pensions in payment and the current level of basic stipend
- Raise the level of starting pensions
- Keep the cost of the pension improvements within the liability faced at present if no changes are made.

## 2. THE PROPOSALS - effective from 1st November 1993

### Pension Benefits

- For qualifying service after 1st April 1978 - to raise the starting pension from 1/100ths to 1/80ths of the basic stipend in payment at the time of retirement for each year of service within this period. Those who are already retired will have their pension similarly adjusted using the new stipend figure of £13,200 agreed for July 1993.*
- For qualifying service before 1st April 1978 - to raise the starting pension or the existing pension for those already retired, by approximately 10% after adjustment for the new July 1993 stipend, for each year except for those years which already qualify for 1/80ths.*

### Pension Increases

After applying any increases due in July 1993, future increases will no longer be linked automatically to basic stipend. Instead they will match the UK annual rate of inflation, ie, RPI, subject to a maximum of 5%. This compares favourably with obligations usually applicable in the private sector.

We hope that you will welcome these proposals.

## 3. WHO WILL DECIDE UPON THE RULE CHANGES?

The General Assembly, which meets between the 5th-9th July 1993, will decide whether to proceed with these proposed changes. However, Assembly will be interested to know the view of the majority of all Pension Fund members before reaching a decision, and it would be therefore help if you complete and return the enclosed slip by 31st May 1993. This provisional response will **not** affect the need for you to make a final choice after Assembly's decision as detailed in paragraph 4.

## 4. WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?

If General Assembly approves the New Rules it is the right of each Pension Fund member whose "pecuniary rights are adversely affected to an appreciable extent" to ask for the existing Rules to continue to apply to that member.

You will be informed of the decision of General Assembly in July and at that time, if you choose to remain under the Old Rules your formal written request must then be sent to the Trustees by the 12th October 1993.

Those who choose to be subject to the old Rules will continue to have their pensions linked to basic stipends.

For those who do not make such a choice the new pension rates will apply from 1st November 1993, and pensions in payment will be adjusted annually thereafter.

## 5. HOW WILL YOU DECIDE?

- 1) Examine: The enclosed statement which shows how your pension will change under the new rules. This is the only firm information which is available.

**THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH MINISTERS' PENSION FUND**

**MY PROVISIONAL RESPONSE**

Please make a provisional response on this form and return it to the Maintenance of the Ministry Office, United Reformed Church, 86 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RT, as soon as possible but in any event no later than 31st May 1993.

Please tick one box only

I am in favour of the proposed New Rules applying to me

I am not in favour of the proposed New Rules applying to me

FOR MISSION COUNCIL, 2-4 MARCH 1993

RESOLUTIONS FROM THE MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK  
AT HOME COMMITTEE FOR TRANSMISSION TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1 MISSION PROJECTS - RECOGNITION

The General Assembly 1992 passed a resolution on Mission Projects, giving first approval to additions to 'The Structure of the United Reformed Church'. No objections to that resolution having been received, final approval of the resolution is requested.

"The Assembly, noting the need for flexibility in situations of mission and church growth, gives final approval to the following additions to 'The Structure of the United Reformed Church' (Manual, section 2) (additions underlined):

2(3) Functions of District Councils (Manual, p 21)

(x) to promote church extension within the area and to submit proposals to the synod for the establishing of new causes and the recognition of mission projects:

2(4) Functions of Provincial Synods (Manual, p 24)

(iii) to promote church extension within the province and decide upon proposals submitted by district councils for the establishment of new causes and the recognition of mission projects:"

2 MULTIPLE CONGREGATIONS FORMING ONE LOCAL CHURCH

The General Assembly 1992 passed a resolution on Multiple Congregations forming one Local Church, giving first approval to additions to 'The Structure of the United Reformed Church.' No objections to that resolution having been received, final approval of the resolution is requested.

"The Assembly gives final approval to the following additions to The Structure of the URC:

1) At the end of paragraph 2(3)(d) (Manual, p 20) insert:

(Where a local church, whether a local ecumenical project or a local church organised according to the second sentence of para 1(1), comprises two or more congregations worshipping in separate locations, the Provincial Synod may, on the advice of the District Council, authorise that local church to appoint representatives to the District Council from each constituent congregation to such number as would be permitted by the above rule if each congregation were a separate local church).

2) At the end of paragraph 2(4)(c) (Manual, p 22)  
insert:

(Where a local church, whether a local ecumenical project or a local church organised according to the second sentence of para 1(1), comprises two or more congregations worshipping in separate locations, the Provincial Synod may authorise that local church to appoint representatives to the Synod from each constituent congregation to such number as would be permitted by the above rule if each congregation were a separate local church)."

### 3 "CHURCH PLANTING"

During the past 10 years the URC has been involved in a series of initiatives in evangelism and mission. In recent years questions have been raised about URC policy on "Church Planting". In February 1992 CHALLENGE 2000 was launched in England as an initiative to help plant 20,000 new churches by the year 2000. This initiative is called DAWN which stands for Discipling A Whole Nation.

In 1992 the **Methodist Conference** passed a **Resolution** in the following terms:

The Conference calls upon every Circuit in the Connexion seriously and prayerfully to consider ways in which God is calling it to growth; to explore in co-operation with its ecumenical partners the possibility of planting at least one new congregation by the year 2000; and to report on its plans to the District Policy Committee.

On 13 March 1993 a broad-based DAWN Advisory Committee was constituted together with representatives from all the major protestant denominations and groups in England.

Already in places such as St Helens co-operative "church planting" on an ecumenical basis is taking place. We now propose that the United Reformed Church expresses its commitment to this process in terms of the following resolution:

The Assembly, recognising the increasing interest in and commitment to "church planting", calls upon every district council of the URC to engage with ecumenical partners in the process of research aimed at placing a body of Christian people in every locality and to set up new Mission Projects or Congregations where appropriate.

The Assembly recommends the "10 DAWN Principles for Responsible Church Planting" (Appendix I) as a useful guide to this end.

**"WHO GOES WHERE?" - REPORT FROM THE MULTILATERAL CHURCH  
CONVERSATION IN SCOTLAND, 1992**

(NOTE: The Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee considers it unnecessary and wasteful to distribute a copy of the report to every member of Assembly (it runs to 30 pages). The following introduction should set the report in context and clarify the issues on which the Assembly is invited to decide. Nevertheless, any member of Assembly who requests a copy of the full text of the report from the World Church and Mission Office will be sent one.)

In 1985 the Multilateral Conversation produced a report 'Christian Unity: Now is the Time,' which invited the participating churches to instruct it to go ahead with the preparation of a Basis and Plan of Union. Four of the six participating churches issued this instruction, but with a number of caveats and questions. The current report 'Who Goes Where?' attempts to answer some of those questions and also asks whether the churches still wish it to work out a scheme of organic union or whether the recent developments in the ecumenical scene have led us to see other forms of unity as preferable.

It should be noted that the report is therefore partial and incomplete. It sets out where the Conversation has got to and attempts to show an outline of what a united church might look like. In the language of architecture it is not a 'Plan' but a 'Feasibility Study'. There are parts of the document which contradict one another and other areas which are by no means fully worked out. Indeed there are references to problems to which the Conversation has not produced a satisfactory answer, and it should be remembered that a great deal of work remains to be done if a Basis and Plan of Union is to be produced. A major reason for returning to the churches now has been the fact that the Conversation feels it necessary to obtain reassurances from the participating churches before beginning the long and detailed work of producing a complete scheme. On page 16 of the report it is noted that neither the Church of Scotland Basis of 1929 nor the URC Basis of 1972 can be used as a measure of the size and complexity of a final report and scheme of union. Depending on the final answers to some of the questions still being posed the bringing about of a church union in Scotland could necessitate not merely legislation to alter and amend trusts etc. such as we have been familiar with in our own URC Acts but also legislation to alter the Accession Oaths taken by the Monarch. The uniting of an established church with free churches from other Christian traditions has never happened before and the complexity of such a union has been greatly underestimated by the Church at large.

However, the report begins with a general preamble which seeks to pose the questions to be answered, to recapitulate the history of the Conversation and to set the Conversation in the current ecumenical scene, in particular by defining its relationship to Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS). The rest of the report begins to deal with the questions raised in that preamble.

The sections on the Controlling Principles and the Responses of the participating churches likewise set out the questions to be addressed and the framework within which the Conversation works.

Therefore the first main area of the report is a section headed 'Some Issues about Episcopacy'. The basic problem to be addressed here has been the fact that the Scottish Episcopal Church has said that it would not abandon episcopacy for the sake of unity while Reformed churches either would not adopt episcopacy for the sake of unity or would accept it for the sake of unity and in respect for the convictions of others, but not because it has proved to be the right way of organising ministry. The Conversation has therefore attempted to re-examine the whole question of episcopacy in an attempt to see whether these positions are as intractable as they might appear. It has been said that in exploring this question too great an emphasis has been placed upon the exercise of a personal episcopacy, and not enough on the values and ideas of corporate episcopacy. This is to a certain extent balanced by the Structures section of the report which deals in part with questions of superintendence at parish and regional level.

The Structures section is an outline of the kind of church organisation that the Conversation envisages. The changes between the pattern outlined in 1972 in the interim report of the Conversation and the pattern outlined in the current report are partly a result of more detailed examination of those early proposals. Equally, and this is an area where the experience of the URC has proved very valuable, the Conversation was convinced that wherever possible local areas should be left to evolve structures that suit local conditions and therefore no attempt has been made to define how tasks shall be addressed, but rather simply to set out what the responsibilities of different levels of the church organisation might be.

There is a general presupposition of a continuation of a reformed eldership in the united church but this is not addressed in any part of this report. This probably should be spelt out more fully, particularly as there are several different understandings of the nature and function of eldership in our reformed churches and a statement about this might have been helpful both to them and to those churches without elders.

Of the Appendices, Appendix A is in fact a section from the report of the Covenanted Churches in Wales, and sets out the ideas they had for the reconciliation of ministries. Appendices B, C, D and E likewise set out some general background material. Appendix F notes down in full the responses of the churches to 'Christian Unity: Now is the Time', and Appendix G attempts to answer in detail a question posed by the Church of Scotland concerning the Articles Declaratory and what changes would be needed. It points out where expansion would be needed but suggests that only Article 8 would need to be completely rewritten.

The following resolution is therefore placed before Assembly:

The Assembly of the United Reformed Church makes the following response to "Who Goes Where?", the report of the Multilateral Church Conversation in Scotland 1992:

- [a] Having been part of the Conversation from the beginning we are thankful for all that has been done over the years. We appreciate all the hard work that has been put in by many people and have found the various publications informative and at times challenging. We think especially of 'Christian Unity: Now is the Time' in 1985. Our response to that report meant that we were one of the four churches who said "Continue with the aim of producing a Basis and Plan of Union."
- [b] We are now being asked "WHO GOES WHERE?"
- [c] First we ask ourselves how far have we come over the past 25 years? We began the Conversation as Churches of Christ and continued after our Union in 1981 as the United Reformed Church. Previous to that Union we had talks with the Congregational Union of Scotland (CUS) which, although not pursued to producing a Basis and Plan of Union, brought our Churches closer together in co-operation. More recently we voted in favour of a plan of Union with the CUS and were sorry when this did not materialise. This has, however, brought us much closer together with the CUS/URC Liaison Group. A local union was effected in June 1992 to form the Augustine United Church in Edinburgh (CUS and URC). Throughout the UK exploratory talks have taken place between the Methodist Church and ourselves and although in the short term this is unlikely to proceed to a Plan of Union, it will bring us closer together and further the growth of Local Ecumenical Projects in which we are both involved, which already number over 250 in the UK. We have also shared in the discussions and fruits of the 'Reformed Churches Group' in Scotland. As a church we remain committed to striving for the goal of visible unity. This is expressed in our Basis of Union and is reaffirmed at every ordination and induction service.
- [d] The visible unity of the whole church is an elusive goal but worth aiming for for the sake of society as a whole. We see the pursuance of this goal either as a full 'Conversation' or bi-laterally as part of the whole. The 1990's have begun ecumenically on a wider front with the Scottish Churches Council giving way to Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS). We see this as a proper progression and note with satisfaction the welcome given in the report to the advent of ACTS. This wider front within ACTS is not, however, we believe, a complete substitute for the Multilateral Conversation unless the particular concerns which brought the Conversation into being are fully taken under the wing of ACTS. It may be that ACTS could be the enabler for the Conversation and as such play a greater part.
- [e] The growing number of Local Ecumenical Projects is an important development towards the goal of visible unity and

indeed is already an expression in some measure of that unity. We hope that this development will continue to receive encouragement from all the churches participating in the Conversation.

[f] We make brief comments on two particular sections of the report:

a) EPISCOPACY - Here we would stress the collective oversight (episcopate) exercised by elders in the councils of the church and the superintendence exercised by provincial moderators in all our provinces and their synods. This whole area is inevitably an important and also difficult one and needs to be got right in any scheme of union.

b) ARTICLES DECLARATORY - We are appreciative of the work done by the Structures Group. We understand the situation much better now and the comments are very helpful. Being put into a clearer perspective the Articles Declaratory do not appear to present as big a hurdle as they once did.

[g] In conclusion we believe that it is always right to look at the 'Controlling Principles' which brought the Multilateral Conversation into being. We hope that we shall move forward together.

[h] The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church therefore gives authorisation to the Multilateral Church Conversation in Scotland to continue its work and reaffirms the response of the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee reported to Assembly in 1986 encouraging the Conversation to proceed with the preparation of a Plan of Union.



## APPENDIX I

10 DAWN Principles for Responsible Church Planting have been drawn up and they are as follows:

- \* **Responsible Pluralism:** A given area may have more than one group ministering in it.
- \* **Mutual Respect:** A participating body considering the possibility of entering a locality where there are existing churches, will consult with representatives of those churches with an attitude of respect.
- \* **Proximity and Density:** When a group considers entering a locality, it will evaluate and minimise any possible adverse effects due to proximity to an existing group. A dense population may reasonably allow different groups to be closer together than in sparsely populated areas.
- \* **Unity with Diversity:** There is an intrinsic unity of the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ. There is legitimacy for diverse structural and doctrinal distinctives within the churches/denominations/groups that co-operate together.
- \* **Team Spirit and Fellowship:** Workers from different participating bodies working in a given locality are encouraged to arrange for communication and fellowship, to create a team spirit.
- \* **Sharing Resources:** Each participating body in an area is encouraged to make their resources available to support evangelistic and church planting efforts.
- \* **Reaching the Unreached:** Participating bodies are encouraged to give priority to areas or groups where there is no resident gospel witness or church.
- \* **Reconciliation:** Every effort should be made to resolve conflicts between participating bodies consistent with Matt 18 vv 15-17 and 1 Cor 6 vv 1-3.
- \* **Church/Parachurch Relationship:** The centrality of local church life is emphasised, and the supportive ministry of parachurch organisations recognised. Consultation between the two groups is encouraged.
- \* **Common Planning:** Common Planning amongst participating bodies should be done periodically, and each group's plans shared.

**RESOLUTION FROM THE MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS COMMITTEE  
FOR TRANSMISSION TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

- 1 The Committee has reported at length in its report to Assembly on the problem of racism. As a contribution by the General Assembly the Committee believes that an invitation to local leaders of other faith communities to visit Assembly, to be greeted by the Moderator and asked to take the greetings of the URC to their people, would be an appropriate gesture of goodwill.

The Committee therefore presents the following resolution:

The Assembly resolves that as a gesture of goodwill local leaders of other faith communities should be invited to the 1994 and subsequent Assemblies, that they should be received by the Moderator, and that they should be asked to take to their communities the greetings of the URC.

URC  
Ministries - Vocations Committee

Resolution regarding Entry Qualifications -  
Age of Entry to the Stipendiary and Non-Stipendiary Ministries.

Resolution

Assembly adopts the revised entrance qualifications - age of entry to the stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministries - as set out as follows:

1. Entry to Stipendiary Ministry

Entry to training should be restricted to those who would be expected to complete training and obtain a Leaving/Completion of Course Certificate before their 56th birthday.

2. Non-Stipendiary Ministers transferring to Stipendiary Ministry

Those transferring should normally be expected to be able to complete the additional training required and obtain a Leaving Certificate before their 56th birthday. In exceptional cases only, a Province and District Council may submit an application for older candidates to the Vocations Committee.

3. Entry to Non-Stipendiary Ministry

a) Entry to training should be restricted to those who are able to complete training and obtain a Leaving/Completion of Course Certificate before their 59th birthday. In exceptional cases only, a Province and District Council may submit an application for older candidates to the Vocations Committee.

b) The lower age limit for entry to the non-stipendiary ministry should be 21 years as with the stipendiary ministry (at present 30 years).

4. Leaving/Completion of Course Certificates

The Committee has considered the validity of these Certificates and for the sake of clarification asks Assembly to agree that they will be valid for 3 years in the first instance. Those not receiving and accepting a call within that time would need to apply to the Vocations Committee for an extension.

A number of factors have prompted the Vocations Committee to look again at the age of entry to both stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministries.

The costs of training have risen sharply, averaging out at £7,000 plus for those training in college and £ .... for those on courses. Generally the older the candidate the higher is the cost of training. The Committee receives a number of requests from older candidates and it is not unusual to receive enquiries from some who are well over the age of 60. This may be acceptable for the non-stipendiary ministry if a District Council has identified a particular ministry to be exercised, but failing that the Committee is suggesting that there should be an expectation of a reasonable period of service from those the church trains for these ministries.

Furthermore, regarding the stipendiary ministry, the Committee is aware that the URC Ministers' Pension Fund has placed an upper age limit of 50 at the time of ordination for membership of the fund; and those over 50 years at the age of ordination who will retire at 65 would not qualify for housing provided by the Retired Ministers' Housing Society.

Consequently the Committee asks Assembly to agree the following revisions in connection with the age of entry to the stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministries.

United Reformed Church  
Ministries - Training Committee

Resolution to Mission Council, March 1993

The Mission Council, acting as a matter of urgency for the General Assembly, resolves that the Revd John Proctor shall on the completion of his first seven years as Director of New Testament Studies at Westminster College on 31st August 1993, continue in office for a further five years, to 31st August 1998.

1. A review group, consisting of Mrs Elisabeth Jupp (Convener of the Training Committee and also of the Nominations to Teaching Staff, Westminster College, Committee), the Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee (Secretary of the two committees), the Revd M H Cressey (Principal of Westminster College), the Revd Dr Rupert Hoare (Principal of Westcott House, representing the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges) and Dr Neil Messer (final year Westminster College student), met at the Principal's Lodge, Westminster College, Cambridge, on Thursday 11th February 1993 at 2 pm for a review of the Revd John Proctor's appointment as Director of New Testament Studies (the Dunn Chair) at Westminster College, Cambridge. Mr Proctor had been appointed in 1986, initially for seven years, with the possibility of extension by 5 + 5 years etc.

2. The discussion centred around a paper that John Proctor had supplied, based on the questionnaire recently used in a staff review at Northern College. The Revd John Proctor joined the group at 3.35 pm.

3. The group noted the breadth of Mr Proctor's teaching commitments for the College, the Federation, the University and in conferences for ministers and members of the URC. It also noted the diversity of administrative work he was doing, to the great satisfaction of its recipients; his readiness to be involved in the life of local churches; and the pressure consequent upon all this which fell on his time for family life, and academically on his time for research and writing. He had produced a number of articles, several in his sabbatical year, but had no book in the planning stage.

4. The Principal reported that all the personal soundings he had taken and all the comments he had heard, indicated widespread appreciation for Mr Proctor's work and pastoral care for students. This was confirmed by Dr Hoare and by Dr Neil Messer from their respective Federation and student points of view. It was particularly valuable within the Federation spectrum to have a staff member clearly identified as an evangelical and as clearly open to other views, a teacher who communicated alternative ideas without hiding his own findings.

5. The group set up to review the appointment of the Revd John Proctor as Director of New Testament Studies (the Dunn Chair) at Westminster College therefore unanimously and cordially takes the view that on the completion of his first seven years on 31st August 1993, he should continue in office for a further five years, to 31st August 1998, his appointment then to be reviewed by a general procedure to be agreed for all Westminster College posts.

United Reformed Church  
Ministries

RESOLUTION

Assembly welcomes the exploratory work done by Northern College in producing the report, 'Enhancing Effective Ministry', takes note of the summary of the report and the recommendations as adopted by the College Board of Governors, encourages the college to proceed with its planning on the basis of the recommendations outlined above, but refers items a) to c) below to the Ministries Training Committee for report to a future Assembly.

NORTHERN COLLEGE, MANCHESTER - PROPOSED FUTURE PROGRAMME -  
'ENHANCING EFFECTIVE MINISTRY'

The Ministries Training Committee has received with great interest the report of the Review Group on Training at Northern college, 'ENHANCING EFFECTIVE MINISTRY'. The following is a summary of the report and the particular recommendations relevant to the United Reformed Church:

- (i) The report considers that criteria need to be agreed concerning the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will enable the Church to recognise competence for ministry. This also implies that appropriate ways of assessing all aspects of teaching have to be established. For this reason it is necessary to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum receive proper recognition and ministerial students can have their competence affirmed. This would apply equally to all students, and is particularly relevant when students are undertaking non-standard courses. The Church as well as the student needs to be confident about readiness for ministry. The Ministries Training Committee has already begun to examine this.
- (ii) The report lays emphasis on the recognition of prior learning in determining the appropriate training for each ordinand. It recommends that before entry to college students should be required to undertake such preliminary study as will ensure their initial training within the life of a church. It also recommends that they experience the ministry of the whole people of God. This would further aid the partnership between the URC and the colleges in testing and affirming the sense of call to particular ministries.
- (iii) The intention is that there should be a greater integration between the 'academic' and 'practical' aspects of training. This would involve a modification of the present pattern to provide more flexible training and to encourage greater integration in ministerial formation. This has implications for present policy in the URC where internship is a mandatory requirement. The college sees the present 4-year integrated course of training as providing a basic programme model which has regard to students prior learning and the objectives of ministerial training.

- (iv) Concern has frequently been expressed about the overload on students during training, especially in the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of other considerations of ministerial formation. The report draws attention to the need for planned post-ordination training as a continuing task for the churches. This is an area where the college wishes to ensure that its work is properly linked to the continuing task of enhancing ministerial effectiveness.
- (v) The college recognises that the URC deploys many resources in training for different ministries. It is for the Church to define the role of the colleges in serving its needs so that effective partnership can be sustained.

The Committee appreciates that the Governors of Northern College recognise that the recommendations can only be implemented effectively in congruence with URC policies for ministerial training. The college currently trains approximately one third of the URC's stipendiary ministerial students. The proposed changes to Northern College's training programme, as outlined, are in line with the thinking of the Ministries Training Committee. It sees no reason why the recommendations should not proceed, but also recognises that there are implications for wider URC training policy. The Ministries Training Committee therefore asks Northern College (a) to share the report and recommendations with other training institutions, and (b) after further consideration, to bring the results of its considerations to the Ministries Training Committee for its report to a future Assembly concerning the following issues:

- a) The advisability of there being a compulsory Foundation course.
- b) The advisability of there being a scheme for compulsory Post-ordination training, consisting of continued academic study and short residential courses to develop particular skills and understanding of the needs of particular ministries.
- c) That the appropriate committees and groups within the URC take steps to develop a comprehensive and coherent scheme, including finance for training for different ministries and define the role of the colleges and courses within it.

Therefore the Committee welcomes the work done by Northern College in producing the report and encourages the College to move towards a new course structure, to start in September, 1994, in accordance with the principles set out in the above summary.

## DOCTRINE & WORSHIP COMMITTEE

### RESOLUTIONS

1 The Assembly gives its approval to the revised version of Schedule C submitted by the Doctrine & Worship Committee.

#### **Review of Schedule C**

(Affirmations made by Ministers at Ordination and Induction)

The General Assembly of 1991 approved a resolution from the North Western Provincial Synod asking for a review of Schedule C, and asked the Doctrine and Worship Committee to undertake this review as soon as possible. After inviting comments from District Councils, the Moderators and a number of recently ordained ministers, the Committee prepared a revised version of the Schedule and circulated it to District Councils for comment. The earlier responses had indicated a wish for only minimal change, and the revised version was approved by an overwhelming majority of the District Councils which replied. There was a particular welcome for the alternative affirmative form, modelled on that in Schedule A for admission to the full privileges and responsibilities of membership.

Various detailed comments on the wording were made, and these have all been considered. The Committee is well aware that a small number of individuals would prefer more radical changes to be made in the text. However, in view of the clearly stated wish by Districts in 1991 for minimal change and the general support given to the version submitted last year, the Committee has made only minor changes. The revised version is now submitted to the Assembly for its approval. If approved by the requisite majority, it will be referred to synods prior to final approval at the Assembly of 1994. a Commentary on the proposed changes is appended to the proposed new version.

#### **Proposal for an amended Schedule C**

NOTE: The service will also include the reading of the Statement contained in Schedule D, and provision will be made for a statement to be made concerning the circumstances of the call. Ministers may also make a personal statement about their faith and sense of calling. After the statement has been read the presiding minister shall then ask the following questions:

- 1 A.B., Do you confess anew your faith in one God,  
Father Son and Holy spirit?  
I do.
- 2 Do you believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments,  
discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,  
is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of God's people?  
I do.
- 3 Do you believe that Jesus Christ,  
who was born of Mary, lived our common life on earth, died upon the  
cross, and who was raised from the dead and reigns for evermore,  
is the gift of God's very self to the world?  
Do you believe that through him God's love and mercy are revealed  
and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life are offered to all  
people?  
And will you faithfully proclaim this gospel?  
By the grace of God, this I believe and this I will proclaim.
- 4 Do you believe that the Church is the people gathered by God's love to  
proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God through Jesus Christ?  
I do.



- 5 Are zeal for the glory of God, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, obedience to the holy spirit and a desire for the salvation of the world, so far as you know your own heart, the chief motives which lead you to enter this ministry?  
They are.
- 6 Do you promise to live a holy life, and to maintain the truth of the gospel, whatever trouble or persecution may arise?  
Relying on the strength of Christ,  
I do.
- 7 Do you promise to fulfil the duties of your charge faithfully, to lead the Church in worship, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, take your part in the councils of the Church, and to give leadership to the Church in mission to the world? By the grace of God,  
I do.
- 8 Do you promise as a minister of the United Reformed Church to seek its wellbeing, purity, and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches, and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?  
By the grace of God,  
I do.
- 9 Will you undertake to exercise your ministry in accordance with the statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church?  
I will, and all these things I profess and promise in the power of the Holy Spirit.

When a minister is inducted to a new charge, the presiding minister (after appropriate consultation) may need to modify the wording of question 7 to fit the kind of ministry to which the candidate has been called.

When an ordination takes place in a Local Ecumenical Project all the questions should be asked in the form set out above, together with any additional questions that the ecumenical nature of the Project may require.

The following alternative form of questions and answers is also authorised for use:

- 1 A.B., will you confess anew your faith?  
I confess anew my faith in one God, Father son and Holy Spirit.  
I believe that the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments, discerned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority for the faith and conduct of God's people.  
I believe that Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, lived our common life on earth, died upon the cross, and who was raised from the dead and reigns for evermore, is the gift of God's very self to the world.  
I believe that through him God's love and mercy are revealed and forgiveness, reconciliation and eternal life are offered to all people.  
And by the grace of God I promise to proclaim this gospel faithfully.  
I believe that the Church is the people gathered by God's love to proclaim the reconciliation of the world to God through Jesus Christ.

- 2 What leads you to this ministry?  
so far as I know my own heart,  
I believe that zeal for the glory of God,  
love for the Lord Jesus Christ,  
obedience to the Holy Spirit  
and a desire for the salvation of the world,  
are the chief motives which lead me to enter this ministry.  
Relying on the strength of Christ,  
I promise to live a holy life,  
and to maintain the truth of the gospel,  
whatever trouble or persecution may arise.
- 3 Will you faithfully fulfil the duties of your charge?  
By the grace of God I promise to lead the Church in worship,  
to preach the word and administer the Sacraments,  
to exercise pastoral care and oversight,  
to take my part in the councils of the Church,  
and to give leadership to the Church in mission to the world.  
As a minister of the United Reformed Church  
I promise to seek its wellbeing, purity, and peace,  
to cherish love towards all other churches,  
and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.  
I undertake to exercise my ministry in accordance with the statement  
concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church.  
All these things I profess and promise in the power of the Holy  
Spirit.

If this form is used in an induction, the presiding minister (after appropriate consultation) may need to modify the wording of the answer to question 3 to fit the kind of ministry to which the candidate has been called.

When this form is used at an ordination in a Local Ecumenical Project, the full form should be used as above together with any additional statement that the ecumenical nature of the Project may require.

### Commentary

Some have suggested that the form for inductions could be shorter than that for ordinations. The Committee considered this suggestion carefully but decided not to recommend any change. Several ministers testified to the significance they attached to the opportunity of renewing their ordination vows at the induction to a new charge; and congregations, which may never have called a newly ordained minister, also spoke of the impact which those questions and answers made upon them.

There is some evidence to suggest that the purpose of the minister's personal statement (which is, of course, optional) may have been misunderstood. Opportunity has been taken to use the wording in the 1989 Service Book to indicate that the scope of such a statement is intended to relate to the call to the ministry rather than the call to a particular charge.

Some have complained about the length of the questions and answers. When the revised version was read aloud in dialogue form at the Committee's meeting, it lasted for three minutes.

Question 1 remains unchanged.

In question 2 'all God's people' has been changed to 'God's people'. The Committee understood 'all' in the existing version to be emphatic rather than exclusive. However, the question of whether Christians are the only people called by God is even more urgent today than it was twenty-five years ago when this was drafted. Paul wrestled with this question in relation to

the Jews in Romans 9-11, and was reluctant to come to the conclusion that God has finally rejected them. Since the question makes perfect sense without 'all', it is proposed to omit it.

The first part of question 3 has been divided into two to make it easier to read. The participles in the existing version are a mixture of past and present and have been replaced by a relative clause. The words 'born into this world, living our human life among us' have been replaced by words taken from the Approach to Communion in the Second Order of Worship in the 1989 Service Book. Both statements are concerned with the way in which Jesus shared our humanity: the first locates Jesus in history by referring to his mother (of Galatians 4:4), whilst the second by using the word 'common' refers specifically to that which we share. The phrase 'God's very self' has been used in deference to those who prefer to restrict the use of 'his', 'himself' etc for God as such to the minimum.

Question 4 has been rephrased in the interests of inclusive language.

There has been much discussion of question 5. Some wished to change the word 'zeal' and others questioned whether any reference to motives was appropriate. The Committee was not persuaded to abandon reference to 'zeal'. Nor did it feel that reference to motives was inappropriate, but a reference to 'obedience to the Holy spirit' has been included to indicate the significance of the sense of call. The alternative ending for inductions has been omitted as unnecessary.

The order of the next two questions has been reversed to improve the progression of the whole. Some have questioned the use of the phrase 'holy life', but the Committee feels that this should be retained and opportunity be taken if necessary to explain the true meaning of holiness. Others have wondered whether anyone can promise to maintain the truth of the gospel in trouble and persecution. One member of the Committee spoke movingly of the significance of this question in her own experience, but in recognition of its difficulty a reference to the strength of Christ has been included in the response.

In question 7 'faithfully' has been substituted for 'with all fidelity' for the sake of clarity. A reference has been included to participation in the councils of the Church at the request of the Moderators and the Executive Committee. 'Its' has been omitted before 'mission', since the mission is properly that of God rather than of the Church.

For the avoidance of ambiguity "the United Reformed Church" has been substituted for "this church" in question 8. 'Wellbeing' has been substituted for 'true prosperity', in order to avoid misunderstanding. Some have questioned whether it is possible or desirable to love all other churches. The Committee believes that 'to cherish love' implies an effort to nurture love, however, difficult that may be, because of the character either of the church or the minister; but if a gathering of god's people is recognised as a church, there can be no avoiding the obligation to cherish love towards it.

Question 9 is the old preliminary question transferred to the end, so that the promises of the minister are set in the total context of the statement on the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church.

The answers to questions 3, 7 and 8 have been strengthened by references to the grace of God.

Provision is made for the content of question 7 to be varied where the ministry is not the pastorate of a local congregation. This proposal was included in the Committee's Report to Assembly 1991, but was not acted upon. Provision is also made to ensure that when an ordination takes place in a Local Ecumenical Project, all the questions are asked, together with any additional questions that the nature of the Project might require.

## 'Europe' at 1993 Assembly

Mission Council agreed at its January meeting that, although there would not be an overarching theme for General Assembly, there could be a useful focus on 'Europe' with a cluster of items (minute 93/16/3).

The inter-departmental Europe Co-ordinating Group has prepared a set of resolutions on Europe in a form that invites four periods of debate, on direct links, on public policy, on URC involvement and on Faith & Order developments. These resolutions are appended together with supporting papers.

These papers are derived from the drafts for a major piece of work which the Co-ordinating Group has in hand, viz. the production of a booklet on 'The United Reformed Church: a European church'. An outline of the chapter headings of this booklet is also appended. It is planned to publish the booklet in the summer, to incorporate any resolutions passed by Assembly.

The four items would be variously presented, depending on the time allowed for each. Church and Society and World Church and Mission, joint sponsors of the Co-ordinating Group, feel that at least three hours of Assembly time, perhaps two sessions, would be required to deal with these items. This is the only Church and Society business anticipated at this stage.

They would be moved, if Mission Council agrees, in the name of the Council since no single 'department' is responsible.

It is intended to invite guests to share in some presentations and to use a variety of media.

# **The United Reformed Church, a European church**

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## **EUROPE REPORT - RESOLUTIONS**

### **1. Direct links:**

Assembly encourages local churches to foster links with continental churches which share the Reformation heritage, especially where civic twinings or parish church links are being made, in affirmation of the church fellowship which has been achieved through the Leuenberg Agreement with Reformed, Lutheran and United Churches.

### **2. Public policy:**

Assembly encourages local churches to foster a dialogue with their elected representatives in the Westminster and European Parliaments (and in the run-up to the 1994 European Parliamentary elections, with prospective candidates) on European social and political issues, in particular the questions of poverty and social division, racism and xenophobia, unity and disintegration, the environment and relations with developing countries.

### **3. URC involvement:**

Assembly

- a) requests the Mission Council to prepare a policy, indicating priorities for our relations with churches in continental Europe, so that our limited resources may be used to best effect;
- b) encourages local churches, Districts and Provinces to make use of the many people in our churches who have personal experience of working on the continent and the three Europe advisers on the co-ordinating group;
- c) welcomes the establishment jointly by Church and Society and World Church and Mission of an interim URC co-ordinating group for Europe comprising Mrs Sheila Brain (church links), Revd Geoffrey Roper (faith and order) and Revd Philip Woods (church and society) and requests the Mission Council to examine the need for a committee specifically to oversee, co-ordinate and develop the church's involvement with continental Europe.

### **4. Faith and Order developments:**

Assembly welcomes the call of the European Protestant Assembly (Budapest 1992) for closer fellowship between historically separated denominations; and encourages the Reformed, Lutheran and United churches linked through the Leuenberg Agreement to take the initiative in seeking deeper fellowship with Methodist and Anglican Churches.

## DIRECT LINKS

The many links which the URC has with other European churches are expressed in different ways: joint conferences and holiday events, exchange visits by groups and individuals, exchange of ministers, representation at Assemblies and Synods, etc. These contacts go on at all levels of church life. It is often from informal friendships that greater links develop, with significant results for European co-operation and understanding. This is true of many of the partnerships/twinings which have developed between local congregations, some going back over many years. Although most existing twinings are probably with congregations in the Palatinate in Germany as a result of the official link between the URC and the Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz, there are many other examples of local links with a range of European countries.

Local church twinings are to be encouraged and may take a variety of forms: regular visits, joint conferences, choir exchanges and concerts, sponsorships, exchange of information through magazine articles, etc. Sometimes official town twinings open up extra possibilities; or an Anglican parish link through their Meissen Accord with the EKD in Germany can be adapted to recognise the long-standing Reformed links. (More on Meissen and Leuenberg under 'Faith and Order developments' below).

In some cases there are links with more than one country which can be particularly fruitful. Many churches have strong and regular links, with frequent visits and activities; for others this may be difficult and only occasional visits may be affordable, but the link is nonetheless real and alive. However, it is also important to be able to recognise when a nominal link is no longer active, and to bring it to an end if appropriate.

District Council and Provincial links are also valuable: they enable a wider range of contacts in an area or country and may allow more people to be involved without having an impossible burden of expectation on one local church.

There are a number of URC ministers who are serving congregations in other European countries and we welcome ministers and lay workers from several of our sister churches who have come to work here in Britain.

There are many possibilities for young people in particular to gain experience of other European countries through visits, conferences, workcamps etc. FURY has developed a number of contacts to increase these opportunities.

The strength of URC links with other European countries, European institutions and pan-European organisations is reflected in the number of URC individuals who are actively involved in leading roles in such bodies.

### Membership

The opening up of Europe means increased mobility for European citizens and this has considerable implications for our church life. More and more people are moving to other countries, particularly within the EC, in connection with their work or indeed to find employment in the first place. For URC members who may be planning to live and work abroad, World Church & Mission has information about church contacts in that country; or you can consult the "Christian Directory of Europe" which also lists English-language services (*published by CHRISTIANS ABROAD, 1 Stockwell Green, London SW9 9HP*).

This is a two-way process and we can also look forward to our fellow European citizens arriving in our own neighbourhoods to take up work. We need to remember that they may feel strange and awkward at first and that the warmth and fellowship of a welcoming church could make all the difference to their life here. This new situation raises a number of questions about how we approach the question of church membership, which are being addressed separately by Mission Council.

## PUBLIC POLICY

During the years of the cold war British churches played an important role maintaining relations with churches in Eastern and central Europe, giving space to their leaders and members to express their hopes and fears about being Christians in a totalitarian communist society. Today the challenges are different. New freedoms and new fears threaten our quest for a Europe at peace with itself and with the world. What may have been understood as our growing together in recent years could now all too easily be shrugged off in fresh assertions of nationalism and economic independence.

First, there is Europe the *context*, the background against which we are experiencing increasing outbursts of racism and xenophobia, business failures and rising unemployment, and the continuing decline of rural communities. It is also the background against which we are experiencing fresh efforts by the EC, especially the Commission, to protect the environment, encourage freedom of trade, and activate some redirection of resources to support disadvantaged peoples and communities.

Second, there is Europe the *issue*. What sort of Europe do we want? Should the European Community be enlarged? Are the countries of eastern and central Europe to be invited in as full partners with the western nations or held at arms length for as long as possible? However, Europe is not just about geographical or institutional boundaries. Increasingly people on the margins of society are finding that the Europe we are constructing has no place for them - people who are unemployed, people discriminated against because of their ethnic identity, their gender, or because of some disability, small farmers and others. Christians, with their understanding of *community (koinonia)*, should have something to say about this.

There are also wider issues such as the environment and relations with the rest of the world. As *context and issue*, Europe provides us with a large agenda, an ethical agenda, an agenda which cries out for the witness of a people who know the love of God and who can translate that into the claims of God's kingdom in the world today.

### **Poverty and Social Division**

In the mid-1980s fifty million people in the European Community (15.4% of the population) lived in poverty (EC Report on the Second Poverty Programme 1985-89). Even more disturbing is the fact that the number of people in poverty is increasing and that the most vulnerable are children and elderly people.

How is this poverty defined? The EC Council of Ministers define the poor as "persons whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the member state in which they live", so that "poverty is the extreme of inequality." This is then given substance by defining the poor as those living on or below 50% of average income in their country; the Institute of Fiscal Studies calculates that 12m Britons live below this line.



Whether the coming of the Single Market will improve this situation no one knows. Some forecasters predict an increase in overall employment of between 1.8m to a maximum 5.7m, though these figures have a wide margin of accuracy. Others are far more pessimistic: Sir John Harvey Jones has "predicted that by the year 2000 more than half of Europe's factories could be closed and half its companies could disappear or be taken over" (quoted in, *Changing Europe*, Sean Baine, John Bennington and Jill Russell, NCVO/CDF, 1992).

What happens inside the EC is only part of the picture. The huge dislocation being experienced in the economies of the former communist countries in eastern and central Europe is creating social misery not experienced since the post-war years. Pensioners are going hungry whilst others are finding themselves unemployed for the first time in their lives and young people leaving schools and colleges have little or no hope of finding employment. Embracing capitalism was supposed to bring about western affluence; the immediate experience is something else. Western aid is little more than window-dressing in the face of the challenges facing these countries. The European Community offers assistance programmes with one hand while with the other it denies access to its markets for products readily exported by countries like Poland and Hungary.

Until these matters are tackled there is already a 'two speed' Europe: a fast lane for a few who will reap whatever benefits are to be had from the Single Market and a slow lane for the rest of us where some benefit may accrue over time. And there is the 'other' Europe, a hard-shoulder where those who can no longer compete are left stranded "to await assistance", only there is little sign that help is coming.

### **Racism and Xenophobia**

Witnessing the fire-bombing of refugee hostels in Germany in the last year was a shocking experience. Coupled with the rise of far-right nationalist politicians in countries like France and Austria there are general grounds for concern about European tolerance for ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers; xenophobia (fear or hatred of foreigners) is replacing hospitality.

Within the European Community there are about 15 million people who are black or from Third World countries (*Changing Europe*, p.94), out of a total population of around 345 million people. Different EC member states have hugely varying ways for accounting for such people: for example in several states, they are counted as foreign regardless of country of birth, whilst in the U.K. we would mainly count those as born in the U.K. as British citizens. Thus in the U.K. there is a significant group of people from ethnic minorities who are accorded greater EC rights than would be the case for similar people in other EC countries.

This is the tip of the iceberg. For while up to the 1970s European countries had relatively liberal immigration policies in a bid to recruit cheap labour, the trend is now reversed and the goal is to stem the flow of migration into Europe. Discussions about

EC immigration policies take place in relatively unaccountable forums such as the Trevi Group and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Immigration. The effect is to make it more difficult for potential immigrants and asylum seekers to gain entry to the EC. Hence the coining of the term *fortress Europe*.

Outside the EC the striving after national identity brings its own problems seen in the displacement of persons in the former-Yugoslavia and across the Commonwealth of Independent States (what used to be the Soviet Union).

In this climate Gorbachev's concept of a common European home seems remote and idealistic. Other continents have had to cope with tremendous movements of peoples, especially in Africa. What is it about Europe that causes us to stand so aloof from the struggles of those around us, to turn our backs on those who are turning to us for refuge. Could it be that the more one has, the less one is willing to share?

### **Unity and Disintegration**

The founding fathers of the European Community, figures like Robert Schumann and Jean Monnet, were looking for mechanisms which could ensure lasting peace in Europe. Thus they proposed some kind of federation through creating "an economic state of affairs capable of resulting in political consequences that could not be obtained in a direct manner." ("The European Community - Introduction and History", Gerard Markhoff, in *The New Challenges of the European Community: Questions from the Churches*, EECES, 1991). While only embracing part of Europe their experiment has achieved its purpose; the old enemies, France and Germany, are perhaps the chief architects of the western Europe of today. The edifice of the European Community was built against the perceived threat of communist territorial ambitions. Now that threat is removed, what of the future?

While in the East we see the more blatant displays of nationalist fervour, with peoples laying claim to new frontiers in bloody conflict as in the former Yugoslavia or Nagorno- Karabakh, we cannot say that this has not been a feature of western society - witness the conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Basque region of Spain.

With the collapse of communism in the East an opportunity has emerged to extend the vision of Schuman and Monnet to embrace the whole of Europe. The experience of Germany, however, points to the enormity of that task. More disturbing though is the sense that there is a loss of direction and a lack of political will to move the "Europe project" on.

### **The Environment**

"The European Community, as a geographical entity, is relatively modest in size (2,366,000 km<sup>2</sup>), but owing to the restricted area it occupies, its situation and extremely favourable natural conditions, it is a densely populated part of the world

(345 million inhabitants, i.e. an average density of 146 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>) engaging in intense economic activity." (*Europe in Figures*; Eurostat, 1992)

This highlights the dilemma the Community faces. The driving force for the EC is its economic strategy designed to achieve ever higher levels of growth in member states. However, when, rather late in the day, the EC commissioned a study on the environmental impact of the Single Market it was (not surprisingly) discovered that there would be a number of serious negative consequences, including an increased amount of road freight, air pollution and waste. This is alongside the growing recognition of existing environmental damage evidenced in the pollution of the Rhine and the prevalence of acid rain.

The response of the EC has been to talk about *sustainable growth* (in marked contrast to the universally accepted term "sustainable development") highlighting the dualism inherent in so many of the EC's policies. The concerns of environmentalists are recognised but the goal of economic growth remains unquestioned. The Single European Act itself speaks in generalities which critics of EC environmental policies believe amount to very little, especially when compared to the real challenge of creating a globally sustainable society. To achieve this an "80 per cent reduction in non-renewable resource use per unit of industrial output and a 90 per cent cut in pollution per unit of output over the next century is required." (*Reinventing Europe*, p.11, The New Economics Foundation, 1992)

Beyond this are the huge environmental problems of eastern and central Europe where decades of neglect have left large tracts of land poisoned and useless, perhaps most famously epitomised in the nuclear wasteland surrounding Chernobyl. Again the EC is offering some technical assistance but short-term human needs of transforming these societies has taken priority over the development of environmental policies and meaningful responses to past catastrophes.

**Developing countries** (*section on EC relations with countries of the South to follow*)

### **Whose Common Home?**

So we reach the crucial issue appertaining to the 'new' Europe: who is in and who is out - who is it *for*? It is a geographical question and a social question, an economic and an ecological question. It is also a deeply theological question wrestled with by people of faith; it expresses our longing for a new heaven and a new earth where God's *shalom* is realised. (see Isaiah 65, 17-23).

Europe conceived of as 'our common home' must find ways of delivering peace and justice for all its peoples, bringing healing to the brokenness of the world environmentally, economically and politically.

## FAITH & ORDER DEVELOPMENTS AND MORE ON LINKS

The United Reformed Church is a European Church. Historically a part of Western Christendom, it was shaped by the Reformation; its predecessor bodies being influenced by Luther, Bucer, Zwingli and Calvin as well as the Scottish and English Reformers. The Reformation churches were soon divided into two streams, the Lutheran and the Reformed. Our choice of the word "Reformed" in the united church's title reaffirmed our identification with that aspect of the Reformation inheritance associated with Switzerland and Scotland (and strong in the Netherlands, France, various provinces of Germany and some places in eastern Europe) and it emphasizes our links to the world- wide family of Reformed churches.

We were able to take part in the bridging of differences between Lutheran and Reformed churches in Europe by signing the epoch- making Leuvenberg Agreement in 1973 which established pulpit and table fellowship between many Reformed, Lutheran and United Churches in Europe.

Through the Conference of European Churches (CEC) we have had contact and collaboration with a wider spectrum of European Christianity including the other denominations we meet on the high street in Britain and the Orthodox churches. In most other European countries we do not, however, find the same commitment to close ecumenical co-operation that we are discovering in the creation of the new ecumenical instruments in Britain. In some parts of Europe Catholics and Protestants are still apprehensive strangers rather than recognizing each other as fellow pilgrims on the path to unity.

It was partly in reaction to the high-profile Roman Catholic manifestations in central and eastern Europe and to Orthodox assumption of primacy in various countries (though also to the incursions of high-powered Evangelical missions and "New Age" influences from the west) that the Protestant Assembly was called to take place in Budapest in March, 1992. Here the identifiably historic protestant denominations were represented: they find their unity around the reformations's assertion of justification by faith with three slogans "faith alone", "grace alone", and "Christ alone". The idea of a European protestant synod and been floated but by the time of the Budapest Assembly, where we were represented by our moderator, Ruth Clarke, it was no longer pursued. What was sought was that "the process in implementing full communion among churches of the Reformation tradition should be pursued without delay". The appeal was addressed firstly to the Leuvenberg fellowship:

*"We request the churches of the Leuvenberg Agreement to take appropriate measures at Executive Committee meetings and at the General Assembly in Vienna in 1994. We suggest, for instance the convening of a special conference to draw consequences for those European Churches that in recent years issued declarations of church fellowship between Lutheran and Reformed churches on the one hand and Anglican and Methodist churches on the other. Equally our relations to the Moravian Church should be examined anew in common conversations."*

The Budapest Assembly here addressed the question of relationships with the churches on our doorsteps, whose churchmanship was shaped in England, the very churches with which the attempt to make a covenant in England fell short of success

in 1982. The United Reformed Church should take a leading role in the process they commend and give an unmistakable signal that we would support the initiative. The relevant section report from Budapest goes on:

*"We are not however in agreement on the question whether (and if so, which) structures of a visible unity follow as a consequence of church fellowship in Word and Sacrament. But we do ask the churches participating in the Leuenberg conversations if they would be prepared to create a new kind of church fellowship with the Methodist Church and the Church of England which would have to examine how the voice of the Churches of the Reformation can be made to be heard more clearly in Europe."*

### **"Free Church", Reformation and "Reformed"**

Our self-description as a "Free Church" tends on the continent to convey something nearer to a sect, community church or gospel hall than the mainstream historic denomination we mean to describe. Many continental protestant churches are Lutheran and respond to "Reformed" as to a partner with a different history and theological emphases. When referring to our common inheritance it is best to speak of Reformation churches (in German "reformatorisch") for to refer to Reformed is to identify specifically with one side of the Reformation tradition which only found full reconciliation with the Lutherans twenty years ago through the Leuenberg Agreement. We can play our full part in realizing the church fellowship established by that agreement, affirming our communion with continental Reformed and Lutheran congregations with which we have contact through town twinnings, inter-church links and exchange visits.

Our sister churches in Britain have varying relationships with continental partners. The Church of England has a diocese of Europe and has also established a link with the German Evangelical Churches (the Meissen Agreement) making possible communion with them in the same sort of way that the ecumenical canons permit with the Free Churches in England.

Methodist churches in Britain and Europe are linked together: in Italy the Methodists work in close partnership with Waldensians and in Germany they have an agreement for fellowship with the Evangelical Churches. Baptists across Europe are linked by a European Region of the World Baptist Federation.

The Budapest Assembly called on the Leuenberg fellowship to take the ecumenical initiative mentioned above in consultation with the ecumenical regions of the world confessional (denominational) families.

Faith & Life offer two proposals for presentations at General Assembly.

1. DISABILITY

The aim of the presentation would be to challenge attitudes and practices of the Church towards people with disability.

This would be achieved by a speech (with suitable audio/visual back-up) by a person who is a wheel-chair user. She would help Assembly reflect on the possibility of people with disability participating in Assembly and other church gatherings, including issues of access, signing, loop system etc. She would also reflect on the experience of people with disability within the church when the ministry of healing is offered.

This presentation could be brief, say 30 minutes including some opportunity for comments to be made from the floor. The Health and Healing Committee would make the necessary arrangements in conjunction with Church and Society.

2. NEW RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING FAITH

The aim of the presentation would be to excite the members of Assembly about developing the faith of children, young people and adults by using new resources.

This would be achieved by an integrated, multi-media presentation, which would include drama, movement, audio/visuals, dialogues and speeches. The materials to be presented are:

Kaleidoscope - ecumenical training material for children's workers;

The Hitch-hikers Guide to the Gospel - the FURY material about belonging and commitment;

Members Together - material for membership preparation and renewal; and

Developing Discipleship - a programme for local learning for all members, and those who will go on to prepare for ministry.

The first three items are all to be published and launched at Assembly. The last is a proposal for material to be produced in the next two years. This is a revised proposal from that presented to Mission Council having taken into account all the comments received.

The presentation could last 30 minutes, plus opportunity for questions and comments from the floor. The Youth and Children's work Training Committee will make the necessary arrangements in conjunction with the Children's Work, Youth, Christian Education and Stewardship Committees and Ministries.

THE URC AS A RECEIVING CHURCH: A PROPOSED DISCUSSION POINT FOR  
THE 1993 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The new CWM structure which came into being in 1977 encouraged a redrawing of the world map, so that there was no longer a single direction of sending missionary personnel from the U.K. to other churches, but a partnership in mission, each member church having the experience of being both a sending and receiving church.
2. To encourage this the URC Assembly has provided 5 Special Ministries to be set aside primarily for personnel (ordained or lay people) from CWM partner churches to serve in the URC for periods of up to 3 years.
3. These have been taken up over the years, with mixed success, but at present only one such Special Ministry post is filled.  
*Two are in the pipe line.*
4. There are other short-term posts, some non-CWM appointments where we are a receiving church, but the committee suggests there needs to be more work done (by Districts and Provinces?) in identifying possible situations where an overseas person could enrich Church life and mission in the U.K.
5. I suggest a presentation and discussion about some of the issues behind this. Has mission, having been transferred in many people's thinking from "far away" to the local, meant that we no longer see a need for international links? The growth of twinned churches suggests not. But what about receiving people into our own church life as leaders and motivators, rather than seeing these visits as training opportunities for the visitors?

What is the connection between "World Church" and "Mission"?  
"Mission Pursuit" spoke about each local church identifying its Mission Purpose and then working out who its allies were in achieving their purpose.

Is our Church mission - motivated? And can it broaden its view, seeing itself as part of the World Church, and learning how to be enriched from beyond these islands by people who have experience of the Church in mission in a different setting?

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These are only preliminary thoughts. The Personnel Committee has still to shape a presentation if we are called upon to make one to the Assembly.

On behalf of the Committee

*Ray Adams*

The Revd Ray Adams  
Convenor, Personnel Committee

2nd February 1993