



MISSION COUNCIL

5 - 7 October 1998

MINUTES

Minutes of the Mission Council held at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick. 5-7 October 1998.

MONDAY, 5th OCTOBER 1998

The Moderator, Mrs. Wilma Frew, constituted the Meeting and together with the Chaplains, the Revds Ken and Meriel Chippindale, led the opening worship, which included a period of contemplation focused on part of the painting the "Return of the Prodigal Son" by Rembrandt.

98/59 Welcome

The Moderator welcomed members to the meeting, mentioning in particular the new Committee Conveners: the Revd Derek Lindfield (Youth and Children's Work) and the Revd Glyn Jenkins (Nominations); the new Provincial Representatives: Mrs. Margareta Batchelor (North Western), the Revd Clifford Wilton (East Midlands) and Mr. Geoffrey Duncan (Thames North); the new FURY representative, Ms Anita Wilkins; the new members of staff: Ms Lesley Anne Di Marco (Secretary for Youth Work), Mrs. Karen Bulley (Pilots' Development Officer) and the Revd Liz Byrne (Yardley Hastings Centre Minister).

She also welcomed the Revd Dr. Finlay Macdonald, the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, as the Theological Reflector for Mission Council and greeted the Revd John Arthur, the General Secretary of the Scottish Congregational Church.

The Moderator noted that the following people were acting as deputies for absent members:

- Revd Bill McCrorie for Mrs. Christine Meekison (Southern)
- Ms Kate Gray for Mr. Peter Devaney (Wales)
- Miss Clare Hardwick for Miss Georgette Margrett (FURY)

98/60 Attendance

There were 63 members present with 17 members of staff in attendance, the Revds Ken and Meriel Chippindale, Mrs. Sally Brooks (Minute Secretary) and Revd John Arthur (Scottish Congregational Church).

Apologies for absence were received from the Revds Michael Cruchley, Peter Roche and Derek Wales and Dr. Colin Thompson, Ms Gabrielle Cox, Mr. Peter Devaney, Mr. Hilary Gunn, Miss Georgette Margrett, Mrs. Christine Meekison and Mr. Chris Wright.

98/61 Minutes of Mission Council 13 – 15 March 1998

The minutes of the Mission Council held on 13 – 15 March 1998 had been circulated. The following corrections were made:

98/34 Nominations

Add:

Mrs. Clare moved the following Resolution:

Mission Council approves the appointment of Mr. Andrew Armour as Clerk of the Governors of Westminster College.

This was carried.

The penultimate paragraph:

"Mr. Simon Rowntree asked for confirmation that the local church at Yardley Hastings would be consulted about the appointment of the Centre Minister. The Revd Malcolm Hanson replied that it would be necessary for the local church to issue a call in the normal way" was replaced by:

"The Convener of the Yardley Hastings Appointment Group, Mr. Simon Rowntree, asked for agreement to expand the Group's membership if necessary in order to ensure that the interests of the local church were covered, given the joint nature of the post. The Revd Malcolm Hanson commented that the local church must issue a call to its minister in the normal way. Mission Council agreed that in the appointment process for the Yardley Hastings post the interests of the local church must be covered in an appropriate way."

98/58 In the penultimate paragraph "1998" should read "1997".

Mission Council heard the concern expressed by the Revd Graham Long that the wording of point 2 of minute 98/28 implied too great a contrast between the views of the Ministries Committee and the encouragement felt following receipt of the letter from the Council for World Mission (CWM).

The minutes were then approved and signed.

98/62 Matters Arising

The Deputy General Secretary noted that all matters arising were included in the meeting's agenda.

98/63 Agenda

The Deputy General Secretary detailed the extra items of business which would be included in the agenda. He also drew the attention of the Council to new papers which were available and gave details of the discussion groups which would be meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday.

98/64 Appointment of Tellers

The Deputy General Secretary proposed that the Revd Tom Bayliss and Mr. Steve Wood be appointed to serve as Tellers until the end of General Assembly 1999. Mission Council agreed.

98/65 Council for World Mission Gift of Grace (Paper L)

The Deputy General Secretary introduced the reports from the three provinces which had been allocated money from the CWM Gift and representatives from each of those provinces expressed their gratitude for the gift and their enthusiasm for the work being funded. Mission Council agreed that the report at Paper L should be sent to CWM.

98/66 Congregational Union of Scotland/URC Union (Paper H)

The General Secretary reported that at the Assembly of the Scottish Congregational Church (SCC) on Friday 4th September 1998 it was resolved by a vote of 97.3% in favour (75% required) to accept the Proposals for Union. He noted that further decisions would need to be taken by our synods and districts and that the SCC required decisions from local churches. However the decision of the SCC Assembly was a great encouragement to all involved in the process. He also noted that, although both Churches would require ratifying decisions at their Assemblies in 1999, it was a reasonable interpretation that we were now on course for the birth of the new Church at a Unifying Assembly which would be held, probably in Glasgow, on Saturday, 27th November 1999.

The General Secretary explained that, in preparation for the union, it was necessary for Mission Council to take a number of decisions:

- (a) On the recommendation of the Mission Council Advisory Group (MCAG), the General Secretary moved the following Resolution:

Mission Council agrees that the General Secretary and one other representative of the Scottish Congregational Church be invited to meetings of the Mission Council in 1999.

This was carried.

- (b) On the recommendation of the Ecumenical Committee, the General Secretary moved the following Resolution:

Mission Council resolves that the General Secretary be instructed to invite the General Secretary of the SCC to appoint one member to each appropriate Assembly Committee of the United Reformed Church, that person to have the status of a co-opted member.

The Clerk suggested that the appointments made should be time limited and the Resolution was amended by adding the words "The appointments to have effect until the end of 1999".

The amended Resolution was then put to Mission Council:

Mission Council resolves that the General Secretary be instructed to invite the General Secretary of the SCC to appoint one member to each appropriate Assembly Committee of the United Reformed Church, that person to have the status of a co-opted member. The appointments to have effect until the end of 1999.

This was carried.

In response to a question from the Secretary of the Nominations Committee, the General Secretary confirmed that the proposed union did not affect the work of the Committee at this stage. He also noted that all appointments made at the 1999 General Assembly would be valid only until the Unifying Assembly, assuming that this took place.

- (c) In the light of information received from the legal adviser the General Secretary moved the following Resolution:

Mission Council resolves that the United Reformed Church Trust be authorised to promote the Parliamentary Bill referred to in the Joint Proposals Document on behalf of the United Reformed Church.

This was carried.

- (d) Again on the advice of the Legal Advisor, the General Secretary moved the following Resolution:

Mission Council resolves that John Waller, Christopher Langham and Anthony Bayley are appointed to immediate membership of the United Reformed Church Trust.

In doing so, the General Secretary explained that this was necessary to ensure that an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Trust which had to be convened before 27th November would be quorate.

The Clerk asked for clarification on the term of appointment of the three new members. The Legal Adviser explained that the new members would only continue in this appointment if they were appointed as directors of the Trust by the other members. If this did not happen then their membership of the Trust would automatically lapse. With this clarification the Resolution was put to Mission Council and was carried.

The Moderator invited the Revd John Arthur, General Secretary of the Scottish Congregational Church, to address the Council. He did so, expressing sincere gratitude to the Moderator, the members of the United Reformed Church and the Joint Negotiating Group for their support and care. He reported that the local churches were enthusiastic for Union and that three had already met and concurred with the proposals.

Mission Council greeted Mr. Arthur's words with applause.

98/67 Assembly Arrangements Committee

The Convener, the Revd Alasdair Pratt, reported that the Committee proposed that the General Assembly in 2001 should take place at the University of York from 16 – 19 July. Mission Council agreed with this proposal.

Mr. Pratt noted that it was hoped that the 2002 General Assembly would take place in Scotland, on the assumption that the planned CUS/URC Union went ahead. He also confirmed that the Committee had started the work of reviewing the pattern of Assemblies and that he hoped to be able to report to Mission Council in January or March 1999.

98/68 Ecumenical Committee (Paper E)

The Convener, the Revd Bob Andrews, introduced the proposal for an Advisory Group on Faith and Order whose remit would be: "To give detailed attention to such matters arising from bi-lateral and multi-lateral talks in which the United Reformed Church is a participant and from ecumenical bodies of which the United Reformed Church is a member in order to advise the Ecumenical Committee on appropriate responses."

The Moderator invited comments and the Deputy General Secretary stated, on behalf of the Convener, that the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee was in favour of the proposal. In response to a question from the Clerk, Mr. Andrews confirmed that the Advisory Group would be funded from the Ecumenical Committee's budget.

The following Resolution was put:

Mission Council authorises the Ecumenical Committee to set up an Advisory Group on Faith and Order, consisting of six persons, on the basis of Paper E presented to its meeting in October 1998.

The Resolution was carried.

98/69 Ecumenical Committee – St. Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak

The Secretary for International Church Relations, the Revd Philip Woods, read the following statement from St. Andrew's Hall Missionary College:

"At the meeting of the St Andrew's Hall Council on the 17th September 1998, the decision was taken to sell the College buildings and land. The College will cease offering a residential facility after Easter 1999.

It is with immense regret that the Council brings to a close the international, residential, Christian community which has been at the heart of the mission education experience here, and has enriched individuals and Churches all over the world. Much has been achieved working within the partnership of the Selly Oak Colleges.

The St Andrew's Hall Association is giving consideration to what might lie ahead. "Our vision for the future of training in mission continues", says Revd Ernest Cruchley, Chair of the Council."

Mr. Woods explained that the Council comprised 25 members, 12 of whom were appointed by the Sponsors (the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), the Council for World Mission and the United Reformed Church). Of these 12 places the United Reformed Church had four.

He reported that the decision to sell the buildings and the land came following a Consultation convened by the Council of St Andrew's Hall to consider the College's future. At an informal meeting of the College's three sponsors on October 2nd 1998 it was learnt that two of the three Sponsors (BMS and CWM) would now support dissolution of the Association. This was subsequently reported to the Council's Executive later the same day and in the light of this information the Executive would be convening an extraordinary meeting of the Council to consider this on the 13th November.

The Deputy General Secretary read a letter from the Birmingham District of the West Midlands Province expressing their dismay at the news of the imminent closure of St. Andrew's Hall.

The Moderator, noting that Mission Council had no authority to influence the decision, invited Mission Council to comment. In response to several comments and expressions of concern, Mr. Woods stressed that the decision had been made by the College's Council, not by the United Reformed Church, whose representatives formed only a minority on the Council. He confirmed that the Church's position had been and continued to be that it welcomed the proposals for a different approach to mission education coming from the College staff. He also noted that the College had guaranteed that all students placed with them for the academic year 1998/1999 would not have their studies interrupted by these developments and would be able to complete their courses by the summer of 1999.

There was much discussion, and members of Mission Council expressed their concern for the current members of staff, and that the work of the college should be enabled to continue on a different basis. It was reported that negotiations were currently taking place with a view to achieving this, and that the Ecumenical Committee had had a positive discussion about the future. Mission Council wished to encourage these negotiations, and it was agreed that the Ecumenical Committee should draft a resolution which could be discussed by Mission Council. This was agreed.

The Ecumenical Committee presented the Resolution on Wednesday 7th October. See Minute 98/90 on page 12.

98/70 Maintenance of the Ministry (Paper M)

The Convener of the Ministries Committee, the Revd Graham Long, introduced and moved the following Resolution on behalf of the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee:

Mission Council sets the basic ministerial stipend for 1999 at £15,600

The Resolution was carried.

98/71 Report from the Mission Council Advisory Group (MCAG) (PaperD)

The Deputy General Secretary introduced the Report, noting that paragraphs 1 to 7 of Paper D were matters of report only and did not require Mission Council to make decisions. The Moderator invited comments and questions. There being none, she invited the Deputy General Secretary to introduce those items of the Report which required decisions.

98/72 Report from the Mission Council Advisory Group: Assembly Moderators (para. 8)

The Deputy General Secretary explained that MCAG had been asked to advise on the question of whether Assembly Moderators who are not ministers should automatically be made members of the synod in whose area they live, at the end of their year of office.

He reported that the advice of MCAG was to maintain the status quo. He noted that the General Secretary had committed himself to drawing to the attention of the relevant synod the election of a non-ministerial Moderator and the possibility of co-opting that person to membership at the end of his or her year of office. Synods would then be left to make the decision for themselves.

Mission Council accepted the advice of MCAG.

98/73 Report from the Mission Council Advisory Group: Retirement of the General Secretary (para. 9 & Paper I)

The Deputy General Secretary, noting the Rules of Procedure in the Manual for the appointment of the General Secretary, explained the proposed timetable: Synods and Mission Council would be asked to supply the names of those who would serve as members of the special committee in time for the General Assembly of 1999 in order that the Assembly could constitute the Committee. . It was noted that it was probable that the first two meetings of the special committee would take place on July 20th 1999 and September 21st 1999.

Mission Council accepted the proposals and timetable contained within Paper I.

98/74 Report from the Mission Council Advisory Group: Small Churches Task Group (para. 10)

The Deputy General Secretary explained that, in response to the General Assembly 1998 resolution requiring Mission Council to set up a Task Group to consider and report on the opportunities, challenges and difficulties faced by small churches, MCAG recommended that a task group of seven people should be appointed, with the request that they report in January 2000. He noted that the group should contain people with synod, district council and local experience of both urban and rural situations.

The Moderator invited comments and questions. In response to a number of comments, the Deputy General Secretary confirmed that it was envisaged that although this was a short term exercise of great importance which would serve to provide focus, it should not be seen as meaning that the work should not continue once the Task Group had reported. Relevant work had been carried out in several provinces, and this, together with the work of the Urban Churches Support Group, should be taken into account. It was also noted that it would be important that the Task Group consulted the group working on the grouping of churches.

Mission Council agreed with MCAG's recommendation and agreed that, should the Task Group feel that their Report in January 2000 was an initial report only, this would be acceptable.

The Deputy General Secretary reported that some people had already indicated their willingness to serve on the group; he asked members to suggest further names to him by the end of the evening session on Tuesday, October 6th, with a view to proposals being brought to the final session on Wednesday.

See Minute 98/92 on page 13.

98/75 Report from the Mission Council Advisory Group: General Assembly 1997 Resolution 41 (para. 11)

The Deputy General Secretary noted that the 1997 Assembly had resolved to appoint a pastoral group to help those caused distress by its resolutions on human sexuality. In its early days the group had given help in a very small number of cases. Mission Council had later resolved to keep the group in being until this meeting. MCAG now recommended that it should continue at least until October 1999 and this was agreed. It was requested that a reminder be issued about the group's existence.

In answer to a question, the Deputy General Secretary confirmed that MCAG was planning to consider the issues of ministerial resignations and secessions at its next meeting.

98/76 Report from the Mission Council Advisory Group: Meetings of Mission Council (para. 12)
Mission Council noted the following dates and venues of forthcoming meetings of Mission Council:

1999	January 23	Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh
	March 19-21	All Saints Pastoral Centre, St Albans
	October 1-3	Swanwick

2000 January 22 Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh (provisional)
March 21-23 Swanwick
September 29-October 1 Ushaw College, Durham

2001 January 20 Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh (provisional)
March 23-25 All Saints Pastoral Centre, St Albans
October 2-4 Swanwick

98/77 Nominations (Paper N)

The Convener of the Nominations Committee, the Revd Glyn Jenkins, reported the following recommendations from the Appointment Groups for confirmation:

Pilots Development Officer	Mrs Karen Bulley to be appointed for a period of five years with effect from 1 st October 1998
Secretary for Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness	The Revd John Steele to be appointed with effect from 16 November 1998 until 30 September 2003.

Mission Council confirmed both appointments and expressed its pleasure by applauding.

The Moderator invited the General Secretary to report on the decisions reached by the Moderator Review Groups. Mr. Burnham reported that the Revd David Helyar's appointment as Moderator for the Southern Province was due to end on 31 August 1999 and that the Appointment Group would recommend to General Assembly that Mr. Helyar should be re-appointed for a period of 2 years, ending on 31st August 2001 which would be the date of his retirement.

The Revd Malcolm Hanson's appointment as Moderator of the East Midlands Province was due to end on 31st August 1999; the General Secretary reported that the Appointment Group would recommend to General Assembly that Mr. Hanson should be re-appointed until 30th September 2003 which would be the date of his retirement.

98/78 Staffing Advisory Group (Paper F)

In the absence of the Convener of the Staffing Advisory Group (SAG), Mr. Geoff Lunt, the General Secretary introduced the paper. Noting that this Group was responsible for the review of "posts" rather than "people", Mr. Burnham reported that two posts had been considered: the Director of the Windermere Centre and the URC Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant.

The General Secretary explained that, because of the urgency of the matter, following their deliberations regarding the post of Director of the Windermere Centre, SAG had sought and gained the agreement of the Officers of the General Assembly to the following recommendation:

SAG recommends that the post of "Director of the Windermere Centre" should be renewed for a period of 5 years, or until the incumbent leaves if that is at an earlier date, from 1st September 1999. It further recommends that the post should be filled by an ordained Minister of the United Reformed Church or other Church of the Reformed Tradition.

Mission Council noted the decision.

The General Secretary reported that the present Financial Secretary, Mr. Clem Frank, had indicated that he wished to retire on June 30th 2000, and then introduced the following recommendation from SAG regarding the post of Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant:

SAG recommends to Mission Council that the post of URC Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant should continue in being as from 1st July 2000. It asks Mission Council to note that detailed job descriptions for this post, and others within the Finance Office, will be produced following further consideration. SAG supports the URC Treasurer's strategy for filling this post.

After lengthy discussion, Mission Council accepted the recommendation, and itself endorsed the Treasurer's strategy.

The Moderator invited the Revd John Sutcliffe to introduce the supplementary report on the posts of Secretary for Training and Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education (Paper P). The Revd David Helyar asked that this subject be considered later in the meeting to allow time for Mission Council to read the relevant papers. This was agreed.

The matter was considered on Wednesday 7th October. See Minutes 98/89 on Page 12

98/79 Theology of Ministry (Paper G)

The Convener of the Ministries Committee, the Revd Graham Long, introduced the Report and asked Mission Council to note the contents and approve the on-going process suggested by the Committee:

Mission Council:

1. recognises and encourages the work already being undertaken within the areas of concern listed in paragraph 2.11 of the affirmed statement on the Theology of Ministry;
2. requests those involved to think in terms of the development of these ministries with a view to making a detailed statement to Mission Council in readiness for General Assembly 2001;
3. requests the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee to prepare a detailed statement of the responsibilities and accountability of these ministries to the whole church;
4. requests all involved to keep in mind the ecumenical implications of their work.

Mission Council agreed.

The Deputy General Secretary noted, on behalf of the Convener of the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee, that the Committee had not yet started to work on the statement requested in paragraph 3, and that it might, therefore, not be completed when other areas of the work were finished.

98/80 Training Committee (Paper O)

The Revd John Sutcliffe, as President of the Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester, expressed an interest in the matter to be discussed and withdrew from the meeting. In his absence, the Secretary for Training, the Revd Dr. Lesley Husselbee, introduced the Report.

The Moderator invited comments and questions and after lengthy discussion, the following Resolution was proposed by the Revd Julian Macro and seconded by the Revd Bill Mahood:

Mission Council welcomes the development of the Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester in order to promote genuine ecumenical convergence in governance and learning and asks the Training Committee and the Finance Committee to bring proposals to the January 1999 meeting of the Mission Council regarding the nature and extent of the financial commitment suggested for the United Reformed Church.

This was carried.

98/81 Report by the Multi-racial, Multi-cultural Development Worker

The Revd Marjorie Lewis-Cooper introduced a time of reflection on multi-racial, multi-cultural issues. Mission Council considered the issues in discussion groups and then reported in a plenary session. Mrs. Lewis-Cooper commended two documents: the 1997 Annual Report of the Council for Racial Equality (CRE) and "Roots of the Future – Ethnic Diversity in the Making of Britain", both published by the CRE.

The Chaplains led the Council in a further period of reflection on the painting of the "Return of the Prodigal Son", a time of prayer and the singing of a hymn.

TUESDAY, 6th OCTOBER

Mission Council joined in worship, led by the Chaplains.

The Moderator welcomed all those who had arrived since the beginning of the meeting.

98/82 Strategy for Mission

The Moderator explained that the three papers A, B and C would be introduced without any discussion.

The Revd Tony Burnham, General Secretary, introduced "Growing Up", a strategy for mission for the United Reformed Church (Paper A). Mr. Burnham said that the proposals were a starting point; the strategy would be to initiate some pivotal changes, which were not all that could be done, but which would facilitate other changes in the move towards achieving the objectives set out in paragraph 5.1. It was open to the Mission Council to reject and/or add some actions. Above all, he stressed the need to listen to the Holy Spirit.

The Revd Graham Cook introduced the report on Church Related Community Work in the United Reformed Church (Paper B). Mr. Cook noted that three of the five marks of mission referred to in "Growing Up", the first, third and fourth, particularly applied to this issue. He spoke to each of the recommendations contained in the report.

The Revd Duncan Wilson, Convener of the Resource Planning Advisory Group (RPAG), introduced RPAG's report on the Procurement and Deployment of Stipendiary Ministry (Paper C).

98/83 "Growing Up" – a strategy for mission for the URC (Paper A)

The Mission Council divided into groups to discuss Paper A. This was followed by a plenary session during which each group reported on its discussions. There was a general welcome for the paper and the Mission Council began to identify those issues which would need to be discussed further at a later stage and to consider how the strategy might be communicated and implemented. The Deputy General Secretary explained that this would be further discussed on the next day, when the contents of Papers B and C would also be taken into account.

Paper A was considered further on Wednesday, 7th October. See Minute 98/87 on page 9.

98/84 Church Related Community Work in the URC and Procurement and Deployment of Ministers (Papers B and C)

The Mission Council divided into groups to discuss Papers B and C. This was followed by a plenary session during which each group reported on its discussions.

98/85 Procurement and Deployment of Ministers (Paper C)

Following the reports of the group discussions, the Moderator asked the Council if it was ready to make a decision on the recommendation of RPAG that Option 2 of Paper C be accepted. This option, of allowing minister numbers to track membership as at present, would mean that as membership grew, procurement of ministry would grow at proportionately $\frac{1}{2}$ the rate; similarly if membership declined further ministry would fall at a rate about $\frac{1}{2}$ of that of the decline in membership. RPAG considered that this option was sustainable in terms of recruitment and of affordability, estimating that it would require an increase of 6% per annum in giving to the M&M Fund, a rate achieved in the past. If present trends in membership continued, it would provide a steady growth in the provision of stipendiary ministry in relation to the total membership of the URC, thus proportionately increasing the ministerial resource over time.

There was much discussion and questions were asked. One issue which caused concern was the possible impact of accepting Recommendation 3 of Paper B, which could mean that the number of Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) in post was 30. Members of Mission Council were concerned that this might mean that fewer stipendiary ministers could be afforded. It was agreed that the issue of CRCWs and the possible impact of an increase in their numbers be set aside, given that no decisions had yet been made concerning Paper B. Any decision concerning Option 2 could be reconsidered on the following day if this was necessary in the light of decisions about Paper B.

The Moderator put to the meeting the resolution that:

Mission Council accepts the advice of RPAG that Option 2 for determining the number of stipendiary ministers to be procured as set out in Paper C be adopted.

This was agreed.

The Revd Duncan Wilson explained the current process through which the deployment figures were derived. The number of members, the number of churches and the population in each province were taken into account, with these three factors appropriately weighted. The formula of 3 parts membership, 2 parts churches and 1 part population had been in use since 1975, and it formed the starting point for a consultation between representatives

of the provinces, during which a mutually agreed set of figures was produced. This might not reflect precisely the results of applying the formula in that adjustments to the base figures could be made because, for example, some provinces might not be in a position to take up their full quota.

Further details of the current Deployment Policy and the way in which the figures are determined will be provided by RPAG. These will be sent to members of Mission Council with the next Mission Council mailing. If anyone needs to see them before that, please contact Revd Duncan Wilson.

RPAG was recommending that the current deployment policy and process continue, but Mr. Wilson suggested that it might help to add support to the Moderators and other provincial representatives if the figures arrived at following their consultation were presented to the Mission Council at its January meeting so that questions could be asked and the agreed set of figures could be approved.

It was important that the church had a deployment policy in which it was confident. However, it was noted that the church was entering a period of change, and, since the deployment policy would need to reflect the mission strategy, it might need to be changed later as and when appropriate.

Mr. Wilson, on behalf of RPAG, moved that:

- 1) **Mission Council resolves that the present formula and process which gives the basis for the deployment of stipendiary ministers in the United Reformed Church be affirmed.**
- 2) **Mission Council resolves that, upon the process being completed, the deployment figures agreed shall be submitted annually for approval by the Mission Council at its January meeting.**

This was agreed.

It was noted that information had been requested about ministers in Local Ecumenical Partnerships and the numbers of ministers in Scotland (with particular reference to the proposed union with the Congregational Union of Scotland). RPAG was asked to provide this in consultation with the Ministries office.

The Moderator's Chaplains led Mission Council in a further period of reflection on the painting and in prayer.

WEDNESDAY, 7th OCTOBER

Mission Council met together to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The Moderator inducted Mrs. Karen Bulley to the post of Pilots Development Officer, and Ms Lesley Anne Di Marco to that of Secretary for Youth Work.

98/86 Church Related Community Work in the URC (Paper B) (cont.)

The Deputy General Secretary, noting that this paper had received general support during the discussions of the previous day, proposed that the major principles of the paper (i.e. those summarised in recommendations 1,2,3 and 14) should be incorporated into a revised version of Paper A. He further suggested that all other recommendations and the whole report should be passed to the Ministries Committee for consideration and appropriate action. It was understood that, should this be agreed, the detail of recommendations 1,2,3 and 14 could be discussed fully when Paper A was considered. This approach was agreed.

98/87 "Growing Up" – a strategy for mission for the URC (Paper A) (cont.)

The Revd Tony, Burnham, General Secretary, tabled a paper entitled "GROWING UP; A Strategy for Mission – the next steps" which contained 14 points. This had been produced in response to the discussions concerning Paper A which had taken place the previous day. There was considerable discussion, and Mission Council arrived at a revised "next steps" paper, derived from the original, which contained amendments to some of the items, a re-ordering of them, and an addition shown as number 5 which was proposed by the Revd Roberta Rominger and seconded by the Revd Elizabeth Welch. The final document, which was adopted by the Mission Council, is as follows:

GROWING UP : A Strategy for Mission - the next steps

1. Mission Council is grateful for the draft document "Growing Up", commits itself to continuing work on a Strategy for Mission and asks the General Secretary to prepare a further draft in the light of the comments made and to bring this back to Mission Council as the basis of a report from Mission Council to the General Assembly and to CWM.
2. Mission Council asks the General Secretary to incorporate the key proposals on the CRCW programme from paper B into the Strategy for Mission.
See Minute 98/88 below for further details of this point.
3. Mission Council asks the General Secretary to include in the Strategy a section on stipendiary ministry, taking account of recruitment, number of ministers and their deployment (see paper C).
4. Mission Council accepts that new work is required to encourage a deliberate engagement between local churches and their communities, commends to the whole church the Five Marks of Mission as a challenge and set of guidelines for local churches and the other councils and asks the General Secretary, with appropriate consultation, to draft for the next Mission Council a programme for the local church on the Five Marks of Mission, which shows how resources of the wider church may be made available in their support. It should also challenge each church to ask about its role in God's mission (6.6).
5. Mission Council asks the Mission Council Advisory Group to consider ways of affirming, encouraging and further enabling, throughout the whole church, the process of reflection on the matters arising out of Part I of the "Growing Up" Paper, recognising the important contribution to be made by local churches.
6. Mission Council affirms as part of a Strategy for Mission the following new work already begun

- Belonging to the World Church
- Pilots
- Local Leadership
- NSM review
- Ministerial Accompanied Self-Appraisal
- Continuing Ministerial Education
- Unity in Mission
- Commitment for Life
- Jubilee 2000
- Policy on evangelism
- Inter-province resource sharing

7. Mission Council agrees to ask the Mission Council Advisory Group to consult the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee and the Ministries Committee, and to bring a proposal for the remit, structure, and staffing of the committees' future work, taking account of the need to hold together witness, community work, stewardship and nurture, building on proposals in Appendix 3 and Paper B, and report and to Mission Council.
8. Mission Council asks the working party looking at the grouping of local churches to take account of the purpose of the district council (6.5).
9. Mission Council asks the General Secretary to develop the section on small churches (6.7) and present this to the group on small churches.
10. Mission Council asks the Mission Council Advisory Group to arrange for the preparation of a strategy on the use of local church premises.
11. Mission Council asks the Training Committee to act on the matter of Elders' Training (7.1).
12. Mission Council asks each synod to report to the October 1999 Mission Council on the initiatives taken so far to develop local leadership.
13. Mission Council refers the implications of being a church in a multi-racial, multi-cultural society (8.3) in the first instance, to the Ecumenical Committee.
14. Mission Council refers the use of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund for the development of mission to the Ministries Committee (8.4).
15. Mission Council refers to the Mission Council Advisory Group the CWM Self Support Fund and requests advice as to how this might be handled.

98/88 Church Related Community Work – incorporation into the strategy for mission

The key proposals of Paper B which were to be incorporated into Paper A were derived from recommendations 1,2,3 and 14 of Paper B. The original recommendations were amended by Mission Council, and it was finally agreed that:

- ◆ The United Reformed Church take into the mainstream of its life the theology and practice of diaconal ministry largely developed by CRCWs and the churches-in-community in which they have served.
- ◆ We begin to implement a policy which would devolve the management of the CRCW programme from the centre to the provinces and districts.
- ◆ It become our policy to aim for an establishment of 30 CRCWs, with at least two being in each province.
- ◆ The United Reformed Church gives consideration to the appointment of not one, but two, persons: the CRCW Development Worker for a period of up to five years, and a second post the designation of which would need to be agreed by Mission Council within its consideration of a total strategy for mission.

In response to concerns that if 30 CRCWs were to be paid there would be less money available to pay stipendiary ministers which would therefore restrict their numbers, the Revd Graham Long, Convener of the

Ministries Committee said that the adoption of a policy of aiming for an establishment of 30 CRCWs would not result in such a number being achieved for some time, because of the necessary time for recruitment and training. Mr. Long assured Mission Council that the lead time was such that the adoption of this policy could not affect the budget in the next five years.

Noting that much work, thought and time had gone into the preparation of Papers A,B and C, the Moderator thanked the General Secretary, the Revds Graham Cook and Bob Day and the Resource Planning Advisory Group.

98/89 Staffing Advisory Group (continued from 98/78)

Mr. Geoff Lunt, Convener of the Group, expressed thanks to the General Secretary who had presented the earlier part of the report in his absence, and presented Paper P – Job Description and Person Specification for the Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education (CME) and revised Job Description for the Secretary for Training. Mr. Lunt asked Mission Council to note the following corrections to Paper P: remove both dates; Secretary for CME: paragraph headed “Accountability” – replace the comma with “and”; item 1 of detailed responsibilities - replace “adopted by the Training Committee” with “endorsed by the General Assembly”; item 2 – reference should be to the National *Youth* Resource Centre; item 6 - replace “provinces” with “synods”; Secretary for Training: item 7 - replace “provinces” with “synods”.

There was discussion and questions were asked. It was noted that the post of Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education was open to lay people as well as ministers, and the Convener of the Training Committee indicated that the task of the Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education would include advising, assisting and enabling the synods to start the programme. Mission Council agreed to amend the paper as follows: Item 8 of the first and 11 of the second Job Descriptions should be amended to refer to “*current* health and safety at work *legislation*”; delete item 5 of the Person Specification.

On behalf of the Staffing Advisory Group, Mr. Lunt moved the following resolution:

Mission Council:

1. resolves to create a new post, the Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education, to run for five years from the date of appointment of a post-holder or until such a post-holder relinquishes the office if that be earlier;
2. resolves to continue in being the post of Secretary for Training for a period of five years from 1st September 1999 or until the post-holder relinquishes the post if that be earlier;
3. approves the Job Descriptions for the two posts as set out in Paper P, as amended by Mission Council in its discussions on 7th October 1998.

This was agreed.

98/90 Ecumenical Committee - St. Andrew’s Hall, Selly Oak (continued from 98/69)

The Revd Bob Andrews, Convener, moved the following Resolution:

Mission Council:

receives with sadness the decision of the Council of St. Andrew’s Hall Missionary College to sell the buildings and the land and to close the College to new students from April 1999;

welcomes the assurance of the Ecumenical Committee that

- a) the scholarship programme, and
- b) the provision of preparation before and reflection after service for people serving overseas, or coming from overseas to work here

will continue;

and supports our representatives on the Council as they continue to work for an outcome which will provide an ongoing resource for mission education to the United Reformed Church.

There was some discussion, then Mr. Simon Rowntree proposed and Mrs. Erica Young seconded the following amendment:

add to the last line: "and encourages them to seek the continued employment of present teaching staff."

It was clear that the Mission Council was most concerned for the future of all the staff of the college, but it was pointed out that it would probably not be possible to continue employing them because of a lack of funds. Having received an assurance that the URC representatives on the Council would be asked to express the concern of the church and to have the welfare of the staff in mind when considering the future, the mover and seconder withdrew the amendment.

The Moderator put the resolution to Mission Council and it was carried.

98/91 Training Strategy for the United Reformed Church (Paper Q)

The Deputy General Secretary informed Mission Council that this paper would be presented at a future meeting, following the advice of MCAG.

98/92 Small Churches Task Group (continued from 98/74)

The Deputy General Secretary proposed that the size of the Task Group be increased from seven to eight. This was agreed, as were the following names:

Revd Ray Adams	South West Province
Ms Ros Fearon	Cumbria
Revd Barbara Flood-Page	Northumberland
Revd Graham Robson	North West Province Training Officer
Revd Stuart Scott	Birmingham
Ms Sheila Rudofsky	Central & North London District
Revd Raymond Singh	South London Industrial Mission
A Methodist	

Mission Council authorised the Moderator and Deputy General Secretary to approach others who had been suggested if any on the above list declined.

98/93 Notices

- 1) It was noted that ITV would broadcast a service from the Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester on October 25th.
- 2) Members were asked to ensure that publicity was given at Synods to the Isaac Watts celebrations.
- 3) TGI (Thank God It's) FURY" would take place in Coventry 24th-25th October.

98/94 Closing Remarks

Mr. Geoff Lunt read a poem, then the Moderator thanked all those who had worked hard to enable Mission Council to do its work.

The Revd Dr. Finlay Macdonald (Theological Reflector) thanked members of Mission Council for their hospitality and friendship, and wished the Council well in its future work.

The Chaplains led the Council in closing worship.



The United Reformed Church

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

Telephone 0171 916 2020

Fax Number 0171 916 2021

Deputy General Secretary

The Revd John Waller MA

Direct line telephone: 0171 916 8646

Direct line fax: 0171 916 1928

To: Members of Mission Council
and staff in attendance

18 September 1998

Dear Colleague,

Mission Council 5-7 October 1998
The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire
Telephone 01773 602482

The remaining papers for the meeting are enclosed. I hope you will read them in conjunction with those you have already received.

You will see from the agenda that Monday is to be given over to a variety of important subjects. Doing essential business in this way allows us to focus on mission, ministry and community for the rest of our time together.

The aim is that we should endeavour to agree a strategy, taking account of what already exists, and seeing what needs to be said and done (and by whom) in order to implement the strategy.

The agenda and timetable suggest a way of doing this. If, as we go on, we want to change the way, that should be possible with the Moderator's permission. The thinking behind the present outline is:

ON TUESDAY

Groups at 11.15: To look at paper A, what it says, what it has omitted. Groups will be asked to focus on particular parts as well as considering the whole.

Plenary session at 3.00: To see where we have got to, and what will be needed on Wednesday.

Groups at 4.15: A similar exercise to the first group session.

Plenary session at 5.45: Again, where have we got to and what needs to be done?

Plenary session at 7.45: Can we agree a policy on the procurement and deployment of stipendiary ministry? Is more work to be done? On what? By whom?

ON WEDNESDAY

Groups at 9.15: Getting our bearings again. What are the issues we want explored, included, developed in the strategy?

Plenary sessions at 10.00 and 11.15: Working through to conclusions.

cont.../2

cont....mc2oct98

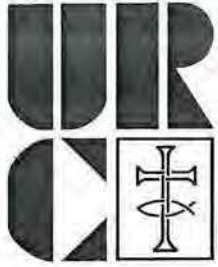
I will send some more detailed notes to group leaders and reporters a few days before the meeting.

Whichever way we do things, there is no doubt that we shall be handling important topics with significant consequences for the future. I look forward to seeing you in Swanwick!

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Waller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left. Below the signature is a solid horizontal line.

Revd John Waller
Deputy General Secretary



The United Reformed Church

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

Telephone 0171 916 2020
Fax Number 0171 916 2021

Deputy General Secretary

The Revd John Waller MA

Direct line telephone: 0171 916 8646
Direct line fax: 0171 916 1928

To: Members of Mission Council
Staff in attendance

10 September 1998

Dear Colleagues

October 1998 meeting

Most of our meeting will be spent discussing the major strategic issues of mission and ministry.

To help us in that, three major reports will be presented as the basis of our discussion. The first of these, "Growing Up", is enclosed with this letter.

The other two, on ministerial resources and on church related community work, will follow with the other Mission Council papers in about a week's time.

If our discussion is to be fruitful, we will all need to come prepared through having read these papers. Please try to allocate reading time.

A significant amount of time will be spent in groups, to allow maximum participation.

This meeting of the Council has the makings of a major milestone in the story of our Church. Let us pray it will be so.

Yours sincerely

pp. *N. Davies*
Revd John Waller
Deputy General Secretary



The United Reformed Church

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

Telephone 0171 916 2020
Fax Number 0171 916 2021

Deputy General Secretary

The Revd John Waller MA

Direct line telephone: 0171 916 8646
Direct line fax: 0171 916 1928

To: Members of Mission Council
and staff in attendance

28 August 1998

Dear Colleague

Mission Council 5-7 October 1998
The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire

As summer prepares to give way to autumn, so another meeting of Mission Council approaches!

This is your first notice of the October meeting: the main, and more substantial, mailing should reach you in the third week of September.

Particularly for those of you who are new to the Council, you should note that the Council begins with lunch on the Monday and ends with lunch on the Wednesday. You can check in at any time from 12 noon.

With this first mailing I enclose:

- directions for getting to Swanwick
- a list of members (to help people plan joint transport)
- an expense slip (to be completed and handed in at the meeting)
- a paper of background information on Mission Council
- a form giving your accommodation and meal requests, and certain other information

Please return the completed form as quickly as possible, preferably within a week. Before some meetings we have to spend a lot of time ringing up people who fail to do so. We need the information in order to liaise with the conference centre and to administer the meeting effectively.

You will see that you are being asked whether you are willing to be a group leader and/or reporter during the year 1998/9. Normally these are not particularly onerous tasks. If enough people indicate their willingness, you should not be called on more than once in the year.

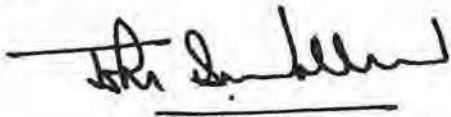
cont...../2

cont.....2 mission council

It seems likely that the major issues at this coming Mission Council will be mission and the number of ministers. I anticipate a special mailing on mission reaching you in the next couple of weeks. You will need to bring to our discussion, in your minds and hearts, those whom you represent at the Council.

Finally, please note some practical details. You should bring your own towel and soap with you; also, a Bible and a copy of 'Rejoice and Sing'. If you have mobility difficulties, or any other special requirements, please contact Naomi Davies in my office.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Waller', written over a horizontal line.

Revd John Waller
Deputy General Secretary

MISSION COUNCIL 5 - 7 October 1998

The Moderator: Mrs Wilma Frew
General Secretary: Revd Tony Burnham
Clerk: Mrs Margaret Carrick Smith
Moderator Elect: Revd Peter McIntosh
Past Moderator: Revd David Jenkins
Treasurer: Mr Graham Stacy
Deputy General Sec: Revd John Waller
Legal Adviser: Mr Hartley Oldham

Assembly Standing Committees

Doctrine Prayer & Worship:	Revd Dr Colin Thompson	
Discipleship Stewardship & Witness:	Revd Elizabeth Caswell	
Church & Society:	Ms Gabrielle Cox	
Youth & Children's Work:	Revd Derek Lindfield	
Ecumenical:	Revd Bob Andrews	
Ministries:	Revd Graham Long	<u>Fury Council</u>
Training:	Revd John Sutcliffe	Ms Anita Wilkins
Finance:	<i>Mr Graham Stacy</i>	Miss Georgette Margrett
Co. munications & Editorial:	Mr Chris Wright	
Nominations:	Revd Glyn Jenkins	
Assembly Arrangements:	Revd Alasdair Pratt	
Equal Opportunities:	Mrs Susan Rand	
Inter-Faith Relations:	Revd Bill Mahood	

12 Provincial Moderators, plus 3 representatives from each Province

1 <i>Revd David Jenkins</i>	Revd Peter Poulter, Dr Peter Clarke, Mrs Wilma Prentice
2 Revd Keith Forecast	Revd Bob Day, Mrs Margaretta Batchelor, Mr Gordon Ollerenshaw
3 Revd Graham Cook	Mrs Barbara Martin, Dr Donald South, Revd Peter Roche
4 Revd Arnold Harrison	Revd John Jenkinson, Mr Steve Wood, Mrs Val Morrison
5 Revd Malcolm Hanson	Mrs Jill Strong, Revd Clifford Wilton, Mrs Irene Wren
6 Revd Elizabeth Welch	Mr Simon Rowntree, Mrs Erica Young, Revd Tom Bayliss
7 <i>Revd Elizabeth Caswell</i>	Revd Michael Burrell, Mr Ken Woods, Revd Clive Sutcliffe
8 Revd Ray Adams	Revd John Rees, Mrs Mary Eden, Mr Geoff Lunt
9 Revd Derek Wales	Revd Julian Macro, Revd David Williams, Mrs Sue Brown
10 Revd Roberta Rominger	Dr Jack Gow, Revd Rachel Poolman, Mr Geoffrey Duncan
11 Revd David Helyar	Mrs Christine Meekison, Revd Lesley Charlton, Dr Graham Campling
12 Revd John Humphreys	Dr Jean Sylvan Evans, Mrs Delyth Rees, Mr Peter Devaney

In attendance

Minute Secretary	Mrs Sally Brooks	Rural Consultant	Revd Michael Cruchley
Moderator's Chaplains	Revd Ken Chippindale	Editor, Reform	Revd David Lawrence
	& Revd Meriel Chippindale	Training	Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee
Church & Society	Revd Peter Brain	Ecumenical Relations	Revd Sheila Maxey
Intl. Church Relations	Revd Philip Woods	Director, Windermere Centre	<i>Revd Peter McIntosh</i>
Ministries	Revd Christine Craven	Communications	Mrs Carol Rogers
Chief Accountant	Mr Clem Frank	Nominations	Mr Desmond Curry
Youth Work	Ms Lesley-Ann di Marco	Childrens Advocate	Mrs Rosemary Johnston
Office & Personnel Mngr.	Mr Hilary Gunn	Multi-racial, multi-cultural	
Discipleship Stewardship		development worker	Revd Marjorie Lewis-Cooper
& Witness	Revd Bill Wright	Convener RPAG	Revd Duncan Wilson
Theological Reflector	Revd Dr. Finlay Macdonald		

HOW TO FIND US

BY ROAD

The Hayes Conference Centre is only 5 miles from the M1

From Junction 28 of the M1 take the A38 dual carriageway towards Alfreton and Derby. Then take the A61 for ½ mile towards Swanwick and Ripley. At the traffic lights in Swanwick turn left towards Somercotes. 550 yards down the road turn right into Hayes Lane, the Conference Centre is straight ahead.

BY PLANE

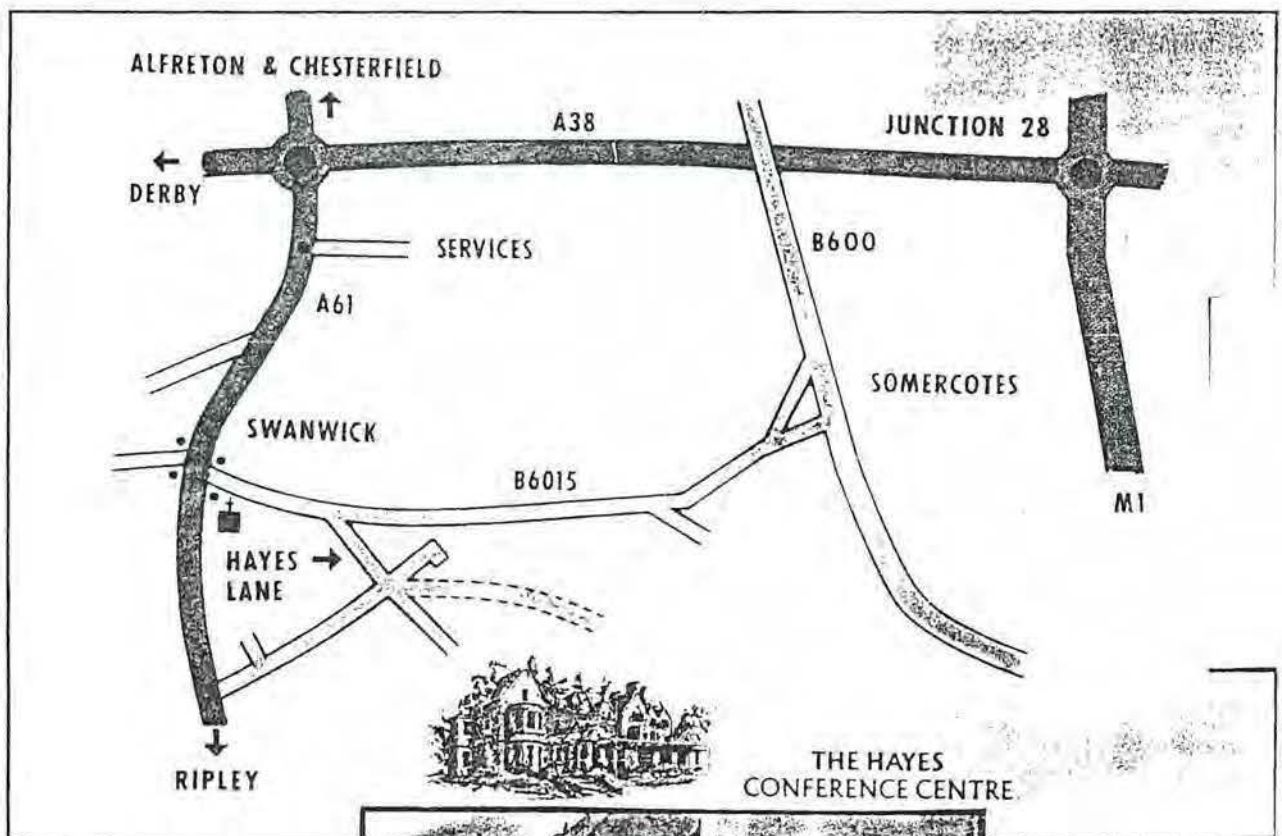
The East Midlands Airport is approximately 30 minutes drive from The Hayes.

BY TRAIN

Our local British Rail Station is Alfreton and Mansfield Parkway Station on the Sheffield-Nottingham Line, although trains are limited. It is about three miles from the centre, but there is a plentiful supply of taxis at reasonable rates. It may be easier to travel to Derby Station, catching a bus from Derby.

BY BUS

From Derby, take the 243 to Mansfield or the 245 to Chesterfield and ask to be dropped opposite 'The Gate' in Swanwick. Then walk down Hayes Lane and the Conference Centre is straight ahead – a 5 minute walk!



Hayes Conference Centre
Swanwick Derbyshire DE55 1AU
Telephone 0773 602482
Fax 0773 540841

GROUPS

The first named person in each group is the leader and the second named is the reporter.

A	<p>Bill Mahood Peter Brain Bob Andrews Lesley Charlton Kate Gray Malcolm Hanson Derek Lindfield Hartley Oldham Carol Rogers Elizabeth Welch Bill Wright</p>	C
B	<p>John Humphreys Irene Wren Sally Brooks Sue Brown Meriel Chippindale Geoffrey Duncan David Jenkins Geoff Lunt Georgette Margrett Donald South Duncan Wilson</p>	D
E	<p>Ray Adams Jean Sylvan Evans Ken Chippindale Lesley Anne Di Marco Mary Eden Dai Hayward (Tuesday) David Helyar Graham Long Gordon Ollerenshaw Graham Stacy Anita Wilkins</p>	F
G	<p>Sheila Maxey Desmond Curry Karen Bulley Michael Burrell Graham Cook Glyn Jenkins Peter McIntosh Wilma Prentice Roberta Rominger John Sutcliffe David Williams</p>	H
	<p>Tom Bayliss Peter Poulter Tony Burnham Liz Byrne Gabrielle Cox Keith Forecast Lesley Husselbee Julian Macro Christine Meekison Jill Strong Steve Wood</p>	
	<p>Delyth Rees David Lawrence Graham Campling Christine Craven Wilma Frew Marjorie Lewis-Cooper Val Morrison John Rees Clive Sutcliffe Philip Woods</p>	
	<p>Simon Rowntree Elizabeth Caswell John Arthur Margaretta Batchelor Peter Clarke Clem Frank John Jenkinson Barbara Martin Rachel Poolman Alasdair Pratt Clifford Wilton</p>	
	<p>Erica Young Arnold Harrison Margaret Carrick Smith Bob Day Jack Gow Rosemary Johnston Susan Rand Peter Roche Colin Thompson John Waller Ken Woods</p>	



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

**AGENDA AND
TIMETABLE**

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

MONDAY

12 onwards Check in

1.00 LUNCH

2.00 **WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY**

Welcomes
Apologies
Minutes of the meeting on 13-15 March 1998
Matters arising not covered by agenda

Our agenda and additional business
Appointment of tellers for the year
CWM Gift of Grace: one year on (Paper L)

CUS/URC union (Paper H)

3.45 TEA

4.15 Assembly Arrangements Committee
Ecumenical Committee (Paper E)
Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee (Paper M)
Mission Council Advisory Group (Papers D and I)
Nominations Committee (Paper N)
Staffing Advisory Group (Paper F)
Theology of Ministry (Paper G)

6.45 EVENING MEAL

7.45 Presentation on the multi-racial, multi-cultural programme
(Paper J)

8.45 **PRAYERS**

TUESDAY

- 8.30 BREAKFAST
- 9.15 **WORSHIP AND BIBLE STUDY**
- Introduction to :
- Growing Up (Paper A)
 - Church-related community work review (Paper B)
 - Procurement and deployment of stipendiary ministry (Paper C).
(Also note paper K)
- 10.45 COFFEE
- 11.15 Discussion of Paper A in groups
- 12.45 LUNCH
- Free time
- 3.00 Report back in plenary session
- 3.45 TEA
- 4.15 Discussion of papers B and C in groups (break at 5.30pm)
- 5.45 Report back in plenary session
- 6.45 EVENING MEAL
- 7.45 Plenary and conclusions on paper C
- 8.45 **PRAYERS**

WEDNESDAY

- 7.30 **HOLY COMMUNION including Inductions**
- 8.30 BREAKFAST
- 9.15 Groups: getting our bearings again
- 10.00 Plenary session on Papers A and B
- 10.45 COFFEE
- 11.15 Discussion and conclusions on Papers A and B
- 12.30 **CLOSING WORSHIP**
- 12.45 LUNCH
Departures



MISSION COUNCIL
5-7 October 1998

PAPERS

A	gold	GROWING UP
B	cream	CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORK REVIEW
C	pink	PROCUREMENT & DEPLOYMENT OF STIPENDIARY MINISTRY
D	bright green	MISSION COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP REPORT
E	salmon	ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE
F	yellow	STAFFING ADVISORY GROUP
G	blue	THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY
H	lilac	CUS/URC UNION
I	salmon	MCAG: RETIREMENT OF GENERAL SECRETARY
J	cream	PRESENTATION ON THE THE MULTI-RACIAL, MULTI-CULTURAL PROGRAMME
K	pink	LETTER FROM NEW MALDEN (RELATED TO PAPER C)
L	bright green	CWM GIFT OF GRACE: ONE YEAR ON
M	gold	MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY SUB-COMMITTEE
N	yellow	NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE
O	blue	TRAINING EXTRACT FROM SEPTEMBER 98 MINUTES
P	lilac	SECRETARY FOR CONTINUING MINISTERIAL EDUCATION
Q	cream	TRAINING STRATEGY FOR THE URC
R	pink	ST ANDREWS HALL



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

A

GROWING UP

a strategy for mission

for

The United Reformed Church

A proposal for Mission Council

5-7 October 1998



To the Mission Council

Somewhat hesitantly, I offer these proposals for **A Mission Strategy**. Because of all the anxiety about our falling number of members, I believe that the analysis in **Part One** is an essential background to any decisions we take. However I recognise that it is a personal view.

Part Two contains some proposals for action. These may not all be acceptable and there may be others which ought to be there. I have tried to keep the list short, focussing on key changes, and to spread the work load. In essence, the strategy is to encourage and support local churches in mission.

I have been greatly helped by Peter Brain with regard to thinking about the **Local Church and the Community**: the text of paragraphs 3.10, 3.11 and Appendix 3 is his. Philip Woods wrote Appendix 2.

Tony Burnham

Part 1

A Dwindling Church

The Churches in the United Kingdom

- 1.1 Any study of the mainline churches in the United Kingdom shows that the number of people belonging to the church during the post-war period has fallen. The experience of the United Reformed Church since 1972 is not unique. Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Roman Catholics have all shown a decline in the number of members¹. In 1975, 72% of the UK population claimed to be Christians and 8 million were church members. Twenty years later in 1995, only 60% made the claim and membership had fallen to 6.5 million.

- 1.2 The 50% fall in membership within the lifetime of the United Reformed Church is serious but it needs to be understood in a context of general decline. Statistics are difficult to interpret and compare but the Church of England between 1960 and 1985 was effectively reduced to not much more than half its previous size². And since 1975, when Basil Hume became Archbishop of Westminster, attendance at Mass in England's Roman Catholic churches has halved. It is with no satisfaction that we note that all our other partner churches in England, Wales and Scotland share this decline. It is true that there has been growth in the independent and in some Pentecostal churches. Davie comments 'Persistently high levels of growth may or may not be sustained as the house churches move into their second generation, a crucial stage in the development of denominational life'.

- 1.3 However the extent of the reduction in church membership and attendance is even more serious when it is seen in a longer perspective. Research by Robin Gill³ shows that most of the Free Churches have been in numerical decline since the 1880's. For the Church of England and the Independents (including Congregationalists) the trend was obvious from 1851. His argument is based on comparative studies of national and local census statistics, churches' own records and a variety of nineteenth century social research sources. One of Gill's arguments is that a significant factor in the decline was the expansion in the number of places of worship: the more the emptier. Far from pre-World War 1 pews being full, he shows, for example,

¹ Grace Davie *Religion in Britain since 1945* 1994

² A. Hastings *A History of English Christianity* 1986

³ Robin Gill *The Myth of the Empty Church* 1993

that at Congregationalism's numerical peak, most of its chapels were only a quarter full. David Cornick⁴ writes

Historians have long noted that the ratio of Christians to the total population began to fall around 1840. In 1854 when the report on the only religious census ever to be taken in Britain was published, all churches had to face the sobering news that only 40.5% of the population were in worship on Census Sunday. There are arguments amongst historians and sociologists about the precise interpretation of that evidence, but it is clear that secularism had become a serious part of British life. People might still believe in God, might still view the world through Christian spectacles, but many no longer felt the need to belong to a Christian community and worship corporately.

The United Reformed Church

1.4 It is worth examining in more detail some statistics related to the URC. What has happened since union in 1972?

(The figures are for the end of each year and, except for churches, are in '000's.)

Year	Churches	Members	Adherents	Children & Young People
1972	2080	192	n/a	102
1977	1990	148	n/a	77
1982	1943	140	n/a	57
1987	1832	127	40*	70
1992	1803	110	56	104
1997	1738	94	40 [#]	89

*1989 figure

[#]Category redefined as *Regular Worshipping Non-members*

Of course, membership may not be a good measure of the number of people belonging to the church. Moreover we may argue about the accuracy of the statistics returned annually by church secretaries but the continuing downward trend over the past 24 years cannot be denied.

The precise number of stipendiary ministers in any year is difficult to assess, particularly in the earlier years. However the figures used are sufficiently accurate to illustrate the trend.

⁴ David Cornick *Under God's Good Hand* 1998

YEAR	MINISTERS (Stipendiary)
1972	1093
1997	720

It is worth noting the contrast between the reduction in number of members and the decline in number of churches and ministers (stipendiary).

1972-97	% fall
Members	51
Churches	16.4
Ministers (Stipendiary)	34.1

Year	Average per church
1972	92 members
1997	54 members

Year	Average per minister
1972	176 members 1.9 churches
1997	131 members 2.4 churches

- 1.5 These statistics do not reveal the number of members in Local Ecumenical Partnerships. Nor do they take account of the proportionately large number of adherents. And what do we make of the number of children and young people? Wild fluctuations in those latter figures must be related to the way the statistics have been collected but trends do emerge. If we conclude that it might not be so bad as we fear, nevertheless the bottom line is that the church is much smaller now than it was in 1972. This has continued a trend that began in the nineteenth century.
- 1.6 For local congregations there are many effects which arise from smaller numbers. There are fewer to do the work and pay the bills to fund ministry, buildings and mission. Of course, sometimes a small congregation can be more effective than a larger group of members who are less committed. Fewer members per minister ought to deepen relationships. Nevertheless ministers find that caring for an increasing number of congregations means more meetings, not only in the church but also in the different communities where the churches are located. The average figure of churches per minister in 1972 is difficult to interpret. Both Congregationalists and Presbyterians had many single pastorate churches. In addition, the Congregationalists had many small churches without ministry. At union a decision was taken that stipendiary ministry would be shared between all churches. It was a response to the requirement that all churches pay for ministry. It was this policy which stimulated the development of the multi-church pastorate. It is also true that falling numbers in themselves tell us nothing about the congregation's age spread, though general observation reveals ageing congregations. If the URC's evangelism is judged by lives changed and commitments made to follow Christ then, if statistics are the only measure, we have not been very successful.

Reasons for Decline

- 1.7 The peak of Congregationalism in England was 1910-12. Membership was at its highest both as an absolute and as a proportion of the whole population. Yet in a 1909 sermon on the subject of **Church Membership**, Sydney Berry, later to be the Secretary of the Congregational Union of England & Wales, said

*I am no pessimist but I confess that the signs in many of our churches are not altogether hopeful. At present they are held together by older people, but one looks in vain for the support that is to come after the older people have passed away.*⁵

If this seems at odds with the statistics, he offers an explanation

*People may come into our Congregational Churches Sunday after Sunday, they may help swell our congregations, and yet many never really become part of the church. And it may justly be feared, I think, that this disinclination to commit themselves to anything definite is growing.*⁶

- 1.8 In this brief paper it is only possible to present headlines, each of which deserves fuller explanation. Nevertheless the scale of the decline and the number of denominations involved ought to confirm that the reasons are complex and therefore are unlikely to be corrected by any simple solution. The starting point has to be the rapid industrialisation of the late eighteenth century. This was followed by a rapid increase in the size of the population. In spite of the Evangelical Revival, in England it is possible to interpret nineteenth century church history as the failure of numerous attempts to convert the newly created urban working class. Congregationalism was part of this failure. English Presbyterianism was less typical, smaller and dependent for its growth on Celtic migration doubling its 1850 membership by 1875. The Churches of Christ experienced their rapid growth between 1861 and 1892. (See Cornick)⁷
- 1.9 Although the churches in the nineteenth century failed with regard to the masses, large numbers were gathered in Sunday Schools, a vast range of organisations and improving groups, as well as at least twice at Sunday worship. However successful such churches were, their size was dramatically affected by the demographic changes of the early twentieth century, shown by the reduction in the size of families. The effect of these on the numbers belonging to a three-generation church was very significant. Part of our sense of failure today is that our small memberships are likely to meet in and manage a nineteenth century building with seats for ten times the present membership.

⁵ A sermon on Church Membership preached in Macfadyen Memorial Church, Choriton-cum-Hardy on Sunday evening 14 November 1909 Revd. Sidney M. Berry

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Op. Cit. p.123ff

- 1.10 Robin Gill⁸ argues that empty churches played a significant part once decline began. The decline could be due, in rural areas, to depopulation or, in urban areas, to the middle class moving to the suburbs. The situation was aggravated by the competitive building of chapels and the failure to prune the surplus. The empty church results in heavy financial demands on the remaining congregation, the need for ministers to serve more than one church, and newcomers finding it difficult to attend casually. If empty pews result in lowered morale for the congregation, they signal the triumph of secularisation to the community.
- 1.11 Struggling with the effects of demographic change and empty churches, we then suffered the First World War. Check the memorial boards in many churches and imagine the devastating result of the loss of so many young men. (The board at Castle Hill URC, Northampton, lists 38 names). There are stories also of those who survived the trenches but, having been encouraged to volunteer by preachers, never went to church again. In the twenties and thirties, facing the hedonism of the middle class and the despair of labour, Congregationalism responded with liberal Christianity at its emptiest. The Second World War sacrificed fewer lives. Theologians' tougher response to the more obvious evils stirred preachers, while people's pastoral needs gave new purpose and the church began to recover its nerve. However, in the late fifties and the sixties, with full employment giving greater prosperity and the development of youth sub-cultures, the churches failed to make a radical response. In the seventies and eighties local churches, lost more ground. In this period elderly congregations benefited from the prevailing political values and were largely unwilling to respond to the issues which attracted both young people and thoughtful adults (anti-nuclear weapons, the environment, world poverty, feminism). The major source of recruitment, the children of our most committed members, of our elders and ministers, fell away. This lost generation is the cadre from which in the past we drew many of our ministers and leading lay people. The miracle is that 1738 congregations have survived to the present.
- 1.12 In contemporary Britain, there have been social changes some of which create difficulties for the churches. Employment makes demands on both partners, taking time from voluntary activities, and can involve moving home frequently. There is not only Sunday shopping but the day is widely used for sporting and cultural activities for the young, keeping them and their parents away from worship. This is also the day when children of split families spend time with the "other" parent. The media, with different values to those of religion, in general oppose, ignore or trivialise the churches. The sexual revolution of the past forty years, has presented further significant challenge.
- 1.13 All this would lead us to expect a decline in interest in religion, even that there would be a general increase in hostility to religion. There may be a resistance to organised religion but there are still serious inquirers as well as a growth in the weird and wacky. Bookshops have full shelves to illustrate this;

⁸ Op. Cit.

astrologers and star signs assume an importance totally at variance with an educated society. Nevertheless the response to sudden deaths (e.g. Hillsborough, Princess Diana) all point to some kind of residual belief. Davie⁹ describes it as 'believing without belonging', though the actual belief may stray far from a Trinitarian Christian faith.

- 1.14 This brief description of the serious numerical decline of the mainstream churches in the United Kingdom, including the United Reformed Church, which began in the nineteenth century, points to the conclusion that there is no quick fix, no simple human solution to reverse this downward spiral.

Planning for Growth – the URC Experience

- 2.1 There is a serious discussion to be held as to whether the church is withering or is being pruned by the Holy Spirit. Whatever the outcome of that debate, the church must still respond to its predicament. One consistent reply to the signs of numerical decline has been to urge the church to **plan for growth**. At the 1983 Assembly, The Missionary and Ecumenical Work (MEW) at Home Committee dipped a fastidious toe into the waters of evangelism.

The committee is inviting the Assembly to designate 1984 as a year of evangelism.

Billy Graham and other evangelists were on their way and so the report continued:

We hope that all our local churches will take up the evangelistic task in their own way in 1984, whatever that way may be.....to help them to do so, we have proposed the appointment of an inter-departmental working party, widely representative of convictions and insights in the URC, to prepare materials for local use and encouragement as well as a major presentation on evangelism at the 1984 Assembly.¹⁰

That brief paragraph is very revealing. The URC has never been comfortable with the word *evangelism*. It is not used in the Basis and appears in the Structure only once concerning the first function of the elders' meeting:

to foster in the congregation concern for witness and service to the community, evangelism at home and abroad, Christian education, ecumenical action, local inter-church relations and the wider responsibilities of the whole church.¹¹

MEW at Home's paragraph avoids anything contentious by pushing the action on to the following year, allowing local congregations to take up the evangelistic task *in their own way*. In case this was believed to be too directive it was softened by adding, *whatever that way may be*. It then

⁹ Op. Cit.

¹⁰ Reports to General Assembly 1983 p.61

¹¹ The Structure of the United Reformed Church para 2(2)i

proposed that the working party be *inter-departmental*, rather than made up of provincial representatives. Even then it had to be *widely representative of convictions and insights*. Finally the task was defined, not as achieving a major objective but merely to *prepare material for local use and encouragement* as well as a *major presentation at the 1984 Assembly*. The actual resolution continued the kid glove approach and remembered another URC sensitivity. Not only were local churches urged to *develop such methods as seem right to the Holy Spirit and to the fellowship* but there was added *ecumenically if possible, with the after thought and with prayer*.

- 2.2 **Growth for Their Sake** was the theme of the report presented in 1984. The Record states that the challenge was accepted *after considerable discussion*. Not until three years later did the Working Party produce **Planning for Growth** (Assembly Reports 1987 pp27-32). The accompanying resolutions refer the Report to each synod and district, each being asked to *set its own objectives*. The provincial reports back came after two years (Assembly Reports 1989 pp3-27). Afterwards the whole subject faded away. During this activity over the six years from 1983 to 1989 the membership declined by 12% (16,000 members). There may have been some small successes as a result of **Growth for Their Sake**. However the seeds of its failure were sown in the desire to keep everyone on board, in an aim that was not specific enough and in a timetable that lacked momentum.
- 2.3 However, if *evangelism* disappeared in a flurry of words and good intentions, at least numerical growth was not advocated in a mechanistic way. It is not just that we have a cultural aversion to such an approach but that theologically we are not convinced. There have been too many instances of growth arising from questionable initiatives.
- 2.4 During the same period, the Assembly was also going down another track. In 1982 under the heading *New Enterprise in Mission*, the MEW at Home Committee presented a report *Good News to the Poor*. Assembly agreed to remit this to *the appropriate committees for consideration and action*. This was an attempt to respond to the needs of a nation with increasing numbers of poor people and, in some of the older industrial areas, high levels of unemployment. At the same time, the slow, steady, development of the replacement for the Deaconess, the Church Related Community Worker, continued. Both these programmes were not about building the church but building and serving the community. Over the years this strand, on the margins of the church's life, has continued. However it has never been properly integrated within the mainstream of the church's thinking on mission. The twin threads of community work and evangelism have both woven in and out of the URC's life without becoming intertwined, both peripheral to the priority given to maintenance rather than mission.
- 2.5 In 1995 Mission Council identified Eight Priorities which were referred to synods, districts and local churches for comment. One priority was **Growth**. The responses indicated that no one was against it but some saw growth as the fruit of going about things in the right way and it was argued that growth should not be a target for its own sake. Other responses rejected *niche*

evangelism, appealing to a narrow segment of society. The question was also asked as to how aiming for growth squared with the prophetic task?

Growth: God's Gift

2.6 In the New Testament there is much about growth and a great deal about evangelism: announcing by word and deed to those who have not heard it before, *all that God has done, is doing and will do*¹². The call is always to faithfulness even if this leads to a cross. When Jesus sent out the *twelve to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal*, he warned them that not everyone would welcome them. As they were leaving those towns, they should shake the dust off their feet (Luke 9. 1-5). Planning a strategy for evangelism therefore is not to be confused with planning for growth. In the New Testament, *numerical* growth is not a major concern, although there is the important reference to the rapid growth of the early church in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. This growth came after the preaching, after the common life, and after breaking the bread. It was only then that

..... day by day the Lord added new converts to their number
(Acts 2.47)

Growth in numbers is by God's gift not by our planning. But if seeking for growth is not our primary task, what is?

2.7 The purpose of our life is spelt out clearly in the Basis of Union

Within the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church the United Reformed Church acknowledges its responsibility under God:

- ◆ *to make its life a continual offering of itself and the world to God in adoration and worship through Jesus Christ;*
- ◆ *to receive and express the renewing life of the Holy Spirit in each place and in its total fellowship, and there to declare the reconciling and saving power of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;*
- ◆ *to live out, in joyful and sacrificial service to all in their various physical and spiritual needs, that ministry of caring, forgiving and healing love which Jesus Christ brought to all whom he met;*
- ◆ *and to bear witness to Christ's rule over the nations in all the variety of their organised life.*¹³

If the church is faithful, then history records that, in God's own time, the church will grow. For example

- ◆ a decayed western church was renewed in the sixteenth century by the Reformation

¹² See *Transforming Mission* David J. Bosch 1991 p.412

¹³ The Basis of Union para 11

- ◆ a lifeless English church was resurrected towards the end of the eighteenth century by the Evangelical Revival
- ◆ missionaries to Madagascar began work in the 1820's, were expelled after ten years, returned in the 1860's to discover that, after persecution, there had grown a thriving church
- ◆ during the Chinese cultural revolution, beginning in the mid 1960's, attempts were made to destroy the Christian faith. Churches were closed, ministers sent to work in factory and field. After ten years, when freedom was restored, the church grew and flourished as never before in all its history.

After death the Spirit brings new life. In each of these examples, during the periods of decay, inertia, persecution and suppression there remained a remnant who were faithful and from whose seeds the Spirit reaped a harvest.

- 2.8 For a church to be anxious about its size is like our *being anxious about food and drink to keep you alive and about clothes to cover your body*. Jesus' response was *set your mind on God's kingdom and his justice, and all the rest will come to you as well*. (Mt 6.25 & 33) It is quality that counts: *You are salt to the world. And if salt becomes tasteless It is good for nothing but to be thrown away.....(Mt 5.13ff)* It is by the light we shed and the good we do, that people will come to *give praise to our Father in heaven* (Mt 5.14ff) And so the message to those who gloomily ask if the URC has a future is *do not be anxious about tomorrow; tomorrow will look after itself. Each day has troubles enough of its own* (Mt. 6.34).
- 2.9 Recalling that Jesus said *If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross* (Mt 16.24) we ought not to assume that faithful evangelism will produce growth in numbers. It might produce the opposite.

In short, church growth says *come and join us*; the gospel call is *follow Jesus*.

Unity in Mission

- 3.1 At the time of union in 1972, the URC saw its direction as dying and rising in further unions of churches. The Basis states that the URC

*sees its formation and growth as a part of what God is doing to make his people one, and as a united church will take, wherever possible and with all speed, further steps towards the unity of all God's people.*¹⁴

On a limited scale this happened in 1981 when there was union with the Churches of Christ. Now Assembly has taken a first decision to unite with the Congregational Union of Scotland in 1999. Further unions still remain our goal. But a sense of realism teaches us that this is not for the immediate future. What then is our role now?

¹⁴ The Basis of Union para 8

- 3.2 This urgent expectation in 1972 for further union is perhaps the main explanation of the absence from the Basis and Structure of many specific references to *mission*. It is true that the purpose of the URC is clearly defined and it may be argued that mission is there in everything but name. However, nowhere is there a systematic exposition of the URC's understanding of mission.
- 3.3 Within the Structure the members are given opportunity in the church meeting to *care for one another, to strengthen each other's faith and to foster the life, work and mission of the church*.¹⁵ One function of the church meeting is to *further the church's mission in the locality*. While many other functions of the church and elders' meetings, the district council and provincial synod fall within any definition of mission, the term only specifically occurs next in a reference to the General Assembly, where one function is to *support and share in the missionary work of the church at home and abroad*. Twenty six years later, our direction is still to seek unity but, given that progress will be slow, we now need to have greater clarity about mission.
- 3.4 However *mission* is defined, we may no longer use the language of *missionary work at home and abroad*. This looks backwards to a time when *mission* was an extra activity, when churches were divided into those who sent and gave and those who received and took. Within the family of the Council for World Mission (CWM), the URC has been a strong supporter of the concept of partnership. Resources are to be given according to ability and all have a voice in deciding how they are to be used.
- 3.5 It has taken some time for the URC to recognise that it is a receiving church. The regular input from five missionaries from partner churches has helped to change our thinking. Now, as a result of the proceeds of the sale of land in Hong Kong, CWM is no longer dependent on the URC for a significant part of its income, and all thirty two partner churches are on a similar footing for giving and for receiving.
- 3.6 It is not insignificant that our CWM partners have now recognised that, after two centuries of seeing Britain as the source of missionary endeavour in their lands, the needs of Britain require them to share with the URC in mission here. Preman Niles' letter of January 1998 (see Appendix 1) eloquently recognises this change.
- 3.7 The Council of CWM has also recognised that it needs to stimulate the mission of each partner church. Therefore each one has been asked to examine its mission strategy and to prepare a mission programme for a three year period. This challenge fits closely with the Mission Council's own decision to respond in appropriate ways to the decline in membership.

¹⁵ The Structure of the United Reformed Church para 2(1)

- 3.8 However any understanding of mission which is to accord with the URC's experience and roots must reflect our commitment to unity. The organised unity we seek is not of static institutions but of churches engaged in mission. The unity we express in our ecumenical pilgrimage now must also be between churches which are in mission together. The way forward is by *mission in unity* and our goal is *unity in mission*.

Mission is.....

- 3.9 As the final sentence of his important book, *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch states that mission is ***the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world***. This simple summary of the previous 500 pages of reflection and study highlights certain principles

- ◆ ***the good news***: the words and deeds that express the life, death and resurrection of Jesus;
- ◆ ***of God's love***: the mission is not ours but God's. The initiative is God's, ours the response; and God's love points us to the cross which stands over our life in judgement and grace;
- ◆ ***incarnated***: mission is not an extra but takes flesh wherever the body of Christ is;
- ◆ ***in the witness***: in a church which is not hidden away but gives testimony and evidence;
- ◆ ***of a community***: for the church to be effective, to be the body of Christ, its members must be in relationship with each other;
- ◆ ***for the sake of the world***: mission is being sent to the world and not for the church's sake, for self-preservation or its numerical growth but as an offering in the mission of God.

- 3.10 Alongside that dynamic analysis of mission it will be helpful to use the formulation of **Five Marks of Mission** first drafted by the 1988 Lambeth Conference and later revised. The 1997 Forum of Churches Together in England endorsed this formulation:

- ◆ to proclaim the good news of the kingdom;
- ◆ to teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
- ◆ to respond to human need by loving service;
- ◆ to seek to transform unjust structures of society;
- ◆ to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Mission is necessary for the life of the Christian church, which, in the familiar phrase, used by the former LMS General Secretary A M Chirgwin, *exists by mission as a fire by burning*. Mission can be defined as **all the deliberate work of the church**: it is the sense of being called, sent and empowered by God, of being *the only human organisation which exists for the benefit of those who are not its members* in William Temple's phrase.

Mission is thus **activity in line with God's own loving purposes** for the world as we believe we know them in Jesus Christ and by the Spirit. Mission seeks, by word and by action together, to generate and sustain faith, hope and love in obedience to God the Holy Trinity, interpreting the whole world of space and time as God's creation, affirming Jesus as Lord, open to be led by the life-giving Spirit.

- 3.11 Various activities follow from the basic understanding set out in these five marks of mission, including worship and evangelism, Christian education, compassionate care, campaigning on issues of justice and peace, striving for a more wholesome lifestyle. Some of these activities require particular gifts and ministries though all are, to a degree, for everyone. If the United Reformed Church is to embark on some fresh planning for mission, we would do well to keep these five points at the forefront of our thinking when we appraise new ideas and suggestions.

The witness of the church must be well organised but not compartmentalised. We need a strategy which will drive the approach of those whose primary task is to make more effective the evangelistic and 'church life' aspects of mission as well as those whose calling is to serve and work for social transformation. We need to speak and to serve. This first section has shown that the decline in size and influence of most local churches has made us less able to serve and less confident to speak. Added to which, the rapid change and growing diversification of British society leaves many traditional activities well past their 'sell-by' date and traditional church language barely intelligible. Now we have a unique opportunity for a fresh, constructive look. Mission thinking sees the wood for the trees; it deliberately reflects *on what God is about today and tomorrow*, it integrates our words and our activities in an appropriate evangelism and an authentic lifestyle; and generally it underpins church life and work with theological and spiritual strength which is not always there at present. We can evaluate not only our practice but our ideas against these **Five Marks of Mission**.

After all, if God had wanted us to live in the past he would never have promised us the future!

Part 2

A Mission Strategy

Introduction

- 4.1 One starting point of **Growing Up** is that people feel something is missing from our life as a church. They look for a vision, a sense of direction, leadership: there are different labels. Usually it is related to a deep unease about numbers. When at Mission Council in 1997 the concerns of the synods were expressed, declining numbers and the need for mission were mentioned more times than all other issues. The foregoing analysis and theological exposition make it clear that there can be no simple solution to the problem of decline. Yet in spite of all the frustrations amongst our ministers, elders and members there is a real commitment. In most churches, there is at least one thing done well. In some churches there are many things done well. But it is patchy: here and there, now and then. The challenge is to build on this commitment and on the faithfulness already demonstrated. The response to decline ought to be greater maturity in faith, not so much a strategy for growth but a growing up. It should be all of our members doing better what some already do well. It is about being more faithful where we are. It is being ready to share, eager to receive and open to learn from Christians in other places. Our calling remains to be more loving as disciples of Christ, more trusting in the leading of the Spirit and more obedient to God, Source, Guide and Goal of all that is.
- 4.2 However it is also clear that some of our failure is a result of too many empty, struggling churches, the maintenance of which distracts us from mission, and whose empty pews discourage the outsider.
- 4.3 This analysis of decline (1.1ff), coupled with an understanding of mission in unity, which sees growth, not as an objective to be achieved but as a gift from God (2.5ff), and which may be tested by the **Five Marks of Mission** (3.10), points us in the direction of changing, building up and supporting the local church. Such an analysis suggests radical changes and many opportunities. Moreover CWM has challenged us to prepare a practical programme for three years. The strategy described below does not deal with every part of church life but focuses on a few pivotal points for change. Nor will everything be new, as if no one has begun to create the building blocks of such a mission programme already. Some decisions have already been taken and some elements of a strategy are already in place.

The Strategy: An Introduction

- 5.1 **The aim** is for the United Reformed Church to balance its commitment to the unity of all God's people with a similar commitment to share in God's mission. The test of this commitment will be as we shape the life of our local churches according to the **Five Marks of Mission**.
- 5.2 The proposals in paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 suggest some pivotal changes to enable this aim to become a reality. Most of the proposals have financial implications and these are dealt with in paragraph 8.5.
- 5.3 **The Timetable.** At the General Assemblies of 1997 and 1998 various programmes were agreed and also in that period, Mission Council took some initiatives, all of which can be interpreted as separate strands in a developing mission strategy. These now need to be interwoven with further proposals to give a more rounded picture. In addition, the church needs to respond to CWM's invitation to prepare a mission programme for the next three or four years. It seems appropriate therefore to attempt to achieve the aim (5.1) during the three years 1999-2001.
- 5.4 **Implementation.** Although this strategy appears to be a single package, it is in fact an overview of a series of possible courses of action, each of which stands or falls on its own merits and is dependent for decision and implementation on different committees and councils of the church.

The Strategy: Supporting the Local Church

- 6.1 **Supporting the Local Church: Belonging to the World Church.** A vision is needed that will enable the local church to lift its eyes from the limited horizons of its own locality. This programme was accepted by the General Assembly in 1998. Various practical programmes have been outlined but their prime objective is to enable each local church to be part of a world-wide Christian family so that, *working together and learning from one another we can gain the perspective and form the networks that help us understand God's purposes in this age and enable us to proclaim and live a gospel that speaks to our time.* (A summary of the programme is in Appendix 2. A fuller account is given in Assembly Reports 1998 p 82.)
- 6.2 **Supporting the Local Church: Pilots** is a non-uniformed children's organisation in which we collaborate with the Congregational Federation. The Youth and Children's Work Committee and its Pilots' Panel are seeking to stimulate children's work in local churches by developing Pilots, building on the organisation's world church foundation.
- 6.3 **Supporting the Local Church: Proclaiming the Good News.** This is the first of the **Five Marks of Mission** and it is part of the calling of every member. As was exhaustively outlined earlier, (2.1 – 2.3) the URC has shied away from evangelism. Partly this has been because it has been associated with some methods, styles of church life and theology with which many

members and ministers have been uncomfortable. Yet there is an inescapable obligation for Christians to speak of the faith in which they believe. David Bosch speaks of the obligation of a church to witness, to give testimony and evidence (3.9). At the 1998 Assembly, in a report on Evangelism, it was emphasised that *the local church and its members are universally seen as the primary agents of faith-sharing*. The need was also emphasised to *find ways in which Christians can learn to speak comfortably about their faith*. (The full report can be found in Assembly Reports 1998 pp 68-9). A resolution on the report called on local churches, district councils, synods and the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee to engage in particular activities to encourage evangelism. However the lessons of the URC's past resistance to a New Testament understanding of evangelism means that the Committee must sharpen its focus, to help the people become more effective in its witness of *proclaiming the good news of the kingdom*. It is no use pretending that people do not need help to be credible witnesses. The faith must be clearly and relevantly presented within each congregation. Everyone should have experience of articulating this to others. We can no longer rely on those outside the church coming in to sample what is on offer. However any that do come must find a welcoming group who are ready to learn about the faith, enjoy worshipping God and show that they love each other and are ready to give loving service and work for justice. If the Holy Spirit adds to their number, then we must rejoice. But the starting point can only be the word and deed of witnessing. To revive the desire to witness and to suggest the ways, must be the focus of the Committee's work in supporting the local church in proclaiming the good news.

6.4 Supporting the Local Church: The Local Church in the Community.

Proclamation of the good news is not only by word but also by deed. Many local churches serve the community well in a variety of ways. However it is an astonishing fact that throughout the life of the URC, no attempt has been made nationally to co-ordinate, share experience, take initiatives, or suggest policy within this field. Alongside a renewed concern for witness, it is proposed to entrust the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee with the development of this new area of work. The proposal is worked out in some detail in Appendix 3 which makes it clear that: *In line with the latter three of the five marks of mission (3.10) we must re-affirm that to fulfil the church's calling requires a deliberate engagement with the local community.*

6.5 Supporting the Local Church: Local groups and the district council. In order to strengthen the local church's mission and to reduce internal administration, new patterns of the grouping of local churches are being considered. Mission Council has already set up a working party on this matter which is due to report in October 1999 on this matter. However the Structure 2(3) defines the district council as *churches grouped together for the purpose of fellowship, support, intimate mutual oversight and united action*. It would therefore be appropriate to explore how the purpose of the district council could be shared between a group of local churches and the synod.

- 6.6 **Supporting the Local Church: A question for each local church.** Populations move. Across the road, there may be another church with whom God wants us to unite. There may be another United Reformed Church in the town, and in coming together, both may be more useful to the Kingdom. There may be another neighbourhood which needs a church. Every church, therefore, whatever its size must ask: **Is there, here in this place, a part for us in god's mission?** If the answer is yes, then the question becomes one of assessing if the church is playing a full part in God's mission there. Such matters are not for that congregation alone. There must be openness to receive the advice of other churches through the district council.
- 6.7 **Supporting the Local Church: Small churches.** The 1998 Assembly requested Mission Council to set up a Task Group *to consider and report on the opportunities, challenges and difficulties* which small churches face. One issue which might be referred to the Task Group is the possibility of asking synods and the appropriate district council, to review the life of all churches with 10 or fewer members. 135 out of 1738 churches have 10 members or fewer. The proposal to review the life of such churches is not a coded way of saying such churches ought to close. They may be sharing more vigorously in mission than many larger churches. Even so, the question ought to be asked whether scarce resources would not be more effectively used if such churches united with another congregation. For example, there are towns where there are two congregations belonging to the United Reformed Church, each with fewer than 10 members. (There is nothing significant about 10. To set the level at 12 members would add another 40 congregations to the list and would require a review of 1 in 7 of our churches).

The Strategy: Leadership

- 7.1 **Leadership: Elders' training.** The key to change in the local church is leadership. This is the responsibility of the elders working with the minister. Many synods undertake programmes of elders' training. A significant element in that training should aim to improve the collaboration between elders and minister. The Training Committee should be asked to review the work which is being done and to present proposals for a systematic programme.
- 7.2 **Leadership: Local Leadership.** In order that each local church should have better oversight without using scarce stipendiary ministry ineffectively, a system of local leadership should be developed by each synod. The pioneering model created by the Mersey Synod could be a starting point. Guidelines on Local Leadership were accepted by the Assembly in 1998 (Assembly Reports pp 66-7).
- 7.3 **Leadership: Ministry (Non-Stipendiary).** This form of ministry was created in 1979. After nearly 20 years experience, Mission Council should encourage the Ministries Committee in its recent decision to review all aspects of this ministry, to see what lessons have been learned and to develop further this gift of ministry.

- 7.4 **Leadership: Ministerial Appraisal.** This was agreed in 1997. Its purpose is to enable ministers to assess their performance and to identify areas where they need help and further training. The Ministries Committee, which has oversight of this programme, should liaise closely with the Training Committee regarding its policies for the training of ministers, in order to respond to the needs identified.
- 7.5 **Leadership: Continuing Ministerial Education.** This policy was adopted by the 1998 General Assembly. This policy should be implemented in the next three years. In many respects this programme could be the key point in transforming the church. The role of ministers in enabling local churches to reshape their life according to the **Five Marks of Mission** is crucial. By expecting ministers to undergo training throughout the life of their service, the emphasis should be on developing and sharing their knowledge of current thinking and good practice as it focuses on mission in unity.

The Strategy: Assembly and Mission Council

- 8.1 **Assembly: Unity.** In the light of the historical analysis of the nineteenth century and the challenge we now face, the ecumenical pilgrimage towards unity cannot be viewed in contrast to mission or as a distraction from evangelism. The whole church should remain alert for every opportunity of co-operating in mission with other denominations and should continue to seek organic unity for the sake of mission: our emphasis must be *mission in unity*; our goal, *unity in mission*. Current developments include negotiations with the Congregational Union in Scotland, resulting in a first decision by the URC's 1998 Assembly to unite; the publication of the first report of the Scottish Church Initiative for Union; and the beginning of informal talks with the Church of England and the Methodist Church.
- 8.2 **Assembly: Transforming Unjust Structures.** The Church and Society Committee should be encouraged as it gives leadership in the fourth mark of mission, through its concern for the poor here and overseas, in particular, through the programme **Commitment for Life** and through the **Jubilee 2000** campaign to wipe out the debts of the world's poorest nations.
- 8.3 **Assembly: A Multi-Racial, Multi-cultural Society.** A first step has already been taken in appointing a Development Worker. Assembly must now consider what steps ought to be taken so that the whole church responds to the outcome of the research undertaken since 1997 and thus benefits from the multi-racial and multi-cultural nature of society and church life in Britain today. Work alongside Ghanaian Presbyterians, having been reviewed, should continue. Some Urdu speaking Pakistani Congregations from a Presbyterian background have recently been identified. New work to support, build up and learn from such congregations should also be undertaken. All this work has enabled the church to begin to tap the deep and different spiritual gifts which the members from our ethnic minorities bring to our life and mission.

8.4 **Assembly: Maintenance of the Ministry.** Although the fund is now named *Ministry and Mission*, the major part of its work is concerned with **Maintenance of Ministry**. This name reflects the priority being followed. Mission Council should consider whether the element of sharing within the financial support of local ministry ought not to reflect mission more adequately, rather than continuing to subsidise a district council's inherited past. No one wishes to lose the great advantages of the central payroll system. However consideration ought to be given to a more strategic use of subsidy to support mission rather than maintenance.

8.5 **Assembly: Finance.** The Mission Council Resources Advisory Group should continue its work of identifying the costs of this mission strategy over the period to 2001. It is not intended that the costs of these initiatives in this period should fall on the local churches. There are resources available to fund this programme:

- ◆ the church has built up reserves and some should be used;
- ◆ CWM has suggested that the URC reduce its financial contribution so that the saving may be used for mission at home and to sustain our partnership in mission relationships outside the CWM family (See Appendix 1);
- ◆ CWM has allocated £313,751 for the support of the URC's mission programme.

8.6 **Assembly: Self Support Fund.** CWM has set aside an amount to assist each partner church to become Self-Supporting. The URC has been allocated £366,043. The intention is for churches to use this allocation to enable them to be self-supporting. (e.g. The Congregational Federation has used its share to purchase a building next to its Nottingham central office in order to generate rental income). The problem for the URC is that we are already self-supporting. CWM has set criteria regarding the use of the funds within the context of self-support (See Appendix 4). Mission Council must therefore resolve how the URC should use its allocation.

One option is to make this available for the self-support of appropriate community work through local churches. This would be a way of enabling the church to act on two of the **Five Marks of Mission** (3.10)

- ◆ to respond to human need by loving service;
- ◆ to seek to transform unjust structures of society.

The use of such resources could be worked out in conjunction with the proposals (6.4) for the local church in the community.

- 8.7 **Assembly: The Discipleship, Stewardship & Witness Committee** should be strengthened to cope with the additional responsibility for the local churches' involvement in the community. This should be by the creation of appropriate additional sub-committees. Another name to replace its cumbersome title, e.g. Mission Committee, should also be found.

The Strategy: Next Steps

- 9.1 **Recommendations.** See Appendix 5
- 9.2 **Mission Council** will discuss these proposals at its meeting 5-7 October 1998.
- ◆ It will amend and accept them and identify to whom each recommendation should be referred for action or further reflection.
 - ◆ It will decide at what stage the strategy should be offered to CWM as the programme of the URC.
 - ◆ It will decide on the report to the General Assembly and any decisions which ought to be taken by that Council.
- 9.3 These proposals, in all their weakness, together with the rest of the life of the United Reformed Church, are offered to the Council for World Mission and to God, by the Mission Council, as a strategy for mission for the years 1999-2001:

*whatever you do, in word or deed,
do everything
in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God through him.*¹⁶

¹⁶ Colossians 3.17

Appendix 1

Letter from Dr Preman Niles, General Secretary of the Council for World Mission, to the United Reformed Church – January 1998

Greetings in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ!

In the context of reviewing contributions from CWM Churches to the common work of CWM, the Executive Committee of CWM (Lusaka, 1-8 December 1997) discussed the matter of the financial contribution of the United Reformed Church. The Executive Committee asked that I write a letter to the United Reformed Church to communicate the important points that were made in that discussion.

1. It was noted that, in the formation of CWM, financial and other material resources outside Britain, belonging to LMS and the other missionary societies which came together in CWM, were handed over to the churches that were using them. The resources in Britain were not handed over to the British churches, but were left for CWM. Consequently, the United Reformed Church, along with other British churches in CWM, did not gain from the initial sharing of common financial and other material resources.
2. The United Reformed Church has supported CWM by putting almost all of its financial resources for mission at the disposal of CWM. Between 1977 and 1997, the URC has annually contributed five to six times more than the next biggest financial contributor in CWM. Not once during this period has the United Reformed Church asked that it be represented on the bodies in CWM which would decide how this money is to be spent.
3. The Executive Committee noted that over the years the membership of the URC has declined by almost 50%. It needs to pay greater attention to its mission at home. The URC also needs resources to sustain the partnership in mission relationships it has formed outside the CWM family.

Twenty years after the formation of CWM, and especially with the new financial resources that have come to CWM, the Executive Committee felt that it is time CWM asked the URC to reconsider its level of financial support for CWM.

So, the CWM Executive Committee has asked me to inform you

- ◆ that the CWM family is grateful for all the United Reformed Church has done over these many years to keep alive the vision and partnership of CWM;
- ◆ that the Executive Committee recognises the fact that the URC may reduce its financial contribution to CWM beginning 1998;
- ◆ that the Executive Committee reiterates the partnership principles of CWM, and asks that the URC not be timid in asking for support from the common pool of CWM's financial and personnel resources for its work of ministry and mission at home and abroad.

I end this letter with what the Moderator of CWM, the Revd Nove Vailaau, said to me in a personal conversation which captures the mood of discussion.

It is like the elder brother in a large family that has lost its parents carrying the burden of the family. Now that the younger brothers and sisters have grown up and become strong, the elder brother wants to take care of his own wounds and hurts. The younger brothers and sisters must gratefully agree, and in turn support the elder brother.

May the United Reformed Church with its vision of unity in mission continue to be a blessing to the nations!

Yours in Christ's service,

Dr Preman Niles, General Secretary

Appendix 2

Belonging to the World Church

The Need

For centuries Christians from this country took the gospel to foreign lands. Today the striking missionary challenge is to present the gospel confidently and meaningfully here. Many of our overseas partners are steeped in the tradition of being "missionary" churches. Alive and vital they display a self-confidence that is sadly lacking in much of the church in this country (witness the comments of those who have served with us from our overseas partners outside of Europe). We should be learning from them that we might rediscover our missionary calling and, interpreting what we find, seek fresh approaches to God's mission here. We need to be challenged by our Christian sisters and brothers from other cultures on attitudes that we take from society which are not gospel or Kingdom values and which hinder our mission. At very least, we should allow their enthusiasm, commitment, courage and vision to inspire us and energise our sense of purpose.

Alongside this is another contemporary challenge – globalisation. The church being both global and local is uniquely placed to speak to this phenomenon. The increased control of wealth and power across the world by a few individuals and large corporations needs challenging, most especially where the needs of people are ignored and the environment is mercilessly exploited. Working with our church partners, sharing stories and experiences, we can make connections and begin to try and understand the forces that are at work behind the term "globalisation". As the Christian community, we too can be global players, but we need to learn from one another and to work much more closely together. Our world church partnerships make this possible.

For both these reasons we need to raise our awareness of the world church so that we might

- stretch the imagination and vision of people in the URC by exposing them to churches whose life, witness and circumstances whilst markedly different from ours, offer much to be learned about being the church engaged in God's mission today
- take seriously the global challenges facing us and find ways of responding together as Christians called to care for God's world.

The Vision

God's purposes are global. They encompass the world, seeking to bring healing to the nations, reconciliation and peace with justice. They speak to our sin and failure, offering love and forgiveness; liberation from the past and new opportunities for tomorrow. They offer a vision of wholeness, of shalom – people at one with God, with each other and with the creation. They call us into partnership, to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Each generation has to make these purposes their own. To see in the signs of the times where God's mission lies for them. To interpret afresh Jesus' understanding of the kingdom and in their own words and actions to witness to these things that others might believe and share in the new life they offer.

The fruits of previous generations' missionary activity provide the foundations for our response to today's challenges. Partnerships transcending the world enable us to think and act globally; to make connections; to link local and international experience; to learn from and share with one another; to challenge others and to be renewed ourselves.

We live in a global culture. Our cities are international centres with communities drawn from many ethnic groups, cultures and faiths. Our rural communities now compete with rural communities across the world for markets which not so long ago could have been taken as granted as theirs. Around the world we are partners in God's mission with churches whose own life reflects the individual strands of the multifaceted society in which we minister. Together we face the common challenge of a global economy and global news and entertainment media. Working together and learning from one another we can gain the perspective and form the networks that help us understand God's purposes in this age and enable us to proclaim and live a gospel that speaks to our time.

The action

The 1998 General Assembly, receiving the above statement encouraged the Ecumenical Committee to implement an exciting set of programmes grouped together under the heading *Belonging to the World Church*.

The programmes are all intended to build into the life and witness of the United Reformed Church a new awareness of belonging to the world church so that we might better fulfil our calling to be witnesses to the ends of the earth, partners in God's mission responding to the challenges of today.

Briefly the principal programmes are:

1. Overseas Training Opportunities for Ordinands and CRCWs

On a reciprocal basis offering everyone training for the ministry or to be a church-related community worker the opportunity to spend two months learning and working with one of our CWM partners outside Europe.

2. **Lay Training Opportunities**

Seeking to enrich the whole life of the church through our world church partnerships we will initiate with CWM events that bring together lay people from the URC and our partner churches to learn from one another and experience at first hand the richness and variety of the world church.

3. **Opportunities for Young People and Children**

Working with FURY we will develop opportunities for young people in the United Reformed Church to learn from the world church. Through the appointment of a Pilots Development Officer new opportunities will be opened up for children to understand that they belong to a world-wide community committed to work together in partnership in God's mission.

4. **Visiting Speakers**

Each year we will invite visitors for each province from our partners outside Europe to pursue a programme of mutual learning. They will learn about us and we will hear their stories of how the church is engaged in mission where they come from. Their visit will conclude with an opportunity to hear our visitors' observations on the life of church and society in Britain.

5. **In-service Training Opportunities**

Opportunities and incentives will be developed to encourage those already working for the church to learn from our overseas partners.

6. **Research Fellowships**

We hope to develop a research fellowship in each of our theological colleges for the study of an aspect of contemporary UK church life in the world context, with a view to developing our understanding and practice of mission here.

In addition we will develop and modify existing work, partnerships and programmes in line with the overall objectives of *Belonging to the World Church*, encouraging every opportunity for mutual learning, enrichment and support as Christians and churches working together we go about God's mission in the world today.

- 3 The resources of the church for mission activity are three-fold, primarily people, then funds, then buildings. (This paper cannot deal with the matter of church buildings.)

We can look to a **range of human resources**:

regular ordained ministers, many of whom are experienced in community work of one kind or another; with new patterns of continuing ministerial education, many more ministers will have the chance to acquire skills in this area.

ministers in 'special category' posts, with specialist work, in demanding locations or within institutions; such ministries are sometimes resented as being a distraction from the 'real ministry' in the local pastorate but this experience must be seen as a valuable resource.

Church Related Community Workers, self-evidently a primary resource for any developing strategy of church and community engagement; as well as those in post there are several others whom we have not used since they ceased to be in post, even though considerable sums have been spent on their training.

professional people in our churches, qualified professionals in relevant fields (community work, education, politics, social sciences, finance, building, administration, etc.) are often available to help; we often fail to acknowledge them and their work as part of God's mission in the world today.

other people with time in today's world, the most precious gift of all to offer.

- 4 What gives this discussion its edge and thrust is, of course, the **prospect of new funding**. This is primarily down to the Council for World Mission and their challenge to us, though it must first be noted that the **basic reserve funds** of the United Reformed Church have been growing and that **grants made from Assembly funds** each year to local projects already exceed £100k. Thus it is not simply the 'new money' which has sparked off new thinking for there has been growing scope for funding of new work in recent years; but the CWM *challenge* (to concentrate on mission in our own land) has jolted and spurred us.

Incidentally, existing small grants from CWM will be maintained: we may apply for two 'special grants' of up to £25k each year and also press the case for 'ecumenical grants' which are made to other bodies and organisations (e.g. we supported recent applications from the Churches Commission for Racial Justice and Jubilee 2000).

The substantial CWM-related funds which are becoming available to the United Reformed Church, directly or indirectly, fall under several heads as described in paragraph 8. To be able to contemplate this level of funding for

new work is indeed a **God-given opportunity** which we simply dare not waste. No other mainstream church in Britain is currently able to contemplate such new expenditure.

- 5.1 The specific proposal which affects the national church is for an enabling programme (see 6.3) to be managed by a new staff member, a **Secretary for Church and Community**. But it must be stressed that the proposal must be evaluated by the intended impact on **local** churches, with actions and events at Provincial and District levels intended towards that basic aim.

There is a proposal (8.6) which could transform the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee into a Mission Committee. That committee might have two associated senior staff Secretaries, one of whom would concentrate on evangelism and one on Church and Community. That structural change would assist the implementation of this staffing proposal but is not a necessary precondition.

- 5.2 It makes no sense to change the present arrangement for the **CRCW programme** which should continue as the responsibility of the **Ministries Committee** which deals with persons and personnel policy. The professional handling of CRCWs (recruitment, assessment, support, etc.) by Ministries Committee affirms the status of CRCWs in the ministry of the church.

There should continue to be a staff post (currently known as 'CRCW Development Worker') primarily directed to the overall management and support of the CRCW programme. The current job description is already being modified and could tolerate further adjustment if the suggestion for an additional post is accepted.

- 5.3 The **additional post** linked to the Church and Community Subcommittee would have responsibility for:

- ◆ overall policy development in church and community work;
- ◆ implementing the 'enabling programme';
- ◆ promoting research and exchange of information, ideas, etc. among local churches and other Councils;
- ◆ submitting applications to CWM .

Such a staff member would clearly need to work in close partnership with the staff of Ministries, Training and other Assembly Committees and with the Provinces. Reciprocally, the CRCW Development Worker, based within Ministries, would be a member of the Church and Community Subcommittee which would also have representation from other relevant Committees. The CRCW Development Worker's job description would complement the Mission Committee's Secretary for Church and Community.

- 5.4 The principal means of implementing any overall commitment in a new URC mission strategy which committed us to reach out more pro-actively into the community would be an **annual enabling programme**, co-ordinated nationally but delivered at local, District and Provincial 'level', including at least these elements:
- 5.4.1 There should be additional specific training opportunities in community work to existing ministers and leaders at £5k + per Province, no less than ten persons to benefit each year. (£75k pa) These might well be provided by one or more specialist bodies contracted to serve the whole church. Some of these opportunities might be overseas or involve overseas personnel, through the complementary 'Belonging to the World Church' programme.
- 5.4.2 There should be major consultations, one per Province per year, on church and community involvement, (£13k pa). Here would be addressed such topics as criteria for good projects, applying for funds, making cross-community partnerships, coping with criticism, etc.
- 5.4.3 It would be helpful if, across each Province, there were some opportunities to share these ideas and information imaginatively in each District, to revisit earlier proposals which never went anywhere, to identify churches with proposals for consideration under 5.4.4 below. The national staff could assist and arrange funding but could not organise District events directly. (£25k? pa)
- 5.4.4 There will be the task of compiling a short list of possible applications for funding through the 'Self-Support Fund' of CWM. The Secretary for Church and Community would collect and monitor these against agreed criteria to ensure balance across the list and might also be able to advise on general fund-raising strategies appropriate to shortlisted projects in collaboration with Provinces.

The Secretary for Church and Community would need to liaise widely to ensure that best use is taken of ecumenical options throughout this enabling programme.

- 5.5 Fairly soon, Mission Council should commission fresh **independent research** into what community work is being done in our churches, what form it takes and how effective it is. This would be done by a statistical survey and a supplementary qualitative survey and might take six – nine months.

A short report made to General Assembly in 1994 following research done into local church community involvement is available from Church and Society, as is a longer version of this paper.

Having reviewed the current mood of the church, the context and the theological imperative for community work as mission, and the fresh opportunity to deploy some new money, these proposals could form a key element in the new mission strategy being developed for the United Reformed Church into our second 25 years.

Appendix 4

CWM's Self Support Fund

This fund arose out of a desire to place the control of some additional financial resources under the control of each member church. It was decided by the Council that churches should be encouraged to provide for some of their own financial needs rather than rely on grants from abroad.

However it was also recognised that all member churches should learn to be receivers as well as givers. Therefore the Fund (£7.5m) was apportioned between the member churches using a formula that took account of the relative economic strength of the country, the size of the church and the number of sovereign nations in which the church was set.

The amount allocated to the URC under this formula is £366,043. This does not have to be spent on a single project and all applications will be assessed by CWM before funds are released.

The Self-Support Fund is for projects that

- ◆ represent the church's long-term strategy to become self sufficient;
- ◆ can support the church's mission priorities;
- ◆ are economically viable and sustainable, taking into account the country's economic situation and showing good business practice;
- ◆ will generate profits in the short and medium term;
- ◆ use safe investment options;
- ◆ create jobs, especially for unemployed people in the church;
- ◆ will increase the member church's contribution to CWM's common pool of funds

Appendix 5

Recommendations

1. Mission Council commends the **Five Marks of Mission** (3.10) to the councils and committees of the Church as a standard against which to assess all their plans and activities.
2. Mission Council acknowledges the programmes already agreed for Belonging to the World Church, local leadership, ministerial appraisal, continuing ministerial education, ecumenism, commitment for life, Jubilee 2000, and multi-racial multi-cultural work as essential ingredients within its strategy for mission, and offers prayerful encouragement to those working on them.
3. Mission Council welcomes the appointment of a new Pilots Development Officer and encourages her, with the Pilots Panel, to plan the growth and development of pilots as an essential part of the strategy for mission with children.
4. Mission Council accepts the affirmation in para 6.4 that new work is required to encourage a deliberate engagement between local churches and their committees.
5. Mission Council agrees to recommend to General Assembly that the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee be renamed the Mission Committee (or something!). It asks the present Committee to draw up a revised remit and way of working which take particular account of paragraphs 6.3, 6.4, 8.7 and Appendix 3.
6. Mission Council offers encouragement to the task groups on the grouping of churches and on small churches, and asks them to continue their work and report in the context of the strategy for mission. In particular the task group on the grouping of churches should look at the issue raised in paragraph 6.5.

7. Mission Council asks district councils to continue to challenge and to support local churches as they address the question in paragraph 6.6.
8. Mission Council asks the Training Committee to review current arrangements for elders' training and to present proposals for a systematic programme (7.1)
9. Mission Council asks the Ministries Committee to conduct a review of the non-stipendiary ministry and to make appropriate recommendations which may serve the mission strategy (7.3).
10. Mission Council asks the Finance Committee, in association with the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee, to consider how the element of financial subsidy might be better used to support mission rather than maintenance (8.4), and to report.
11. Mission Council asks its Resource Planning Advisory Group to consult and to advise on how the resources identified in paragraph 8.5 might be used to finance the mission strategy, initially over a 3 year period to 2001.
12. Mission Council agrees to set up a group to suggest appropriate ways for the United Reformed Church to use its allocation from the CWM Self-Support Fund, (Appendix 4) within the context of the mission strategy.
13. Mission Council agrees to forward the report "Growing Up" (amended in the light of discussion) to the Council for World Mission as a first statement of its mission strategy.
14. Mission Council agrees to send copies of the report "Growing Up" to each district council and to invite comment and suggestion by (an agreed date).

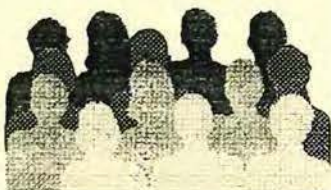


MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

B

**church related
community work
in the
united reformed
church**

**a report
to mission council**



CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORK IN THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Contents

The recommendations

The report

- 1. The brief and its changing focus**
- 2. Affirming the work of CRCWs**
- 3. Models of Church Related Community Work**
- 4. Theology**
- 5. A strategy and recommendations**
- 6. Managing the strategy**
- 7. Other matters**

The appendices

- A. The accreditation of a CRCW post and commissioning of a CRCW**
 - B. The process for candidating, training, placing and commissioning of CRCWs**
 - C. Eligibility of Community Workers from other churches.**
-

Graham Cook

and

Bob Day

The Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. The United Reformed Church take into the mainstream of its life the theology and practice of Diaconal ministry which hitherto has largely been pioneered by CRCWs and the churches-in-community in which they have served. (5.3)
2. We begin to implement a policy which would devolve the management of the CRCW programme from the centre to the Provinces and Districts. (5.4)
3. That it become our policy to aim for an establishment of 30 CRCWs, with at least two being in each Province. (5.5 and 5.11)
4. That CRCWs should be integrated into the system which applies to all Stipendiary Ministers amongst us, including the terms and conditions laid out in the Plan for Partnership. (5.12)
5. That during the period of office the new Development Worker sit with the Moderators Meeting when CRCW vacancies are being considered. (5.13)
6. That the processes for accrediting CRCW Posts, the candidating, training, placing and commissioning of CRCWs as set out in appendices A and B to this report, be accepted as the policy of the United Reformed Church. (5.14)
7. That the CRCWs share both in the development of Provincial Missionary Strategies and in the promotion of Church Related Community Work in the District and Province in which they are situated, and that their job descriptions make allowance for this. (5.15)
8. That full time training continues at Manchester through the Faith in Living Course, and that the delivery and development of this training be overseen by the Development Worker. (5.17)
9. That the Training Budget of the United Reformed Church continues to finance the provision of specialist Community Work tuition on this course. (5.18)
10. That the part time training option be continued and developed; that suitable candidates be encouraged to undertake a Youth and Community Work Training Course locally whilst beginning the Faith in Living Course on a part time basis, with a local community work placement. In such cases the commissioning should take place at the end of the third year of training, with the requirement that the Faith in Living Course be completed by In Service Training during the fourth year. (5.19)
11. That the training of CRCWs should include some recognition of the wider role of advocacy and the development of missionary strategy in District and Province. (5.20)
12. That consideration be given to Ordinands being required to take the Community Work module as part of their training for ministry. (5.21)

13. That Provinces set up a structure whereby regular supportive relationships may be maintained with local churches-in-community and with participants. (5.22)

14. That the United Reformed Church gives consideration to the appointment of not one, but two, persons: the CRCW Development Worker for a period of up to five years, and a second post the designation of which would need to be agreed by Mission Council within is consideration of a total strategy for mission. (6.4)

15. That a properly resourced survey be undertaken into 'para ministries' being exercised within the United Reformed Church and recommendations be made as to their recognition and training. (7.2)

1.

The Brief and its changing focus from Church Related Community Workers to Church Related Community Work

- 1.1. This Review was set up in April 1997 with a team of only two members.
- 1.2. The original brief was to consider:
 - ◆ the mission of the whole church
 - ◆ the development and recognition of Diaconal ministry
 - ◆ the relationship between the CRCW programme and other community work in the URC
 - ◆ the relationship of the CRCW programme to similar programmes in other denominations.
- 1.3. In particular recommendations were called for relating to:
 - ◆ the need for and the future role of a development worker
 - ◆ the selection and training of CRCWs
 - ◆ the recognition of 'non-stipendiary' CRCWs
 - ◆ the accreditation of workers from other denominations
 - ◆ the management of the CRCW programme
 - ◆ the funding of the CRCW programme.
- 1.4. Although the original hope was that the team could report to the Mission Council by January 1998, it was soon recognised that such a small team with such a large brief could not complete the task in the suggested time scale. It was agreed that the report should be ready by August 1998 with a view to reporting to Mission Council in October 1998.
- 1.5. However there was one urgent issue. With the impending end of contract for the then Development Worker, Graham Ghaleb, a recommendation as to the future of the post was required so that a decision as to the continuance of the post could be made early in 1998.
- 1.6. In November 1997 we recommended that the post be renewed for 'at least another five year period'. The reasons we gave were:
 - ◆ Many of the churches and projects currently involved with CRCW's are struggling and need continuing support.
 - ◆ Provinces, Districts and local churches have had little training and there is a major task to be undertaken in this regard. This is particularly true if the programme is ever to be devolved to the Provinces in future.

- ♦ There is a need to develop employment practice and give an overview of terms and conditions.
 - ♦ There is a large and increasing number of enquiries about setting up new projects.
 - ♦ Churches and support groups need training.
 - ♦ Whatever the outcome of our review, any changes will require long term supervision.
 - ♦ There is an important role to be played by the Development Worker in the current training of CRCWs.
- 1.7 The Staffing Review Group meeting on 15th January 1998 agreed to recommend to Mission Council that the post be approved for a further five years. It was also agreed to propose that the task be broadened to a concern for **Church Related Community Work**, with special responsibility for the oversight of the CRCW programme, the development of more local management structure, and with planning for a transfer of responsibility from the centre to the Provinces and advocacy of the vocation of CRCW.
- 1.8 At its March meeting the Mission Council accepted the above recommendation with its subtle, but fundamental change of direction from a concentration on a limited number of Church Related Community Workers to Church Related Community Work throughout the United Reformed Church.
- 1.9 The same Mission Council gave encouragement to the ideas contained in a paper from the General Secretary which, if implemented would move the United Reformed Church towards a total strategy for mission, integrating a concern for evangelism with a care for the community. Those responsible for appointing both the new Secretary for Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness and the CRCW Development Worker were asked to bear in mind the likely development of such a comprehensive strategy and to adjust the job descriptions accordingly. From thereon we, as reviewers, had to adjust our vision to the emerging elements of this embryo strategy. This was both exciting and taxing.

2.

Affirming the work

2.1 **Context**

The ministry of Church Related Community Workers in the United Reformed Church is particularly valued by other agencies and people in the community for the following reasons:

- ♦ The stability of five year contracts affirms the need for a holistic approach that builds across a long time scale. This type of appointment is becoming rarer in the voluntary sector but is essential for the continuity of community work,
- ♦ This gives time for thorough evaluation of the lack of community facilities and an exploration of local issues. It also provides for the need to rebuild structures which are new and appropriate.

- ♦ Church Related Community Workers have a freedom to speak which can challenge people and structures. This is not always available to those working in the statutory sector.
- ♦ This is linked with the ability to act as an honest broker and to encourage people to look wider and share resources in partnership,
- ♦ The capacity to work across 'boundaries' is crucial and allows for some integration in complex situations of conflict. It allows for some flexibility in defining the community and people with whom they work which is not often possible for other workers.
- ♦ The lack of defined targets to meet helps to promote work which is more creative and permits different styles of engagement.
- ♦ This ministry also demonstrates its usefulness in providing a strong witness to the context and illustrates new models of being a team. Work with a wide variety of 'partners' is a particular strength.
- ♦ The persistence of a church presence and of a worshipping congregation often opens access to resources of people, buildings, money and knowledge for the local community and for the church. This enables the rebuilding and development of local church links with the community, taking into account the history of church/community relationships.

2.2 It is clear that the programme is highly regarded ecumenically, Members from other denominations serve on the Central Management Committee and are committed to the growth, development and quality of the programme. Locally many of the CRCW situations have an ecumenical management committee and are committed to work with a wide variety of denominations as well as groups from other faith communities. The United Reformed Church is the only denomination which has accepted CRCW as a ministry. The inclusive nature of the work is to be commended although further ecumenical work is required.

2.3 Church Related Community Workers have been called to work in inner-city areas and run down council estates on the outskirts of cities, where social and economic problems tend to be most severe. This reflects the church's commitment to people who are forced by poverty, discrimination or oppression to live on the margins of society.

The breadth and depth of this ministry in opening up and tackling issues at a local level in partnership with other groups and agencies is impressive. The CRCW Annual report records the great variety of projects and issues undertaken in each situation and makes interesting reading. A summary of the work is as follows:

- ♦ Working with council tenants, helping them contribute to plans for the regeneration of their community.
- ♦ Working with local people to develop community resources, including credit unions, a health centre, community businesses, self-help groups, community newspapers, and community festivals.
- ♦ Working with community groups to challenge local and central government and other powerful institutions over issues affecting the life of their community.

- ♦ Working with churches to help them develop their mission in partnership with the community and to consider new ways of being the church.

Particular local projects and initiatives include:

Summer play schemes	Girls groups
Residential team building week-end	Mental health group
Play group	Women's festival
Community fun day	Employing workers
Building developments	Supervising community workers
Serving on management committees	Youth work advocacy
Establishing a community association	Shopping precinct development
Developing a church youth club	Youth football project
Community consultations	New evening congregation
Community meal	Food co-op
Sports drop in	Good neighbour scheme
Redevelopment of church community centre	Social housing project
Homestart scheme	Researching communities
Learning and studying	Home-working project
Crime actions group	Racial incidents group
Urban detached youth work project	Partnership council for regeneration
Health centre development	Health and exercise group
Community park and garden	Designing play equipment
Community Development Forum	Tenant participation group
Residents Association	Local history booklet
Training with residents	Community Trust
Teaching CRCW	Art and pottery workshops
Working with social services	Dance and relaxation groups

This list does not cover the many meetings required to develop a group response to local issues. Relationship building and networking are also key tasks in forwarding this style of community work.

- 2.4 The CRCWs are also involved in the wider church structures and committees and bring a challenging dimension to the church's work and witness. The work done in encouraging and developing other churches in the District to engage with CRCW is also to be welcomed. Greater affirmation of this ministry would occur if churches and ordained ministers took time to understand and acknowledge the value of this work in terms of the Kingdom.

3.

Models of Church Related Community Work engaged in by CRCWs

In practice a wide variety of models have been developed. These depend on context and the skills and interests of particular workers. They often overlap. The models described by CRCWs at their Strategy Conference are not fully formed and the appropriateness and effectiveness of each model needs ongoing evaluation. The principles of the CRCW Covenant are a guide to good practice.

3.1 Community Development: CRCW as an organiser

The organiser is part of the process of understanding the context and building up of acceptance and trust in the church and community by working with groups to develop strategies. The task is seen as helping to kick start projects and supporting the work while also establishing a clear exit strategy. The church, often in an inner city area, changes by death of its members and through developing new ideas. There can be a care taking, key holding, and property steward role for the CRCW especially where local membership is weak.

3.2 Community development: where there is no link with the church,

In these situations there is much rejection and pain. The church is perceived as having failed people (often because of 'personalities'). Conflict resolution and healing the church-community relationships is a major part of the work.

3.3 Non-building based work with community groups

The occurs by invitation from those who are marginalised. It is often with those people who miss out and are casualties of the structures. This is, in theory, a team response and so should try draw on the strengths and resources of others. There is a need to look at the bigger picture and struggle together.

3.4 A process which can start at any point.

Research, exploring, responding, participation, involvement, negotiation.

3.5 Community development in the wider community in partnership with agencies.

There is no real ownership of work related to the church. This model views the church as a community group that also needs to be worked with. It explores and enables shifts of power and change in the church and tries to avoid community dependency.

3.6 Community work 'social entrepreneur'.

The church is enthusiastically involved. The CRCW works in partnership with the minister and together they try to find new horizons and wider perspectives. This brings the church and community (and sometimes business) together in projects and seeks for common explanations and dialogue. Discipleship expressed in this way is very exciting and is always looking for more demanding and adventurous opportunities to enhance the life and well being of the community as a whole.

3.7 **Ministry as space to be with people.**

This is a 'process' which is not necessarily task orientated. It affirms people in their activities. CRCW as a 'mission enabler'.

3.8 **Broad based organising**

In some areas of the country churches are being invited to participate in this new way of community organising which was developed in the USA. There are at the moment six schemes of this kind.

4.

Theology

The theological basis of the work is an understanding of mission as responding to a God who is already actively involved in the world. It is contextual in nature and needs to be worked out with local people.

- 4.1 The main difficulty is in overcoming the separation between church and community. Many church people still conceive of 'God in the church' and this becomes the focus of their life of faith. It is hard for them to talk about 'God in the world' as they are bound up with a theology of survival. Through their activity in the community the CRCWs illustrate the need for dialogue between these differing points of view.
- 4.2 One CRCW comments, 'As I don't work directly with the church I LISTEN to the community. I value people's experiences and respond to their questions by encouraging the telling of stories and the development of spirituality in a community context.' This has the potential for people to offer fresh ideas to the church about the need for relevance and to conceive of new ways of being the church.
- 4.3 This depends upon the church being able to hear God's Good News from the community. It involves the building of community in church and neighbourhoods through a commitment to mission as ACTION based on justice and love for neighbour.
- 4.4 The inclusive nature of God in both church and world leads naturally to a theology of DIGNITY in which all are valued as God's people. Everyone has a contribution to make as part of the Body. This challenges the church to follow and participate in the Jesus manifesto of Luke 4. This, together with the Isaiah vision, gives glimpses of the Kingdom in which all can be actively involved by taking responsibility for their actions and the structures they have helped to create. This is a challenge to transformation.
- 4.5 'Helping people to do business with God', is more than giving people a vocabulary and exploring spirituality. It has links with the bigger story of Jesus and with God's activity in the world. Stories of faith and the gospel interweave with the stories of struggle and celebration in people's lives. These need to be taken seriously for people to grasp what it means to be fully human.
- 4.6 This leads to a definition of mission as fulfilling human potential. In many ways this happens all the time but it is not always named in the small things. The connectedness of the life-giving nature of God in the whole of creation needs to be affirmed.

- 4.7 This leads of a REVALUING of people and ministry. Ways need to be found for all God's people to feel creatively empowered in collaborating in the health and well being of the whole of society.
- 4.8 Sadly we find it hard to work with each other in this way as we do not recognise our common values and ideas. This method of working requires the development of an open theology of team and ministry.
- 4.9 A theology of SERVICE is still valuable as long as the dangers of being paternalistic are recognised and dealt with by accepting and valuing the gifts of everyone. This requires the church to let go of its controlling role and work mutually and responsibly with others. Theological tensions in churches can prejudice and devalue this style of ministry. These tensions need to be addressed if a positive and creative environment for mission is to be achieved.

5.

A strategy: with recommendations

- 5.1 If we are to take seriously the consensus growing amongst us that we need to have a comprehensive strategy for mission which integrates an expression of God's concern for the whole community with a requirement to go on telling the story of God's saving love offered in Christ, then part of that strategy requires an acceptance of this sort of understanding (as set out in the previous sections 2, 3 and 4) which has been worked out, tried and tested, by the Church Related Community Workers as they have gone about their task on behalf of us all over the past years. The whole church needs to learn what they have discovered and to own it as part of our missionary strategy.
- 5.2 The United Reformed Church should take delight in the work and the witness of the CRCWs and the churches-in-community over the years. This has been a pioneering piece of work on behalf of the whole Church of God. We are the only church which has accepted CRCWs as a ministry. In the exercise of this ministry we have discovered something of the purposes of God. We need now to own both this ministry and the understandings on which it based more widely within the United Reformed Church and beyond.
- 5.3 Our central recommendation, on which all others are based, is that **now is the time for us to take into the mainstream of our church's life the theology and the practice of Diaconal ministry which hitherto has largely been pioneered by CRCWs on the frontiers of our engagement between churches and the communities in which they are set.**
Although they are by no means the only ones, (as will be seen later in this report), the CRCWs and the churches-in-community in which they have served, have demonstrated an understanding and style of ministry which should be one of the hallmarks of all our churches.

- 5.4 If such a recommendation is to be taken seriously then moves must begin to **devolve the management of this programme from the centre to the Provinces and the Districts**. There is always a relationship between ownership and acceptance and while the management of this programme remains a centralised function, largely separated from the structures within which most of our ministry is exercised : i.e. Province and District, it will remain misunderstood, unaccepted and marginal.
- 5.5 We have to report that one the key decisions which has brought the CRCW programme to such a state of readiness was the decision to establish the Development Worker post in 1992. The post was established with the following objectives:
- ◆ To establish 'Covenant' agreements for all posts.
 - ◆ To develop the programme through more effective local management.
 - ◆ To establish clearer lines of accountability for workers.
 - ◆ To increase the size of the programme.
- 5.6 As a result of this appointment:
- ◆ A mission strategy has been established.
 - ◆ There are now Covenant agreements for all posts.
 - ◆ There are six new accredited posts.
 - ◆ Twenty churches have been advised on the development of their work in the community.
 - ◆ There has been a net increase in the numbers of workers in post from 7 to 10.
 - ◆ Counselling and support has been given to twenty enquirers exploring a vocation to this ministry.
 - ◆ A review system for posts has been established.
 - ◆ There is a regular reporting system for workers and local management committees.
 - ◆ Support has been given to workers and local management committees.
 - ◆ The profile of the programme has been raised, through Reform, Assembly, Mission Council, provincial Synods and District Council.
 - ◆ An Annual report has been produced along with publicity and display material.
 - ◆ Liaison and support has been given, first to Salford Urban Mission, and more recently to the Manchester Christian Institute which has since become the training base for the programme.
 - ◆ Links have been established with and maintained with secular community work organisations and ecumenical bodies such as the Churches Community Work Alliance.
 - ◆ Identification of key issues for the development of the programme such as the accreditation of workers from other denominations and the need for recognition of 'non-stipendiary' "Church Related Community Workers".

- 5.7 The decision has already been made to appoint a Development Worker for a further five years. One of the main objectives of that worker will be to work with the Provinces to devise a plan for the devolution of the programme to the Provinces.
- 5.8 If the programme is as credible and as prophetic as we believe it to be and its insights, style and understanding are to be more widely shared then one of the keys must be **an increase in the size of the programme**. We need more CRCWs and we need them to be more evenly distributed amongst the Provinces. There are some Provinces where there are currently neither workers nor posts.
- 5.9 At the time of writing there are 10 CRCWs in post. There are a further 5 accredited CRCWs not in post. There are 3 in training with a further 2 or 3 beginning their training in the Autumn of 1998. So far there are two candidates who expect to start their training in 1999.
- 5.10 There are now 10 posts filled, there are three declared vacancies, 4 churches-in-community seeking accreditation and a further 9 churches working on a CRCW application.
- 5.11 Given these figures it should be comparatively easy to double the size of the programme from 10 to 20. It should not be beyond the bounds of possibility to increase the number to 30. **It is our recommendation that it become our policy aim for an establishment of 30 CRCWs with at least two being in each Province.**
- 5.12 As part of the process of devolving the programme to the Provinces and in order to give due recognition to CRCWs as a Stipendiary Ministry amongst us, (recognising, at the same time, that as far as local churches are concerned they will have a semi-detached, or even detached role) **the CRCWs should be integrated into the system which applies to all Stipendiary Ministers amongst us**.

This will include:

- ♦ The assessment of the call to ministry, using the same process of national assessment as applies to Ministers.
 - ♦ Their training (see below at 5.16 - 5.20) and support during training.
 - ♦ Their call to their first appointment i.e. interviewed by Moderators near the end of their training, write their own CV, introduced to a prospective vacancy by the Moderators, accepting, or rejecting such a vacancy.
 - ♦ Vacancies appearing on the Moderators lists along with ministerial vacancies, and circulated to all CRCWs on a monthly basis.
 - ♦ Their inclusion in the terms of the 'Plan for Partnership'
- 5.13 **It may be that during the period of office of the new Development Worker he/she will need to sit in on the Moderators' Meeting when CRCW vacancies are being considered.**

- 5.14 Not only should the workers be integrated into the mainline system of the United Reformed Church, so should the process of approving and accrediting posts. A great deal of work has already been done on this and papers relating to this appear in this report as appendices B , C and D. **It is our recommendation that these be accepted as policy.**
- 5.15 **We recommend that CRCWs share in both the development of Provincial Missionary Strategy and the promotion of Church Related Community Work in the District and Province in which they are situated. Their job descriptions should make allowance for this.**
- 5.16 Full time training of CRCWs has, until recently, been provided by Manchester Christian Institute under the general oversight of the Development Worker with specialist tuition being bought in by Manchester Christian Institute (funded by the Training budget of the United Reformed Church). Under the reorganisation of theological training in Manchester the Manchester Christian Institute has disappeared and the work of training CRCWs has been taken over by the Northern College, Manchester.
- 5.17 **We recommend that full time training continue at Manchester through the Faith in Living Course, and that the delivery and development of this training be overseen by the Development Worker.**
- 5.18 **We recommend that the United Reformed Church Training Budget continue to finance the provision of specialist Community Work tuition on this course.**
- 5.19 **We recommend that the part-time option be continued and developed. That is that suitable candidates be encouraged to do a Youth and Community Work Course locally whilst beginning the Faith in Living Course on a part time basis, with a local Community Work placement. In such cases the commissioning should take place at the end of the third year, with the requirement that the Faith in Living Course be completed by In Service training in the fourth year.**
- 5.20 **We recommend that the training of CRCWs should include some recognition of the wider role we are recommending for them, of advocacy and missionary strategy in Districts and Provinces.**
- 5.21 **We recommend that consideration be given to Ordinands being required to take the Community Work Module as part of their training for ministry.**
- 5.22 **We recommend that Provinces set up a process whereby regular supportive relationships may be maintained with local churches-in-community, CRCWs and students.**

6.

Managing this strategy

- 6.1 We recognise that if policy recommended by the Mission Council at its meeting in March 1998 is to be fully implemented (i.e. a development of Church Related Community Work throughout the United Reformed Church) then considerable further work needs to be undertaken beyond that which we have described and made recommendations about in section 5. We are a little reluctant to make recommendations about this as we are aware that others have been working on this. But it does impinge more than a little on our brief and we feel that we ought to be saying something about it in this report.
- 6.2 It would be mean that someone, other than the Church Related Community Work Development Worker, needs to oversee an overall policy development, encouraging broader theological and missiological development throughout the United Reformed Church, ensuring the development of training opportunities in community work and its role in mission for local churches, Districts and Provinces and encouraging local churches to develop church related community work as a central expression of their life.
- 6.3 Such a person would need to consider how links can be forged with other forms of community ministry (see 7.2 below), and develop policies for the creation of leadership teams in 'clusters' Ministers, CRCWs, and Local Church Leaders and patterns of how such clusters might work.
- 6.4 All this means that **we recommend the appointment of not one, but two persons. One the CRCW Development Worker (already agreed by Mission Council) for a period of up to five years, and a second post whose designation needs to be agreed by Mission Council within its consideration of a total strategy for mission within the United Reformed Church**
- 6.5 Job Descriptions:

CRCW Development Worker	The 'Second Post'
1. Offer support to CRCWs in post and to local management committees as appropriate	1. Be responsible for over-all policy development of a strategy for mission within the United Reformed Church.
2. Follow up CRCW enquiries and encourage suitable people to candidate.	2. Encourage broad theological and missiological reflection within the United Reformed Church.
3. Help enquiring churches-in-community devise a clear mission strategy and encourage CRCW applications where appropriate.	Promoting maximum exchange of information, ideas, etc., among local churches and other Councils advocating this total mission strategy.
4. With the Provinces, devise a plan for the devolution of the CRCW programme to the Provinces.	4. Promoting training opportunities in Community Work and its role in mission in local churches, Districts and Provinces.
5. Devise and implement a detailed recruitment strategy with particular emphasis on the recruitment of candidates from under represented groups.	5. Implementing an annual enabling programme including training opportunities in community work and in evangelism for current ministers and leaders: an annual consultation in each Province.

6. Negotiate with Northern College and other appropriate agencies over the maintenance and development of relevant community work and theological training opportunities for potential CRCWs.	6. Ascertain other forms of community work being undertaken within the United Reformed Church and devise a strategy for integrating it into a total 'church and community' programme.
7. Advise the CRCW Management Committee (or its successor body) in its responsibilities for the assessment of local projects and placing of workers by maintaining a regular and supportive relationship with the local projects, workers and students.	7. Identifying a short list each year of possible funding through CWM grants and assisting in the preparation of applications.
8. In close liaison with the Secretary for Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness and other appropriate committee secretaries, develop and deliver a comprehensive strategy for mission in the United Reformed Church.	8. In close liaison with the Secretary for Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness, and the CRCW Development Worker and other appropriate committee secretaries, develop and deliver a comprehensive strategy for mission in the United Reformed Church and developing a programme under girding and affirming the contribution made to the realisation of the Kingdom of God by the daily work of most of our Church Members.
9. Respond imaginatively to new challenges and ways of working as shall from time to time be determined by the developing policy of the United Reformed Church.	9. Respond imaginatively to new challenges and ways of working as shall from time to time be determined by the developing policy of the United Reformed Church.

- 6.6 The other matter related to the management of the programme is where about in the total Committee structure of the United Reformed Church does this programme fit. It seems logical that it should, at least for time being, remain with the Ministries Committee. In the short term it is likely that the Ministries Committee will wish to continue to have a CRCW Management Committee as one of its subcommittees. But recognition needs to be given to the changes of role which will come about as a result of the change from being concerned only with CRCWs to being concerned with Community Work throughout the church. It also needs to be recognised that as the programme devolves more and more on to the Provinces most of the work of this subcommittee will also devolve in the same direction.
- 6.7 We are aware that there is likely to be a suggestion made to Mission Council that the existing Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee be transformed into a **Mission Committee**, with a Church and Community Subcommittee. If this suggestion was adopted as policy then further thought would need to be given as to the relationship of the Development Worker to both the Ministries Committee and the Mission Committee.

7.

Other matters

- 7.1 Part of our original brief was to consider the matter of Diaconal Ministry. During our work we have been asked to consider the possibility of non-stipendiary Church Related Community Work. We have also had drawn to our attention the existence of numbers of 'para ministries' which have grown up in response to local need in many parts of the United Reformed Church.
- 7.2 With the limited time and person power at our disposal it seemed too big a task to consider the implications of this whole matter. We did, however, undertake a simple, not to say simplistic, survey. Both because this was not a very sophisticated operation and because of the uneven response the results are not very reliable. But even this shows that there are at least 600 workers in 260 of our churches, nearly 200 of whom are paid. A high proportion of these could be described as being involved in community ministry of one description or another. It is clear that a more sophisticated and properly resourced survey should be undertaken and recommendations made as to the recognition and training of such a body of workers within our church. **We recommend that a properly resourced survey be undertaken into the 'para-ministries' being exercised within the United Reformed Church and recommendations be made as to their recognition and training.**
- 7.3 We were also asked to consider the accreditation of workers from other denominations. We discovered that Mission Council had already considered and agreed this matter. The paper covering the regulations concerning this are appended to this report as Appendix C.

Graham Cook and Bob Day

September 1998

APPENDIX A

PROCESS FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF A CRCW POST AND THE COMMISSIONING OF A CRCW

There follows a description of the process for the accreditation of a CRCW post in the most logical sequence possible. The process is often more complicated than this with steps being repeated or taken in a different order. It is unusual for the whole process to be completed in less than six months. In many cases it can take years. Some churches work their way consistently through the process, many seem to operate in bursts, and some work for a period of time on a CRCW application but eventually decide not to make a formal application.

1. Church considers possibility of developing a CRCW post
2. Church raises possibility with District Council.
3. Church asks CRCW Development Worker for information.
4. Development Worker sends information about how to establish a CRCW post and informs the CRCW Central Management Committee (a sub-committee of Ministries) of the Church's interest.
5. Elders / Church meeting discuss the idea.
6. Church invites the CRCW development worker to meet with elders / church meeting.
7. Church decides to take application further and informs District Council.
8. Church sets up a Steering Group. (This may include a representative of District Council.)
9. Steering Group works on application.
10. Steering Group meets with development worker to discuss application in some detail.
11. Steering Group produces application including:
 - * a mission statement
 - * a description of the needs of the area
 - * a Church-Related Community Worker's job description
 - * a budget for the full five year term
 - * sources of funding for non-stipend and project costs
 - * composition of local management committee (to include representatives of both church and community)
 - * information about the proposed support system for CRCW
 - * indication that the local Church will sign Covenant
12. Steering Group discusses application with church meeting to ensure Church support.
13. Church presents proposal for a CRCW to District Council and seeks its support.
14. Church seeks Provincial Support (through Provincial Executive?)

15. Application is forwarded to CRCW Central Management Committee for its consideration.
16. CRCW Central Management Committee appoints visitor to assess the application.
17. Visitor meets with Church-in-Community and recommends accreditation conditionally (see 18) or unconditionally (see 20).
18. If conditionally, Church-in-Community works on the outstanding issues (eg the raising of non-stipend costs or expanding of local job description.)
19. Once conditions have been met, the CRCW Central Management Committee and the District Council are informed.
20. Once the post is accredited unconditionally, a vacancy is declared and the Provincial Moderators are informed.
21. The Development Worker informs all accredited CRCWs (in or out of post) and students in their final year of the vacancy. [NOTE: In future this could be done through the list of Pastorate vacancies distributed with the pay slip.]
22. Interested CRCW approaches Provincial Moderator of relevant Province to express an interest in the Post.
23. Moderator informs Church-in-Community of the CRCW's interest and asks Church to send out information about the post.
24. CRCW visits Church-in-Community informally.
25. CRCW informs Provincial Moderator and local Church that s/he would like to apply formally.
26. Church-in-Community sets up formal interview. [NOTE: A representative of District should be involved in the interviewing process.]
27. The CRCW is interviewed.
28. The Church-in Community decides to appoint.
29. Church-in-Community asks for District concurrence.
30. If District concurs, CRCW appointed.
31. District informs Church House (Finance and Personnel) of proposed start date.
32. Church-in-Community informs funders of appointment and requests the release of grants.
33. Church-in-Community informs Provincial Moderator and negotiates date for commissioning service (with CRCW).
34. CRCW commissioned. The Commissioning Service will include the signing of the CRCW Covenant.
35. CRCW starts. [NOTE: The Commissioning Service will often take place after the CRCW has started.]

APPENDIX B

PROCESS FOR THE CANDIDATING, TRAINING, PLACING AND COMMISSIONING OF CRCWS

1. URC member expresses interest in Church-Related Community Work.
2. Speaks to minister of local church about this.
3. Minister encourages individual to attend Enquirers Conference.
4. Enquirer meets with CRCW Development Worker.
5. Enquirer meets with Provincial Moderator. If enquirer decides to candidate at this stage, Moderator gives her/him an application form with the relevant guidelines.
6. Enquirer decides to candidate and so completes the application form, returning it to the Provincial Candidating Secretary.
7. Candidate meets with the local church and receives the commendation of Church Meeting. Church Secretary completes a report on the candidate and his/her suitability for the CRCW ministry.
8. Provincial Candidating Secretary requests references from the minister, two personal referees and the medical referee.
9. Candidate attends a District interview. District reports on his/her suitability for the CRCW ministry.
10. Candidate attends a National Assessment Conference. Assessment Conference report is completed and sent to Province.
11. Candidate attends Provincial interview. Province takes a decision on the candidate's suitability for this ministry (with reference to the report from National Assessment Conference), including the appropriate training package.
12. The Church decides to send the candidate for training.
13. The CRCW Training Co-ordinator consults with a relevant Province or District about a suitable CRCW placement for the three years of training. This may be in the Manchester area, if the candidate chooses to move to train there, or may be within easy travelling distance of home.
14. The Training Co-ordinator and the CRCW student agree an appropriate placement with a Church-in-Community. A local supervisor and community work consultant are appointed.
15. The CRCW student starts training (in September) and starts her/his three year placement.
16. Training agency sends annual report on CRCW student to the Province.
17. At beginning of year 3 (September), CRCW student meets with Development Worker and a Provincial Moderator to discuss possible CRCW posts.

18. Moderators and Development Worker meet (October) to discuss the placement of CRCW students and the movement of other CRCWs.
19. Moderator encourages CRCW student to apply for a specific post.
20. Moderator introduces CRCW student to Church-in-Community.
21. Church-in-Community arranges for CRCW student to visit informally.
22. CRCW student indicates wish to apply formally. Church-in-Community arranges formal interview.
23. Local church in community recommends appointment of student subject to District concurrence.
24. District Council concurs and CRCW is appointed.
25. CRCW student finishes training (June/July).
26. CRCW, Church-in-Community, District Council and Provincial Moderator agree date and plan commissioning service.
27. District Council advises Church House (Finance and Personnel) of proposed start date.
28. CRCW commissioned.
29. CRCW starts work.

Graham Ghaleb
February 1998

APPENDIX C

REGULATIONS REGARDING THE ELIGIBILITY OF COMMUNITY WORKERS FROM OTHER CHURCHES TO ENTER THE URC LIST OF ACCREDITED CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS

- 1. Before a Church Related Community Worker is appointed to a project by the United Reformed Church, the District Council must satisfy itself that for one of the following reasons the CRCW concerned is eligible:**
 - a) The CRCW is on the accredited list of the URC**
 - b) the CRCW 5 have gone through the assessment process and been accepted as a candidate; and**
 - c) have satisfactorily completed the prescribed training**
 - d) the Community Worker has a Certificate of Eligibility issued by the Ministries Committee of the URC**

- 2. The Ministries Committee is empowered to issue a Certificate of Eligibility, on behalf of the Assembly, in the case of Community Workers from member churches of the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland or churches overseas which are members of the Council of World Mission or the World Alliance of Reformed Churches provided that:**
 - a) they will subscribe to the Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church;**
 - b) they are in good standing with their own denomination;**
 - c) their course of training was at least equivalent to that for Church Related Community Workers of the URC and or they have special gifts or qualifications which would be of service in the URC;**
 - d) they have understood the terms of remuneration for URC CRCWs.**

- 3. The Ministries Committee shall have the right to require further training for work with the URC before issuing a Certificate of Eligibility. Where such training is required there may be a charge on the training fund.**

- 4. In the case of Community Workers from churches other than those covered by paragraph 2, the Ministries Committee will present any proposal to issue a Certificate of Eligibility to the Assembly or Mission Council for approval.**

(see following page for application procedure)

**PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUE OF CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY TO A
COMMUNITY WORKER FROM ANOTHER CHURCH TO ENTER THE LIST OF
ACCREDITED CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS IN THE UNITED
REFORMED CHURCH**

Mission Council agreed to the issue of certificate of eligibility to community related workers from other churches so that they might be appointed to a project approved by the United Reformed Church and enter the list of accredited Church Related Community Workers of the URC.

The procedure for such a course of action shall be;

1. Initial enquiries shall be directed to the Secretary for Ministries who will send the community worker an application form
2. On receipt of the completed form the Secretary for Ministries will;
 - a) ascertain the applicant is community worker in good standing with their own denomination;
 - b) obtain other references;
 - c) confirm that previous training was equivalent to that required of Church Related Community Workers in the United Reformed Church;
 - d) confirm that the applicant's own denomination is a member of Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland Council for World Mission or World Alliance of Reformed Churches
 - e) confirm that the applicant understands the financial provision given by the URC.

In the case of c,d e above any concerns will not necessarily preclude the application going before the Accreditation Sub-Committee of the Ministries Committee. However the committee will need to be aware of any complicating factors in assessing the application.

3. If the applicant is in England, Scotland or Wales the CRCW Development Worker will be asked to arrange an interview with the applicant with a view to recommending him/her as a Church Related Community Worker in the United Reformed Church
4. In the case of overseas applications the Community Worker's present church will be asked to provide further information
5. The Accreditation Sub-Committee shall consider the completed application and may then issue Certificate of Eligibility
6. If the Community Worker's own denomination is not a member of church of Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, Council for World Mission or World Alliance of Reformed Churches; the certificate shall not be issued until the application has been approved by General Assembly or Mission Council;
7. Certificates of Eligibility are valid for three years. During that time the CRCW Development Worker is free to introduce the name of the holder of the certificate to potential projects in the United Reformed Church;
8. If an appointment is made the name of the community worker is entered onto the list of accredited Church Related Community Workers of the United Reformed Church; If after three years no appointment is made the certificate will lapse.



MISSION COUNCIL

5 - 7 October 1998

C

Procurement & Deployment of Stipendiary Ministry

Resource Planning Advisory Group

This paper refers, throughout, to procurement and deployment of stipendiary ministry only. This is the immediate task given by Mission Council. The subliminal message transmitted through the URC over the years that "No Stipendiary Ministry = No Ministry" is not accepted by RPAG and needs to be countered. RPAG clearly recognises, and encourages, the need for, and the use of, other forms of ministry throughout the URC.

Introduction

RPAG has been asked to submit clear, workable proposals for a strategy for deployment to this Mission Council. This paper seeks to fulfil its remit by providing numbers of ministers available for deployment by the URC for the next 5 years. It provides these numbers in the certain knowledge that this represents only half the picture.

This paper draws a distinction between

- ◆ **The number of stipendiary ministers PROCURED by the denomination.**
- ◆ **The means through which, and the ends to which, those ministers are DEPLOYED through the whole church.**

It is simplistic and ultimately futile to think that the provision of ministerial numbers will resolve the underlying tensions about which much has been said (and more can be found in the appendix to this report). RPAG seeks to reconcile the irreconcilable — The siren voices crying that more ministry will enable growth (despite hard evidence to support this claim) against those whose duty it is to exercise proper stewardship of our financial resources. RPAG believes that, while there are no simple answers, Mission Council needs to give a clear lead to the wider church. Specifically, it needs to refer pieces of work to the relevant standing committees.

Essentially there are three options facing the denomination in determining a sustainable number of Procured Ministers. In arriving at the recommendation RPAG has considered and costed these options.

1. Hold minister numbers constant at the present level for a defined period (five years has been suggested). This would enable claims of ministerially led growth to be tested. There are significant long term liabilities arising from this form of "ministerial inflation".
2. Allow minister numbers to track membership as at present. This means that as membership grows procurement of ministry will grow at proportionately $\frac{1}{2}$ the rate; similarly if membership declines further ministry will fall at a rate about $\frac{1}{2}$ that of the decline in membership. This middle way would, under present circumstances, entail a continuation of the present regime through which there is a modest degree of "ministerial inflation" which imposes a steadily increasing burden on congregational giving.
3. Track the changes in membership through a (more-or-less) fixed ratio. This would allow increases in ministers against growth in membership, but, more likely, would see a decline in ministers in line with the decline in membership. The emphasis would be on achieving greater clarity about mission opportunities for the same resource in real terms. Mission Council rejected this option in March 1998

Recommendation

RPAG is firmly of the opinion that Option 2 represents the sustainable way forward for the next 5 years. This option has the merit of being sustainable in terms of recruitment and affordability. On present trends it provides a steady growth in the provision of stipendiary ministry in relation to the total membership of the URC. It

proportionately increases the ministerial resource over time.

The best data available gives the following picture of stipendiary ministry.

<u>Year (beginning January 1st)</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
“Known data”						
Number on payroll at year start	692	678	663	641	641	630
Retirements	-35	-26	-34	-23	-27	-25
Unpredictable changes (average)	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7	-7
Ordinations	28	16	14	13	1	
Number on payroll at year end	678	661	634	617	584	552
“Assumed data”						
Ordinations		2	5	17	22	22
Total stipendiary ministers on payroll at year end	678	663	641	641	630	620

It must be emphasised that, like any forecast, these numbers will not apply precisely. It is impossible to predict with certainty events like death, resignation and even ordination. These are target numbers. The denomination can cope with a small variation in a year or two. There are not the funds available to cope with large long-term aberrations.

This pattern of Ministerial Procurement has considerable merit

1. It is based on (more-or-less) known data
2. The number of Procured Ministers from this analysis follows closely the trend of the last 25 years.
3. Implementation of these targets will allow paid ministerial resource steadily to increase in relation to membership at a rate believed to be sustainable.
4. There are no major departures from existing practice.

It could be said that this recommendation is not visionary — that it seeks merely to enshrine, in policy, the *status quo*; and that we should instead seek to maintain the number of ministers constant for 5 years to challenge the churches to respond through growth. This is an interesting idea which RPAG explored at length. If growth does not occur we will need to return to the previous trend line over a period of time, say 10 years, in order not to jeopardise recruitment. The cost of this risk is £7½ million in today’s money. RPAG cannot justify, or recommend, this risk to the denomination.

We currently spend over £13 million each year on stipends, National Insurance and pension contributions for stipendiary ministers. This cost is a continuing cost which is met from annual contributions by churches to the MMF — and will continue to be in the future. Although the URC has relatively substantial accumulated reserves these reserves are not big enough to meet the long-term cost of paying a significant number of stipendiary ministers in the event that churches do not to the MMF. In fact the investment from these reserves already goes to reduce the amount we have to ask churches to contribute to the MMF. So we have to consider any policy on numbers of stipendiary ministers in terms of its impact on the cost to be born by the churches. This is most easily expressed in terms of a “cost per URC member” (when discussing costs we should always think in terms of “cost per member”).

There is no precise answer to the question “What can we afford?” because the cost has to be met from future MMF contributions. Over the years we have managed to meet the cost of Option 2. The increases have not been evenly spread. Over the period 1992-94, following substantial increases in stipends, the increase in MMF targets was very large indeed. In recent years the increases have been kept down by the reduced cost of pension contributions but, despite this, some Provinces have found it difficult to cover their MMF targets.

It is RPAG’s view that it would not be wise to adopt a course that would involve a greater increase than we have been able to meet in the past. Indeed, maintaining that situation will represent a challenge for many churches.

Planning for Decline

RPAG’s role is to proclaim the consequences of the reality the denomination faces. There are many who accuse RPAG of planning for decline. This is both unfortunate and untrue because RPAG is, in many ways, simply holding up a mirror to the denomination. RPAG has examined the trends over the life of the URC and has come

to the conclusion that these trends are extremely consistent. It will take great powers of persuasion for RPAG to base its forecasting on any other trend, although it would like to be able to do so.

Mission Council lives by the notion that it can offer the URC some glimpses of a vision of growth and the reversal of present trends. At the same time it recognises that the "frontier of mission" is the local church. How can the "centre" change things to the direct advantage of local mission? Or, in other words, can local mission be "cranked up" from the "centre"? Both the "centre" and RPAG are powerless to deliver growth of the kind many aspire to. RPAG, however, is charged, firstly, with optimising the conditions under which growth can occur and, secondly, with providing resources for growth.

The locus for growth is the local church. It is from the outworking of its mission that growth is enabled or decline follows. It is also the local church which bears the responsibility for raising up new ministers and ministry. As growth takes hold in local situations, so the locally based resourcing follows. It is possible to envisage taking limited risks (in both time and money) to give growth a chance. RPAG would see this as a shared risk involving the local church/District.

Deployment

Deployment of stipendiary ministers reflects the denomination's priorities for the use of the Procured Ministry. Present practice places some in Church House, some in a variety of ministries and the majority in pastoral charge. Details of the current deployment can be found in the appendix. Assembly appointments largely determine the number of stipendiary ministers deployed in ministries other than pastoral charge. This process is under the control of Mission Council and takes priority in the allocation of people.

Pastoral charge ministry forms the (admittedly large) remainder. Allocation of these numbers between Provinces has been done through formula-based approach which seeks to recognise differing demographics, geographies, social situations, etc. in arriving at sharing fairly the available ministry. This formula-based approach has served well, and is generally the basis for any discussion between Provincial Moderators. There is also scope for flexibility.

This approach does not satisfy Provincial Moderators' pleas for more ministers in total. RPAG recognises that everyone would like more, so that more could be shared around. It is difficult to believe that churches, Districts and Provinces have rigorously assessed their mission opportunities and thus derived their ministerial requirements — including all forms of ministry, of which stipendiary ministry is one element. This is an on-going process and different Provinces are at different stages on the journey.

Implications — and other issues

The attached appendix outlines the implications of RPAG's recommendation. RPAG believes that there is substantial work for the committees of the church to do. Mission Council should not lose the opportunity to ask that the work be done. In outline the major items for consideration are;

- A review to characterise and comprehensively plan ministry in LEPs.
- A review to take account of ecumenical relationships, propose actions in crisis situations where church buildings and local mission were "life expired" and identify places where new opportunities for mission (plantings) could be explored and developed.
- Encouragement of the ethos of team working and the development of different forms of ministry.
- Development of "para-ministries" — specific, non-traditional forms of ministry for specific needs.
- A positive programme to encourage local churches to develop detailed, realistic mission strategies, including the building of membership from adherents.
- Consideration of the better use of ministers (not just NSMs) as Ministers of the District and the implications for the provision of "Interim Ministry" rather than the limited role of interim moderatorship during vacancy and grow towards a more radical view/application of sharing URC ministers.
- The urgent need to evaluate non-stipendiary ministry in the URC.
- The recent change in relationship to CWM which goes beyond its financial implications has led to a renewed awareness of both the local and global significance of the refreshment of the mission agenda in the UK. It has also released financial resources to the advantage of URC mission.
- A review of the functions and structures of the different strands of church life in light of increasing difficulty in resourcing and running some Districts.

Procurement and Deployment of Stipendiary Ministry

Appendix

Introduction

This appendix seeks to provide some background data to enable Mission Council to place the discussion about Procurement and Deployment of Stipendiary Ministry in the current context. After all we have to start from where we are.

RPAG, in advising on the way forward, has undertaken a detailed analysis of the past, reviewed the currently available resources (ministerial and financial), and looked forward five years.

Central to the evaluation of any analysis is consideration of both the following questions;

- ◆ What changes can Mission Council make that will enable growth?
- ◆ What powers does Mission Council have to make those changes?

Timetable so far

1. March 1998 Mission Council asked Ministries Committee and RPAG to bring forward proposals regarding the deployment of stipendiary ministry for discussion at the October Mission Council.
2. A discussion with Provincial Representatives on 7th May produced many insights. Two “options” were produced for further consideration. The first noted that “The cry for stability does not reflect reality. There is a need to create structures to cope with change”. The second took the form of an “Aunt Sally” in order to explore whether any benefit to the URC might be gained by “stabilising” the number of ministers for a period of five years (finances & recruitment permitting) during which the church at every level would commit itself to the development of its mission.
3. Further development took place at the meeting of RPAG on 2nd July. The second option was opposed on several grounds by some members but was considered worthy of exploration by others, notably Ministries Committee representatives. The first option reflected the view previously developed and strongly advocated by RPAG - that the URC should plan to manage (declining) resources through innovative responses. This second was further refined to reflect a) tracking of member numbers directly (a view rejected by Mission Council in March 98) or b) continuance of present trends (minister numbers declining at a slower rate than member numbers).

Background

RPAG has engaged in regular consultations with Moderators and Finance Representatives of each Province. In addition RPAG has worked closely with Ministries Committee in attempting to arrive at a consistent approach to deployment. Mission Council heard, at its meetings earlier in 1998, of some of the driving forces and confusions behind the issue of deployment. The list, although incomplete, includes;

- The number of ministers presenting for training
- The pattern of retirement of ministers
- The cost of employing ministers through the M&M fund
- The local cost of housing etc
- Provision of ministry to LEPs
- NSMs and Special Category ministers

There is a prevalent unspoken assumption that increasing the number of ministers will reverse the decline in membership. There is no evidence for this — indeed if this were the case the URC would be a rapidly growing Church because it has almost the highest ratio of ministers to members of any of the Churches in 1998 at ~153:1 (the Baptists are rather more “ministered”).

There is also a dangerous expectation that something can be done at national level to reverse the decline. This is true, but only up to a point. The prime place where growth is delivered is in the local church. The wider denomination should determine to provide the resources to enable that growth.

To repeat some well known facts, the national rate of decline in
 Membership is ~3% per year
 Ministers is half that of membership at ~1½ % per year
 Buildings is negligible

Additionally it is important to see how the number of members per church has changed over recent years (dates are as at January 1st).

<u>Percentage of churches with:</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1993</u> <u>Cumulative %</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1998</u> <u>Cumulative %</u>
Fewer than 30 members	31	31	44	44
31 — 50 members	16	47	17	61
51 — 100 members	28	75	24	85
100 — 150 members	14	89	9	94
150 — 200 members	4	93	4	98
200 + members	7	100	2	100

The number of the largest churches has fallen by more than $\frac{2}{3}$ in five years, while the number of the smallest churches has risen by more than 40%. A further indication of the change is seen in the following table;

<u>Relative size of churches by number of churches</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1998</u>
Small (0-50 members)	838	1078
Medium (51-199 members)	834	627
Large (200+ members)	99	39
Total number of churches	1771	1744

Ministers find themselves pulled in conflicting directions. They are ministering to fewer members — but those members are spread through the same number of church buildings, a total of over 1,700. The result is that many ministers spend increasing time in travel between distant places trying to hold together ageing congregations. It is not a surprise that ministerial stress is on the increase!

As a result some argue for closure of small churches on the grounds they sap resources, especially in situations where stipendiary ministry is already stretched. However, history suggests that small churches with low provision of ministry and low building maintenance costs can sustain themselves almost indefinitely. As with many apparently obvious choices the easy choice is not necessarily the right one. The URC needs to define models of ministry appropriate to those situations — perhaps borrowing from the traditions of the Churches of Christ.

There are many important difficulties and distractions in arriving at a strategy for deployment. There are complaints from Provinces that they develop strategies to cope with a deployment target, only to find that the goalposts have moved 12 months later. There are Provinces and Districts which are unwilling/unable seriously to attempt to plan for the next five years.

The issue of ministerial provision to LEPs is often relegated to the “too difficult” category — but they should be the easiest to plan as each is on a defined timescale.

There is a mistaken belief that Special Category ministers are “free” in deployment terms because they do not count towards any deployment target. While this may be current practice it would clearly be unsustainable if widespread advantage were taken of this situation.

Past attempts to derive a procurement and deployment strategy have foundered because some have been unwilling to accept and implement the, then agreed, policy — primarily because everyone would like more stipendiary ministry. Fundamental to the development of a strategy for procurement and deployment must be acceptance by the whole church of the agreed strategy. Failure to implement along agreed lines will result in differences and ensuing unhappiness leading to breakdown of the strategy.

All these issues speak to the need for

- ◆ A consistent strategy, based on sound information and analysis, which can be applied for a reasonable length

of time.

- ◆ Provinces and Districts realistically to determine a mission purpose, to plan their future ministry needs and to set about implementing those plans. Help may be needed to enable this to be done.
- ◆ An appropriate communications strategy to help the entire denomination understand the policy and the reasons for its choice.

Analysis

MEMBERSHIP

The unpalatable trend of the last 25 years is that membership has declined at ~3% per year and resulted in half the number of members of 25 years ago. The decline shows no sign of flattening out. There are voices that declare that past trends are no guide to the future — true, but RPAG will require powerful and supported arguments to advise the Mission Council that the future should be based upon a different trend. RPAG is well aware that the trend is not uniform across the country. There are variations between Provinces and within districts. Questions about why the trend has taken so strong a hold are outside the scope of this paper but include issues over which the church has some influence.

- ◆ Theology. The role of minister as theologian and teacher from within a real-life context is often overlooked in the press of daily activities. This should be corrected.
- ◆ Leadership. RPAG has long advocated a strengthening of leadership at the local level.
- ◆ Training. RPAG has supported life-long-learning and other training initiatives.
- ◆ Bringing into membership. Why do some people remain long term adherents? From where do we raise up our future stipendiary ministers?

There are other issues over which the church can wield little influence, eg. changes in social/lifestyle issues.

Accordingly RPAG's primary assumption is that membership will continue to decline at ~3% per year over the next 5 years. This is not planning for decline, but rather seeks to plan for the provision of ministry from as sound a basis as is practicable. RPAG is of the firm belief that, while this is an uncomfortable view which we are all seeking to reverse, it would be false stewardship to base forecasts on any different assumption. It is the work of but a moment to plan a different scenario, although changes of $\pm 1\%$ from this do not result in very significant differences to the resulting conclusions.

MINISTERS

To allow distillation to the essentials ministry, as discussed here, refers to stipendiary ministry. No allowance for NSMs has been made as there is a comprehensive review of this ministry underway.

At its most basic, the URC had 717 ministers of all categories on the central payroll on 1st January 1998. The denomination had chosen to allocate them as follows (all numbers are full-time equivalent and are rounded);

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Annualised Cost (£000s)</u>
Ministers in pastoral charge	650	11,732
Special Category ministry	18	325
Church House staff	12	248
Moderators & Province appointments	23	446
Others (inc CRCW & colleges)	14	263
TOTAL MINISTRY PAID FROM MoM	717	~13,000
URC ministers not paid through MoM	108	

The category of "URC ministers not paid through MoM" includes 71 who were ordained as URC ministers but have subsequently left the denomination. The remaining 37 includes posts such as Naval Chaplaincy where others pay the full cost of each particular ministry.

However an understanding of the number of ministers paid by the URC shows only part of the story. There are some 250 ministers of all denominations (including URC) providing ministry to some of our members in ecumenical situations. URC members are contributing to their stipends in a variety of ways. We cannot ignore the mutual responsibilities we have through our covenants. Our mutual commitments in LEPs could, and should, be mapped.

In terms of data gathering and analysis this should be relatively straightforward, although time consuming. The last CTE Forum agreed that the task should be done but was unwilling to take the lead. There is an opportunity for the URC to take the lead and to act as "project manager" for this. We should use external resources such as those at Llampeter University under Professor Leslie Francis.

In light of the ageing and numerical decline in membership we must be explicit in recognising that any decisions about the number of ministers in the URC's employ needs to take account of the ability of future generations of members to pay the stipend bill. Giving in to the temptation to go for a short term fix will result in a long term liability — especially if we are successful in recruiting people to ministry early in their careers. The cost to the denomination of someone entering ministry early in life is in excess of £2½ million (including inflation) over their lifetime. The acceptance of this level of commitment by the denomination is not to be undertaken lightly! The cost of this comes directly from congregation giving. In exercising stewardship we must be careful to ensure that our successors can afford to pay the bills. **RPAG's second assumption is that any deployment strategy must be sustainable over the long term.**

Sharing of ministers

Various methods of sharing have been devised, and used, over time. At the macro level they all arrive at approximately the same result in allocating ministers to Provinces. (*Pace* those who say that even a difference of 1 or 2 ministers is significant at the local level). The methodology has provided a start point for what turns into a haggle at the margins between Provinces. This has worked tolerably well, although there are cases of inequality between Provinces and resulting dissatisfaction.

1. Of more strategic relevance is the need thoroughly to probe and assess the mission opportunity for each deployment post in the long term. Flowing from this analysis at Province and District level will be the need to implement difficult decisions about opportunities which are worthy of support and those which are less meritorious. It is clear that Provinces and Districts do not all have the skills and systems in place to arrive at these decisions. There is a need for a framework against which these difficult decisions can be taken and training and support in the processes involved. RPAG is of the view that this should be provided. The overall effect will be to move decisions to the place where they are best made — the local level. In doing so there will be a need to accept responsibility at the local level. This will, at times, be uncomfortable.
2. RPAG would also like to see an exploration of the possibility of maximising the deployable ministerial force. Are there tasks currently undertaken by stipendiary ministers which could be done by lay people? It would be possible to release some 10 or more ministers if present administration functions were to be undertaken by an appropriately trained lay workforce. There would be benefits in two directions; i) release of ministers for pastorate work and ii) potential improvement in cost effectiveness of the denomination's administration activities. Clearly there would need to be safeguards to ensure the administration worked to the denomination's agenda and did not seek to build "empires".
3. A comprehensive communication plan should be developed to help the denomination understand the strategy for procurement and deployment of stipendiary ministry.

Structural Issues

1. The denomination has long prided itself on its conciliar decision making structures. These have served well and have delivered consensus based decisions over the life of the denomination and before. We are moving into an era of more rapid change and the ways the denomination makes some decisions need to be reviewed. Consensus takes a long time to build and is not sufficiently responsive to a shorter decision timescale. When combined with the reality of declining membership the resultant effect is one of increasing difficulty in filling the plethora of posts required by our structures. RPAG believes that a thorough review of structure in relation to function is required throughout the URC.
2. Part time pastorates are increasing in number but are more difficult to fill. It should be possible to allow retired ministers, who wish to, to continue to exercise ministry in these pastorates. RPAG believes there might need to be a change in the rules governing retired ministers' housing to allow more than one move after retirement.



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

D

Paragraphs 1-7 are matters of report
Paragraphs 8-11 require decision
Paragraph 12 is for information

Mission Council Advisory Group report

1. The Advisory Group has met on two occasions since the last Mission Council, implementing decisions made and preparing for this meeting.
2. Following the decision of Mission Council to set up a task group on the grouping of churches, the following people were invited and agreed to serve:

Arnold Harrison (Convener)	Yorkshire Moderator
Catherine Middleton (Secretary)	Mansfield College
Jean Bull	Church Secretary in Halifax Group
Simon Loveitt	CRCW Hulme
Brenda Stephenson	Mid-Somerset Group
Mary Wetherall	Methodist, Malvern
Chris White	East Midlands Synod Clerk
3. In March Mission Council decided that there was need for more consultation about the future use of Mansfield College. MCAG appointed the then Mission Council officers (David Jenkins and John Waller) and Elizabeth Caswell to carry out this consultation. Meetings have been held with representatives of the College and also the Congregational Federation. The three "consultants" are to be available at Church House on Wednesday, 9 December, for any groups or individuals who wish to consult them.
4. As agreed at the last meeting, a paper on Oversight Ministries has been sent to all Synod Clerks with a request that they arrange a discussion on ways in which oversight is shared between their moderators and the district councils and synod. There is to be a report back for October 1999. A letter has been received from Thames North expressing the view that the process agreed is not radical enough. The synod has been urged to participate despite its reservations.

5. There has been some delay in getting together the remaining papers on the discipline of local church officers. This matter is being pursued.
6. In 1997 Assembly asked the Ministries Committee to produce guidelines for the application of its decision on human sexuality (resolution 19) in the cases of non-stipendiary ministers. MCAG reports that these have been produced and they are being circulated to synod moderators.
7. Following the decision of both Assemblies to support the union of the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church, the Revd John Arthur (General Secretary) or his nominee has been invited to attend this meeting of Mission Council.
8. MCAG was asked to advise on the question of whether Assembly Moderators who are not ministers should automatically be made members of the synod in whose area they live, at the end of their year of office.

The point is that former Assembly Moderators remain members of Assembly for the rest of their lives. They provide a source of wisdom and experience which the Assembly is able to use in a variety of ways from time to time. Ministers who are former AMs can usually fulfil the same function in a synod. Elders who are former AMs may well not be members of a synod.

The advice of MCAG is to leave things as they stand. However the General Secretary has said that, whenever a non-ministerial Moderator is elected, he will draw to the attention of the relevant synod the possibility of co-opting the person to membership at the end of their year of office. Synods would then be left to make the decision for themselves.

9. General Assembly accepted the recommendation that the Revd A G Burnham should be re-appointed as General Secretary until 31 July 2001. MCAG now brings proposals as to how the process to appoint his successor should be conducted (Paper I).
10. At its meeting in July, General Assembly passed the following resolution:

General Assembly recognises the value of work done by small Churches and requests Mission Council to set up a Task Group to consider and report on the opportunities, challenges and difficulties which such Churches face.

General Assembly also directs synods and district councils to reflect on the unique situation of each of the churches in their area, when considering what special (financial, pastoral and other) support they need.

In response to the first part of the resolution, MCAG recommends that a task group of seven people should be appointed, with the request that they report in January 2000. The group needs to contain people with synod, district council and local experience, as well as being balanced between the urban and the rural. In view of the importance and urgency of the task, MCAG hopes to have names to suggest if Mission Council agrees with what is written above.

11. In 1997 Assembly resolved to appoint a pastoral group to help those caused distress by its resolutions on human sexuality. In its early days the group gave help in a very small number of cases. Mission Council later resolved to keep the group in being until this meeting. It has not been consulted since the 1998 Assembly, although two tentative enquires were made. MCAG believes, however, that this would be the wrong time to end the life of such a group and recommends that it continue in being at least until October 1999.
12. The dates and venues of Mission Council meetings in the next 3 years are as follows. The dates were agreed some while ago: some venues have been changed.

1999	January 23	Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh
	March 19-21	All Saints Pastoral Centre, St Albans
	October 1-3	Swanwick
2000	January 22	Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh (provisional)
	March 21-23	Swanwick
	September	
	29- October 1	Ushaw College, Durham
2001	January 20	Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh (provisional)
	March 23-25	All Saints Pastoral Centre, St Albans
	October 2-4	Swanwick

John Waller
16 September 1998



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

E

Proposal for an Advisory Group on Faith and Order

Mission Council authorises the Ecumenical Committee to set up an Advisory Group on Faith and Order, consisting of six persons, on the basis of Paper E presented to its meeting in October 1998.

Remit

To give detailed attention to Faith and Order matters arising from bi-lateral and multi-lateral talks in which the United Reformed Church is a participant and from ecumenical bodies of which the United Reformed Church is a member in order to advise the Ecumenical Committee on appropriate responses.

Composition

- Up to four people chosen for their experience and expertise. They would be appointed by the Ecumenical Committee, in consultation with the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee. They would serve, initially, for a period of four years.
- One current member of the Ecumenical Committee, appointed by that committee.
- One current member of the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee, appointed by that committee.

Staff member: the Secretary for Ecumenical Relations.

Authority

The Advisory Group would report on its work to both committees, but formal reporting would be through the Ecumenical Committee.

Frequency of meetings

Up to three non-residential meetings per year. Some work may be done by exchange of papers.

Note: the current remit of the DPW committee states its purpose b) to be
To participate in and respond to ecumenical and inter-faith discussions on doctrinal matters.

The current remit of the Ecumenical Committee sees its role as fostering ecumenical development in the life of the United Reformed Church and quotes the Basis of Union commitment to take further steps towards the unity of all God's people (para.8)

The Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee, at its meeting in July, welcomed the proposal in principle.

The Ecumenical Committee at its September meeting supported the above proposal and forwards it to October 1998 Mission Council for approval.



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

F

MISSION COUNCIL STAFFING ADVISORY GROUP

REPORT TO MISSION COUNCIL: OCTOBER 5 - 7 1998

INTRODUCTION

1. The Staffing Advisory Group [SAG] met on July 1st to consider two posts. One of these was the post of Director of the Windermere Centre, and the other was the post of URC Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant.

DIRECTOR OF THE WINDERMERE CENTRE

2. Because of the urgency of the matter it was felt that following its consideration of the future of this post SAG should issue its report and make its recommendation directly to the Assembly Officers rather than waiting until the October Mission Council. This was done and SAG's report with recommendation is annexed hereto for Mission Council members to note.

URC FINANCIAL SECRETARY and CHIEF ACCOUNTANT

3. The URC Treasurer, Mr Graham Stacy, advised SAG that the incumbent of the post of Financial Secretary, Mr Clem Frank, had indicated that he wished to retire on 30th June 2000, about 2 years earlier than his 'normal retiring age'. SAG had studied papers prepared by Mr Stacy and met with him to discuss the post, its Job Description and the way forward. The matter was considered now for reasons which Mr Stacy will explain verbally to Mission Council. All the issues were thoroughly discussed by SAG which concluded unanimously that the Post of Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant should continue in being from 1 July 2000.

4. Annexed hereto is a paper prepared by Mr Graham Stacy which sets out the position and gives an outline Job Description for the post. Mission Council is asked to note the last paragraph before the word 'Conclusion'. The precise nature of the tasks to be performed by the Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant from July 2000, and the degree of delegation to senior members of the Finance Office staff, will be given further consideration within the next 20 months.

RECOMMENDATION:

5. SAG RECOMMENDS TO MISSION COUNCIL THAT THE POST OF URC FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND CHIEF ACCOUNTANT SHOULD CONTINUE IN BEING AS FROM 1st JULY 2000. IT ASKS MISSION COUNCIL TO NOTE THAT DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR THIS POST, AND OTHERS WITHIN THE FINANCE OFFICE, WILL BE PRODUCED FOLLOWING FURTHER CONSIDERATION. SAG SUPPORTS THE URC TREASURER'S STRATEGY FOR FILLING THIS POST.

TO: OFFICERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MISSION COUNCIL STAFFING ADVISORY GROUP

REPORT TO ASSEMBLY OFFICERS

INTRODUCTION

1. The Staffing Advisory Group [SAG] met on July 1st to consider two posts. One of these was the post of Director of the Windermere Centre.

DIRECTOR OF THE WINDERMERE CENTRE

2. The incumbent of the post is Revd Peter McIntosh who completes a 5-year term of service on 31st August 1999. The SAG were invited to consider the future of the post as from 1 Sep 1999.

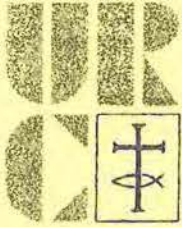
3. The SAG had received, before its Meeting, papers prepared by Revd David A L Jenkins, the convener of the Windermere Advisory Group, together with a fully detailed Job Description. During the meeting the Group met with Mr Jenkins and thoroughly discussed the situation with him. Revd David Jenkins outlined the management structure of the Centre and discussed some ideas about the future work and direction of the Centre and its life.

4. The Job Description was examined in great detail and Revd Jenkins agreed to revise it in several areas to reflect the SAG's thinking and concerns. The revised Job Description is enclosed with this Report as an Annex.

5. The SAG were clear that a post should continue in being but discussed with Mr Jenkins whether or not the post could be filled by a lay person, noting that hitherto incumbents had always been ordained Ministers. It was considered that the Centre requires as an absolute minimum a "Warden-type" post, but such a post could only be expected to deal with the management of the Centre from an accommodation standpoint. A lay person could, of course, do that kind of job. However, if the ethos and purpose of the Centre were to be continued and fostered it was felt essential that a "Director-type" post was an absolute necessity. In practice, such a "Director-type" post really needed to be filled by an ordained Minister who could bring the theological and spiritually reflective insights so essential to characterise and develop the Centre and its work. SAG agreed with this view.

RECOMMENDATION

6. SAG RECOMMENDS THAT THE POST OF 'DIRECTOR OF THE WINDERMERE CENTRE' SHOULD BE RENEWED FOR A PERIOD OF 5 YEARS, OR UNTIL THE INCUMBENT LEAVES IT THAT IS AT AN EARLIER DATE, FROM 1st SEPTEMBER 1999. IT FURTHER RECOMMENDS THAT THE POST SHOULD BE FILLED BY AN ORDAINED MINISTER OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH OR OTHER CHURCH OF THE REFORMED TRADITION. SAG COMMENDS THE ANNEXED JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE POST.



THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

JOB DESCRIPTION - DIRECTOR, WINDERMERE CENTRE of the United Reformed Church

1 Purpose:

The post of Director exists to manage and develop the Centre, the overall objective of which is to provide opportunities for the development of the faith, life and mission of the church and its people.

2 Key Responsibilities:

The Director will operate the Centre to:

- be a place of healing, reconciliation and renewal;
- be a resourced centre at which local congregations can reflect and plan in an atmosphere conducive to deepening their fellowship;
- provide a platform for innovation;
- enable groups in the URC structure to offer fora of various kinds.

3 Primary Specific Duties:

a) Financial:

- i) As a Managing Trustee, adjudicating Hannah Fund applications;
- ii) Paying speaker expenses;
- iii) In conjunction with URC Church House staff, setting salary levels.

b) Guest services:

- i) Welcoming guests and telling them of the Centre ethos and house rules;
- ii) The pastoral and spiritual care of guests.

c) House services:

- i) Authorising non-office equipment renewal <£500;
- ii) Maintaining an ongoing review of the appropriateness of the stock of the Reference library, and dealing with accessions and cataloguing (the latter two functions typically being delegated to the Locum Director and Chaplain).

d) Merchandising:

- i) Ensuring that the bar is correctly licensed;
- ii) Exercising choice over the Bookstall stock.

e) Office Services:

Authorising office equipment renewal <£500 and seeking Advisory Group consent for items over £500.

f) Programme:

- i) Programme planning, speaker booking and event finalisation;
- ii) Selectively leading events;
- iii) Daily Windermere worship and ensuring grace is offered at mealtimes;
- iv) Evaluating events for their effectiveness in meeting the needs of participants;
- v) In conjunction with the Windermere Advisory Group, maintaining programme balance.

g) Publicity:

- i) Preparation of copy for event flyers;
- ii) Programme brochure layout and printing;
- iii) REFORM advertising and editorial copy;
- iv) Windermere Contacts policy, in conjunction with the Advisory Group.

- h) **External relationships:** Developing and maintaining mutually fruitful liaisons with:
- i) Carver URC;
 - ii) Districts & Synods;
 - iii) Formal and informal ecumenical and international networks;
 - iv) other Centres (e.g., Yardley Hastings);
 - v) URC Church House departments, in particular with the Discipleship, Witness and Stewardship Committee and the Training Committee;
 - vi) The Windermere churches.
- i) **Staff matters:**
- i) Communication within the Core Team (by regular Core Team meetings) and generally (and usually informally) through all Centre staff;
 - ii) Scheduling Director absences and Locum Director & Chaplain presence to ensure the appropriate and optimum availability of effective pastoral functions for guests and staff and 'figurehead' presence in the House;
 - iii) Performance review of members of the Core Team;
 - iv) Pastoral care of all Centre staff in conjunction with relevant members of the Core team (effected through both the pastoral dimension of Core Team meetings and informal discussions);
 - v) Recruitment and training of administrative staff.

4 **Delegated Duties:**

The following matters are normally delegated to various members of the Core Team. The Director will take direct responsibility in these areas as required, e.g., in the scheduled absence of the relevant Core Team member.

- a) **Financial:**
- i) Budget preparation in consultation with the Treasurer and Convenor, Management Committee;
 - ii) In the absence of the Treasurer:
 - monitoring performance vs budget and making quarterly financial forecasts;
 - authorising payments from the Centre;
 - iii) In the absence of the Administrative Secretary, making payment requests to the Hannah Fund.
- b) **House Services:**
- i) In the absence of the Domestic Manager:
 - holding and monitoring regular fire drills, the availability and maintenance of fire safety equipment, the observance of fire precautions and appropriateness and presence of fire notices;
 - regularly testing the presence and effectiveness of security equipment
 - ii) In the scheduled absence of the Convenor of the Management Committee, authorising major fabric & fittings repairs and reviewing security policy.
- c) **Staff Matters:**
- i) In the absence of the Administrative Secretary, organising the staff rota for administration to provide maximum administrative presence;
 - ii) In the scheduled absence of the Convenor, Management Committee, operating the formal disciplinary procedure as necessary;
 - iii) In the absence of the Domestic Manager, training (including induction training) of domestic staff;
 - iv) In the scheduled absence of members of the Core Team, reviewing the performance of their subordinates as appropriate.

5 **General Duties:**

- a) As for all members of the Core Team, flexibility in working outside the duties of the job is necessary as required by the workload of the Centre and staff availability.
- b) As with all the Centre's staff, a proactive approach to tidiness and courtesy is expected, together with attention to security (especially if the last to leave the Centre on any occasion).

6 Organisational setting:

- a) The staffing of the Centre is made up of a Core Team consisting of Director, Administrative Secretary, Domestic Manager and Treasurer. The Director is assisted by a Locum Director & Honorary Chaplain (primarily in the Director's absence); the Administrative Secretary is assisted by a part-time Receptionist, and the Domestic Manager supervises the work of cooks, part-time domestic assistants and a part-time handyperson.
- b) The Director is assisted in discharging his/her responsibilities by:
- i) An Advisory Group, whose role is to:
 - advise on and articulate Centre policy,
 - ensure effective pastoral care and support for the Director,
 - provide support for the decision-making of the Director and Management Committee,
 - provide space for reflecting on the effectiveness of events,
 - effect liaison between the Centre and appropriate General Assembly Committees.
 - ii) A Management Committee, whose functions are:
 - proposing the Centre budget and ensuring that the Centre operates to agreed budget
 - setting domestic staffing levels, contracts and terms of employment
 - employing and terminating locally-employed staff
 - the decoration and maintenance programme
 - implementing improvement projects approved in principle by the Advisory Group
 - equipment and depreciation

7 Accountability:

The Director, as an Executive Secretary of the central staff of the URC, reports to the General Secretary and is accountable to General Assembly through the Discipleship, Witness and Stewardship Committee.

8 Scope of Post:

The post of Director is full time. The pattern of working hours varies considerably to accommodate participation in Centre events and travel outside the Centre. In managing his/her time, the Director is required to pay regard to adequate provision for domestic and study life.

(This Job Description was prepared by the Windermere Advisory Group in consultation with the staff of the Windermere Core Team and Convenor, Management Committee. The Job Description was ratified in September 1997 by the Discipleship, Witness and Stewardship Committee through its Convenor's membership of the Windermere Advisory Group. Minor editorial changes were made in July 1998.)

Proposal for the continuation of the post of Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant

Introduction

Clem Frank, the present Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant, has indicated that he wishes to retire on 30 June 2000. This will be two years earlier than his "normal retirement date". The first stage in the consideration of arrangements for the period following Clem's retirement is to seek Mission Council approval for the continuation of the post of Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant.

Job description

The post holder is responsible to the General Secretary and the Treasurer of the Church, and through them to the General Assembly, for the overall management of the financial affairs of the Church.

The Church has gross assets, excluding pension funds and funds held in trust for provinces and churches, of over £40 million and annual expenditure of about £19 million. It operates a payroll for some 2000 serving and retired ministers and lay staff.

The post holder is responsible for establishing and maintaining accounting records and procedures in relation to all of the Church's assets, liabilities and transactions. These tasks are carried out under the supervision of the post holder by the Finance Office which has a full-time staff of nine.

In addition to the supervision of the day to day financial activities of the Church the post holder is required to attend some fifteen committees or working groups dealing with such matters as stipends, pensions, retired ministers' housing, training and investments.

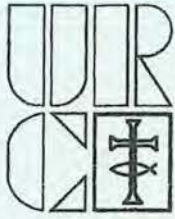
The post holder is also expected to respond to enquiries or requests for advice on a wide range of matters from every part of the United Reformed Church.

The detailed job description of the Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant, and the extent of delegation to senior members of the Finance Office staff, is a matter for further consideration in the period up to June 2000.

Conclusion

The post of Financial Secretary and Chief Accountant is a very important one. It is recommended that the post should be continued after the retirement of the present post holder in June 2000.

GHS
30.8.98



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

G

The Theology of Ministry

- 1.00 At its meeting in October 1997 Mission Council received the statement on the Theology of Ministry prepared by the Doctrine, Prayer and Worship Committee and the Deputy General Secretary. This was accepted as an affirmed draft. (See Minute 97/67) Mission Council asked that Doctrine, Prayer and Worship, in consultation with Ministries and Training should undertake, with an envisaged time scale of two years, the required further work noted in paragraph 2.11 of the statement covering
- (a) ordained and non-ordained ministry;
 - (b) stipendiary and non stipendiary ministry;
 - (c) elders and lay preachers;
 - (d) *diakonia*.
- The stated purpose of the extra work required is to clarify the URC's understanding of each of the above.
- 2.00 A meeting of representatives of these three committees and of Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness was convened in June 1998 to consider how best to devolve the responsibility for undertaking the required work among the committees.
- 3.00 The existence of work already in hand was noted.
- Ministries is embarking on a wide ranging review of the non stipendiary ministry including its relationship to the stipendiary ministry.
 - Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness has work on the eldership already underway.
 - Doctrine, Prayer and Worship also have in hand work on aspects of the eldership.
 - The recently established Lay Preaching Support Committee is beginning to take up concerns relating to the ministry of lay preachers.
 - The Mission Council Review Group considering the ministry of Church Related Community Workers is due to report in the near future.
- 4.00 After lengthy discussion it was agreed that the best course is to encourage the completion of these pieces of work rather than commissioning separate work. However, it was noted that this will not by itself fulfil the requirement of Mission Council. There will be need to draw the various aspects into a coherent statement. In addition one particular matter arises in connection with each which might helpfully be addressed as a special issue. What is the nature and extent of the authority and accountability attaching to each aspect of ministry?
- 5.00 It was also noted that consideration of these matters will be incomplete without examination of their ecumenical implications which will require consultation with the Ecumenical Committee.
- 6.00 The consultation recommends that Mission Council**
- 6.01 recognises and encourages the work already being undertaken within the areas of concern listed in paragraph 2.11 of the affirmed statement on the Theology of Ministry;**
 - 6.02 requests those involved to think in terms of the development of these ministries with a view to making a detailed statement to Mission Council in readiness for General Assembly 2001;**
 - 6.03 requests Doctrine, Prayer and Worship to prepare a detailed statement of the responsibilities and accountability of these ministries to the whole church;**
 - 6.04 requests all involved to keep in mind the ecumenical implications of their work.**



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998



**The Scottish Congregational Church
CUS-URC Proposals for Union**

At the SCC Assembly on Friday, 4 September, it was resolved by a vote of 97.3% in favour (75% required) to accept the Proposals for Union. Along with our further decisions by synods and districts, the SCC will now require decisions from local churches. Both Churches will then require ratifying decisions of the two Assemblies in 1999. However, a reasonable interpretation is that we are now on course for the birth of the new Church at a Unifying Assembly which will be held, probably in Glasgow on Saturday, 27 November 1999.

A report will be given to Mission Council.

In addition, there are certain specific proposals to be considered:

- (a) **That the General Secretary and one other representative of the Scottish Congregational Church be invited to meetings of the Mission Council in 1999.**

This recommendation comes from MCAG.

- (b) **That the General Secretary be instructed to invite the General Secretary of the SCC to appoint one member to each appropriate Assembly Committee of the United Reformed Church, that person to have the status of a co-opted member.**

This recommendation comes from the Ecumenical Committee.

- (c) **That the United Reformed Church Trust be authorised to promote the Parliamentary Bill referred to in the Joint Proposals Document on behalf of the United Reformed Church.**

The legal adviser tells us that Messrs Dyson Bell Martin, parliamentary advisers, have advised that the promoters of the Bill should be United Reformed Church Trust and the Congregational Union of Scotland Nominees Limited.

- (d) **That John Waller, Christopher Langham and Anthony Bayley are appointed to immediate membership of United Reformed Church Trust.**

The Legal Adviser tells us that in order for the Trust to pass the necessary Resolution(s), its Memorandum of Association will require slight amendment. This in turn means that an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Trust has to be convened before 27th November, the final date for lodging the petition for the Bill in Parliament.

As there is no Trust Meeting planned before that date and to avoid having to ask members to travel specially into London for a meeting which will probably not last more than 3 minutes, Mission Council is asked, on behalf of General Assembly, to nominate three more persons to membership of the Trust to ensure that the Extraordinary General Meeting mentioned above will be quorate.



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

I

Retirement of General Secretary

This paper is a recommendation to MC by the Advisory Group

Following the decision of the GA in July 1998, the Revd. Tony Burnham, on reaching the age of 65, will retire from the office of General Secretary in July 2001.

The Rules of procedure in the new edition of the Manual state

- 4(1) The General Secretary who shall be a minister of the United Reformed Church shall be appointed for a period of seven years renewable for the same term or such shorter period as the Assembly may determine. The appointment shall be made according to the following procedure.
- 4(2) The General Assembly shall constitute a special committee consisting of two representatives appointed by each provincial synod, the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Convener of the Nominations Committee and nine persons selected by the Mission Council, five of whom shall be Conveners of Assembly Standing Committees, with authority to make a nomination for appointment as Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary to the Assembly. In any emergency the Mission Council shall be empowered to set up this committee.

The rules also state

- 5(1) The General Assembly may appoint a Clerk of Assembly as distinct from the General Secretary.

This is the present situation.

Timetable

1. Following the GA 1998 decision regarding the re-appointment of the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary drew to the attention of synod clerks the resolution to come to the GA in July 1999 constituting a special committee, in order that they may report the names of their representatives to the secretary of Mission Council by 28 February 1999. These names will be made available to the meeting on 19 March.

2. Members of MC will elect their representatives knowing the names of those chosen by the synods.
3. The General Assembly in 1999 shall constitute the special committee for the appointment of a General Secretary.
4. The first two meetings will take place on (dates to be advised at October 1998 MC), and those being nominated to the committee should keep those dates clear.
5. In the present General Secretary's recent review, the Clerk acted as secretary and the Deputy General Secretary serviced the committee. This division of responsibilities was agreed because the latter did not feel it appropriate to be involved in a close colleague's review. The appointment of a new General Secretary is different. The two individuals will only work together for a year and it may be a positive advantage for the special committee to have the Deputy General Secretary, with his close knowledge of the work, present as a resource. It is therefore recommended that the Deputy General Secretary both services the committee and is its secretary.
6. The General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary will together update the two present job descriptions and these will be reported to MCAG in February 1999. The main purpose will be to provide the current job descriptions to the special committee. It is not necessarily assumed that the future appointment(s) will continue the same pattern of work.
7. The special committee will complete its work in order to bring a nomination to the General Assembly in 2000.
8. The new General Secretary will be inducted to office at the General Assembly in 2001.
9. Since it now seems likely that the union between the Congregational Union of Scotland and the United Reformed Church will take place, Mission Council is asked to consider taking a resolution to the General Assembly in 1999, if Assembly passes the unifying resolution. This would allow representatives of the future Synod of Scotland to be involved in the special committee from the outset of its work:

Assembly agrees, in the light of the imminent union, to invite the Congregational Union of Scotland to appoint two representatives to be members of the special committee to nominate the next General Secretary, with a view to the Synod of Scotland, at its first meeting, confirming them as members of the committee under rules of procedure 4(2). (In the event of the union not proceeding, this invitation would be withdrawn).



MISSION COUNCIL

5 - 7 October 1998

J

THE MULTI-RACIAL, MULTI-CULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME REPORT TO
MISSION COUNCIL OCTOBER 1998

The URC's Multi-racial, Multi-cultural Development programme began officially in July 1997, with the appointment of a Development Worker.

- (a) To help the URC at every level be more open and integrated culturally and racially**
- (b) To explore the task of mission in our multi-cultural society**
- (c) To foster awareness of issues of racism and racial justice in congregations and councils of the URC**

During the first year, visits were made to the twelve Provinces and discussions were held with URC members, clergy and officials at Provincial and District levels, as well as, persons from other denominations and organisations working in the area of racial justice.

The discussions were focused around the following topics:

- 1) The context of the Province, i.e. the major social, economic, political and cultural/religious features
- 2) The experience of racism and related issues in the church and the wider society.
- 3) Strategic Planning Processes in the Province (e.g. the Development of a mission statement, visioning workshops, medium to long term setting of goals and action plans)
- 4) The participation of minority ethnic persons in the life of the church in the form of membership, participation in activities and leadership at Congregational, District and Provincial levels.
- 5) Implementation of the URC's Equal Opportunities policy

- 6) Inter-Faith dialogue
- 7) Relationships with other minority ethnic Christians (including black-led churches worshipping in URC buildings)
- 8) Involvement with racial justice issues in the wider society (e.g. racially motivated crime, asylum seekers)
- 9) Steps taken to reflect cultural diversity in congregational life, e.g. in the area of liturgy, pastoral care and counselling
- 10) Participation in celebrations and observances such as One World Week, Racial Justice Sunday, Traid Craft
- 11) Involvement in International exchanges and Training Programmes.
- 12) The Province's history of involvement in overseas mission and the documentation of and reflection on the experiences.
- 13) Work of other churches and agencies in the Province, in the area of racial justice.
- 14) Racism awareness training conducted in the Province.
- 15) Experience of effective communication and implementation of Assembly resolutions at the local level.

Some of the areas of work for 1998-1999 include

- Discussion of draft Provincial Reports within Provinces
- In-depth discussions with the major committees of the URC
- Training for persons from Provinces who are members of the multi-racial network of the URC.

Prepared by

Marjorie Lewis-Cooper

Multi-racial, Multi-cultural Development Worker.



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

K

Letter from New Malden

The following letter was received after a Church Meeting at New Malden. In my reply I undertook to bring this concern to the attention of Mission Council but I also referred the Church Meeting to Assembly resolution 49 on Recruitment to Ministry. No doubt members of Mission Council will bear this church's concern in mind, among other factors, when they discuss Paper B. I hope the Southern Province representatives will ensure that New Malden is given some report of our discussions.

John Waller
17 September 1998



The United Reformed Church

Malden Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 6DR

Minister: Rev. BRUCE D.D. STUART, A.B., M.Div.
23 Cromwell Avenue, New Malden, Surrey KT3 6DN
Tel. 0181-942 6362

Secretary:

Mrs. Marjorie Barnard
40 Bramshaw Rise
New Malden
Surrey KT3 5JU
Tel. 0181-942 9768

Treasurer:

Mrs. Catherine Roberts
89 Salisbury Road
Worcester Park
Surrey KT4 7BZ
Tel. 0181-337 6901

TEL: 0181-942 9768

40 Bramshaw Rise,
New Malden,
Surrey KT3 5JU

10 July 1998

Revd. John Waller
Mission Council

15 JUL 1998

Dear Mr Waller,

I have been asked by our Elders and Members, following our June Church Meeting, to inform you of the following resolution which was passed at that Meeting.

"We, the Members of the New Malden United Reformed Church, are concerned about the severe reduction in numbers of Stipendiary Ministers in the URC and the resultant effect on the Ministry in local Churches. It is understood that this has been known about for a number of years, and we acknowledge that some efforts have been made by General Assembly to encourage more potential ordinands.

However, we feel that more effort could have been made to recruit suitable candidates, and that local Churches must be more actively encouraged to promote the calling of appropriate men and women. We trust that Mission Council will be more proactive in the future in providing considerably more information, materials and encouragement at both national and local level."

I shall be grateful if you will kindly bring this to the attention of Mission Council. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Marjorie Barnard
Church Secretary



MISSION COUNCIL

5 - 7 October 1998



CWM Gift of Grace

In October 1997 Mission Council heard of the plans of the East Midlands, Mersey and Wales synods to spend the money allocated to them from the CWM gift.

Each of them was asked for a progress report, a year on. The reports follow: it may be that they should be forwarded to CWM.

EAST MIDLANDS

We have allocated this to the appointment of a Province Mission Enabler and Revd Moiseraela Prince Dibeela of Botswana has been appointed on a three year contract. Most members of Mission Council will have been at General Assembly when he was introduced. Oadby United Reformed Church, with help from the Province Trust, has provided a manse and the Gift of Grace money will be used to pay his housing costs and working expenses such as the provision of a car, telephone, PC and so on.

For three years of his appointment he and his family will be members in the South Leicestershire Group and he will work with the ministry team there throughout his appointment but also within the structures of the province and as indicated in the Three Year Plan which is appended.

Separate management and support systems have been put in place and appear to be working well.

This is a significant development for us as we attempt to be constantly renewed for God's mission and it could not have been financed without help from beyond the province.

MERSEY

The Mersey Synod agreed to the provision of a new Provincial Office and Resource Centre in November 1997. Since then a number of possibilities have been considered and consultations held with interested parties and churches.

The outcome is that the new centre will be St. Stephen's URC, Wavertree, Liverpool. This has received all the necessary agreements of the Church Meeting, District Council and Synod. Early in 1998 an architect drew up a feasibility study and subsequently drew up a plan for alterations to the church premises necessary to accommodate the centre.

Planning permission has now been obtained for the project, the finances have been secured and this month tenders are going out to contractors.

The timescale for completion is sometime after Easter 1999 or early summer, if all goes according to plan.

As you can see all this has taken quite a long time and we are impatient to make the move as soon as possible. As yet we have nothing tangible to show for the "Gift of Grace" but without it we would not have considered embarking on this exciting project. We are now planning the provision of staff for the Centre and aim to make an appointment for a new office manager for the beginning of 1999. This will be of immense help to our Provincial Administrator, who will be involved in the preparations for General Assembly 1999.

WALES

1. Pembrokeshire District Minister for Youth & Children - £2,000

We was this as a valuable area of mission work which was not being tackled and could enable significant areas of growth in an area of concern. A person has now been appointed to the post and a committee set up to monitor progress, enabling an immediate start to be made.

2. Builth Wells Mission and church Growth project - £1,600

Builth Wells had already begun a creative project which was bringing about growth in various ways. It was intended to use the money to develop further an outreach programme to young people. A total of £2,250 has been used to purchase a complete amplified sound system and instruments, enabling young people to provide music for the evening service. Attendance at this service has since trebled to about 60. In addition, an average of 60 young people attend a newly formed midweek youth group.

3. Brecon Rural Group - £4,500

A special category minister was to be appointed to care for the special needs of these rural churches and to encourage growth in this area of Breconshire. A person has just been appointed to the post.

4. Newport URC Christian Resources - £400

While this was small scale it aimed to draw together the network of youth and children's work pursued by the Church so that the faith could be presented in helpful and relevant ways. Following extensive consultation with parents and Junior Church Leaders, £80 has been spent on Welsh language material. The remaining money will be spent on English language material and orders for this have been placed. The material will be on display in the Church foyer and neighbouring churches will be invited to make use of it. Providing the material is received in time, there will be a dedication service on 1st November to which other churches will be invited.

5. Fairwater, Cardiff - Time for God Worker - £3,000

Fairwater URC have begun to reach out to the local community by making their building available. They realise, however, that unless the congregation got to know the groups using their building, it would not result in growth. It was hoped that the appointment of the worker would begin this process but to date it has not been possible to recruit a suitable person.

6. South Wales District Council Enabler - £10,000

This appointment would encourage local churches to respond to the opportunities for mission in their locality and address the underlying issues and causes of decline and growth. A person has just been appointed to this post.

7. Canton Uniting Church, Cardiff - CRCW project - £5,500

This represented a long term community outreach project whereby the church could become deeply involved in bringing change to community life in Canton. This project has not yet been established.

8. Christchurch, Rhyl - Rent Guarantee Scheme - £1,000

This project aimed to help release people from the spiral of debt, in particular by providing bond boards to enable people to get rented accommodation. The scheme has had both successes and failures. The minister, Simon Walkling, is happy to share the experience with anyone contemplating a similar scheme.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

EAST MIDLANDS PROVINCE, 32 Penzance Avenue
 Wigston, Leicester LE 18 2HW. Tel. 0116 211 3979
 Mission Enabler: Revd Moiseraele Prince Dibeela BTHhons.

MISSION PROJECT: A THREE YEAR PLAN

I. 1998/1999	II. 1999/2000	III. 2000/2001
<p>a) <u>working with local churches</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what work of mission is already undertaken - how to equip the LC for mission - what resources are available - how to motivate people to take risks for God <p>b) <u>District Mission Days:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exploring with the districts what their mission priorities are - How they can be catalysts for mission - what renewal needs to take place <p>c) <u>Journey with the SLGC:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -support the team of ministers -challenge the group to try 'new things' for God 	<p>a) <u>Local Churches</u></p> <p><i>(as outlined)</i></p> <p>b) <u>Province Mission school for ministers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -explore mission issues -how to be enablers of mission in our congregations - how should the province be an instrument of mission <p>c) <u>Music and 'Perfoming' arts as resources for Mission:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ways of communicating the gospel - music and culture - 'lirtugical' arts - etecetera <p>d) evaluation</p>	<p>a) <u>Launch a programme of renewal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -to exite congregations, districts and province to do mission -to help with a resource of things to do (content and process) -to get all involved in the enabling process <p>b) <u>Build and enable District 'teams' to facilitate the 'renew process'</u></p> <p>c) <u>Youth in Mission</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role of young people in mission -mission oriented programmes -Is the URC 'youth friendly'? <p>d) Evaluation</p>

SLGC = South Leicestershire Group of Churches



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

M

Stipend level for 1999

The current basic ministerial stipend is £14,820

Inflation in the year to 31st October 1997, (the relevant base year) was 3.71%. The Maintenance of the Ministry sub-committee considered that it would be appropriate for the stipend increased in 1999 to be RPI + 1.5%. (as was the increase for 1998).

This was recommended to the RPAG, and the budget for 1999 was prepared on the basis that the basic ministerial stipend in 1999 should be £15,600, which is £14,820 + 5.26%.

This was reported to Assembly in the report of the Maintenance of the Ministry sub-committee (Assembly reports 1998 page 106). No adverse comments were noted at Assembly.

The Officers of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee recommended to Mission Council that the basic stipend for 1999 should be set at £15,600 per annum.

RESOLUTION

Mission Council sets the basic ministerial stipend for 1999 at £15,600



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

N

Paper for October Mission Council from Nominations Committee

Assembly Staff Appointments

The following recommendations from the Appointment Groups are submitted for confirmation:

Pilots Development Officer

Mrs Karen Bulley to be appointed for a period of five years with effect from 1 October 1998.

Secretary for Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness

Revd John Steele to be appointed with effect from 16 November 1998 until 30 September 2003.

There may also be reports from Moderator Review Groups.



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998



Extract from Training Committee Minutes – 9th – 10th September 1998

98.33 Colleges

(b) **The Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester**

John Sutcliffe, who is the new President of PTEM, declared an interest and left the meeting during the following debate.

The committee was reminded that the Training Committee had already agreed to support the proposals for the setting up of the Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester. The committee is now being asked to recommend to appropriate URC financial bodies that the URC make a financial investment in the Partnership in order for it modernise its buildings and make them suitable for the Partnership to carry out its work.

It was reported that a meeting had taken place in July 1998, between the General Secretary, the Chief Accountant and Treasurer of the URC, the Secretary for Training and representatives of Northern College and the Partnership, in order to discern:

- (i) the likely costs involved in URC investment
- (ii) legal arrangements regarding the nature of the trust and how this would effect the URC's requirements.

The following points were made:

- Northern College's investment of £250,000 in the Partnership will reduce its ability to subsidise student fees. Fees for students attending Northern College will, therefore rise, unless a viable number of students attend the college. (Currently, a viable number of students is 30, while the total student body for 1998-9 is 27). The Ecumenical Partnership, however, is likely, than Northern College alone, to be more robust in coping with fluctuating student numbers each year.
- If the URC money is to be 'locked into' the Partnership there will be enormous justification to use the college for other training ventures and, in particular, lay training.
- Any degree of substantial investment by the URC should be accompanied by the right to appoint a trustee.
- Concern was expressed about the URC investment, should the Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester continue, and the URC pull out. The General Secretary confirmed that the Charity Commissioners are being asked about this point. It was, however, pointed out that even if the URC withdrew initial ministerial education from the Partnership, it was likely that PTE would be used for lay training and Continuing Ministerial Education.

- Concern was expressed about whether the proposed financial support by the URC might create a precedent, given that it is not URC policy to offer block grants. This, however, would be a capital investment, not an annual block grant.
- Methodists find the ethos of the Partnership to be overly Reformed in character. This has been a stumbling block for Methodists and Anglicans. Methodists have made sacrifices in agreeing to ordinands living off-site. It will be necessary for the Reformed Colleges to make similar sacrifices if the Partnership is to work.
- If the Partnership is to function well it will be necessary for there to be a common syllabus.
- Clarity needs to be achieved between the boundaries of job-description Trust/Buildings body and the Training Activities body.

Resolution

The following resolution to be sent to Mission Council, that in the light of the fact that the URC has yet to receive a detailed business plan for the developments of the partnership, that:

'The Training Committee recommends, in principle, to Mission Council, that the United Reformed Church invest in the Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester in order to promote genuine ecumenical convergence in governance and learning.'

Proposer: Iain Frew and John Proctor

Seconder: Roy Lowes

This was unanimously agreed.



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

P

Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education

Job Description

The person serving in this post will have major responsibility for stimulating both thought and action about continuing ministerial training in The United Reformed Church in order to equip ministers of Word and Sacrament, Church Related Community Workers, and Lay Preachers to grow in faith and skills for ministry.

The work will be undertaken as a Christian Ministry in which vision, administration and collaboration with a wide range of colleagues will be keynotes.

Accountability

The post-holder will be accountable ultimately to the General Assembly through the General Secretary, the Convener of the Training Committee.

Detailed responsibilities will be as follows:

1. To promote the policies on Continuing Ministerial Education adopted by the Training Committee and in particular, to ensure the development of continuing education programmes for ministers and lay preachers.
2. To act as a link between the Training Committee and Colleges, Courses, the Windermere Centre and the National Resource Centre, Yardley Hastings, and those responsible for Continuing Ministerial Education in the Provinces, by working in partnership with the Secretaries for Training and Ministries, the Colleges recognised by the Training Committee and the United Reformed Church and Provincial Training Officers to:
 - (i) *Act as an agent provocateur in making learning opportunities known*
 - (ii) *Build up a knowledge of the needs of ministers and help providers to plan accordingly*
 - (iii) *develop a culture of learning, development and personal growth within the United Reformed Church*
 - (iv) *help Ministers develop their role as adult educators, spiritual 'directors' and as leaders of in-service learning courses*
 - (v) *be responsible for enabling the communication of information about Continuing Ministerial Education opportunities and events.*
3. To share in ecumenical and international thinking about theological education and in particular, Continuing Ministerial Education.
4. To be responsible for the proper administration for Continuing Ministerial Education and to give pastoral support and help to staff.
5. To ensure that the sub-committee and any working parties concerned with Continuing Ministerial Education are adequately serviced
(To act as secretary to, and work with, the Continuing Ministerial education Sub-Committee)
6. To listen to, and communicate with, provinces, Districts and local churches in order to promote effective Continuing Ministerial Education (including Post-Ordination Training) throughout the Church.
7. To work collaboratively with other committees of the Church and colleagues, specifically with the Secretary for Training; and the Secretary for Ministries, in relation to areas where there needs to be shared responsibility. In particular, to work with the Secretary for Training providing cover in his/her absence.

8. To ensure personal compliance and that of support staff with health and safety at work practices.

The Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education will be expected to remain open to new patterns of work and new responsibilities should the General Assembly, or its appointed committees, so decide.

June 1998

Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education

Person Specification

The Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education will have:

1. considerable experience of educational methods and the needs of Ministers and Church Related Community Workers. Experience within the United Reformed Church, and a knowledge of theology is desirable;
2. a first degree (or the equivalent) in theology, or a related subject, and preferably a higher degree. Ministerial education and experience would be an advantage;
3. the energy and enthusiasm to encourage and initiate new programmes, but to be sensitive to the needs and experience of ministers, and be willing to co-operate with the Councils and officers of the Church.
4. a working knowledge of computers and information technology and/or the willingness to continue developing computer skills;
5. a clean driving licence;
6. a willingness to be based in London at United Reformed Church House.

NB A manse and car (or a house or car allowance) will be provided together with the provision of a Personal Assistant.

SECRETARY FOR TRAINING

Job Description

The person serving in this post will have major responsibility for stimulating both thought and action about training in The United Reformed Church in order to equip both lay people and ministers of Word and Sacrament to grow in faith and skills for ministry.

The work will be undertaken as a Christian Ministry in which vision, administration and collaboration with a wide range of colleagues will be keynotes.

Accountability

The postholder will be accountable ultimately to the General Assembly through the General Secretary and also to the Convener of the Training Committee.

Detailed responsibilities will be as follows:

1. To promote the policies adopted by the Training Committee and thinking about training throughout the Church, and in particular:
 - 1.1 To oversee the training of ordinands.
 - 1.2 To oversee the training of lay people.
 - 1.3 To ensure the development of training for lay preachers.
2. To act as a link between the Training Committee and Colleges, Courses and those responsible for training in the Provinces, through service on governing bodies and by personal contact.
3. To oversee the Training Committee's responsibility for Youth and Children's Work training programme, including, attending meetings of the trainers.
4. To share in ecumenical and international thinking about theological education, ministerial training and lay training.
5. To be responsible for the proper administration and smooth running of the training office and to give pastoral support and help to staff.
6. To ensure that committees, sub-committees and working parties concerned with training are adequately serviced.
7. To listen to, and communicate with, provinces, Districts and local churches in order to promote effective training throughout the Church.
8. To provide links with the committees for Ecumenical Relations; Ministries; Youth and Children's Work; Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness; Doctrine, Prayer and Worship; Church and Society.
9. To work collaboratively with colleagues, specifically with the Secretary for Continuing Ministerial education, and the Secretary for Ministries, in relation to areas where there needs to be shared responsibility. In particular, to work with the Secretary for Continuing Ministerial Education providing cover in his/her absence.
10. To act as budget holder for the Training Committee.

11. To ensure personal compliance and that of support staff with health and safety at work practices.

The Secretary for Training will be expected to remain open to new patterns of work and new responsibilities should the General Assembly, or its appointed committees, so decide.

July 1998



MISSION COUNCIL

5 - 7 October 1998

Q.

Training Strategy for the United Reformed Church

1. Introduction

The Training Committee was set up in January 1994 with the remit:

"The committee will encourage and enable the integration of the training of the whole people of God and to this end will seek to influence the philosophy and methodology of learning; the core content of courses; and the development of resources. It gives direct support to, and acts in partnership with Doctrine, Prayer and Worship, Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness; Church and Society, and Youth and Children's Work Committees and synods and districts, as they respond to the needs of local churches in training matters. It collaborates with Ministries Committee in the training of ministers of word and sacraments, CRCWs and Lay Preachers. It also supports all other committees and task groups, in particular the Ecumenical Committee and the Advocacy and Stewardship Task Group. It also gives oversight to the YLTO and YCWT programmes."

2. What are the Priorities?

- 2.1 Integration of Lay and Ordination training
- 2.2 Emphasis on developing learning opportunities for all
- 2.3 Continuing development of Initial Ministerial Education and Training
- 2.4 Continuing development of Post Ordination and Continuing Ministerial Education.
- 2.5 Make Lay Education more interesting
- 2.6 Develop Integrated Training strategy within a single structure
- 2.7 Work as ecumenically as possible

3. What has been done so far

3.1 Integration of Lay and Ordination Training.

General Assembly 1991. The Integrated Training Working Party proposed an integration of lay and ordination training. They put forward detailed proposals (pp176-187 in the Book of Reports) for integration in Christian Nurture, especially in the fields of Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes.

3.2 Emphasis on developing learning opportunities

3.2.1 '*Developing Discipleship*' was produced by the Integrated Working Group for post-confirmation groups.

3.2.2 '*Training for Learning and Serving*' was adopted as an integrated Lay training Course for training Lay Preachers and others serving the Church. The first groups taking this course began in September 1995.

3.2.3 It was also agreed that the '*Exploring the Faith*' Course for Lay preachers and others be phased out from June 30th 1998.

3.3 Initial Ministerial Training and Education

- 3.3.1 *criteria for courses for initial ministerial training (General Assembly 1995)*
- 3.3.2 *minimum standard of initial training, plus requirement of 800 hours of placement experience. (General Assembly, 1997)*
- 3.3.3 *minimum entry requirements for candidates attending assessment conferences. (1997)*
- 3.3.4 *changes in routes through training for Stipendiary and Non-Stipendiary Ministers (1997)*
- 3.3.5 *regional Commitments of Provincial Officers and College and Course representatives*
- 3.3.6 *commitment to lay people, ordinands and ordained learning together where possible*

3.4 **Continuing Ministerial Education (Both Ordained and Lay)**

Proposals on Continuing Ministerial Education and Post Ordination Training

- N.B. It has been generally agreed, though not formally agreed, that Westminster College specialises in Reformed Studies and Northern College specialises in Contextual Missiology in an urban context.

4. **Future Strategy**

- 4.1 Make Post Ordination Education and Training (POET) and Continuing Ministerial Education (CME) work (Including in-service training for Lay Preachers and others)
- 4.2 Continuing to review and monitor curriculum for Initial Ministerial Training (in recent years we have not give detailed attention to the curricula context of Initial Ministerial Training and this is something we would like to return to.)
- 4.3 Continue to develop an interesting range of widely accessible lay training activities (we want this area to go on growing).
- 4.4 Explore ways of co-ordinating lay and ministerial training more fully.
- 4.5 Foster ecumenical convergence on as many fronts as possible.
- 4.6 Develop the '*Belonging to the World Church*' programme – As part of their training, ordinands are encouraged to spend at least one month abroad with a third World Church, (preferably a member of the Council for World Mission).

5. **How will we know when we have achieved this?**

There is a sense that we will never achieve the perfect training strategy, but we have been able to see lay courses such as *Training for Learning and Serving* (TLS) develop, through the number of students in initial ministerial education have been attempted and achieved through visits and more formal inspections. We will be able to see the developments in Continuing Ministerial Education through, hopefully an increased number of courses and more take up of them.

Lesley Husselbee
23rd September 1998



MISSION COUNCIL
5 - 7 October 1998

R

Mission Council:

Receives with sadness the decision of the Council of St Andrew's Hall Missionary College to sell the buildings and the land and to close the College to new students from April 1999;

Welcomes the assurance of the Ecumenical Committee that

- a) the scholarship programme, and
- b) the provision of preparation before and reflection after service for people serving overseas, or coming from overseas to work here

will continue;

And supports our representatives on the Council as they continue to work for an outcome which will provide an ongoing resource for mission education to the United Reformed Church.

GROWING UP : A Strategy for Mission - the next steps

1. Mission Council affirms as part of a Strategy for Mission the following new work already begun
 - Belonging to the World Church
 - Pilots
 - Local Leadership
 - NSM review
 - Minister's Appraisal
 - Continuing Ministerial Education
 - Unity in Mission
 - Commitment for Life
 - Jubilee 2000
2. Mission Council agrees to ask the Mission Council Advisory Group, to consult the Discipleship, Stewardship and Witness Committee, and to bring a proposal for the remit, structure, and staffing of the committee's future work, taking account of the need to hold together witness, community work, stewardship and nurture: building on proposals in Appendix 3 and Paper B; and report to Mission Council.
3. Mission Council asks the working party looking at the grouping of local churches to take account of the purpose of the district council (6.5).
4. Mission Council asks the General Secretary to develop the section on small churches (6.7) and present this to the group on small churches.
5. Mission Council asks the Mission Council Advisory Group to arrange for the preparation of advice on the use of local church premises.
6. Mission Council asks the Training Committee to act on the matter of Elders' Training (7.1).
7. Mission Council asks each synod to report to the October 1999 Mission Council on the initiatives taken so far to develop local leadership.

8. Mission Council refers the implications of living in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society (8.3) in the first instance, to the Ecumenical Committee.
9. Mission Council refers the use of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund for the development of mission to the Ministries Committee (8.4).
10. Mission Council refers to the Mission Council Advisory Group the CWM Self Support Fund and requests advice as to how this might be handled.
11. Mission Council asks the General Secretary to incorporate the key proposals on the CRCW programme from paper B into the Strategy for Mission.
12. Mission Council asks the General Secretary to include in the Strategy a section on stipendiary ministry, taking account of recruitment, number of ministers and their deployment (see paper C).
13. Mission Council commends to the whole church the Five Marks of Mission as a challenge and set of guidelines for local churches and the other councils, to assess their plans and activities; and asks the General Secretary, with appropriate consultation, to draft for the next Mission Council a programme for the local church on the Five Marks of Mission, which shows how resources of the wider church may be made available in the support. It should also challenge each church to ask about its role in God's mission (6.6).
14. Mission Council asks the General Secretary to present the above Strategy for Mission as a new Part 2, with a revision of Part 1 taking account of the comments made and to bring this back to Mission Council as the basis of a report from Mission Council to the General Assembly and to CWM.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON URC MISSION COUNCIL

Let me begin by saying how much I valued the opportunity of attending Mission Council. In 1980 the Church of Scotland set up an Assembly Council to be an intermediate body between the General Assembly and the various Boards. Its purpose was to provide some strategic thinking and to supply a measure of co-ordination in the work of the Boards, though itself accountable to the General Assembly. Two years ago the Assembly reviewed the work of the Council and decided that it had become too involved in “nuts and bolts” management issues. The Council was reconstituted with a primary “think tank” focus. At the same time a “Co-ordinating Forum”, involving the executives of the Assembly Boards was set up and part of the function of this body is to provide a consultative mechanism for the Board of Stewardship and Finance in setting the budget of the Church. It was therefore extremely helpful for me to observe the URC model of Mission Council. It was also a bonus, in such a meeting, to have the luxury of reflection rather than the responsibility of management

In preparation for the task I read all the papers and two ideas immediately came to mind, namely, faith and fear. Faith is often contrasted with doubt, but it has always seemed to me that the real antithesis of faith is fear. Fear in turn is fed by uncertainty. To quote Rabbin Burns: “forward though I canna see, I guess and fear”. As we look back on statistics of former years and project continuing rates of decline into the future it is natural that we feel uncertain, anxious and somewhat fearful. Yet we are called to be a people of faith who trust that the future is in God’s hands. When Jesus and his disciples were caught in a storm in the Sea of Galilee and the disciples, fearing for their lives, woke Jesus, he rebuked the wind and calmed the sea. Then he turned to his disciples and said “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” (Mark 4: 40). In light of my preliminary thinking it was appropriate that our opening worship should include the line from the hymn; “the joy of God comes close when faith encounters fears.” (Rejoice and Sing 107)

Not having a body quite like Mission Council in the Church of Scotland I was interested to read the original remit to the Council, particularly the statement: “It is a Mission Council and so the aim it will have in mind is to ensure that all we undertake centrally and all we are as a denomination is directed towards the mission of God in the world, towards that kingdom of justice, peace, forgiveness and hope which is true life and which Christ brings in his person. The Council will ask, is this programme, this appointment, this budget, this grant, this statement designed to further the overall mission, or simply to maintain our human structures of institutional life? It is by such criteria that priorities will have to be assessed, not only when new work is proposed but as the existing work of the Church is reviewed”.

This perfectly expresses the underlying challenge to the Church not to cling fearfully to the security of those institutional structures with which we are familiar, but to have the faith to let go and move on. It was only when the disciples cast off from the shore and let down their nets into the deep water that they found those nets full of fish. We are to be a faithful people, not a fearful people.

Alongside the tension between faith and fear I also sensed a tension between maintenance and mission. Taking the disciples’ fishing boat as a motif for the Church, we would not expect the disciples to spend all their time maintaining the boat on the shore: rather, they are to use it as a means of catching fish. This thought struck me in the discussion on the Strategy for Mission paper (paper A) and particularly section 8.4 and recommendation 10 (appendix 5). Are we more concerned with maintenance than with mission; more concerned with the familiar institution than

with a challenge which might make us afraid; more concerned to preserve the old than to move out into new areas and develop new things? Are we a faithful people or a fearful people; are we maintainers or missionaries?

We can apply a similar critique to the issues raised in the discussion on Monday evening of racism. It is disturbing to be made aware of how endemic racism is in British society; it is even more disturbing to be reminded of its presence in the life of the Church itself. The fact that this is so suggests a fear of change rather than a faith in change; a desire to maintain the status quo, rather than develop new models of church life.

The point arises again in relation to buildings. The discussion group of which I was a member emphasised the need for a building strategy within the Church. We noted how the building can be the congregation's security, even although it is hopelessly unsuitable for the purposes of the Church and indeed a disincentive to the stranger. Yet, in the midst of uncertainty, we cling to our buildings for their own sake and do not always have sufficient faith and imagination to let them go altogether, or, at least, adapt them to be more suitable resources for the work of the Gospel. As noted above, this was specifically articulated in recommendation 10 of appendix 5 of paper A, namely, "Mission Council asked the Finance Committee, in association with the Maintenance of the Ministry Sub-Committee, to consider how the element of financial subsidy might be better used to support mission rather than maintenance."

In the current climate we can often feel that we are doing well just to maintain the existing structures. Indeed maintaining a reasonably viable congregational life is no mean achievement. Accordingly, I was struck by the very real commitment of Mission Council to move beyond a strategy for maintenance and institutional survival towards a strategy for mission. In this context it is worth underlining the obvious point that such mission does not have as its aim the survival of the institution but the proclamation of the gospel, the redeeming of lives and the renewal of society. Mission is not for the sake of the Church but for the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

Finally, a word about our worship. In the days following Mission Council I found myself reflecting more and more upon the appropriateness of the parable of the prodigal son. I confess the Rembrandt painting still haunts me. It is a powerful work of art and I continue to reflect upon it and what it says about the relationship between the father and his two sons. Just as when preaching on the story of Mary and Martha the preacher inevitably hears comments sympathetic to Martha, so when preaching on the parable of the prodigal son, one hears expression of support for the elder brother. Is the elder brother, who represents the status quo, a role model for the Church; or is the younger brother, while hardly a model of Christian living, yet in his very prodigality and immersion in the world, a challenge to those within the Church whose aim and objective is careful maintenance and self righteous self satisfaction? We are certainly not called to lose all in riotous living, but we are called to give all for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

FINLAY A.J. MACDONALD
October, 1998