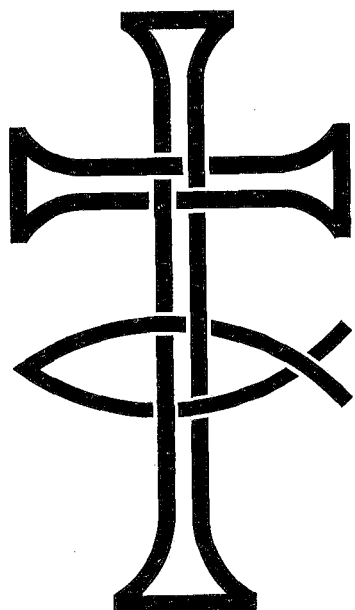


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The United Reformed Church  
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



**GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY  
1989**

July 1st ~ 4th  
UNIVERSITY OF  
**YORK**

**REPORTS**



Contents	Page No
1. Business Committee	1
2. Provincial Reports on Growth For Their Sake	3
3. Faith and Life Department	28
4. Nominations Committee	53
5. World Church and Mission Department	70
6. Church and Society Department	98
7. Executive Committee	107
Appendix: St. Andrew's Bournemouth - Appeal for Secession	113
8. Forward Policy Group	122
9. Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee	123
10. Ministries Department	126
Appendices: 1. Inspection of Queens College, Birmingham 133	
2. College Reports 145	
3. Students in Training 1988/89 149	
4. Training Statistics 153	
11. Finance and Administration Department	160
Appendices: 1. Contributions to MoM and Unified Appeal 1988 169	
2. Ministers holding Assembly Appointments 170	
3. Amalgamation of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund with the Unified Appeal and re-organisation of the Central Finance and Administration Department 170	
12. Budget Committee	177
13. Provincial Moderators' Report	178
14. Communication and Supplies	185
For Information	
a) URC History Society	189
b) Schools Linked with the URC	190
c) URC Housing Association Ltd	195
Standing Orders	197





# THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd A J Wells

Secretary: Mr H L Gunn

1. Following the failure of the talks about union with the Congregational Union of Scotland, the moratorium on constitutional changes within the United Reformed Church has been lifted. Discussion on these has now moved to the Executive committee.

2. At the request of the Executive committee we are proposing an additional Standing Order as set out below (Resolution 2). Its aim is to improve communications between Assembly and the other councils of the Church by enabling Assembly to defer, for one year only, a decision upon a question before it. There are times when a matter is raised at relatively short notice and upon which it might be advisable to have wider consultation. At present there is no straightforward way to secure this consultation and the proposed Standing Order seeks to remedy that lack.

3. General Assembly 1990 will be held from 14-18 May in the Civic and Wulfrun Halls of the Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council in the West Midlands Province.

## PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

1. That the report be received for debate.
2. (a) Assembly accepts a new Standing Order to be known as SO 5c in the following terms:

During the course of a debate on a motion any member may move 'That decision on this motion be deferred to the next Assembly meeting.' The motion requires a seconder. The motion then takes precedence over other business, the mover explains the reasons for its introduction and, unless the Moderator considers that the motion is an unfair use of the rules or would have the effect of annulling the motion, the vote upon it shall be taken and a two thirds majority of those present and voting shall be required for its approval. At the discretion of the Moderator, the General Secretary may be instructed to refer the matter for consideration by other councils of the Church. The General Secretary shall provide for the deferred motion to be re-presented at the next meeting of the General Assembly.

- (b) Assembly agrees to the following consequential changes:
- (i) to re-number existing SO 5c as 5d;
  - (ii) to include reference to 5c in the first line of the new 5d.

# PROVINCIAL REPORTS ON GROWTH FOR THEIR SAKE

The General Assembly in 1987 passed the following resolution

The Assembly asks every Province to present a report to the Assembly of 1989 on progress in the setting and achieving of objectives for growth in its own life and in the life of Districts and local churches within it.

The written reports are offered to the Assembly, and a presentation of them will be made by the Revd Edmund Banyard, who will move.

That the Assembly receives the Provincial reports and encourages continuing work on the theme of growth in all local churches and all councils of the URC.

## NORTHERN PROVINCE

A conversation between the Moderator, David Jenkins and the Convener of the World Church and Inter-Church Relations Committee, Dr George Hood.

- D. Well, George, we're over 2 years on since the launch of *Growth for their Sake*. I have not been in the Province that long but you have seen this project launched in the Province and have been able to view something of its progress. What were the initial hopes?
- G. As a Province, David, we have a rather patchy record, I'm afraid, as we have tried to encourage our churches to look more positively at mission, renewal and growth. We are a very varied Province geographically and socially, stretching as we do from Teesside all the way to Dundee and across to north Cumbria. As you know, the Border Country is an area where it takes some time for new ideas to take root. But there is a very strong loyalty and deep tradition of churchmanship in many of our churches.
- D. Do you think people have been suspicious of words like mission, growth and evangelism?
- G. I think they are understandably suspicious of any instant answers to the deep-seated problems which many of our churches face, and they rightly are hesitant about embracing any campaigns which will come one day and be gone the next.
- D. I believe your committee, George, has handled the main thrust of this initiative?

- G. Yes, it does seem to have become our remit. I have not been at all happy about this because, as I'm sure you'll agree, mission cannot be the concern of only one committee within the Province. It embraces all aspects of church life, worship and outreach. It is an attitude of mind rather than an agenda item. And for so long the word mission has been only linked with Missions overseas that I do wish we had had a committee which crossed the departmental boundaries in order to develop a constructive strategy.
- D. Where then, George, do you see some of the achievements or bright spots over the last two years?
- G. There are numerous congregations who are taking their outreach seriously. With many churches in decline numerically or simply just holding their own, it is quite evident that we do have a need to look at the ways in which we are viewed from outside. Our own Province has a great challenge to ask questions concerning the way in which we serve our local communities. The churches who have begun to look at the material published in Mission Pursuit and who have done an audit of their congregation and of their locality, have certainly been helped to ask the right sort of questions about service and mission.
- D. Has Mission Pursuit been used widely in the Province then?
- G. I know, for instance, that all the Scottish churches have been given copies of the pack by their District Council. I know that at least 4 churches are using the material in Cumbria. Our church at Darlington in Teesside has worked extensively on the material, as has Robert Stewart Memorial in Newcastle. But other churches are doing their own research and examination of resources, not relying on an outside pack of material.
- D. What about Mission Enablers or Evangelism Enablers, George?
- G. We have a team of Evangelism Enablers who have not been used as widely or intensively as they had hoped, but have done good work wherever they have been called in to lead conferences in Districts (as they have in Newcastle and Cumbria), or to engage with churches as they examine their mission potential. Since the publishing of Mission Pursuit, however, churches are able to do much of this work on their own.
- D. I notice from the magazine Ferment issued in September last year that the playlet which West Midlands Province has written has also proved to be very useful for our consumers.
- G. Yes, the Evangelism Enablers have used the West Midlands role play very successfully, especially as a starter for discussion at the conferences they have led.

- D. Well, George, we have had three churches in the Province close in the last couple of months or so. There certainly seems to be a lot of work still to do if our congregations are to arrest the decline in membership. I come across some fine examples of ministry and service, of risk-taking and, although in some there is no immediate growth in numbers, I do believe there is a new spirit in some churches giving hope for the future. On the other hand we are a very traditional and entrenched area, especially in our attitudes to worship and our willingness to embrace change. Our rural churches seem to be having a very difficult time, but even these places where we seem to be weakest may be in the future the areas where there will be potential to attract new families. Do you think we are setting our expectations and goals too low?
- G. You are right to mention expectations. Our recent visitors to Taiwan, David Welbrock and Chris Baillie, came back with stories of churches with a very different spirit of expectation. At a recent Synod we heard the stories of three situations where growth has been achieved across the world and nearer at home. We do need to be realists but we are not pessimists.
- D. One of the brighter examples of a positive approach comes from the Women's Convention in Scotland. Over one hundred women gather each year at Easter time for a weekend, and during the last two years they have been exploring the theme of **Growth for their Sake**. I remember helping with the 1988 convention and Muriel Garrow has led the more recent one this year. There was an excellent spirit at those occasions giving us cause for hope, especially among our tiny Scottish churches.
- G. One area we haven't mentioned is the area of ecumenical relationships. We do not have many LEPs in our Province but there is a growing co-operation especially in rural areas, and I think the next few years will see this as a key area of development. As you know, we are trying to strengthen the Provincial ecumenical structures so that we can play our part more adequately. I do hope we can make some progress, especially in rural areas.
- D. A final question, George. Have the Districts set any goals or objectives for the next twelve months or two years?
- G. Many of the Districts have got plans and programmes for various aspects of church life but they haven't set any direct goals in relation to **Growth for their Sake**. This whole area of opportunity will not go away. At every level of church life in our congregations and as Districts and Province we will go on searching for ways in which we can be more fully responsive to the Gospel for the sake of the world of today and tomorrow.

## NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE

### 1. APPROACH TO THE RESPONSE

1.1 The long-term effects of our Provincial response to the call to **Growth for Their Sake** were considered crucial. A programme, thoroughly researched and phased so as not to overwhelm the churches, was agreed by Synod in March 1987. It will result in the formation of twelve commissions (section 2 under) to explore issues **additional** to those already being considered as part of our continuing church, district and provincial life.

1.2 Our aim will be to try to offer vision, ideas and practical suggestions to prepare, train and encourage local churches, their elders and members.

1.3 The vision, ideas and suggestions will be shared through **Discuss and Act** papers, designed as **popular** versions of the full reports of our commissions; features in **Together**, our Provincial newsheet; debates and discussions in Synod and District Councils, and special conferences and briefings. Our Provincial Day in 1990 will be used for a major launch of our plans.

1.4 What we hope from **Into the 90's** is that the spirit will write **new things** into the hearts and minds of our churches, districts and provinces and that these will lead to growth in every part of our witness to the Kingdom of God in our midst.

### 2. THE COMMISSIONS - their remits

2.1 **On Growth** To meet representatives of selected churches that have shown signs of growth in membership or in some other aspect of church life, to discover what lessons can be learned from their experience.

2.2 **New Churches** To consult with District Councils about possibilities for starting new churches.

2.3 **Pastoral Care** To consider the role of Elder in this ministry and to learn from recent developments in our churches of the office of Pastoral Assistant.

2.4 **Life Crises** To consider our work with younger parents and the middle-aged, exploring particularly the opportunities when approached for ceremonies associated with birth, marriage, death and other crises.

2.5 **The Elderly** To consider the opportunities presented by the growth in numbers of the retired and elderly (from 4 million and 10% of the population 75 years ago to 10 million and 18% now)

2.6 **Membership Training** To review and suggest effective methods of training members for membership, with continuing training including preparation for service as Elders.

2.7 **Faith in the City** To consider the implications of this report, and related matters, to the churches of the Province.

2.8 **Growing Together** To help our churches which have people of other faiths in their neighbourhoods, and to stimulate the development of local ecumenical collaboration.

2.9 **Music in Worship** To review developments in our churches using choirs and instrumentalists, suggesting new approaches and preparing for our new hymn book.

2.10 **Buildings** To review the life of churches where buildings are new or extensively refurbished, and to consider how to upgrade other buildings.

2.11 **Introducing the URC** To meet members of our congregations who are professionally involved in communicating information about goods or services to the public, to listen to their views on introducing the church to those outside.

2.12 **District Visitations** Recognising the inadequacy of much of this work, to suggest new methods that will help local churches to respond to new ideas and share their vision and experience with the wider church.

### 3. CONCLUSION

3.1 Within the Province, there are signs that in some parts of our life the slow decline of our churches is being reversed.

3.2 There are ministers who are enthusiastic, elders who are excited and members who have received a new vision of their part in the church's ministry. In essence, our suggestion is a structured attempt to bring some of that enthusiasm, excitement and vision into the open for others to share. We will be taking a risk, for if it goes wrong we will have created twelve talkshops and a mountain of paper. However, to do nothing at a time when there are some signs of new growth might be to miss a rare opportunity. 3.3 We know that such an enterprise ought not to be attempted without the belief that we are acting in obedience to God. We go forward in the belief that we are being matched with an hour of opportunity.

## MERSEY PROVINCE

4. The response of the Mersey Province is given under five main headings:

Growth in Faith and Discipleship  
Growth in Witness  
Growth in Leadership  
Growth in the pursuit of Justice  
Growing Together in One that the World may believe

5. To give an indication of the life of the church and a starting point for growth, a survey of the local congregations was carried out using the statistical returns over the past ten years and a spot survey of those at worship on one Sunday in May 1988. Being an exercise largely in numbers, the survey showed a 28% loss in membership over the decade, an ageing membership and a predominance of women in the membership. What it was unable to show were the quality factors, and these could be obtained only by personal experience and observation. The fact that 106 churches and one outreach project took part in the survey, and the one church which did not was taking part in another project that day, indicates a widespread concern within the Province and a basic desire for action.

### 6. GROWTH IN FAITH AND DISCIPLESHIP

6.1 Objective: To increase the faith and discipleship of members and of others associated with the local churches, at all levels of age and Christian experience, both individually and corporately.

6.2 The expression of this in quantifiable terms is largely impractical as it is concerned with quality rather than quantity. Some measure might be found in limited areas which might be considered to result from this growth:

- Increased financial giving
- More regular attendance at church services
- Higher proportion attending Bible Study Groups and Prayer Meetings

Increase in number and scope of church related community projects.

6.3 Other areas such as the quality of worship, personal relationships and attitudes, personal spirituality, whilst no less real are less easily measured.

6.4 Growth in faith and discipleship requires an input of teaching, sharing and experience and an output of commitment,



action and participation. Although these will be predominantly within the sphere of the local church, Districts and Province have a role to play in providing opportunities and encouragement (sometimes financial) for members to come together for wider experience and mutual support in Provincial, national and international events. We aim to improve the quality and support of those organised by the Province and Districts, utilising resources both within and outside the URC.

6.5 To increase efficiency we are examining the Provincial committee structures and methods of operation; identifying areas of overlap with ecumenical activities in the Merseyside and Region Ecumenical Assembly (MARCEA) and the Cheshire Church Leaders operations; the use of Synod meetings and attempts to release time spent on routine business in order to give more time for the presentation of major topics and sharing together; we are encouraging financial stewardship and the use of Direct Debit by churches for the payment of Unified Appeal. An Advocacy Agent is being appointed. A Provincial Scheme for the Survey of Property is being introduced.

## 7. GROWTH IN WITNESS

7.1 Objective: To become more effective witnesses of Christ in the world that others may respond to His call, receive the salvation He offers and enter into discipleship.

7.2 Faith is for sharing, and our growth in faith should lead to a growth in witness.

7.3 Two consultations for ministers, to study the results of the survey in order to develop a strategy for mission, have been held.

7.4 The Provincial Evangelism Team (Mission Enablers) has full Synod recognition. It is involved in District days and in consultation with local churches to stimulate and train members through Mission Pursuit and the Bible Society programme Person to Person.

7.5 A 21-page booklet has been compiled of Resources for Evangelism (#1.00 ppp)

7.6 Action is proposed to

- help church members to speak about their faith and share it when opportunities come
- identify 10% of active membership who have a call to evangelistic activity and release them for it using the 90% for prayer support and nurture.
- make specific plans to attract and evangelise amongst men, giving them appropriate interest groupings and using their skills.

- encourage ministers to be less constrained by pastoral duties and allot time for evangelistic activities.
- examine the feasibility of the appointment of a full-time Provincial Evangelist.
- hold a training day on the theme **One shall tell another.**

7.7 We seek the establishment of a base for Christian witness and worship in every area where people are. In this connection we are appointing a chaplain to the Higher Education establishments in Liverpool. We have a full-time Industrial Chaplain in Liverpool and a special ministry in Liverpool city centre. Financial support is being given to ecumenical projects in which our leadership involvement may be high (Skelmersdale) or minimal (Croxteth)

## 8. GROWTH IN LEADERSHIP

8.1 Objective: To increase the quality and availability of trained leadership.

8.2 Growth in faith, discipleship and witness, certainly of a corporate nature, is very dependent on competent leadership. Leadership in the local church is a key issue and local congregations need to raise potential leaders.

8.3 In 1988 a Training Co-ordinator for the Province was appointed to bring the training activities together to minimise overlap and to ensure that a total programme is available. Those involved in training roles have formed a team to carry out this task. The current areas of training were identified as:

- Youth workers
- Elders
- Children's workers
- Lay Preachers
- Non-stipendiary ministers
- Stipendiary ministers

8.4 Other needs identified were for the training of:

- Church Secretaries and Treasurers
- District Council visitors to churches
- Tutors (**Equipped to Teach.** Youth workers, Auxiliary Ministers)
- Local Pastors
- Musicians

8.5 Training is to equip, educate, encourage, enrich, enthuse, elevate and energise, and we plan to do this using resources both within the URC, within the ecumenical scene and outside as appropriate.

## 9. GROWTH IN THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

9.1 Objective: To encourage our churches to be more prophetic, to promote justice, moral awareness and greater sensitivity.

9.2 We face churches with this aspect of the Gospel through:

Worship packs on social issues (eg Peace, The City, Nuclear Winter) Synod presentations on:

Merseyside and Region Unemployment Council

World Debt

The 1% Appeal

Central America

Local church affiliation to bodies such as:

World Development Movement

Church Action on Poverty

World Disarmament Campaign

## 10. GROWING TOGETHER IN ONE THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE

10.1 Objective: To share the common life in worship and witness not doing separately those things which we can do together.

10.2 The Mersey Miracle is something we continue to contribute to and build upon at local church, District and Provincial levels.

10.3 MARCEA is well established but it has not yet reached the stage at which we can cut down on our separate committees. This is one of our objectives for the coming period.

10.4 Three models for Ecumenism have been identified:

The **Instead of Model** - doing together something which the churches are not doing, or have stopped doing separately. This could be new work or existing work.

The **Co-ordinating Model** - in which the personnel and resources of member churches are shared in a particular area for a specific task.

The **On behalf of Model** - in which one denomination, because it has expertise in a given area, undertakes a piece of work for all the churches, and is trusted by them for this purpose.

10.5 Two of our Districts fall outside the MARCEA region, so we are also involved in the activities of the **Cheshire Church Leaders**. This involvement led to the signing of the **Wirral Covenant** in 1987 and others within the county of Cheshire. We will continue to participate and move forward in these ecumenical ventures.

10.6 Growth in trust, awareness, and common action in the service of our one Lord is our pilgrim path for the future.

## YORKSHIRE PROVINCE

11. **Ecumenical Councils** cover the whole of the Province. In West Yorkshire there is now a full-time Ecumenical Officer. At his induction to this post in the St Anne's Catholic Cathedral in Leeds, the Church leaders made a covenant to work more closely together. This has led to increased ecumenical activity in all the Districts. The very active involvement of the Roman Catholic Church in the West Yorkshire Council has been particularly valuable.

12. There has been a certain amount of re-structuring in the organisation of the Province. The previous arrangements had not been found entirely satisfactory, and in the future it is proposed, subject to confirmation at the March Synod, that there be two committees concerned with mission. The first of these will deal with deployment and ecumenical affairs, and the second with mission at home and abroad. It is hoped that in this way the needs of the Province will be better served, and the churches helped to achieve the objective of **Growth for their Sake**.

13. At the 1988 Synod, the World Church and Mission Committee staged a **mock church meeting**, the aim of which was to show how churches tend to get things out of proportion. The presentation poked gentle fun at our tendency to spend time on secondary issues, and then have no time or energy left for the things that really matter. This led into a talk by the Moderator of the General Assembly on **Growth for their Sake**, followed by a general discussion on growth, evangelism and mission.

14. **The Mission Enablers** team is still working in the Province and has been able to help a number of churches. Some of this help has been through one-off visits to a church by members of the team. In other cases the relationship with the church has continued over quite a long period.

15. In some parts of the Province there is a very large Asian population. The World Church Committee organised a day conference in autumn 1988 entitled **The Cross and the Crescent**. The time was spent in learning about Islam and discussing ways of improving our understanding of, and relationship with, our Muslim neighbours. The visit included a visit to a nearby mosque. The speakers were from Bradford and the event was hosted by the Halifax Group of Churches. During the afternoon discussion the participants were given the opportunity of sharing their experiences and fears as they found themselves living in a multiracial society. This was found to be immensely valuable; we hope it will be possible to arrange a follow-up to the conference in the near future.

16. On the initiative of the Bishop of Bradford, the relevant Christian leaders met with local Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Jewish leaders to discuss the Salman Rushdie controversy. Admitting the religious, cultural and political differences, there was a united commitment to bridge-building and to reinforcing community life in Bradford.

17. Such is an overall survey of some activities at Provincial level which have contributed to church life and church growth. Many others could have been mentioned. Now we move on to think about local churches or groups of churches where some of the goals of **Growth for their Sake** are being achieved.

17.1 **Halifax.** The work here is particularly interesting as it illustrates the church serving the community in an area with a high percentage of Asian residents. A great deal of valuable work has been done through the Community Programme and is continuing under the Employment Training Programme. The scheme includes Day Care Centres for the elderly, a stroke club for the handicapped, a community centre, various outreach teams, and of course the training programme. The Mission Enablers Team has also been involved in helping some of these churches to discover their part, their mission - within this extensive community work - so that the churches grow in faith as well as in service.

17.2 **Bradford.** On a much smaller scale a church in the Bradford District, with about 40 members and no minister, was thinking about the future and their outreach and applied to the Mission Enablers Team. They were encouraged to start a weekly luncheon club which has proved to be successful. The church fellowship has been strengthened as a result.

17.3 One of the main aims of **Growth for their Sake** has been stated as being the **building up of local churches as growing communities of faith and worship.** This can happen in many ways: through community service, as outlined above, is one way. A small church in the Wakefield District has another story to tell. For many years a devoted Christian lady has cared for the church. She knew and loved all the members, organised the life of the church -carried them all. Then she died. Some observers wondered how the church would survive. A new minister came to share his time between this and two other churches. He is a Boys Brigade man, and began and continues a great work among the boys. It was a thrill to the elderly congregation to have children in the church after many years without them. They gave him every support. The women's meeting, for many years the key group in the church, supports the work among the boys and their parents with their prayers and their interest. They are all working together and there is a new spirit of joy and faith and service in that fellowship. No longer is all the work done by one lday - this is growth of a different sort.

17.4 A church in the Leeds District had shared a minister with a church in a neighbouring town for many years. Now in vacancy, they have set their minds to work and pray to make it possible to exist as an independent pastorate. They are well on the way to succeeding in this aim, and a new hope and enthusiasm is evident in the church as the members strive together towards a definite goal.

18. **Growth for their Sake** also includes the aim of helping churches to feel part of World Church and its mission. An encouraging example here is a church in Bradford which decided to concentrate on one overseas church as a project for the whole fellowship. They chose Taiwan, and the experiment culminated in a day on which the different sections of the church family shared what they had learned and what they had done. This was a great success and the whole church benefited from the experience and plan to repeat the exercise some time in the future. A growth is encouraged as more is learnt about growing churches in other parts of the world.

19. It is not possible in the available space to do more than mention:

- the adaptation of a hall to provide a non-alcoholic bar for young people in Whitby.
- the construction by our church at Withernsea of a hall for youth work across all the churches
- the increasing success of the Pilots organisation bringing new families into the church
- the building up of the faith and participation of the young people through the work of the Youth Leadership Training Officer and the Children and Young People's Committees.
- increasing confidence and more effective use of resources through the creation of Local Ecumenical Projects.

20. In many different ways **Growth for their Sake** is taking root and bearing fruit.

#### **EAST MIDLANDS PROVINCE**

21. **Growth for their Sake** has become part of a process begun in the Province in 1983 when, following a major consideration of Synod priorities, the project **Faith Aflame** was launched at the Provincial Day in 1985. The purpose was to encourage and enable confidence in faith and Christian discipleship. Study material prepared and used included a pre-membership course based on the URC Affirmation of Faith; an evangelism pack **Face to Face**; worship and learning material for the whole church, **Easter to Pentecost** and an Advent study course, **The Magnetism of Christmas**.

22. Annual Vocations Conferences (for all kinds of ministry), workshops and Retreats were a natural development of **Faith Aflame**.

23. In specific response to Growth for their Sake the following aims were agreed:

Christ is sending every Christian out to share with other people God's love for them and for all creation, by whatever means, according to his or her gift.

The local churches exist to enable Christians to do this work and to be his message.

Therefore our objective is to encourage the whole Province, through District Councils, churches and members, to apply this priority in every aspect of its life, particularly in the following areas:

- a) Worship and Prayer
- b) Ministry: membership enrichment, elders, auxiliary ministry, local leadership
- c) Stewardship of all resources: people, buildings, money, time.
- d) Young people
- e) Children
- f) Structures: both URC and ecumenical

24. A major discussion at Synod emphasised **Worship and Prayer** as the major priority which over four years is being explored through seven gateways:

Stewardship  
Structures  
Community  
Evangelism  
Leadership  
Children  
Youth

The whole process has been brought together under the title **Rooting for Growth.**

25. The Leadership Working Party reported to the Synod Executive at the beginning of 1989. Interim reports were received from the Working Parties on Children's Work and Youth Work.

26. Progress has been made in the setting of objectives for growth. They are not so easy to monitor. Some Districts and local churches have given this a high place on the agenda.

27. Overall, there is an increasing recognition of a change in direction and of a process just begun.

#### WEST MIDLANDS PROVINCE

28. In October 1987 the West Midlands Synod meeting entitled **Mission in the West Midlands 1988/89**, responded to the 1987

General Assembly remit by resolving as follows:

To awaken those who do not belong to any Christian church to recognise what the Gospel has for them, Synod calls upon District Councils and local churches to identify priorities for mission in 1988 and 1989 and initiate a programme for action.

29. Representatives of the Synod Departments had met with the Synod Officers on several occasions prior to the above mentioned Synod resolution in order to identify Priorities and Resources towards Growth.

30. In reviewing progress over the past two years, the West Midlands Province reports as follows:

30.1 **Faith and Life Department.** The main emphases in a two-year programme have been Worship and Children's Work and Christian Education.

30.2 We have an active and enthusiastic consultant for **The Community of Women and Men in the Church** who is in touch with a network of District representatives and with the National Committee.

30.3 Our Provincial Group for Training and Evangelism continues to promote Mission Pursuit and is available to advise local churches on all aspects of Mission and Growth. A number of churches and District Councils have benefited from visits by the Group.

30.4 We have a Consultant in Communications, and recognise the increasing importance of his role.

30.5 On the Department's initiative, Synod agreed to provide funding towards the appointment of a full-time Youth Leadership Training Officer within the Province.

30.6 The Department currently has as one of its priorities, promoting the work of Pilots.

31. **Church and Society Department** has held a consultation on Rural Deprivation (including the theology of mission) having previously considered **Faith in the City** in 1986.

31.1 Plans are in hand for consultations on Ecology and A Study in Human Wholeness.

32. **World Church and Mission Department** promotes ecumenism generally and holds regular meetings of Provincial and District Ecumenical Officers who are currently studying the new Ecumenical Instruments.



32.1 The possibility of linking Synod with a church in another country is under active consideration.

33. **Finance and Administration Department.** A group has been set up to meet annually to assess priorities and make recommendations regarding the allocation of financial resources. The Department has agreed to encourage other Synod Departments in new initiatives in mission even where increased expenditure is involved.

34. **Ministerial Committee.** The remit of the Committee has been widened to include Church Related Community Workers.

34.1 A consultation has been held on all aspects of Auxiliary Ministry. Some of the issues raised at the consultation will be passed to the Central Ministries Department in due course.

34.2 The Committee endeavours by various means to assist potential ministers and CRCWs to recognise their vocation. It also encourages ministers to participate in In-Service Training.

35. **Districts and Local Churches.** Responses from District Councils at our November 1988 and February 1989 Synod Executive meetings have, on the whole, been disappointing. We imagine that a great deal is happening but is either not being communicated or is not being identified under the headings of **growth** or **mission**.

36. There have been significant developments in the inner-city of Birmingham where a special minister has been appointed to the Lodge Road/Winson Green pastorate and a CRCW to the Nechells area. A Covenant has been signed between five Birmingham inner-city URC churches.

37. Our Worcester/Hereford District and Synod have been actively involved in establishing a Local Ecumenical Project in South Hereford with the appointment of an Anglican CRCW.h Related Community.

#### **EASTERN PROVINCE**

38. Seeking to make ourselves part of what God is already doing, our priority as a Province is to encourage the development of i) confidence, ii) identity, iii) resource finding and releasing, iv) community, and v) our togetherness in Christ.

#### **SOUTH WESTERN PROVINCE**

39. A special group was set up, representative of each District, to think through this matter and bring recommendations to a Synod meeting. In the preliminary discussions of the group it was quite clear that most thought the purpose of the Provincial organisation is to help local churches function to the best of

their ability in their local situations. It seeks to provide expert help and advice with building, trust and legal matters, and to provide a larger forum for local churches to share in the discussion and programme-making of the national church.

40. The group rejoiced in the many local ecumenical unions of churches and the two united areas in Wiltshire, and declared our continued willingness to share fully with other denominations.

41. The Provincial Synod, meeting on 15 October 1988, adopted the following as objectives for growth and requested the Synod General Purposes Committee to implement them:

41.1 **A Renewed Life.** Encourage 2 or 3 pastorates each year to engage in a programme of renewal, taking care to evaluate the process afterwards.

41.2 **A Growing Life.** Each year 4 weekend conferences are to be planned involving about 100 people which would major on bible study, prayer and worship. Further, we should invite people to form a loosely based community following a daily pattern of worship and bible reading.

41.3 **A Worshipping Life.** Worship is the life-blood of our churches, and the quality of local church life is heavily dependent on its worship which also provides most of its teaching. Almost all the local churches in the South West are grouped in pastorates involving several churches. The Synod requested Districts to call meetings for ministers, lay preachers and church secretaries to discuss ways in which our worshipping life might be renewed.

41.4 **A Serving Life.** There is a need to raise the consciousness of the church about the many issues of social and political responsibility which face the world. The Synod and District Councils were asked to ensure that **church and society** matters found a rightful place on agendas (normally such issues can be tackled ecumenically).

42. The Provincial Synod noted that many Districts and local churches had already set their own objectives for growth.

#### WESSEX PROVINCE

43 Two years ago we reported the appointment of a Strategy Group, which had identified three **priority areas** for the development of growth in the life of the Province: Growth in Spirituality, Growth in Outreach and Growth in Church and Society and World Church concerns. Considerable work has been done throughout the Province in these priority areas. For example, in terms of Growth in Spirituality the Province now has a clearly defined programme of in-service training and post-ordination

training. Elders' training has become an established part of the life of most Districts. There have been training days for Junior Church leaders and those involved in the leadership of house groups. Work is currently being done on **Refreshing our hearts in the Bible**, and several Districts are opening their meetings with bible study, as has been the practice at Synod now for over two years. Growth in Outreach has become a major concern and constitutes the bulk of this report. Active steps have been taken to promote concern for Church and Society matters with the development of a network of link people in Districts and congregations. Something similar has happened in the field of World Church and Mission, where also a paper was produced for action by congregations **belonging to the wider church**. In this connection also, a Provincial Newsletter is about to be launched.

44. At the same time, the Province has been looking at its own structures, and a number of changes have been made to ensure that these structures provide the most effective basis for the life of the Province and particularly for taking up some of the priorities which have been identified. Consideration has also been given to a financial strategy for the Province, which has been closely linked with the general strategy and priorities previously identified. Districts have also looked closely at their structures and priorities, some working through the discussion paper on District strategy prepared for this purpose. Two Districts now have their own Strategy Group as a permanent feature of their life.

45. In July 1987 the Strategy Group met with the Wessex Evangelism Team to discuss the implications of Growth in Outreach. As a result of this, a **Growth for their Sake Working Party** was set up to prepare a programme for the Province. This was presented to the Synod in October 1987 and set out a three-phase programme - **Catching the Vision, Planning for Growth and Into Action**.

46. **Catching the Vision**. This has been the dominating theme during the last year. Three Quiet Days for ministers were organised in different centres in the Province in the early Spring of 1988. These were conducted by the Moderator on the theme of the resources of the gospel and our responsibility to share them. They were attended by the majority of ministers in pastoral charge. Similar Quiet Days for Elders have been arranged since for groups of churches in all the Districts, thus giving Elders in all congregations the opportunity to share in **Catching the Vision**. These Quiet Days have proved of such benefit in themselves that it has been decided that they should become a regular part of the ongoing life of the Province.

47. Prayer cards were also produced for use by church members. In some cases other District events were arranged as part of the

Growth for their Sake programme. There was also a presentation at Synod in March on **One Step Forward Ministries**.

48. **Planning for Growth.** We have now entered the second phase of the Provincial Growth in Outreach programme. After considering the material available, the working party decided to commend the Mission Pursuit pack as the best means of implementing a concern for Planning for Growth. There was a major presentation on this by Donald Elliott at the October Synod, in the course of which ministers in the Province also shared their experience of using the pack. Congregations are being encouraged to use the pack in making their own plans for the future. The Wessex Evangelism Team are making themselves available to help congregations in this respect. Districts are planning, or have already held, events to introduce congregations to Mission Pursuit and help them to use this tool effectively in their mission to the communities in which they are set.

49. All congregations in the Province have been encouraged to engage in a **Commitment to Mission** on a convenient Sunday in January 1989. Material has been prepared for use in worship, to enable congregations to do this at whatever stage they are in their concern for Growth in Outreach.

50. **Into Action.** The working party is now planning to produce material which will help congregations to act on their assessment of their situation through Mission Pursuit and to move **Into Action**, particularly in terms of communicating their faith to the people of their own community.

#### **THAMES NORTH PROVINCE**

51. **Setting objectives.** In November 1986 the Provincial Council agreed a statement summarised as follows:

**INTRODUCTION.** As a basis for considering **purposes and priorities**, it was felt necessary to spell out the basic aims of the Church. We suggest they are:

- a) to proclaim Christ
- b) to continue his caring, teaching, healing ministry
- c) to work for the establishment of his Kingdom/rule.

52. **The overall purpose of the Province** (Synod, councils and committees, Moderator, Officers and Staff)

- a) to serve the local churches and Districts - to provide servicing, corporate support and leadership, to fulfil an initiating or prophetic role when appropriate;
- b) to be the Church at a regional (Thames North) level, dealing with those wider issues and relationships which could not be handled by local churches or Districts.

When it comes specifically to the question of mission, the Council went on to enlarge on the above points:

a) the Province must encourage, support and enable the local churches in their mission - helping to motivate and mobilise them, assisting them to audit their situation and identify realisable goals and objectives.

b) the Province must also be involved in a corporate witness to the region. Synod is A Church Meeting for London area concerns.

53. **Priorities for Growth in the URC arising in Thames North in the next 10 years.** We identify the need for growth in:

53.1 understanding on the part of all our people that mission and indeed evangelism is an essential element of being a Christian - something in which we are all inevitably involved - and that prayer is the bedrock of that mission;

53.2 the willingness and ability amongst local churches to listen and respond to the needs and concerns of individuals and the neighbourhood;

53.3 community awareness and involvement in local churches;

53.4 knowledge in our local churches of the situation, concern and outlook of Christians in very different sorts of communities, near at hand and far away;

53.5 our care and support for the individual gatekeepers (ie decision-makers) in our midst;

53.6 prophetic witness towards the institutions of London;

53.7 our care, concern and involvement in the inner city and urban priority areas (and certainly no more withdrawal);

53.8 understanding and relating to other faiths and cultures in our midst;

53.9 church extension or planting where appropriate, ecumenically if this seems right (eg new areas of Slough and Aylesbury);

53.10 new forms of Christian community and presence (eg Community for Reconciliation, Shalom Justice and Peace Centre, Robert Kemble Christian Institute).

54. **Achieving objectives.** Thames North has been involved in the process of Growth for their Sake for some time. At October Synod in 1985 the Province committed itself to a three-year programme Mobilising for Mission, which had three main thrusts:

1. the development of the mission of the local church
2. the increasing of awareness of the world Church and its global mission
3. the recruitment of ministers and others for Christian vocation.

55. An evaluation took place at the October Synod 1988 indicating that at least some progress had been made. Interest in and recruitment for the ministry and Church Related Community Work has undoubtedly increased. A series of Vocation Days round the Province was attended by 37 enquirers and a substantial proportion are now candidating or in training. It has been agreed that St Andrewstide be adopted as a time when all local churches will give special emphasis to world mission and a Provincial service or event will be held on this theme every second year.

56. So far as local churches are concerned there are signs of growth in interest in both evangelism and Christian service, in attendance at worship and, in some places, in church membership, though this seems to be counterbalanced by pruning of the rolls in some larger churches to make them more realistic! Mission Pursuit or other audit processes are being used to help churches determine what the needs, both spiritual and practical, are in their neighbourhoods, and what their role might be in responding. The Provincial Mission Enablers team have been available to help, but feel they have not been as widely used as they would like, so a new pattern of working is being developed whereby a re-vamped (and re-trained) group of Mission Explorers will visit local churches in turn at the suggestion of District Council or Moderator, to find out about what is happening and to share experiences and insights from elsewhere.

57. Undoubtedly the most effective way of encouraging and assisting churches in mission has been by sharing stories and experiences. Share a vision is a concept which has been developed in a number of different ways - by special days for groups of churches, by District Councils, by individuals. A Provincial Video Group has been set up and has produced a number of videos on the Mobilising for Mission theme and a number of other videos (like the Bible Society's Person to Person programme) are available on loan for use with groups and small meetings.

58. Districts are also looking at ways of centering their agendas more on mission than on maintenance. Pastoral visitations are being replaced by consultations which help churches to examine their life and work in the context of their role in their community. One District is experimenting with churches presenting their own report and vision to the Council meeting.

59. There have been a handful of small, inner city churches which have captured a new sense of purpose and begun to grow again. Some have responded to an evangelical approach, others to a call to community service. Many have benefited from the work of the four person Urban Churches Support Group shared with the Southern Province, who bring encouragement and advice to individual Elders and Church Meetings and organise day events like consultations for Church Secretaries and Market places to exchange ideas and resources.

60. Some local churches are very active in community work, adapting premises and/or employing community workers (not all recognised CRCWs yet). Others, concentrating on renewal have attracted more worshippers with their lively worship and evangelistic approach.

61. A re-organisation of Provincial structures means that the Council is able to look at a wide range of policy issues whilst committees deal with details. District boundaries have been re-organised so that they coincide more readily with those of civic authorities and other denominations. The Province is deeply involved in London-wide social responsibility concerns through the London Churches Group, where issues like housing, AIDS, racial harassment and relationships with the police are constantly under consideration. Following **Mobilising for Mission** consideration is now being given to the best way of continuing its ongoing concerns of encouraging local mission, interest in the world Church and Christian vocation.

#### SOUTHERN PROVINCE

62. Following the 1986 General Assembly resolution concerning **Growth for their Sake** the Southern Province has sought at all levels of its life to respond to the challenge to grow for the sake of God's Kingdom in the world.

63. In September 1986 a Provincial Consultation, attended by representatives of all departments, recognised the need:

- to recruit more ministers, both stipendiary and auxiliary;
- to audit and assess the life of the local church;
- to listen to and respond to questions posed by the world at large;
- and to sow and pray in faith in order to bring about growth.

64. This recognition has since moved into the area of further planning and action.

64.1 There has been a steady response within the Province to the call to full-time and auxiliary ministry.

64.2 In conjunction with Thames North Province the Urban Churches Support Group has offered consultation, participation and training opportunities to many of the smaller churches in the urban priority areas of Greater London.

64.3 In particular, the Provincial Training Officer has visited many small and struggling churches and, from that experience, has produced a booklet **New Life for Small Churches** designed to help the **small church** to be a more confident, well-organised, renewed community, regardless of its numbers, ages or circumstances.

64.4 A comprehensive Training Programme for Elders has been drawn up, in the hope that such essential training will commence throughout the Province in 1990.

64.5 During 1988 a team of enablers from the Province visited every District to encourage engagement in Mission Pursuit. A large number of churches have now begun to participate with enthusiasm and determination.

64.6 Signs of growth are being witnessed. At the first District Council in 1989, 8 churches in the Canterbury District reported an increase of between 8 and 10 members since the previous Council. In Crawley all three UR churches are each moving into different areas of housing development with the establishment of regular worship and the hope of planting new church life. The 1988 General Assembly recognised the newly-established community church at Durrington in West Sussex as a church of the URC. In other places new buildings, carefully designed, have enhanced worship and brought new opportunities of offering service to the wider community.

65. In September 1988, another Provincial Consultation sought to respond further to the challenge to put **Growth for their Sake** at the centre of its planning and life. As a result of this consultation a number of targets were identified.

66. The Church and Society Department expressed a need for **Growth in Awareness**, and urged the Church to maintain its prophetic role in challenging the disruption of society. In order to sharpen awareness of the many issues which call for our attention, it was agreed that a Prayer Calendar should be produced for distribution to all churches as a means of focusing our prayer, Biblical reflection and action for the sake of others. Such a Prayer Calendar, imaginative, informative and flexible in style was produced for distribution at the Spring 1989 Synod.

67. The Ministries Department emphasised the need to release ministry from stifling traditional patterns which do not encourage a ministry of the whole people of God. Districts would be urged to scope pastorates in the light of an overall strategy



for mission and growth, and to seek a more collaborative ministry involving stipendiaries, auxiliaries, lay preachers and elders. Such a move demanded careful forward planning rather than swift change.

68. The World Church and Mission Department looked to **Growth within Partnership - Ecumenical and Worldwide**. Unity and mission belong always together, and our glad participation in the Inter-Church Process must have as its goal **that the world may believe**. Unity should lead to a new sense of community and to the call together to witness to and serve the community in Christ's name. Ecumenical sharing of resources locally, and twinning with churches in Europe and in the Third World, need to be encouraged and developed. Bromley District Council has forged a link with the Zerbst District in East Germany, and the Southern and Wessex Provinces are exploring ways of developing links with the Eglise Reforme in Northern France.

69. The Faith and Life Department urged that all our life and activity in local church, District and Province should be grounded more firmly in Biblical faith and insights, not least through worship and Bible Study at the beginning of meetings. Any concept of growth must include spiritual growth. Provision should be made for a more solid building up of confidence and trust both in the gospel and in one another, with more time given to praying together. These basic principles were incorporated into the planning of the Spring 1989 Synod.

70. The Finance and Administration Department laid stress on the need to **fund for growth**. For several years there has been an increasing release of finance in the Province for purposes related both to building development and to enable the fulfilment of particular ministries. A number of imaginative building projects in the Province are at present being developed, together with plans for an ecumenical Channel Tunnel Chaplaincy. In previous years a proportion of Provincial and District expenses has been met from the giving of our churches for Unified appeal. From 1988 these costs are met in full from Provincial income, and the #12,000 so released has been diverted to national funds for ministerial training. This will be an ongoing policy.

71. The Province has committed itself to giving priority to growth in every aspect of its life, work and witness. Such provisional planning, however, must ever be matched by the desire within each local church to fulfil its mission to grow in Christ for the sake of others.

#### WALES PROVINCE

72. Subsequent to the Assembly 1988 the General Purposes Committee of the Wales Synod devoted a special meeting on 6 June 1988 to consider **Objectives and Structures** for renewal and mission - the implication being that clarification of the former

would enable the Province to see which structures would best serve to realise specific aims and objects.

73. It became clear that aims and objectives needed to be related

a) to the life of the local churches and congregations in terms of their worship and mission and

b) to the Province's administration in terms of the function of its Moderator and other Officers, the role of its committees, and its relation with the local churches.

74. Re a), a draft statement of and questionnaire concerning Aims and Objectives was circulated to all Districts and churches with a request that after discussion at all levels, a response should be made to the Synod Clerk by 1st January 1989. A distinction was made between General Aims and Specific Objectives, recognising that the latter would vary from church to church and District to District. The General Aims formulated for discussion included

- 1 the establishment and extension of ecumenical links
- 2 the ensuring that every congregation was part of a full-time ministry
- 3 the strengthening of local churches and the encouragement of greater involvement with the local community
- 4 the equipping of churches and their members for mission
- 5 the development of the awareness of churches to God's call for the establishment of Justice and Peace
- 6 the seeking of ways and means of increasing personal commitment and its expression in terms of giving and funding
- 7 the improving of local and Provincial organisation and communication

75 The response to this questionnaire to date has been somewhat disappointing! Some 12-14 churches have returned completed papers, 3 or 4 Districts have given it some consideration, and the Faith and Life Committee considered it in some depth.

76. The returns from the churches, though few in numbers, have been constructive and valuable, indicating a great deal of effort in a number of areas. Our concern is with the churches that have not yet responded -but we look forward to a full discussion at our March Synod.

77. There is evidence that the project is acting as a stimulus in many churches and there are already signs of growth, though at this stage very limited, in the Province as a whole.

78. Re b), there is a major review in progress of the organisation of the Province and its structures. This affects

the location and running of offices, the role and function of officers and committees, etc. The change from one Moderator to another, and the appointment of a new Synod Clerk (the present appointment being temporary) and new Administrative Assistant has given the opportunity for a thorough re-assessment of the situation in Wales.

79. Certain recommendations to the October Synod of 1988 were referred back to the General Purposes Committee and fresh proposals will go to the March Synod 1989.

80. In addition to the above, District Days, a weekend conference at Trefecca and other meetings have been organised, and a small number of churches have been chosen by our **Mission Enablers** to serve as bases for pilot schemes. These too will be reporting at a later stage.

81. Whilst recognising that there is much yet to be done, the Province is encouraged by the indications that some development on growth for their sakes is taking place.

# FAITH AND LIFE DEPARTMENT

Convener: The Revd Tony Coates  
Secretary: The Revd Terry Oakley

## Introduction

1. The Faith and Life Department exists to help the church at all levels to be a vital believing community, and it tries to be that too in its own life. We are part of a whole network of relationships, and our role, as well as initiating activities, is to orchestrate and co-ordinate the activities of others. We try to be alert to what is happening in other churches, in our provinces, districts and local churches, and to pass on to the wider church what we learn which is of value. The following report is of the contribution that we have attempted to make to this process during the past year, but it is only a fraction of the faith and life activity (which is any conscious effort to make us a more vital believing community) going on through the United Reformed Church.

## Personalia

2. We are grateful to all whose service in the department has come to an end during the past year or comes to an end at this Assembly, and to those who have undertaken work in the department. We would mention the following in particular. John Robinson has served us well as Master Pilot and we are grateful to him for his work, and to his church, Hayes Free Church, who made him available to do it. He is succeeded by Chris Baker, who is serving as Master Pilot half-time, which is a significant advance. We are grateful to the East Midlands Province for making this appointment possible and to the Congregational Federation for the generous provision of office space in the Congregational Centre, Nottingham. Edmund Banyard has been editor of the much appreciated Prayer Handbook for four years, and is succeeded by Graham Cook. Hazel Snashall has resigned as secretary of the Children's Work Committee, to which she brought her very great experience in this field, and she is succeeded by Stephen Thornton. Robert Latham's period of service as Convener of the Windermere Policy and Planning Committee comes to an end at this Assembly: he was the first Convener of the committee and has presided over the founding and establishment of the Windermere Centre as an integral part of the life of the URC. We are grateful to him, and to Rosalind Goodfellow who is nominated to succeed him. Jean Holdsworth has been forced to resign through ill health as Convener of the Youth Committee. We have admired Jean for the courage with which she has continued to serve despite pain and disability and we share her sorrow that she has had to resign. We thank her for her service at this time of rapid

development in youth work, and Ruth Clarke for accepting appointment as her successor. In the Faith and Life Office we have welcomed Marcia Jones as secretary in the Youth Office and congratulated Caroline Ritchie on her marriage last September.

#### NETWORK for women and men

3. The URC has aimed at providing equal treatment of and opportunities for ministry by both women and men. For this reason no separate organisation or departmental staffing have been provided for women or men. However, attempts have been made to ensure reasonably balanced representation by women, men and young people on the committees and groups of the Church.

4. On reviewing the situation it is clear that some achievements can be recorded, but that more could and should be done, particularly in the light of the development of the women's movement over the last two decades!

5. Particular needs have been, on the one hand, to relate effectively to ecumenical bodies focussing on women's issues, (such as the Women's Inter Church Consultative Committee - WICC), and on the other to help those women and men who want to share common concerns to be able to do so.

6. Ruth Clarke on behalf of the Department enabled a gathering at Windermere over a weekend in December 1988. Over 300 showed interest and formed a basic mailing list. Those who met made several recommendations, which were accepted by the Faith and Life Department. These were:

- a) There should be a NETWORK (women and men) the aim of which would be to encourage full participation of both women and men at all levels of church life and equal respect and status...It would exchange information (newsletters etc) and there would be opportunities for meeting other members (locally and ecumenically and occasionally nationally).
- b) There should be another meeting arranged through this network from 9-11th June 1989 at Windermere.
- c) Provinces should be encouraged to appoint Provincial Consultants (re Women and Men) as has the West Midlands.
- d) Districts should be asked to appoint District Correspondents (re Women and Men)

The Department is acting on these recommendations and therefore asks Provinces and Districts to appoint Consultants and Correspondents.

## **Women's World Day of Prayer (Mrs Ruth Bowyer)**

7. This year has been very rewarding in the Women's World Day of Prayer movement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The services held on March 3rd 1989, were well attended, the theme being **Lord, Teach us to Pray**, from the women of Burma. Day conferences have been held encouraging Bible study and preparation of the services.

8. We now have Area Link Persons to help and advise the 3,147 local Branches. The National Committee has produced a booklet **Guide-lines for Local Committees** to keep the movement alive and efficient.

9. For full information, please purchase the annual **Together in Prayer** book. The service for 1990 **A Better Tomorrow, Justice for All** has been prepared by the women of Czechoslovakia.

## **Scotland (Mrs Jean Tinto)**

10. The 1988 service **Open Doors** was greatly appreciated and generally found to be challenging and appropriate for the first year of the second century. There were more reports of the service being held in hospitals, retirement homes and day centres. It appears that more men are now attending services and in some cases taking part and more groups such as Girls' Brigade, Girl Guides, Red Cross etc. are being involved. The Bible Studies and Children's Service are also being increasingly used. Several Directors of Education have agreed to receive copies of the Children's Service for distribution to schools and their areas.

11. The following grants were made: #14,000 to Feed the Minds; #8,500 to National Bible Society of Scotland; #400 to projects for deprived women.

12. There was a great disappointment over television coverage. Scottish Television had recorded material for **Late Call** on each evening of the week of the World Day of Prayer. When programmes for that week were published it was discovered that there was no **Late Call**. The number of letters and telephone calls of protest as a result took STV by surprise. Changes in broadcast schedules were given as the reason. Local radio stations gave good coverage.

## **DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP COMMITTEE**

**Convener:** The Revd Prof Colin E Gunton  
**Secretary:** The Revd John H Taylor

## **Service Book**

13. The new book is expected to be published by the Oxford

University Press by the end of the year. As a result of the Assembly's decision last year to let more churches try out more of the draft services, 88 ministers and congregations sent us criticisms and suggestions. It proved a useful exercise and a good number of improvements have been made. We are grateful to all those who responded and to the Moderators who assisted us with the service for the Ordination and Induction of Ministers. A few services which were in the 1980 book (eg. stone-laying, dedication of property) will not be in the new book. Instead master copies for photocopying will be available at Provincial Synod Offices and Church House in the New Year.

14. Next, we are turning our attention to special services, such as for Christmas, Holy Week and all-age Communion. We should like to make it known as widely as possible that we would welcome copies of services from churches which they have used on special occasions and found stimulating. If these could reach Church House by the end of the year it would be helpful.

### **The Revised English Bible**

15. This revision of the New English Bible is to be published early in the autumn by Oxford and Cambridge University Presses. High on the list of aims of the revisers have been to diminish sexist language wherever possible without being unfaithful to the Hebrew or Greek and to furnish the Church with a version which would be good to read aloud. In a large number of instances we have been able to make use of the REB in the new Service Book through the good offices of the Presses. A copy of the bible is to be presented to the Moderator of Assembly during the meetings and we look forward to the launching of the new version in September.

### **Proposals for New Marriage Act**

16. Towards the end of last year a Green Paper was published with proposals for the reform of marriage law. However, many months before that the committee, together with one of the church's legal advisers, responded to several questions on the subject put to the denomination by the Churches Main Committee. The proposals in the Green Paper accord well with the views we expressed. The locations where marriages may be performed are to be widened without permitting extremes. Authorised Persons will need re-appointing every three years and will have to serve an initial probationary year. There will be a new marriage certificate with information about mothers as well as fathers of brides and grooms. One notes that the government is not prepared to consider making a civil marriage obligatory before a religious ceremony could take place. How long it will be before a bill comes before Parliament with the proposals we await to see.

## **Mission and Other Faiths**

17. During the last year we have kept in touch with the Mission and Other Faiths Committee. The Doctrine and Worship Committee wish to make clear that we are in favour of dialogue with people of other faiths, also with secularists. The approach to dialogue taken by MOF is one, however, of several held by members of the URC and we wish to see all the different approaches kept open.

## **Local Church Leadership**

18. A working party is being set up to examine the basis and practice of the ministry of elders and whether the time has come to think of changes to our order. Times have changed since 1972. There are more union churches and local ecumenical projects. There are many more small congregations and many more groups of churches. The ordained ministry is spread about more thinly. On the other hand elders' training has made great progress.

19. When union with the Congregational Union of Scotland was anticipated it was agreed that a working party ought to be set up to consider the future of local church leadership. Now that the scheme has fallen through, the task needs to be done nevertheless. Moreover the CUS would like to take part.

20. Following the November meeting of Executive, the East Midlands Province undertook to convene a working party which, will comprise ordained and lay members from the Province and representatives of both the Ministries and Faith and Life Departments, the CUS and the Methodist Church.

## **Lay Presidency**

21. We have received some queries about the guidelines on Lay Presidency and how districts use them. We are making inquiries and seeing what changes might be necessary. Next year we expect to place before Assembly revised guidelines.

## **Baptism**

22. The consultation on baptism held in September 1988 at the Windermere Centre was well worthwhile and a report of it was circulated in the Information Service. However, the committee has been asked by a number of people to raise the question of our belief and practice again.

23. In 1987 the Doctrine and Worship Committee brought to Assembly a report containing its interpretation of the teaching of the Basis of Union on the practice of baptism in the URC. The report was not accompanied by a resolution, and the outcome has been a measure of uncertainty about both the practice of baptism and the operation of the conscience clause in the Basis of Union. We offer the



following paragraphs and resolution in the hope of clarifying the position.

#### BAPTISM AND THE BASIS OF UNION

24. We affirm, along with the whole Church of God, that there is one baptism which God has given us as the means of entry into the body of Christ. Almost alone among churches the URC holds in trust for the coming great Church a dual track practice of baptism, in which as a church we recognise both infant and believer's baptism. Beyond those differences we hold that baptism 'is the sacrament of entry into the Church and is therefore administered once only to any person.' (**Basis of Union** - printed as **Clause 14** in **The Manual second edition**). As a church we hold that baptism, whether of believers or of infants, is administered in the light of the divine promise and in response to the priority of grace. Any denial, or action implying denial, of one of the two forms, renders non-existent the sacramental action of the church which was performed in faith.

25. We confess that the baptismal practice of the Church has sometimes been the cause of pain and scandal. We recognise that some have, for various reasons, ceased to regard their baptism as infants as true baptism. In our own communion, uncertainties about the conscience clause in the Scheme of Union have led to perplexity and misunderstanding.

26. With regard to the conscience clause the **Basis of Union** is explicit that as a church we affirm that 'both forms of baptism are understood to be used by God in the upbuilding of faith.' **Basis of Union, Clause 14**. The rights of conscience allow that no particular minister shall be compelled to administer baptism in a form to which s/he 'has a conscientious objection.' They do not allow that a congregation may declare one exclusive mode of baptism. We believe that ministers are obliged to make it clear to their congregations that there is a case for both forms of baptism. We also believe that if we are to be truly a dual track fellowship, the opportunity for both forms of administration must be made quite plain. All parents bringing an infant for initiation must be informed that there are two possible forms of initiation.

27. We believe that careful pastoral practice will help to prevent some of the pain and misunderstanding that have been a feature of recent experience. On the one hand the seriousness of vows made by parents and the congregation must be stressed. On the other hand, we would wish to encourage opportunity to be given for the reaffirmation of baptismal vows both at the point of personal declaration of faith and as a regular feature of the church's worship.

28. The URC depends for its well-being on the conciliar discipline according to which we voluntarily and with integrity order our

pastoral practice according to the Basis of Union. We affirm that it is the responsibility of District Councils to see that those who make vows before God make them seriously and with the intention to live in accordance with them. These considerations must be borne in mind particularly at the time of inductions to pastorates.

### **Christian Initiation and Church Membership**

29. The committee has been asked on several occasions why in this ecumenical age there is no common Church Membership Certificate to set alongside the one for baptism. It is not for want of trying. An attempt to produce one early in the eighties revealed a distressing state of affairs with churches holding different understandings of the meaning of membership, what are its basic requirements and preparation, besides the sacramental rites involved. A working party was set up in 1984 which reported last year in a booklet, **Christian Initiation and Church Membership (BCC, #1.50)**.

30. The report begins with two graphic stories of young people, children of mixed marriages (interchurch families) who are determined to belong to both the Protestant and Catholic churches of their parents and who, by patience and persuasion achieve their goals. They live in Europe but not in Britain.

31. The report then proceeds with accounts of local covenanting in these islands. Then it surveys and examines what the churches believe and practice. What emerges is that becoming a member of the Church of Christ involves a person in a) belonging to a local church fellowship, b) having a spiritual and inner sense of incorporation with Christ, and c) being formally recognised by a local institutional church. Furthermore, the sacramental aspect of Initiation marks a definite public stage in the total process. Churches have varied in what they have emphasized and what they have neglected. Next there is a discussion of baptism and confirmation.

32. There is plenty here to keep ministers and elders examining what their churches are doing about membership, and why. And there are questions on almost every page which, if answered positively, look like pointing the way ahead. The report concludes with a series of twelve questions for local churches and Councils of the Church to consider. Some ask us to go and see what happens in other churches. What about joint preparation and joint baptisms? Would a simple ceremony of reception be sufficient to admit someone confirmed in another church to ours? What about local covenants?

33. The BCC awaits our answers. Neither the booklet nor the subject is simple. The committee suggests that every Province prepares a presentation for Synod encouraging ministers and churches to study the report and send their responses to us by 30 November 1990.

34. The Eastern Province is at work examining the meaning of church membership today - discipling is becoming the fashionable word -and it is hoped that their report and the responses from the churches generally will enable us to submit to the 1991 Assembly our response to the BCC report.

35. Finally the committee would like the Provinces to know that its members are very willing to meet people and discuss Christian Initiation, or for that matter other doctrinal subjects, and to encourage a wider interest in theology in our church.

**Musicians' Guild (General Secretary: Mr Don Gray)**

36. The URC Musicians' Guild is pleased to report the formation of a new Branch in the North West Province. The Branch Secretary is Mr H E Wilby, 76 Millfield Road, Chorley, Lancs. PR7 1RE. The inauguration was held in June, 1988, during a Choir Training Day led by John Cooke, the Northern Commissioner for the RSCM.

37. The Guild is proud to be affiliated to the RSCM and acknowledges, with thanks, the help and encouragement given to musicians in the URC. The Director, Dr Lionel Dakers, has recently retired and moved with his wife, Elizabeth, to a new home in Salisbury, Churches in the URC who have experienced at first hand Lionel's unique leadership in singing and choir training, will endorse the Guild's good wishes for their future. We are also pleased that the Revd T C Micklem serves, and has served for many years, on the RSCM Council.

38. Two important events in 1990 dominate our plans. The first is the promotion of the new hymnbook. The Guild will be pleased and honoured to be involved with the Districts in promotion plans. The second is a national scheme which seeks to address the serious shortage in the number of people prepared to learn the church organ and serve as organists.

39. 1990 will be National Learn-The-Organ Year. A committee has been formed of distinguished organists, representatives of academic institutions concerned with organ tuition, and representatives of Church Music Societies. Dr David Morris represents the Guild on this committee. Specific plans have not yet been formulated, but churches at local level will be asked to co-operate by allowing their organs to be tried by aspiring musicians from colleges, schools and local community. There will be nationwide publicity for the scheme and every encouragement will be given for interested musicians to take up formal tuition.

40. All churches are reminded that the Guild maintains an Organ Register for both disposal and purchase/transfer of unwanted organs. This scheme can save a great deal of money to churches considering purchase of new organs. However, the scheme's effectiveness depends on people using it. A copy of the register will be sent to any church expressing interest.

41. The Guild exists to serve the church. Membership is open to all who have responsibility for music in worship, organists, pianists, choir leaders etc. Please give your encouragement to your musicians to enrol. Contact the General Secretary, (address in the year book), or the Membership Secretary: Mr Wallace Bray, 13 Hewitt Lane, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 0JA.

#### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

**Convener:** The Revd William Mahood  
**Secretary:** Mr Michael Harrison

#### **Integrated Training**

42. In our work this year we have been seeking to explore the belief that in the Church, all are called. The Ministry of the Church is about the whole people of God working together. If we are to be confident within our ministry we need the sense of being called to it and equipped for it. Every member needs to be infused with the idea that learning about our faith is a lifelong and continuous process.

43. We recognise opportunities and courses for training already exist in various departments of the Church. When we look at all of these together we see both overlaps and gaps. We have initiated conversations with Ministries Department with a view to developing Integrated Training opportunities within the Church, possibly on a modular basis with several modules being common to the training for different roles in the Church.

44. Arising out of this year's work we would recommend to General Assembly that in the future, where possible, Vocation Conferences should focus on all forms of Ministry - stipendiary, auxiliary, eldership, youth work, working with children etc. Experiments on this basis have been tried already with some success in a number of provinces.

#### **Guide-lines for Elders' Training**

45. One of our main areas of responsibility continues to be that of Elders' Training. We are aware of a great variety of practice throughout the country. In some places considerable thought is given to this and elders are provided with wide opportunities to explore and develop their vocation as elders. In other places elders are asked to undertake this very important role with very little help.

46. We therefore put forward the following guidelines as being important for all elders' training:

(a) Deciding on eldership

We recommend that opportunities should be created for people to think about eldership before becoming an elder. Literature is already in existence but we believe that within churches, districts and synods, opportunities need to be created for exploring the whole role of eldership in our denomination.

(b) Initial training

We recommend that all elders be offered some formal training within twelve months of their ordination. Such training should include the areas of pastoral care, leadership, administration and management of the local church and development of personal spirituality. Such training is best done at district or synod level.

(c) Continuous training

Clearly the work of an elder is one which will place continual demands upon people. There must always be the chance for reflection and personal growth. Regular opportunities must be given for this. Believing in the importance of this we bring a resolution to General Assembly for the appointment of someone in each Province to be responsible for elders' training.

### Information Exchange

47. Christian Education and Stewardship must be about a continuous growth in discipleship which enables us to become more confident in our faith and our sharing of it. We are confident that there is already a wealth of resources available within our churches. We are beginning as a committee to discover and evaluate many of these resources and intend that as much information as possible be made available to our churches.

### CHILDREN'S WORK COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee

Secretary: The Revd Stephen Thornton

48. The committee wish to express their warmest appreciation to Hazel Snashall for all the hard work which she put into being Secretary of this committee, and especially for her work in the editing Children and Communion? the Mission Pursuit - Guide-lines for Children and the Stop - Where have all the children gone? leaflets. We should also like to thank Alvin Satchwell and John Hull for their contribution to the committee, in Alvin's case, over

many years, and wish them well for the future.

49. At its meeting in January, 1989, the Faith and Life Department approved the appointment by the Pilot's Panel of the Revd Chris Baker as Master Pilot for a period of three years, beginning 1st September, 1988, and welcomed the closer collaboration with the Congregational Federation that this represents. The support given by the East Midlands Province in seconding Chris to work half-time for Pilots was also greatly appreciated. The Children's Work Committee greatly appreciate the work that Chris has already initiated on behalf of Pilots, and his contribution to the work of the committee.

50. The committee believes that children are an integral part of the life of the whole church, and that issues about the way in which children worship and learn are issues which also affect adults. It is not appropriate to assume that children 'learn' and adults 'worship'. In the healthy faith community of the church, adults and children both worship and learn, sometimes together, sometimes they learn from one another, sometimes they worship and learn in separate groups, but the way in which this happens is the concern of the whole church.

51. **Children in Communion? - Let's Talk about it**, is now available priced at 50p per copy. This booklet discusses many of the issues both for and against children receiving communion. We commend this booklet to churches for study by Elders' and Church Meetings.

52. **Mission Pursuit - Pack for Children's Groups** is also available at 50p. This is designed to be used in conjunction with the **Mission Pursuit** pack, especially where children's groups are working on their own. Ideally, we should like to see **Mission Pursuit** being used by the whole church, where we hope this will be a useful addition.

53. **The New Partners in Learning** has sold out twice in its first year. The committee are delighted to discover that many churches are finding it very helpful indeed, especially for all age worship, but emphasise that it works best when the leader of worship and groups from the whole church are able to get together to plan sessions in advance.

54. The training course, **Equipped to Teach** has been revised, and there was a launch for this with a meeting for tutors on April 8th, 1989. The committee commends this course to churches, and encourages those working with children on Sundays and on weekdays to receive training.

55. The committee has launched a tutor's training scheme for those who have been asked by their Districts and Provinces to run training sessions for people working with children. A very useful and supportive weekend was held at Harborne Hall in January, 1989,

and we are hoping to hold a follow up weekend from 14th-16th July at the Windermere Centre. The committee would like to express their thanks to Roger Tolman and Ivan Andrews for their advice and help with these sessions.

56. Paul Franklin has been investigating the work of the 11-14 year age group in the church, by visiting many groups. A support group has been set up to consider the development and support for workers in this area.

57. The government are indicating that voluntary groups, such as churches, will be, in the future, asked to make sure that any workers with children are vetted to make sure that they do not have convictions for child abuse. Children come into contact with the whole church community, so adequate vetting may be difficult for churches. While being concerned to protect children, we would also wish to affirm the need for good, positive loving relationships between adults and children in the church.

58. The National Christian Education Council are hoping to produce a journal relating to Christian Education issues, which will be produced twice yearly. They are also in the process of producing, in conjunction with the Truro Diocese, a distance learning, training scheme for workers with children, entitled *Called to Lead*, which will include a video. The committee commend both of these to churches.

#### **Pilots Panel (Master Pilot: The Revd Chris Baker)**

59. The Master Pilot, Chris Baker, is now based at the Congregational Centre, 4 Castle Gate, Nottingham, which expresses the partnership between the URC and Congregational Federation in Pilots. Supplies for companies continue to be handled through Tavistock Place.

#### **Membership**

60. At the time of writing there are 200 Pilot companies, with about 4,000 Pilots. Approximately 10% of companies are in Congregational Federation churches, and there are a handful which belong to other denominations.

#### **Age Range**

61. There are now three sections: Deckhands (5-6s), Juniors (7-10s) and Seniors (11-14s). In addition a small number of companies are sharing in an experimental project involving 15-17s. This will be assessed after two years and in a collaborative project involving Children's Work and Youth Committees. The young people in these groups will be using exciting programme material on the theme of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

## Training

62. There is a renewed emphasis on training for officers. It is hoped that the point will be reached when all new officers will receive training.

## Finance

63. The new life Pilots is making heavy demands on limited financial resources. Ways of funding this work are being explored.

Thanks to all those who support Pilots.

## WINDERMERE POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Dr Robert O Latham  
Director and Secretary: The Revd Graham Cook

64. The second mile or the second year are often the most testing. This has been true of the Windermere Centre. 1988 was a hard year: two members of staff died, John Brown, a domestic assistant and Dennis Aughpin the handyman/gardener; Hannah Clarke, the beloved daughter of Ruth and Raymond died after a cycle accident in a country lane on a quiet Sunday morning; Edna Wood, the housekeeper/cook was first of all incapacitated for two months by a simple accident and then resigned three months later.

65. We are pleased to report to Assembly that having been tried in the fire the Windermere Centre has survived. We have been moved and sustained by the manner in which Ruth and Raymond Clarke have lived through their tragedy. We have been encouraged that such has been the spirit of the staff of the Centre that they have carried the stress of these events in such a way that those using the Centre will not have noticed anything amiss. The URC owes them all a debt of gratitude.

66. As a result of Hannah's death, the Clarke family have expressed the desire to establish a memorial to her in the form of a fund (The Hannah Fund) to enable a variety of people to use the facilities of the Windermere Centre. They have in mind that it might include the unemployed, elderly, young or disabled people. This fund has now been established by the generosity of many people whose gifts have been added to the original and substantial sum donated by the Clarke family. We hope that others may feel it an appropriate way to share in Hannah's memory. We hope the existence of this fund will become widely known and much used. We hope that Moderators, Ministers and Church Officers and others will feel able to take the initiative in asking for assistance on behalf of those who need it but will not ask.



67. 1988 saw 4089 bed nights at the Centre. This is a very slight reduction on 1987 (1.4%). This is to be expected in the second year of operation. We are greatly encouraged by the prospects for 1989 and anticipate approximately 4500 bed nights, a break even budget with no subsidy from the general funds of the church.

68. We ran 76 courses in 1988 covering a wide variety of subject matter from dancing, reading, praying and preaching in church to working with children and young people, to rural and urban ministry, from housing problems for the poor to appropriate life styles for affluent Christians. We studied scripture and theology, consulted about baptism and mission; the disenchanted were heard and those about to retire were advised; a women's network was established and inner paths to God were explored. Theological teachers consulted together, flower arrangers practised their art to the glory of God and the Church, the Kingdom and the Nation were reflected upon. Seventeen local churches from seven Provinces (Wessex, South Western, East Midlands, West Midlands, Yorkshire, Mersey and North Western) came to consider their life and mission. People came from all over Great Britain, from the Isle of Wight, to Shetlands, from Northern Ireland to East Anglia and from all over the world including Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Uganda, United States, Germany, France, and Czechoslovakia. We have received many testimonies to the difference coming to Windermere has made to people, to churches and committees.

69. We have been encouraged by the offer of Central Church, Sheffield to fund an extension to the Conference Room and create a small quiet room/chapel. As this report is written planning is going ahead. We will have an up-dated report to Assembly.

70. Although the Centre has only been open just over two years (nearly three by the time Assembly meets), the work required to plan, to fund and create it goes back much further than that and some of those who have played a crucial role in its creation and successful launch are now coming to the end of their period of service. These include Robert Latham who has convened the National Policy and Planning Committee since its creation, Norman Charlton and Tom Chirnside who both played an enormous part in local detailed planning from the very beginning, Stewart Ross who has been a member of the local Management Committee and Clare Iafin who has been a member of the Programme Committee. The Windermere Centre has already shown itself to be an important resource, enabling the church to renew its vision and to find the fresh energies that God supplies. This has been made possible by the work of these people and those who have shared the task with them. Assembly should be grateful. We are delighted that Rosalind Goodfellow is prepared to continue her public service to the church by being the Convener of our Committee. We look forward to her leadership.

71. For one person, however, this marks only the end of the first phase. It will come as a surprise to many as it does to him, that Graham Cook completes his appointed five years of service as Director at the end of this year. The Committee have unanimously recommended that he should be invited to serve in this office for a further period of five years from February 1990, and we look forward to Graham's continued leadership.

#### **HYMNBOOK EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**

**Convener:** Dr David Thompson

**Joint Secretaries:** The Revd David Gardner, Mr Alan Haywood

72. By the time this report is presented to Assembly, the complete manuscript of the new hymnbook should be in the hands of the Oxford University Press. It is expected that a promotional leaflet, containing a selection of hymns from the book will be available for Assembly next year; and the new book will be formally launched at the time of the 1991 Assembly. We have already been in touch with Provinces and Districts about publicity for it.

73. The many letters received in response to the Committee's first list of hymns in *Reform* were of great assistance in making the final decisions on what was to be included. An enlarged list was published in *Reform* for November 1988, and this also contained tunes, so far as they had been agreed. The final stages of selection involved decisions on new material and other outstanding requests for inclusion, and here the balance of the book as a whole was often a decisive consideration. A list of the final additions to and omissions from the enlarged list will be published in *Reform*. As well as hymns the book will contain separate sections of worship material (related to that in the new Service Book), psalms, and canticles. The title is still being considered.

74. The Committee have been encouraged by the predominantly welcoming note in the letters they have received, particularly in response to the enlarged list. Once again therefore we urge congregations to budget now for its purchase. The publishers cannot commit themselves now to a price for 1991; but full details of the prices and discounts (which will be fixed by Oxford University Press) should be available at the 1990 Assembly. We dare to believe that our selection includes the best of old and new. It will contain a number of new translations of ancient hymns, as well as giving a new weight to the twentieth century. We hope the new book will be bought with enthusiasm.

## HEALTH AND HEALING COMMITTEE

**Convener:** The Revd D Alasdair Pratt  
**Secretary:** The Revd Michael Playdon

75. The world of Health and Healing in church life has grown and developed in many remarkable ways within the past two decades. Much of the responsibility for this can be attributed to those who were open to the Holy Spirit, recognised the signs, and led the church forward in faith and understanding of God's work in this sphere. These leaders included Bishop Morris Maddocks for the Anglicans, the Revd Howard Booth of the Methodists, the Revd Denis Duncan in the Churches Council for Health and Healing and our own Revd David Dale. Each of these is now retiring from present responsibilities. Our committee would like to thank them all, but especially David Dale, whose vision and leadership produced work that is valued beyond as well as within the URC. We thank him for his recent service as Consultant to our church, which has now come to an end.

76. In February 1989 the fifth national conference organised by this committee was held at Swanwick on the theme of Healing Relationships. It was led by the Revd Stewart McGregor, Chaplain at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

77. Links with the Provinces are being strengthened. Each Province has appointed someone to liaise between the committee and the local church. Provincial conferences have been arranged on varied topics including Stress in the Ministry, as well as more general introductions to the work. When issues emerge they are fed back to the committee. These include the apparent dichotomy between the miraculous approach to healing, and the holistic or sacramental view. In some places there is a danger of polarisation when theological points of view are opposed. The committee is recognising the importance of working at these tensions.

78. The committee is encouraged by the development of interest in silence and retreats, which can be seen as an expression of healing in the church.

79. During the year two leaflets have been produced - Praying for Healing and Going into Hospital.

80. The Churches Council for Health and Healing. We continue to be part of this important body which is now directed by the Revd Dr John Young, who has succeeded Denis Duncan on a full-time basis.

81. Future Work. The committee is concerned with the promotion of positive health as part of Christian stewardship. Issues of the environment and lifestyle are relevant to a Christian view of wholeness. We are facing the theological tensions that surround

the ministry of healing and which cause doubts and difficulties for a number of people. We are looking at ministry to the mentally ill, and handicapped people. We are always available to advise local churches as well as Districts and Provinces in the development of this ministry within the church.

82. We believe that the church is a Healing community. We are committed to the idea that healing is for community as well as individuals. We follow Him whose broken body has become a source of healing.

### **Silence and Retreats**

83. By the time Assembly meets, two URC retreats arranged by the Silence and Retreats Group will have been held: one at the Windermere Centre and another in Windsor. A very successful retreat leaders course has also been held, which reflects the growing participation of the URC in this area.

84. The development of the URC network has been greatly assisted by the leadership of the Revd Stella Beare, and by the editorial work of the Revd Kate Compston in producing *Windows*, the twice yearly broadsheet of the network.

85. There has also been significant ecumenical progress. The National Retreat Centre, the Association for Promoting Retreats and the Methodist Retreat Group had already been co-operating, and have revised their constitution. This enables the Baptists and URC to play a full part in the ecumenical promotion of retreats. The future pattern of ecumenical collaboration is not yet clear, but there is a strong commitment to work closely together.

### **PRAYER HANDBOOK**

**Secretary:** The Revd Terry Oakley  
**Editor:** The Revd Graham Cook

86. The 1989 book *All the Glorious Names* has sold very well, and may be a sell-out. This was the last to be edited by Edmund Banyard, and the writer was Stephen Orchard. The 1990 book *Say One For Me* is to be available by Assembly, The Editor is Graham Cook and Tony Burnham is the writer. The style of the book will differ, in that there will be prayers and meditations on both right and left hand pages. One side will reflect all three lectionary passages, whereas the other will focus on one passage, phrase or theme. The price will remain at #1, which includes the cost of the CWM Prayer Leaflet.

87. Looking ever further ahead, work is in hand on the 1991 book, and a Writers' Conference has already produced some prayers for the 1992 book!

## FORUM

**Co-ordinator:** The Revd Terry Oakley

88. **Earth Shall be Fair** is the title of the 1989 Forum, to be led by John Reardon and members of the JPIC Working Party. Worship should be stimulating, with the help of the Wild Goose Worship Group of the Iona Community.

89. Attendance at Forum has shown a slight increase in the last two years, and bookings for this year are well advanced on last year. It could be a full Forum!

## YOUTH COMMITTEE

**Convener:** Mrs Ruth Clarke

**Secretary:** The Revd Paul Quilter

90. In our report last year, we indicated that a major review of our youth work was under way. Much of the Youth Committee's energy has been directed towards the end of this report. However, the Committee has not neglected other aspects of its work, and we gladly share some information about it with the wider church.

### **Youth Leadership Training Officers and Funding**

91. A great deal of time and energy has been given to preparing our application for funding from the Department of Education and Science. A new system was introduced in April, which required careful consideration of our priorities and matching them with the programmes, which the DES are prepared to support. The exercise proved to be worthwhile from our point of view, and has also resulted in a small increase in our level of funding.

92. Whilst we have been coping with the DES funding exercise, we have also tried to respond to the provinces which have asked for the services of their own youth leadership training officer. This is proving to be very difficult to resolve. Provinces which are able to meet the financial requirements are being asked to support the appointment of an officer, on the understanding that the person will serve seventy-five percent of the time in the province, but allowing a widening of the brief, which is laid down in the YLTO job description. The remaining twenty-five percent of the YLTO's time is to be given to work involved in the DES funded programmes, which, in themselves, will have direct benefit to their own and other provinces. By the time Assembly meets, we hope to have appointed a YLTO for the West Midlands Province under the new model. Negotiations are in hand with other provinces. Sadly, some provinces have expressed a desire to have their own YLTO, but do

not have the resources to support such an appointment. The Training Sub-Committee is concerned about the inequitable situation we now have, but does not feel able to seek funding from central resources.

## **Training**

93. We are pleased to share the news that **Spectrum**, an exciting new ecumenical training course for youth leaders, will have been launched in May. We believe that this course, and others to follow, will have a profound effect on interchurch co-operation within the youth leadership training sphere.

94. The Training Sub-Committee published a series of booklets, entitled **Close Inspection**, following the publication of the HMI report on youth work in the URC. The booklets are designed to help local churches, districts and provinces to examine their youth work and consider ways of improving it. Every local church received a copy from their YLTO, but we wonder how many churches actually did anything with their copy of **Close Inspection**. It is not too late, and we can provide more copies.

## **Connect '89 and Challenge for Change**

95. The World Affairs Sub-Committee continues to have a very exciting agenda to handle. **Challenge for Change** is the title of the new programme for young people throughout the URC. It will be launched at **CONNECT '89**, our major youth event, taking place in Bristol, over the weekend of 27th to 29th October 1989.

96. The Youth Committee continues to organise a wide range of activities for young people. Full details can be found in the 1989 Activities Pack. It is regretted that there are many churches which do not encourage their young people to participate in the programme of national events, resulting in both the church and individuals missing out on experiences, which have a very profound effect on all those that participate in them.

## **Personalia**

97. Sadly, Mrs Irene Tolman, wife of Roger, our National Training Officer, died just before Christmas. We continue to uphold Roger with our love and prayers, and we share his loss, for Irene was a great friend and supporter of URC youth work.

98. Regrettably, our Convener, the Revd Jean Holdsworth, was forced to resign, primarily due to ill health. Jean has been an outstanding convener, and has given excellent leadership and support to the Youth Committee. At the beginning of March, we were delighted to welcome our new Convener, Mrs Ruth Clarke. We are grateful that Ruth feels able to undertake this task, especially at such an exciting but demanding time.

99. There have also been changes on the YLTO front. We said goodbye to Clare Laflin, YLTO for Northern and Yorkshire Provinces, after five years of dedicated and fruitful service. We shall also be losing Janet Turner, YLTO for Wales and the South Western Provinces, who has also contributed so much to the life of the church. We are pleased that John Quilter has been re-appointed as YLTO for East Midlands and Eastern Provinces, and equally delighted to learn of his forthcoming marriage to Julie Pearce, a Youth Committee member.

### **The New FURY Project**

100. The Fellowship of United Reformed Youth (FURY) has served the URC well since its inception. As 1990 and the new decade approaches, the Youth Committee felt it was time to consider the future in the light of some major questions that were on our agenda, and for which answers needed to be found. The process began in July 1987. A working party presented findings at various points during the ensuing period, and in November 1987 after much prayer and thoughtful deliberation, the Committee agreed to adopt what is now called the New FURY Project. With the full support of the Faith & Life Department, proposals for the future of youth work in the URC are presented in this report. It is hoped that the General Assembly will give approval for their implementation.

### **The Questions on the Youth Committee's Agenda**

101. (a) How do we enhance youth work at local and district levels?

It is primarily for this purpose that the Youth Committee and its wide-ranging programmes exist. Naturally, it cannot change the quality of youth work on its own. However, the resources of the national scene must be of more direct benefit to the local church. Our aim is to support young people as they make their pilgrimage of discovery towards personal faith and active membership of a local church. The New FURY explicitly sets out to assist and encourage this process.

(b) The nature and structure of FURY?

One of FURY's greatest strengths is its openness. Unfortunately, it is also one of its weaknesses. Constantly we hear the cry that FURY is too vague and too nebulous. The Youth Committee believes that the New FURY must hold on to its openness and flexibility, but must redefine its role in the life of the URC, and create a more appropriate structure for the future.

(c) The Ginger Group Project and Youth Ministry?

Without a doubt, the Ginger Group Project has been highly successful. Nevertheless it is expensive and, in its present form, limited in its scope. The Project has tried to demonstrate to the whole church that young people have a tremendous amount to give and can be looked upon as a resource to be used in the mission of the church. We believe the New FURY Project provides a means of developing and supporting the concept of youth in ministry in all sorts of exciting new ways.

(d) Participation of young people?

Participation of young people is one of the hallmarks of the URC's youth work. Even so, we have barely begun to scratch the surface. The New FURY sets out to provide more support, encouragement and opportunities to develop skills and enhance confidence, in order that young people can participate more fully at all levels of the church's life.

(e) FURY at National level?

FURY is the young people's organisation within the URC, but at national level very few young people are involved in its running. Consequently, the Youth Committee's agenda is too big, too complicated and needs to be involved in too much detail. Because it meets only three times a year, it is a bottle-neck. Ideas take a long time to come to fruition. Only a few ideas can be handled in any great depth and many young people, throughout the URC, do not feel they can contribute or influence the life of FURY at national levels. The New FURY tries to redress these concerns.

(f) National activities?

The programme of nationally organised events is good. However, we need to make them more attractive, accessible and even more varied. We need to respond more effectively to the demands of young people today, and at prices which are within reach of more people. The New FURY Project will enable the Youth Committee to respond to these needs imaginatively and with a far greater degree of flexibility.

(g) Camping and outward bound equipment?

The URC owns equipment worth thousands of pounds. We have the resources to provide accommodation under canvas for up to two hundred people. We have many people able



to lead all manner of outward bound activities. At present the equipment is vastly under-used. It is badly stored in an inaccessible place. The New FURY Project will turn what is, at present, a financial liability into a revenue-earning resource very rapidly. Into the bargain, countless more young people and youth leaders up and down the country will be able to put this equipment to effective use, as part of local and district youth work.

(h) Young people's needs?

There are many young people who, at different times feel disillusioned with their local church. In part, this is normal and to be expected. Many young people work through such feelings and stay within the fellowship of local churches. However, the reality is that many young people leave the URC. Some go to the more lively evangelical churches, encouraged by the attractive events offered by many organisations, which direct them away from the URC. Some take strength from places such as Taize and Iona. Sadly, most are just lost. The New FURY Project tries to address these issues. It will provide another source of help, which we believe will enrich and encourage young people, and help many to feel that their spiritual home can be within the URC.

### **The Ethos of the New FURY**

102. The Youth Committee's vision is of a new FURY, which will be developed and modelled as a community within the URC. The Iona Community has been, in part, our inspiration. We look to the creation of a fellowship, which will inspire and encourage young people to explore the Christian faith and lead them to active involvement in their local congregation.

103. The life of FURY will be based on the five words of the former Stewardship Committee: Worship, Prayer, Involvement, Giving and Learning. FURY will include a broad range of activities and programmes, which will help young people to explore, in many different ways, the relevance of the five words to Christian lifestyle. We hope that through involvement in FURY, young people will be helped to understand and develop their church membership.

104. Through a process of consultation, we hope to find ways whereby young people will be able to make a more tangible form of commitment to FURY, which will also express their intention to continue their pilgrimage of discovery and of service in the local church. The Youth Committee does not wish to see FURY developed in such a way that it could be seen as an alternative to the local church. Neither does it wish to create a hierarchy within FURY or

an exclusiveness about FURY.

105. There are many people under 25 years of age (the present age limit of FURY) who have many skills and talents, which can be used beyond the church, as well as within it. The New FURY hopes to create many more opportunities for young people to train and serve in the mission of the church. Over the coming months, we hope that we will be enabled to explore with young people, youth leaders and others, how we can create a structure for FURY, which will allow young people to take more responsibility for the running of FURY and extending its programme within the aims and aspirations of the wider church.

106. Whilst the Youth Committee feels able to present the principles of the New FURY to the General Assembly, it also feels that the wider membership of the church should be fully involved in the process of creating the detailed structure of the New FURY, which can then be presented to the Assembly for final approval in 1990.

### **Resourcing the New FURY**

107. If such ambitious plans for the New FURY are to be realised, the Youth Committee believes that the Fellowship will require an additional source of energy beyond the administrative and committee structures which presently exist. We believe the transformation of the Yardley Hastings URC, halls and manse into a residential centre provides the key for FURY's future. Yardley Hastings is ideally placed for the road and rail network, and is surrounded by all the necessary resources and the environment for what we have planned. Such a centre will, indeed, enable FURY to achieve its aims and objectives.

108. The buildings lend themselves most admirably for the kind of conversion proposed. When completed, accommodation can be provided for between forty and fifty people, in twin-bedded rooms. There will also be a plenary hall, a small hall which will double as a chapel, six to eight small group work rooms, offices, kitchen and dining room. In addition, there will be an annexe providing bed-sit accommodation for five or six full-time volunteers.

### **Staffing and the Creating of the Centre at Yardley Hastings**

109. The Assembly is to be asked to approve the appointment of a full-time minister to be the chaplain of the centre, and minister of the Yardley Hastings congregation. The person appointed will be accountable to the Faith & Life Department, through the Youth Committee and Youth Secretary. The chaplain's role is primarily pastoral and managerial rather than administrative, and will be fully involved in the programme, which is to be based at Yardley Hastings and throughout the country.

110. The Youth Secretary will continue to be based at Church House

and will have overall responsibility for the wider work of the Youth Committee and its sub-committees. However, a great deal of the routine administrative work will be transferred to Yardley Hastings. Eventually, this will lead to a reduction in staffing levels, with the subsequent reduction in cost to Unified Appeal.

111. In the early stages, the minister appointed to be chaplain will be involved in the advocacy of the project and in fund-raising. The centre will evolve gradually, as it is hoped that many church members, friends and young people will help create the centre. The Youth Committee believes that if others can build a church in a weekend, it should be possible to use the many skills and talents of URC people to help create a residential community centre for the denomination's youth work over a period of months.

112. When finally completed, the centre will be staffed, in addition to the full-time minister, by a full-time housekeeper/catering co-ordinator. Eventually there will be a full-time, permanent administrative secretary, in addition to the five or six full-time volunteers, who will serve for up to one year. All the costs of both staff, volunteers and the expenses of the full-time minister, are contained within the budget for the running of the centre. Full details will be presented at the General Assembly.

#### **The New FURY's Programme**

113. It is important to stress that, whilst Yardley Hastings is to be the base for FURY's work, it is not to be understood as the centre of it. That remains in youth groups at local and district levels throughout the denomination. Naturally, we hope Yardley Hastings will become a special place in the life of FURY, but it must be the springboard for all that is done throughout the denomination in the name of FURY.

114. There will be a broad spectrum of activities based at Yardley Hastings for young people, children, youth leaders, Pilots and children's work leaders, uniformed organisations, ecumenical groups, district and provincial youth and youth leaders' groups. We plan to create mini-ginger groups, working on a part-time basis in districts up and down the country. We hope to develop varied types of youth mission teams, who will operate at local and district levels. Special interest groups will be formed. Yardley Hastings and its team of people will be involved in the training, preparation and support of the many groups that will operate at district and local levels.

115. It is planned that the minister and, especially, the full-time volunteers will participate in, organise and lead all manner of events at all levels of church life beyond Yardley Hastings. In the spring and summer months, we aim to provide a wide range of

activities, both at and around Yardley Hastings, and throughout the country, using the camping and outward bound equipment, which will be properly stored and maintained.

### Looking to the Future

116. In time, through the life of the community, its ministry and its people, we believe the ethos of the New FURY will permeate to all levels of FURY and beyond, throughout the denomination. The Youth Committee lays before the church an ambitious plan, which, if adopted, we believe will transform the youth work of the denomination. It seeks to obtain the resources required to provide a ministry to and for young people, which is appropriate for the modern age. Most important of all, we believe that the New FURY will help every local URC to develop its work with young people. Finally, if the New FURY comes into being, we believe that rapidly the URC will look upon its youth work as a resource for the church, rather than the church having to provide resources for youth work.

### RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report of the Faith and Life Department for debate.
2. Assembly accepts the interpretation of the **Basis of Union** contained in paragraphs 2-6 of the **Statement on Baptism and the Basis of Union**.
3. Assembly encourages each Province to appoint someone to be responsible for Elders' Training.
4. Assembly notes that the Department has published the booklet **Children in Communion? - Lets Talk about it**, and encourages local churches to discuss the important issues raised in it.
5. The General Assembly agrees to adopt, in principle, the New FURY Project, believing it to be the way forward for youth work in the URC, and recognising that this will incorporate the re-development of Yardley Hastings church, halls and manse.

The Assembly approves the appointment of a full-time stipendiary minister, to be based at Yardley Hastings, as chaplain. The appointment to be made as soon as possible, for an initial period of five years.

The Assembly gives approval for the launch of a national appeal in support of the New FURY Project.

# NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

**Convener:** The Revd Brian Nuttall

**Secretary:** Mr David Butler

1. During the year, the Committee has reviewed its working methods. We are a large committee: we delegate responsibility for some appointments, which are open to application, to small appointment groups. But, for the greater part of our task, involving the recruitment for committee work of ministers and lay people, male and female, young and old, drawn from the whole spectrum of our Church, we need the breadth of knowledge and insight which only a large committee can provide. Put together the Provincial Moderators and one other from each of their provinces, the five Conveners of Departments (with the expertise of all their departmental committees behind them), the General Secretary, the immediate past and present Moderators of Assembly and the Moderator-elect (who travel widely throughout the Church), and you have a unique blend of local and national acquaintanceship which it would be very hard to replace.

## **Appointments made since the last Assembly.**

2.1 The last Assembly agreed to the recruitment of a full-time Advocacy Secretary for a maximum period of five years and appointed an Appointment Group to seek one. That Group nominated the Revd Bill Wright to the Executive Committee in March. We are delighted to have secured the services of one so dedicated to the advocacy cause. He will operate from Merseyside, but be attached to the General Secretariat. His appointment is for three years in the first instance, with effect from 1st April 1989. It is subject to review, with a possible extension for a further two years.

2.2 The Executive Committee, on our nomination, also appointed the Revd Michael Davies to serve for three years as Convener of the Advocacy Group, which will support the Advocacy Secretary in his work. Each province was invited to suggest the name of one who would represent that province on the Group and also be an advocate within the province. Those suggested were appointed to the Group by the Executive Committee, on our nomination. Four vacancies remain, which we hope to fill at this Assembly. The members of this Group will serve the usual committee term of six years, reviewable after three.

2.3 Two Committee officers within the Faith and Life Department resigned in mid-term: the Revd Jean Holdsworth, Convener of the Youth Committee, for health reasons, and Mrs Hazel Snashall, Secretary of the Children's Work Committee. Thanks will be expressed to them, along with other Committee officers who retire at this Assembly, during the Assembly itself. In their places,

Mrs Ruth Clarke was appointed Convener of the Youth Committee and the Revd Stephen Thornton Secretary of the Children's Work Committee on our nomination at the Executive Committee in March.

2.4 Mr John Quilter, Youth Leadership Training Officer for the Eastern and East Midlands Provinces, was re-appointed for a further five years, with effect from 1st July, 1989.

2.5 Our Committee has nominated a Convener and nine other members to form, with ten from the province, the Thames North Provincial Moderator Review Group and to bring a recommendation to Assembly in 1990. We nominated a Commission to represent Assembly at the Induction of the incoming Moderator of Assembly in May, tellers for the election of the next Moderator of Assembly (Mr C A Raggett - Convener, Revd Greta M Morgan and Mr H E Grief), a Convener for tellers of Assembly business (Mr Monty Helmn), and representatives to the Assemblies of other Churches. We have filled some twenty mid-term vacancies on committees of the Church and among our representatives on other bodies. These are indicated in the Appendix to this report by a single asterisk, while those nominated to fill vacancies arising at this Assembly are indicated with a double asterisk.

#### **Departmental Secretary, World Church & Mission Department.**

3. In February 1989, the Revd Donald Elliott took up the post of Divisional Secretary of the Conference for World Mission at the British Council of Churches. We congratulate him on this appointment. On our nomination, the Executive Committee appointed an Appointment Group, which is pleased to bring to this Assembly the name of the Revd Tony Coates to serve as Departmental Secretary of the World Church & Mission Department for the next seven years. (See Resolution 2.)

#### **Director, Windermere Centre.**

4. The Revd Graham Cook's first period of service ends on 1st February, 1990. An Appointment Group has reviewed the appointment and has recommended that Mr Cook be re-appointed for a further five years. (See Resolution 3.)

#### **Committee Officers.**

5. We wish to nominate the following to serve for six years, in succession to officers completing their terms of service at this Assembly:

5.1 Convener, Windermere Policy and Planning Committee:  
Mrs Rosalind Goodfellow.

5.2 Convener, World Church and Mission Department:  
Mrs Mary Marsden.

- 5.3 Convener, Mission and Other Faiths Committee:  
The Revd John Sutcliffe.
- 5.4 Convener, Assembly Pastoral Reference Committee:  
The Revd Cyril Franks.
- 5.5 On being nominated for the latter appointment, Mr Franks has resigned as Convener of the Welfare and Emergencies Committee. We wish to nominate Mr Ray Heritage to serve as Convener in his place.

#### RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the Report.
2. The Assembly appoints the Revd Tony Coates as Departmental Secretary of the World Church & Mission Department for a term of seven years from 1st September 1989.
3. The Assembly re-appoints the Revd Graham Cook as Director of the Windermere Centre for a further term of five years from 1st February, 1990.
4. The Assembly appoints Committee Officers, as set out in paragraph 5 of the Report
5. The Assembly appoints Committees and Representatives of the Church, as set out in the Appendix to the Report.

#### APPENDIX

##### COMMITTEES AND REPRESENTATIVES

1. The Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator and the General Secretary are members ex officii of every Standing Committee.
2. The Departmental Conveners and Secretaries are members ex officii of each Committee within their respective Departments. The Secretary of the Finance and Administration Department is a member ex officio of every committee which has funds.
3. Officers and Members appointed since Assembly 1988 are denoted by an asterisk. Those denoted by two asterisks are to be appointed by Assembly for the first time.

## MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT

Convener: The Revd A G Burnham - 1990  
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

### CENTRAL COMMITTEE

#### Provincial representatives

I	Revd Hazel Catton*	VII	Revd G R Muttram
II	Revd A A Tomlinson*	VIII	Revd Dr D G Cornick
III	Revd P H Welsh	IX	Mr R J Smith
IV	Revd S O Jones	X	Revd P C Jupp
V	Mrs V Stonehouse	XI	Mr C E Davis
VI	Revd J Lovett-Hargis	XII	Revd Kevin Watson

together with the Conveners of the committees within the Department, Revd Dr C B Baxter, Mr E C Chilton, Miss M Roberts, Mr D Thacker, Revd Elizabeth A Welch and a representative of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee.

### VOCATIONS

Convener: The Revd M B Stolton - 1991  
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Revd E S Allen	Mrs Gwen Hall	Mrs M Hindley
Revd M J Davies	Revd P C Jupp	Mrs Connie Holmes
Revd S O Jones	Revd V G Ridgewell	

### TRAINING

Convener: Mrs Elizabeth Jupp - 1993  
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

Dr J C G Binfield	Revd Nina Mead*	Revd Principal M H Cressey
Revd J C Brock	Revd D H Hilton	Revd D Jenkins
Revd D Grainger	Mrs S Owen	Dr Ann Stevenson
Mrs S Thompson	Revd Dr R J McKelvy	

together with one stipendiary ministry student (Mr Tim Hopley).

#### Panel for Assessment Conferences

Miss R Archer, Revds B Baker, C J Baker, Mr J S Benbow, Revds Elizabeth Caswell, T C Cheesbrough, Jessie Clare, Mrs R Clarke, Mr R T Clarke, Revds G J Cook, F G Wilson Dennett, A S Dunstone, Revd Mary Evans, Mrs B Fisher, Revds J Francis, A Frost, Dr Anne Galer, Mrs R Goodfellow, Revds A G Green, Dr L C Green, Mrs Gwen Hall, Revd R J Hall, Mr M Hammond,



Revd M G Hanson, Mr M Harrison, Mr A Hart, Revd H G Hayes, Mrs M Herbert, Revds D H Hilton, R W H Jones, Mrs E Jupp, Revds R O Latham, R H Lewis, W W Mahood, Mrs J W Macdonald, Revd W R Marchbank, Mr R Norris, Revd F R Nunn, Mrs B Onions, Revds Dr S C Orchard, D A Pitkeathly, Professor R Schwarzenberger, Mr A Senior, Mrs E M Steel, Dr Ann Stevenson, Mr B Stonehouse, Mrs G Swain, Revd I L Thomas, Mr A W Thompson, Revd B D Treharne, Miss L Tucker, Revds A J G Walker, R J Way, Elizabeth Welch, Miss J Welford, Revd C Wilton, together with the General Secretary, the Provincial Moderators and the staffs of the recognised Colleges, members of the Auxiliary Ministry Board of Studies and the Convener and Secretary of the Training Committee.

#### Panel for Assessment Conferences - CRCW Sub-Section

Mrs S Ackroyd, Mrs D Beale, Revds P Loveitt, Kate McIlhagga, A T Newman, Mrs A Sutcliffe, Miss J L Turner, Revds C F Warner, M W Williams, R V Jones.

#### Nominations to Teaching Staff (Westminster College)

Convener: Mrs Elisabeth Jupp - 1993

Secretary: The Secretary of the Training Committee

Principal, Westminster College  
Miss Ann Phillips  
Revd J E Young

Professor John Ferguson  
Professor G N Stanton

#### SUPPORT

Convener: The Revd P J Brain - 1991

Secretary: Executive Secretary, Ministries Department

Revd Hazel M M Addy\*\*  
Revd R Pagan  
Mrs M Stacy

Mrs B Brettell\*\*  
Revd Christine Pinnell  
Revd D L Helyar

Mr R Norris  
Mrs E M Tait\*

#### FAITH AND LIFE DEPARTMENT

Convener: The Revd A J Coates - 1992

Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

#### CENTRAL COMMITTEE

##### Provincial Representatives

I Revd Peter Poulter  
II Mr Monty Helmn  
III Miss Fiona Gow  
IV Revd A D Wright  
V Mr John Culley  
VI Mrs R Tomlinson

VII Revd Richard Church\*  
VIII Revd Stella Beare  
IX Revd Mark Westerman  
X Revd David Turner  
XI Revd Ceri Lewis  
XII Mrs Eileen McIlveen

together with the conveners of the Committees within the Department, Revd G E F Bowerman, Mrs Barbara Brettell, Mrs Ruth Clarke, Mr B Worrall.

Members under 25: Mrs F Kissack\*, Mr D Rainford\*

#### DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP

Convener: The Revd Professor C E Gunton - 1991

Secretary: Revd J H Taylor - 1993

Revd K C Fabricius	Revd Mary Frost	Revd Betsy King**
Revd D H Rominger**	Dr W N Gray	Revd Susan Durber
Dr R Trigg	Revd Dr P Morgan	Dr C Schwoebel
Revd Justine Wyatt	Revd Principal M H Cressey	
Revd Margaret G P Nuttall		(1 vacancy)

#### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP

Convener: The Revd W W Mahood - 1993

Secretary: Mr M Harrison - 1992

Dr D George	Mrs E Jurd	Revd P E McIntosh
Mrs A Morgan	Revd Greta M Morgan	Revd G H Sharp
Revd R K Scopes	Mrs J Tomlin	Mrs L Wilson
Revd J T Yates		

#### YOUTH WORK

Convener: Mrs R Clarke - 1995\*

Secretary: The Youth Secretary

Miss Rachel Burnham	Mrs A Coates	Mr K Coote
Revd D M Taylor	Revd M J Fisher	Miss B Prettie
Mrs M Nineham	Miss J Pearce	Mr G G Maskery
Revd J W Steele		(1 vacancy)

Members under 25:

Miss D Allen	Miss P Harvey*	Mr I Patterson*
Mr D Leon	Mr A Johnson*	Mr A Hughes
Mr P Ashworth	Mr R Nicholson	Mr D Rainford
Mr G Walker	Mrs F Kissack	Mr P Van Walwyk*

#### CHILDREN'S WORK

Convener: The Revd Dr Lesley Husselbee - 1992

Secretary: The Revd S M Thornton - 1995\*

Mrs Pat Evans	Mrs G Turner**	Revd J H Oldershaw
Mrs S H Flett	Revd J Robinson	Mr B W Russell
Mrs P Shapland		

together with the Master Pilot\*

#### HEALTH AND HEALING

**Convener:** The Revd D A Pratt - 1990

**Secretary:** The Revd M C Playdon - 1992

Revd P Jeanne Christie	Miss Sarah Clark	Dr Anthea M Cooke
Dr I D O Frew	Revd J M Ward	Dr Joan L Holliday
Revd A R Lee	Revd R R Hine**	(2 vacancies)

#### WINDERMERE POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Convener:** Mrs R Goodfellow - 1995\*\*

**Secretary:** The Director

Representatives of the Ministries, World Church and Mission, Church and Society and Finance and Administration Departments, Revd Ruth Mealand, Mr Roger Tolman, Revd Dr S C Orchard\*, with the Assistant Director, the Convener and the Treasurer of the Management Committee, the Convener, Faith and Life Department and a representative of Carver URC, Windermere.

#### HYMN BOOK EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

**Convener:** Dr D M Thompson

**Secretaries:** The Revd D C M Gardner, Mr W A Haywood

Revd Margaraet T Taylor	Revd Barbara Gates	Revd A Gaunt
Revd D McIlhagga	Revd David Jenkins	Revd Dr F H Kaan
Mr A Satchell	Revd C Micklem	Mrs M Raggett
Revd Dr C P Thompson	Revd Brenda Stephenson	Mrs C Brock

#### WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT

**Convener:** Mrs M Marsden - 1995\*\*

**Secretary:** The Departmental Secretary

#### CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Provincial representatives

I Revd Dr G A Hood	VII Revd R J Mortimer
II Miss J Robins	VIII Revd P Killick
III Revd K M Smith	IX Revd J Sturney*
IV Mrs M E J Gilbey	X Revd I S Duncan
V Revd N Healey	XI Revd D J Morgan*
VI Mrs M Schofield*	XII Revd K Graham

together with the Convener of Committees within the Department and the Revd G J Cook, Mrs Anthea Coates, Mrs Norah Morgans, Mr D W Parry.

## MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK AT HOME

**Convener:** The Revd J F Slow - 1990

**Secretary:** The General Secretary

Revd R J Bade	Mr R J Coole	Revd A J Addy**
Revd Dorothy C Spence**	Mrs M Hambly	Revd A M Gudgeon**
Revd Dr D R Peel	Miss C E Robertson	Revd W E C Sewell
Mr P A Wade		

together with the Adviser for Local Ecumenism.

URC/Methodist Liaison Committee

Revds G E Beck, J Hollyman, P I Poulter, N L Shepherd,  
B G Thorogood and M F Hubbard, Mr D McNair\*

## MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD

**Convener:** The Revd D M Wales - 1991

**Secretary:** The Departmental Secretary

Revd C J Allen	Revd Susan K Armitage	Miss J M Barclay
Revd Froukein E Smit**	Mrs E Cottle	Revd P R Floe
Miss H P Jones	Revd R V Jones	Mr H Morgans
Mrs L Wilson**	Miss F Harris	

## MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS

**Convener:** The Revd J M Sutcliffe - 1995\*\*

**Secretary:** Revd J M Parry - 1990

Mr M Childs	Revd Gillian Boorne	Mrs J Killick**
Revd M G Hanson**	Revd J Proctor**	Revd R J Mortimer
Miss J M Robins	Revd Dr D G Bowen**	

Consultant:- Revd R H Lewis

## PERSONNEL

**Convener:** Revd W R P Adams - 1994

**Secretary:** The Personnel Secretary

Revd N W Bainbridge	Revd J Dean	Mrs B Martin*
Mrs H Horsfield	Revd Joan Johansen-Berg	Revd Moira H Kerr
Mrs Marian Strachan	Revd H B Singh Rahi	Mr K Maxey**
Mr C P W Wright	Principal of St Andrew's Hall	

## CHURCH AND SOCIETY DEPARTMENT

Convener: Dr Mary Ede - 1991  
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

### CENTRAL COMMITTEE

#### Provincial representatives

I	Revd A W Summers	VII	Mrs J Armour
II	Revd G Eatock	VIII	Revd B W Kirk
III	Revd M F Camroux	IX	Revd Susan Nuttall
IV	Mrs W Higginbottom	X	Revd D Batchelor
V	Revd P Fuller	XI	Revd D V Clarke
VI	Mr D Barton	XII	Revd P Taylor

together with Revds Molly J Kenyon, Elizabeth J Nash,  
Elisabeth Neale, Mrs S Fielding, Mr D Jones, Dr M Claire Shephard,  
Mrs V Morrison\* and Mrs G S Ntiamoah\*

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Convener: Mr A M Grimmond - 1994  
Secretary: The Departmental Secretary

### CENTRAL COMMITTEE

#### Provincial Representatives

I	Mr J C G Forrest	VII	Mr P A Wade
II	Mr G R Stelfox	VIII	Mr G Lunt*
III	Mr R D Holden*	IX	Mr J E Richardson*
IV	Mr J E M Gilbey	X	Mr R S Martin
V	Mr M Harrison*	XI	Mr E J Ford
VI	Mr H Kempton	XII	Mr A Gilmour

together with the Conveners of the Committees within the  
Department, Miss R M Cook, Mrs C S Marshall,  
Revd Dr Catherine A Middleton, Revd W Wright.

### TREASURERSHIP

Convener: Mr D Davies - 1993  
Secretary: The Chief Accountant

Mr D Iethem	Mrs J Gilbert	Mr R M Hardie
Mr J Craig**	Mr W M McVey	Mrs I Steele
Mr E Morgan	Mrs M Thomson**	Mr R T Masser
(2 vacancies)		

## **MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY**

**Convener:** The Revd J D Waller - 1990

**Secretary:** Mr A A Taylor - 1995

### **Provincial Representatives**

I	Dr P Clarke	VII	Mr P A Wade
II	Mr G R Stelfox	VIII	Mr A M Johnston
III	Revd P W Pells	IX	Dr D R Page*
IV	Mr J E M Gilbey	X	Mr V F Lane
V	Revd G Smith	XI	Mr D Buckland
VI	Mr R Webb	XII	Mr S Harvey

together with the Convener of the Pensions Sub-Committee (Mr V Hugff\*), the Revds Hazel M Day, P Grimshaw\*\*, Mrs Elizabeth Wilkinson and a representative of the Ministries Department. The Revd J D Waller also represents the Provincial Moderators.

### **WELFARE AND EMERGENCIES**

**Convener:** Mr R A Heritage - 1995\*\*

**Secretary:** Mrs Judy Stockings - 1992

Revd T C Stiff\*\*  
Revd May Segain

Revd Nanette Head  
Mrs Joyce Sutcliffe

Revd R J Hall

### **CHURCH BUILDINGS**

**Convener:** The Revd J J Macro - 1992

**Secretary:** Mr T T W Peregrine - 1991

Mr M J Ballard  
Revd R Good  
Mr G E Knowles  
(1 vacancy)

Miss B F Davis  
Mr R Honey  
Mr C A Raggett

Revd A W Duncan  
Revd M F Hubbard  
Revd Dr A R Ritchie

### **RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING**

**Convener:** The Revd D R Hannen\*

**Secretary:** Mr R S Carruthers

Mr M Foster Taylor  
Mr G S Anderson\*  
Mrs J Parkinson  
Mr G Yuille

Mr J E M Gilbey  
Revd M F Hubbard  
Mr M J Ballard\*

Revd F L Hill  
Mr G H Parkinson  
Mr G E Winter

Note: This Committee shall consist of all the members of the Committee of Management of the URC Retired Ministers Housing Society Limited with the ex officio officers of the Department.

## OTHER COMMITTEES

### EXECUTIVE

Convener: The Moderator of the General Assembly  
Secretary: The General Secretary

Four representatives of each Synod, including the Moderators, together with ex officio members as follows:

The Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator, the Deputy General Secretary, the Assistant Clerk, the Legal Adviser, the Conveners and Secretaries of the five Departments, the Conveners of the Business, Nominations, Budget and Communication and Supplies Committees, the Secretaries of the Nominations and Business Committees.

### BUDGET

Convener: The Revd A J G Walker - 1993  
Secretary: The Chief Accountant

### Provincial Representatives

I	Mr G Trenholm	VII	Mr P A Wade
II	Mr G R Stelfox	VIII	Mr A M Johnston
III	Revd Barbara Gates	IX	Revd J J Macro
IV	Mr D Lethem	X	Mr P M Fickling
V	Mr M Harrison*	XI	Mr E J Ford
VI	Mr A Redhead	XII	Mr B Smith

together with the Convener or Secretary of the Ministries, Faith and Life, World Church and Mission and Church and Society Department, the Convener or Secretary of the Maintenance of the Ministry, Communication and Supplies Committee, the Convener of the Treasurership Committee, the Honorary Treasurer, the General Secretary, the Office and Personnel Manager and one Provincial Moderator.

### Budget Priorities Panel

The immediate past Moderator (Convener - ex officio), Mrs J Boulind and the Revd R A H Bocking.

## **BUSINESS**

**Convener:** The Revd A J Wells - 1991  
**Secretary:** The Office and Personnel Manager

### **Provincial Representatives**

I	Revd Dr A R Ritchie	VII	Revd J B Simpson
II	Revd B A Baker	VIII	Revd Jessie Clare
III	Revd A Duncan*	IX	Revd G H Thomas
IV	Mr D Thacker	X	Revd G W Satchell
V	Mrs M Weedon	XI	Mr H Grief
VI	Revd P J Cullum	XII	Revd P D Scotland

together with the Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator, the Clerk and General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary, the Assistant Clerk and the Conveners of the five Departments.

## **NOMINATIONS**

**Convener:** The Revd C B Nuttall - 1991  
**Secretary:** Mr D Butler - 1993

### **Provincial Representatives**

I		VII	Revd J B Simpson
II	Revd B A Baker	VIII	Revd Jessie Clare
III		IX	Revd G H Thomas
IV	Mr D Thacker	X	Revd Greta M Morgan*
V	Mrs M Weedon*	XI	Mr H Grief
VI	Revd P J Cullum	XII	Miss D Newns

together with the Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the immediate past Moderator, the General Secretary, the Conveners of the five Departments and the Provincial Moderators.

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPLIES**

**Convener:** The Revd D J Netherwood - 1990  
**Secretary:** Secretary of Communication and Supplies

Revd C G Evans	Mr J Silvan Evans	Revd P L Flint
Mr R J Grant	Miss B E How	Revd R A Irving
Mr C P W Wright	Revd C E C Richards	Mr A J Webster
Revd E Rea	Mr A Rogers	



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Revds G J Cook, R J Ellis, J Filsak, D Lawrence\*,  
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Secretary: The General Secretary

Mrs Benita Kyle                      Revd N W Bainbridge\*\*              Dr Paul Rogers  
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Joint Secretaries: Mr A L Lodde\* and Mr I G Neilson

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Mrs Gwen Hall	Mr C M Frank	Mrs J Gilbert
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Mr H Kempton	Revd V N J Lewis	Mr K M Kirby
Mr W M McVey	Mr R S Martin	Mr R T Masser
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	Revd R J Wiggins	

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Mrs S Tull                              Revd K Chippindale              (1 vacancy)

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Secretary: The Revd W Wright - 1992\*

## Provincial Representatives

I    Revd Dr E K Massey*	VII
II   Revd Dr Lois M Sundeen*	VIII Mr A M Johnston*
III Mrs B Martin*	IX   Dr M Claire Shephard*
IV	X
V   Mr M Harrison*	XI   Mr A Hamilton*
VI	XII  Mr B Lopez*

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Presbyterian Church in Ireland	The Moderator* Revd W R P Adams*
Congregational Union of Scotland	Revd D Jenkins*
Congregational Federation	The Moderator*
Union of Welsh Independents	Revd P L Trow*
Presbyterian Church of Wales	Revd P R Mark*
Waldensian Synod	Dr Ruth Cowhig*
Palatinate Church	Revd Derek Wales*
European Assembly of Churches)	Mrs N Davies*
on Peace with Justice )	Revd J P Reardon*

### 2. CHURCH BODIES

#### British Council of Churches

Revds Molly Kenyon, Dr J I Morgans, R J Mortimer, J P Reardon,  
Mrs D M Beale, Dr D M Thompson, Mrs Mary Marsden and  
Mrs Yvonne Parry (through WCM Dept)  
Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in England:  
Revds M F Hubbard, P I Poulter\*  
Consultative Group on Ministry among Children: Revds A Greenslade,  
T Oakley  
Women's Inter-Church Consultative Committee: Revd J E Sowerbutts  
Youth Unit Reference Group: Revd P Quilter  
Standing Committee of Theological Education: Revds M Dunford &  
Dr A H B Logan\*  
Team Ministry Conference: Revd G K Tolley  
Working Party on Collaborative Styles of Ministry: Mrs B Brettell,  
Revds M C Diffey & T Oakley

**Scottish Churches' Council:** Revd P D Arthur and Miss I Kidd\*

**Free Church Federal Council:** The Revd P W Beaman, Mrs B Brettell,  
Revds N Healey, B G Thorogood, J M Ward  
Chaplaincy Board: Revds P W Beaman, A B Holroyd, R Royston-Bishop  
Education Committee: Revds A D Lewis, T Oakley, Miss R Davis,  
(Dr Mary Ede, Revd J P Reardon also serve)  
Joint Education Policy Committee: Dr Mary Ede  
Women's Council: Revd May Segain

### 3. OTHER COMMITTEES AND NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

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Mr L Macro (Honorary Treasurer), Revd G Satchell  
Christian Education Movement Council: Revd T Oakley

Churches' Main Committee: Mr C M Frank, Mr N H Oldham\*,  
 Mr B Nutley\*

Congregational Fund Board: Revds C H Grant, Havergal-Shaw,  
 D A Smith, J H Taylor, G W Satchell\*

Cambridge Federation Examination in Theology Committee of  
 Management: Revd M G Dunford

Joint Liturgical Group: Revds Justine Wyatt & Dr C Thompson

Methodist Faith and Order Committee: Revd K Fabricius

National Christian Education Council: Revds C K Forecast,  
 T Oakley

National Council of Voluntary Organisations: Revd J P Reardon

National Ecumenical Agency for Further Education: Revd M C Diffey,  
 (1 vacancy)

Scottish World Day of Prayer: Revd Jean Tinto

Society for the Ministry of Women in the Church:  
 Revd Patrice Sessions

United Navy, Army and Air Force Board: Revds M Diffey, D Friend,  
 J Paull, E P Schofield, B G Thorogood

United Reformed Church History Society: Mrs K Davies,  
 Revd P C Jupp, Mrs Carol Rogers\*, Mr E P M Wollaston  
 (Dr D M Thompson also serves)

Wharton Trust: Mrs B Taylor

Widows' Fund of the Three Denominations: Revds K French,  
 L A Stringer, Mr L Macro, Revd G W Satchell

Women's World Day of Prayer: Mrs Ruth Bowyer

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Bishops Stortford College: Revd C G Evans

Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges: Convener and  
 Secretary, Training Committee

Caterham School, Board of Governors: Revds D L Helyar, T Perry

Chestnut Foundation: Mr D Davies, Revd M G Dunford

Northern College: Revds Dr D Cornick, M G Dunford, D Jenkins,  
 (1 vacancy)

Eltham College/Walthamstow Hall: Miss M Moyce

Homerton College Trustees: Mrs J Boulind,  
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Milton Mount Foundation, Governors: Miss Margaret Canning,  
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Queen's College, Birmingham: Revd M G Dunford

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 Miss B Vickerton, the Revd M Diffey

Silcoates School, Governor: Dr C Binfield

Springhill College Endowment (Mansfield College): Revd W W Biggs,  
 Sir Kenneth Corley, Mr R A Heritage, Revds M F Hubbard,  
 R W H Jones, (1 vacancy)



OTHER COMMITTEES AND NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

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Bible Reading Fellowship:	Revd F G W Dennett
Church Hymnary Trust:	Mr G R Barr, Revd Joan T Peters
Churches' Council for Health & Healing:	Revds D Dale, D A Pratt, (1 vacancy)
Churches' Advisory Council for Local Broadcasting:	Mrs Carol Rogers
Churches' Council on Alcohol & Drugs:	Dr D Acres, Revd J P Reardon
Churches' Advisory Panel of the Boys Brigade:	Revd T Oakley
Council of URC Boys Brigade Companies:	Revds J M Rees, P Quilter
Funerals, Cremations & Crematoria:	Revds J C Neary, R L Richards
Guides' Religious Advisory Panel:	Revd Gillian Bobbett
International Bible Reading Association:	Revd T Oakley
Joint Committee on New English Bible:	Revd Prof W Houston, (alternate: Revd R K Scopes)
Scout & Guide Fellowship (URC):	Revd P Quilter
Scouts' Religious Advisory Group:	Mr D Marshall Jones

# WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION DEPARTMENT

## WORLD CHURCH AND MISSION

### CENTRAL COMMITTEE 1989

**Convener:** Mrs. Rosalind Goodfellow

**Secretary:** The Revd Donald Elliott

1. The Department's work this year has been dominated by words such as pilgrimage, ecumenism, unity, sharing, dialogue, mission and partners.
2. The Inter-Church Process has now arrived at the decision making time and it is the clear hope of the Department that Assembly will adopt the Resolutions (Resolution 4) that will signify the United Reformed Church's participation in and support for the new ecumenical bodies.
3. It is with regret that we report that the scheme for unification with the Congregational Union of Scotland did not achieve the necessary majority in the CUS Assembly, so the scheme failed. However, there are continuing areas of work in which the two churches can plan and witness together.
4. The sharing of resources between nations, churches and peoples has been a crucial issue for the Department this year. Statements asking people to commit themselves to such sharing may be remote from their daily lives. The Department's response to the World Council of Churches Consultation on Resource Sharing held at El Escorial in October 1987, is one we should like every local church and member to consider. Study of it will lead to discussion and maybe argument, but also hopefully to constructive assessment of our commitment as churches and individuals and of our willingness to share our resources through the World Church (Resolution 2).
5. We hope that A Dialogue on Dialogue attached to the Mission and Other Faiths Committee Report will bring alive the differing strands of thinking within the Church. Why not present it at a Church meeting?
6. At all the committees of the Department we are kept aware of God's mission through the Church at home and overseas, of the people we receive and send in the name of the URC, and the decisions they have to make when they offer to serve the Church.
7. Finally we wish to thank the Revd Donald Elliott for his leadership, his sheer hard work and searching initiatives during his years as Departmental Secretary. We wish him well in his new appointment as Divisional Secretary of the Conference for World Mission of the British Council of Churches in this time of ecumenical change.

## MISSIONARY AND ECUMENICAL WORK ABROAD COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd Derek Wales  
Secretary: The Revd Donald Elliott

8. "The ecumenical sharing of resources" is not the lightest of phrases. Ecclesiastical jargon, perhaps, but it has weighty implications, and they have been at the centre of the committee's deliberations this year.

9. A World Council of Churches Consultation with this theme was held at El Escorial, Spain, in October 1987. Its report points to "the rise of unjust structures which perpetuate dependence and poverty for the majority of the world's people" and calls upon the Church "as the first-fruits of the new humanity to stand in solidarity with all people, particularly with the poor and the oppressed, and to challenge the value systems of the world". Written very much from the stand-point of the Third World, the report speaks of the participants committing themselves 'to a common discipline of sharing among all God's People'.

10. It raises awkward questions: Why must people and groups be 'squeezed out' by political and economic systems, where 'they' always seem to be in control? How can people be given genuine choices, a chance of self-reliance and self-determination? How can we share resources of all kinds, across the world? How can we make decisions together (e.g. North with South) about the proper use of resources? We found it very difficult to know how to respond to something so challenging to our accepted ways of life and thought. We looked at some of the ways in which the URC shares resources, through relations with churches overseas and New Enterprise in Mission at home. But we were left with the question as to how far our Church's activity truly brings home to members of the URC the issues of resource-sharing and how far it may at times reinforce inadequate models of response. Can we say, for instance, in the words of CWM's comment upon the report that we are 'purging' our language of every trace of dominance/dependency patterns' or that we are moving from 'sharing resources' to 'sharing life in its multiple dimensions'?

11. The Department's reflections on the document are appended to this report. We suggest that congregations look at those reflections, along with the report if possible, and consider what it could mean to take them seriously (Resolution 2).

12. Meanwhile, the sharing of reflection and experience with churches across the world continues. Our Secretary attended the Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana and the Revd Susan Armitage the Synod of the Protestant Church of the Union (EKU) in East Germany. That Church was also visited on our behalf

by a group of four people which included two office secretaries, Miss Pat Bolton and Mrs. Joy Button. The Revd John Reardon attended a consultation of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Botswana where assent was given to a proposal to establish an Area Committee in Southern Africa. We agreed to support this initiative financially for at least three years but expressed the hope that a more ecumenical body might develop from this base, perhaps in association with the All Africa Conference of Churches.

13. In two provinces there is a development of links with European Churches, in Thames North with the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, and in East Midlands, in association with the Eastern Province, with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the Netherlands Reformed Church.

14. At our request the Assembly Executive Committee agreed to recommend that churches observe either Kassinga Day (May 4th) or Soweto Day (June 16th) on the nearest Sunday, focussing in worship on our concern for Southern Africa. Materials are available for the information of congregations. Kassinga Day commemorates May 4th 1978 when South African troops, claiming to attack a military target, killed at least 612 people in a refugee re-settlement camp. The day has become a focus of national pride for the Namibian people). (Proposed Resolution 3).

15. In the absence of secure funding for response to emergencies we find it difficult to know how to answer requests for help or at least for a tangible expression of concern from sister churches in times of special need. It remains our hope that future thinking about advocacy and fund-raising within the URC will consider the desirability of establishing some kind of contingencies fund. In the meantime, we have managed this year to respond to cries for help from Churches in Bangladesh, in Jamaica, and in Hungary, where the Reformed Church has been helping refugees from Romania, and we would commend the needs of these Churches to those congregations which have funds to spare for overseas causes on top of their Unified Appeal contributions. We also made a donation, through the Amity Foundation Fund to an appeal from the BCC China Relationships Committee on behalf of rural clinics in northern Jiangsu.

16. We would commend to churches for their concern and where possible their financial support the literature programmes of Feed the Minds and Eurolit both of which are based at Robertson House, Leas Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4QW. (0483 577877).



## COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION

**General Secretary:** The Revd Dr. Christopher Duraisingh

17. The CWM family of 28 member churches, sharing together a common fellowship in the Gospel, has been led to discover during the year that partnership demands not only the sharing of resources in mission but also a deeper commitment to mutual responsibility and interdependence. Hence sharing in one world mission is seen essentially as mutual empowering of each other for mission. Several factors have led the Council to reiterate this dimension of our partnership in mission. Some of these factors are the rapidly deteriorating international economic order, the international debt crisis that badly affects many of our member churches and the ecumenical quest for authentic models of sharing in mission as represented in the World Conference on Resource Sharing in El Escorial. 18. Several member churches have been empowered to seek relative self-reliance so that they shall contribute to our interdependence in mission from their strength and not weakness. The United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman has undertaken a major process of restructuring for mission and ministry and CWM family has assisted that Church in setting up a substantial trust fund toward self-reliance. Guyana Congregational Union is working hard on a plan to launch a Decade of Renewal, Advance and Evangelism (DARE) at the end of which it hopes to be relatively self-reliant financially. The Churches of Christ in Malawi has been encouraged to make an assessment of its life and mission in order to plan systematically for renewal and advance in mission. Through a team visit from partner churches, and with a new team of leaders the United Church in Zambia has reviewed its priorities in mission and now looks towards a period of renewal in mission at grass-roots.

19. The Education in Mission programme has been undertaken by many churches in equipping their local congregations for mission. Several regions of the Council are at present engaged in the process of writing materials relevant to their context. The Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar recently published its EIM material. Church of South India, and the churches in the Pacific, East Asia and Southern Africa regions are working at regional materials.

20. The first regional Youth in Mission Workcamp was held in Taiwan with participants from seven member churches. For three weeks more than 20 young persons were exposed to the life and work of the mission of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan with special attention to the mission alongside the poor and marginalized. The primary purpose was to expose them to the challenges and opportunities in mission in today's world. Since September 1988, another group of four young women and five young men have been involved in yet another year of the Training in Mission programme.

21. Empowering sections of the people of God is an essential part of partnership in mission. Hence CWM is seeking ways of encouraging its member churches to participate in the Decade of Church's Solidarity with Women, initiated by the WCC. Bringing into being a common human community in solidarity with women will find greater expression within the Council's programme during the next year. Plans for consultations and actions at various levels of the CWM family are being drawn up. It will be a major item on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of the Council in June 1989. Arrangements have been made to change CWM's constitution so that three women and three young persons can become voting members of the Council from 1989.

22. During the year regional consultations were held in all the six regions of the Council. These consultations have become occasions when we listen to what the Holy Spirit is already doing within each member church and in the world, so that the whole fellowship may be enriched by such sharing. They also have given more visible regional emphases and approaches to much of the vision and concerns of the Council without creating any regional structures.

23. Leadership development for active mission engagement continues to be a major programme thrust of many of our many member churches. Therefore a major portion of the common financial resources was allocated for programmes related to such a concern during the year. Related to this was also a major international consultation sponsored along with the Programme on Theological Education of the WCC and CEVAA in early January 1989 in Kenya. There were about 65 participants. The Consultation explored the relation between mission and ministry, relevant models of theological education which would equip persons as enablers of God's people for their mission both locally and globally, and global partnership in mission-education in formal and non-formal theological programmes. Its findings will be made available through the publications of PTE and CWM later in the year.

24. Serious reconsideration of the nature of sharing persons in mission has been undertaken during the year by CWM. The implications of the findings of a major consultation of the WCC held in Birmingham in September for sharing of persons in mission within the CWM family are being examined. Greater commitment by each of the 28 member churches to sending and receiving persons in mission is our goal in such a search.

25. Along with various productions for particular member churches, the pamphlet **CWM Is....** has been revised. Two new slide-tape presentations are under preparation: **Sharing in Mission** an updated presentation of the life and work of the Council and **Kumbaya**, an aid for intercession for and with CWM member churches. These will be ready by the end of June.

26. CWM has been considering the applications for membership from the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and the Presbyterian Church in Korea. Decisions regarding their membership will be made before the end of June.

27. The meeting of the Council will be from June 20th to 30th, in St. Andrew's, Scotland. Among the major items are the six yearly review of the life and work of the Council and the appointment of a new General Secretary and a Secretary for Personnel.

28. This is my last report to the General Assembly. I have been immensely enriched by my relationship with the local congregations and Councils of the URC at various levels. As I leave the United Kingdom I want to express my thanks for these four years of significant spiritual growth, warmth of Christian fellowship and strength of partnership in the Gospel that I have enjoyed.

## APPENDIX 1

### ECUMENICAL SHARING OF RESOURCES

This statement represents an initial response by the World Church and Mission Department to the "Guidelines for Sharing" drawn up by international participants in the World Council of Churches Consultation on Resource Sharing held at El Escorial, October 1987, Spain.

#### A. OUR GOD

We of the United Reformed Church, as partners in the Council for World Mission, affirm our understanding of God in relation to the world in line with the Guidelines, as follows:

1. God's outgoing love has created the world and given it to all humanity for faithful use and common sharing.
2. Sin and selfishness have led to unjust structures which entrench poverty for a majority of the world's people.
3. Jesus Christ's self-emptying love on the cross leads to our repentance and becomes the pattern for our sharing.
4. The new life given by the Holy Spirit makes us members in Christ one of another, bearing each other's burdens and sharing together in God's gift of life to all.
5. In the Eucharist we offer to God ourselves and all creation in brokenness, and are sent renewed into the

world to be Christ's body, to be broken again and shared for all.

6. The Holy Spirit empowers us to stand and act in solidarity with especially the poor and oppressed, in obedience to God's will, preparing for the coming of God's Kingdom of justice and peace.

## B. OUR WORLD

Accordingly, we of the United Reformed Church believe that we ought to commit ourselves with other Christian disciples to a deliberate discipline of sharing among all God's people in the world, by:

1. Working for a new value system based on justice, peace and the integrity of creation, since existing values permit the ever-widening gap between rich and poor and the escalation of militarism.
2. Involvement in comprehensive mission which includes identifying, exposing and confronting the root causes of injustice, and working for a new economic and political or
3. Seeking to empower as equal partners in decision-making those who are marginalised by reason of gender, race, age, economic or political status, and physical or mental disability.
4. Enabling people to organise themselves for self-reliance and self-determination, and supporting such organisations among the poor and oppressed.
5. Being open to mutual accountability, correction and forgiveness in all our sharing.
6. Developing relationships on the basis that all have gifts and all have needs.
7. Seeking to overcome unnecessary barriers between different faiths and ideologies.
8. Resisting or working to change international financial mechanisms that undermine the ability of poor people to struggle for justice and human dignity against deepening debt.
9. Devising ways of shifting the setting of terms for the use of resources to those who are denied both resources and power.

10. Facilitating exchange between peoples of the South of the world with common concerns.

## C. OUR CHURCH

As part of the Church in Britain, and as a partner in the Council for World Mission, we of the United Reformed Church recognise our need to improve ecumenical sharing and self-examination at all levels, international, regional, national, local and personal.

### I International and Regional

1. Our main means of resource sharing at these levels is through the Council for World Mission through undesignated giving, education in mission and personnel exchange.
2. The United Reformed Church also has particular partnerships with churches in Ghana, Korea and in Eastern and Western Europe, involving exchange of information, visitation and some scholarships.
3. Through the Conference For World Mission of the British Council of Churches, there is participation in sharing ideas, money and people with Christians in China and elsewhere.
4. Members of the United Reformed Church are encouraged to share in Christian Aid's resource sharing through the URC 1% Appeal.
5. **Twinning** between congregations and Districts is developing within Europe and further afield.
6. It is unclear to what extent this activity truly alerts and conscientises members of the URC to the issues of resource-sharing, and how much it may at times reinforce inadequate or outdated models of response.

### II National

1. The United Reformed Church looks forward to enhanced levels of resource-sharing through the new ecumenical instruments. We expect it to be possible for the expertise and experience of one Church to be put at the disposal of all in specific matters, including some international relationships.
2. Ethical investment needs to be actively promoted in the URC, using such advisory agencies as the Ethical Investment Research Service (EIRIS).

3. Resource-sharing calls for improved church education, helping people see for themselves the need for Christian political engagement through a contextual approach to the study of the Bible.
4. Leadership in the church needs to reflect a commitment to power-sharing and balance in gender, race and social origin.
5. Liturgy, the heart of the Church's life, must become more participatory in preparation and style, drawing on the gifts and insights of many.
6. There should be recognition that the 'blessed' ones of the Sermon on the Mount (the poor in spirit, those who hunger for justice, etc.) constitute the basic membership of the Church at all levels, over against hierarchy.
7. National structure should provide for maximum flexibility for groupings at the local level.
8. The URC is a pioneer in church-related community work, but there are lessons to be gained from community work training for the Church's overall witness.
9. Provincial resources need to be further opened up to national accountability.
10. It is a scandal that recently there was serious talk of cutting back on the URC's outgoing commitments to CWM or Church & Society issues at a time when incomes have been on the whole rising above the rate of inflation. Equally, the New Enterprise in Mission Fund is really a very small response to opportunities. Financial sharing within the church is overdue for advocacy.

### III Local

1. Church property "ownership" needs exposing to an understanding of the Gospel for all. What are the criteria for extending or closing a building: congregational convenience or mission strategy?
2. The gift of ministry and its deployment should likewise be scrutinised in the light of the Gospel for all people. Is ministry to be allocated by congregational or community need?
3. Is the District Council too large a grouping effectively to assist mission resource-sharing for a given neighbourhood or area?

4. How does power actually operate in our Districts and congregations? Is the power with the people of God? Or does the "debate" style marginalise most?
5. As a Reformed Church we have nonetheless allowed undue focus on ordained over against lay leadership. Do we really need so many full-time paid ministers?
6. Resource sharing requires discipline, and the URC ministry usually lacks the disciplines of Job Descriptions and regular appraisal.
7. Similarly, membership often lacks discipline in spirituality, attendance or contribution. Should we not be a tithing people.

#### IV Personal

1. We recognise that commitment to Gospel-based resource-sharing in today's world is likely to be personally costly and painful, though sometimes exciting.
2. We believe, however, that the Guidelines for Sharing are neither inappropriate nor utopian.
3. Our only questions, then, are Shall we obey? And if we do, Shall we be sustained in that obedience?

#### MISSION AND ECUMENICAL AT HOME COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd John Slow

Secretary: The Revd Bernard Thorogood

29 'The way leads on'. The theme of pilgrimage has been at the centre of recent ecumenical discussion and action. Pilgrims are concerned about where they are going, how they will reach their destination, priorities for the journey, not least who their fellow-pilgrims may be, but, most of all, the imperative to keep following the way ahead. This report speaks of encouragements and disappointments, opportunities and frustrations in our continuing pilgrimage as the people of the disturbing God who refuses to allow us to settle down.

30 **Inter-Church Process: Not Strangers But Pilgrims**  
**Churches Together in Pilgrimage**, was published on the 23rd January, 1989, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Copies have been made widely available, including one sent to each member of General Assembly. The document marks a crucial stage in the Inter-Church Process in which more than 30 denominations have become increasingly involved over the past five years. It contains

definitive proposals for new ecumenical instruments. They are being commended to the decision-making bodies of the churches during the summer of 1989 and, if approved by them, will be implemented in 1990.

30.2 The proposals call for a new ecumenical life-style involving more churches than ever before including Roman Catholics and the black churches. They require a significant movement "from ecumenism as an extra which absorbs energy, to ecumenism as a dimension of all that we do, which releases energy through the sharing of resources". Such movement will need to take place at every level of the Church's life, but especially in each local community.

30.3 **Churches Together in Pilgrimage** takes note of most of the points made in the URC's response to the consultative documents published last year. The Committee, with the support of the Department, warmly commends it to Assembly in Resolution 4.

### 31 ENGLAND

31.1 **Adviser for Local Ecumenism.** The Committee has been pleased to welcome the Revd Peter Poulter, who now represents the URC on CCLEPE (Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in England) and the Methodist-URC Liaison Group. In addition to making a valuable contribution to the Committee, he has also responded to several requests for advice from local churches and District Councils. It will be extremely helpful if information about ecumenical developments and difficulties as well as ecumenical questions could be sent to him direct, thus enabling resource material to be gathered.

31.2 A **Joint Churches Annual Returns Form** was distributed to LEP's (Local Ecumenical Projects) for the first time in the autumn. It has been generally welcomed although some criticisms have been noted.

31.3 **Baptist-URC Sharing Agreement.** A model agreement has been prepared by the solicitors of the two denominations. Copies are available from the Department.

31.4 **Ecumenical Officers' Training Courses** have proved valuable to those taking up such appointments. Details for the national courses are circulated by CCLEPE. Other courses are arranged at a regional level and information is circulated through local councils of churches.

31.5 **Ecumenical Canons.** The General Synod of the Church of England has approved the final form of the Ecumenical Canons which govern the interchangeability of ministry.

31.6 **Consultative Committee for Local Ecumenical Projects in**



**England.** The seventh report of CCLEPE has been recently published together with a basic guide for those serving on County Ecumenical Councils and Sponsoring Bodies.

**31.7 Methodist-URC Liaison Group.** A proposal for joint Induction Services in Methodist-URC situations is before both churches and will be circulated in the Ecumenical File. The Methodist Church is also working on a paper setting out the expectations of 'Recognised and Regarded' ministers which will be helpful to both incoming ministers and District Councils. The Committee will be discussing the ordination of elders in joint churches.

**31.8 Lutheran Synod.** Following the visit of the Revd Geoffrey Roper to the Synod, it was agreed to renew the request to District Councils to seek to build closer links with Lutheran congregations within their bounds. The Lutheran Synod is a group of congregations uniting protestant Christians from Lutheran, Reformed and United backgrounds. At present these churches are facing difficulties of dwindling and ageing membership and reduction in the number of pastors. As both the Lutheran Synod and the United Reformed Church are signatories to the Leuenberg Agreement, it behoves the URC to offer support to a sister Church and, where appropriate, to give effect to the pulpit and table fellowship established between us for several years.

## 32 SCOTLAND

### 32.1 Congregational Union of Scotland and United Reformed Church

Although the Proposals for Unification received almost unanimous approval (99.4%) in the last year's Assembly, unfortunately the Assembly of the Congregational Union of Scotland, achieved a vote of only 64.6% when 75% was required. With inevitable disappointment, the Joint Negotiating Group met in October, 1988 to wind up the process. The Group agreed the following Statement:

"The Proposals for Unification failed to receive the required majority of 75% in the Congregational Union Assembly held in St. Andrews in September, 1988. Subsequently the Joint Negotiating Group of the two churches has met to conclude the present negotiations."

32.2 "Ecumenical commitment remains crucial for both denominations, even though the present process has been brought to a halt, and each will now have to consider its own future relationships. No new negotiations have been proposed but the journey towards the full expression of Christian Unity will continue, in Scotland as in the whole of Britain".

32.3 "The two denominations will continue to work together, and certain areas of co-operation in Scotland can already be noted - Youth Work, World Mission matters, Women's Work, Theological Education. One way in which the spirit of shared concern can

be made more effective is in the care given to the small number of United Reformed Church fellowships in Scotland. It is hoped that a joint liaison group can be formed in Scotland which would take on such responsibility".

32.4 "The Group rejoices in the gifts of the Spirit which have been shared during the years of this process, is grateful for the prayers of many local churches, friends in other denominations, and the Churches around the world which have sent messages of encouragement. It believes that the work done together is a contribution to the total life of our churches".

32.5 We hope our two churches will continue to co-operate where possible. Meanwhile, we remember those who had looked forward to a successful outcome of these Proposals, especially the seven URC congregations in the Mid-Scotland District.

### 33 WALES

33.1 The responses of the Covenanted Churches to **Ministry in a Uniting Church** have now been assessed by the Covenant Commission. Questions were about the outlined pattern of ministry and about readiness to proceed to the preparation of a Scheme of Union. The responses of the Methodist and U.R. Churches were generally positive; those of the Presbyterian Church of Wales and the Covenanted Baptist Churches more equivocal. That of the Church in Wales was negative on these questions, but that church expressed a strong desire to further the growth of local ecumenism.

33.2 Although these responses are recognised as not giving the Commission a mandate to proceed immediately to a Scheme of Union, they are not taken as discouraging. The quest for visible unity proceeds, and a four point programme has been drawn up and submitted to the churches: to prepare answers to questions on ministry raised in the churches' responses and to continue work on membership and initiation; to explore with the Church in Wales the possibilities for single presidency at celebrations of the Covenant Eucharist; to foster greater co-operation in the sharing of ministerial resources; and to commit greater resources to the work of the Commission, alongside their commitment to the proposed new wider ecumenical body, CYIUN.

33.3 The implications of these proposals are currently being studied in the province of Wales and within the Department.

### 34 IRELAND

The Committee has been pleased to welcome again the Revd David Nesbitt, Convener of the Inter-Church Relations Board of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, who spoke of ecumenical opportunities and difficulties as the Irish Churches were preparing

to co-ordinate their response to 'Not Strangers But Pilgrims'. The Presbyterian Church planned to hold a special residential assembly in 1990 on the theme of renewal, to mark the 150th anniversary of the Presbyterian General Synod.

### **35 Rural Mission and Ministry**

**35.1 Rural Consultant.** We offer our congratulations to the Revd John Clarke on his appointment as Director of the Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh. A new URC-Methodist appointment of a URC minister as Rural Consultant is being sought, based on three small rural churches in Northamptonshire, within reasonable travelling distance of Stoneleigh. The post, financed by both churches, the Centre and a private trust, will be for a period of 5 years in the first instance.

### **35.2 Methodist Rural Life Committee**

Stewardship in Rural Areas and Rural Ecumenism have been major items on the Committee's agenda. Although smaller churches may be fearful of being absorbed, the positive emphasis of ecumenism in the countryside is not about joining churches together but about the wholeness of the community.

**35.3 The Archbishops' Commission on Rural Areas.** The Revd John Clarke and Mrs. Clare Laflin are serving on the Commission as representatives of the United Reformed Church, which is also making a contribution of £1,000 towards the cost of the project. Three working parties on Economy and Environment, The Rural Community and Rural Services, will lead to consideration of the life and mission of rural churches. Members of the Commission will be visiting different parts of the country during the summer. Details of their visits are available from the Department and will be circulated in the Ecumenical File, a copy of which is sent to each Province and District.

**36 New Enterprise in Mission Fund.** During 1988, seventeen projects received grants totalling £23,400 three of which were new applications. The latter included help towards the expenses of a Church Related Community Worker in an inner-city council estate where the local church was unable to meet them; a grant towards an ecumenical centre for the unemployed, again in the inner-city; and a URC-Methodist community project. The fund has provided essential help in enabling new mission projects to become established.

**37 Community and Race Relations Unit of the British Council of Churches** A request for a grant of £2,000 per annum, to be included in the Unified Appeal budget as soon as possible, is being made in partnership with the Church & Society Department to the Budget Committee. Meanwhile, the Department has approved an annual contribution of £1,000 in 1988 and 1989.

38.

**EVANGELISM AND MISSION EDUCATION GROUP**

**Convener:** The Revd C. J. Baker

38.1 During the past year Muriel Garrow has strengthened links with the Mission Enabler Teams around the country. These each have their own style which is developing with experience.

38.2 The original pattern of training teams and enthusiastic individuals was to hold national weekend conferences. This is now changing and during 1989 there will be four regional conferences. It is expected that these will help more people to be involved.

38.3 The Group has also recognised the needs for ecumenical consultations in evangelism and mission. This idea was warmly received by Denominational Home Mission Secretaries and a meeting has been arranged at Windermere, 12th-14th April.

38.4 The **Mission Pursuit** pack continues to be widely used. We welcome the excellent tape/slide presentation produced by the West Midlands Team. Several Provinces have purchased copies and copies may be borrowed from Church House.

38.5 We also welcome the Mission Pursuit Children's material produced by the Children's Work Committee and hope that the children will encourage the whole church to be involved.

38.6 We are seeking to find out which churches are using Mission Pursuit and want to share stories of the joys and the set-backs experienced by churches as they seek to go forward. An additional paper on Social Analysis is being prepared.

38.7 **Children's Leaflets.** Recognising that there is now a dearth of up-to-date material for children and others about churches round the world Geoffrey Duncan is working to produce a series of leaflets. This is being considered with our sister churches in the CWM and the Methodist Church. The Faith & Life Department also has an interest, particularly in respect of the world mission emphasis and Voyages for Pilots. It is hoped to publish the first leaflet in September, 1989.

38.8 **Inform through Reform.** We welcome the regular CWM column in Reform and are delighted that this column is edited by Mary Marsden.

38.9 The Evangelism and Mission Education Group is looking at various resource material on Sharing the Faith so that people may be aware of what is available.

## 39 URBAN RURAL MISSION GROUP

**Convener:** The Revd Charles Brock

39.1 The Group met 6 times and dealt with a broad range of issues concerning relations of the URC to urban and rural areas of deprivation and its implications for theology, ethics, finance, ministerial development and training. The Convener made numerous journeys to UPAs and attended many conferences during his sabbatical. An interim report was presented to the Missionary and Ecumenical Work at Home Committee.

39.2 Plans are in hand for a major report to Assembly in 1990.

39.3 Two days have been arranged in May 1989 for a conference of selected UPA and rural church workers to present their ideas for an illustrated booklet for general distribution in the URC and elsewhere. It is hoped it will be a stirring call to the leafy suburbs and an encouragement to the churches in deprived areas. There is also ecumenical sharing of ideas and concerns as well as liaison with other URC committees.

## MISSION AND OTHER FAITHS COMMITTEE

**Convener:** The Revd Roger Tomes

**Secretary:** The Revd John Parry

40 The Committee considers that encouraging URC participation in local inter-faith dialogue is one of its most important tasks. Members of the Committee report on local initiatives at each meeting. The meeting of the Committee last July was held in Bradford, and we were able to see something of the work of the Interfaith Education Centre, which local URC ministers helped to establish, and to hear about Bradford Concord, which promotes good relations between the local faith communities. In November a one day meeting on **Inter-faith relations: the changing pattern** was held at Belgrave Union Church in Leicester, which is in a predominantly Hindu area. In the morning we discussed inter-faith relations with a Hindu, and in the afternoon shared experiences and insights from a wide variety of local situations.

41 A further consultation with members of the Sikh community was held in London in December. The theme was **Faith in the city**. Sikhs as well as Christians had studied the Church of England's Report, and it soon became evident that Sikhs had much to contribute to the problems and opportunities of the inner cities both from their tradition (the Sikh gurus established cities and made the needs of their inhabitants the prime consideration) and from their present day experience of being to some extent disadvantaged people in British cities. Shared study of the Sikh and Christian scriptures was again a highlight of the meeting. Our

meeting place was Campion House, which provides preliminary training for late entrants to the Roman Catholic priesthood. On this occasion John Parry was invited to talk to the students about Sikhism and the students joined us on a visit to a local gurdwara, where we enjoyed traditional Sikh hospitality. Future plans are for a series of one day meetings in which we hope local URC churches will meet local gurdwaras.

42 The response to the document **A theological perspective on inter-faith dialogue** which we presented to the Assembly last year has not been overwhelming, but it has been discerning and helpful. We have been particularly grateful for the care which those who dissent from its approach have taken to explain their reasons. We have had a further discussion with members of the Doctrine and Worship Committee: this has not led to close agreement, but it has indicated that there are a number of theological positions held by members of the URC, all of which deserve to be taken seriously and listened to carefully. It looks as if we need to practise dialogue at home as well as with other faith communities. For this reason we have not tried to produce a definitive revision of our statement but a reconstruction of the dialogue which we believe is taking place within the church (see Appendix to this report).

43 The last year has seen the launching of a new organisation, INFORM, with the aim of providing information and help to those interested in or involved with new religious movements. Apart from providing information and conducting research INFORM hopes to help set up a network of local consultants on new religious movements. The Committee continues to maintain an interest in the development of INFORM and hopes that it can make a positive contribution in what is a very difficult field.

44 Inter-faith marriages, baptisms and funerals. It is not uncommon now for ministers to be asked to conduct weddings at which one of the partners is a Christian and the other belongs to another faith. Occasionally a couple who profess different faiths may bring a child for baptism or a service of dedication and there are funerals where either the deceased or the nearest relatives are of another faith. A year or so ago, in response to a request in **Reform**, several people shared their experience of such occasions with the Committee. We offer the following reflections.

45 The question of what help to give pastorally if a minister is asked for advice was dealt with helpfully some years ago by the British Council of Churches Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths in a pamphlet written by Christopher Lamb, **Mixed-faith marriage: a case for care** (since reprinted as an appendix to Roger Hooker and Christopher Lamb, **Love the stranger** (SPCK)). His general advice is that it is wise to encourage such marriages only if the couple concerned are fully aware of the religious implications and can see a way of handling them acceptable to both their consciences. It has to be said that other faith communities are

more likely to be unhappy about inter-faith marriages than most Christians would be. It is not so easy for the British Council of Churches to 'offer guidance about the conduct of inter-faith marriage services, however, since some churches do not enjoy the flexibility which we have. The **Methodist Service Book** (1975) offers guidance which differs in some respects from what follows.

46 The most common inter-faith marriages still appear to be those between Christians and Jews. There is of course no objection to including psalms and other passages from the Hebrew scriptures in a Christian marriage service. Other Jewish customs, such as the sharing of a cup by the bride and bridegroom, and prayers, such as the seven Benedictions, can also be successfully included. The chief question is whether to omit New Testament readings, Trinitarian references and "through Jesus Christ our Lord" at the end of prayers. Those who have done so generally thought afterwards it had been a mistake. Perhaps the alternative of having a service of blessing after a civil marriage should be considered.

47 The latter course is essential when a Muslim marries a Christian who does not convert to Islam. The civil marriage is necessary to comply with the laws of this country; a church wedding would not be acceptable to Muslims. One couple had a civil marriage, followed by a service in the mosque and a service in church, and agreed not to consider themselves married until after the church service (which was the normal Christian service).

48 There is no reason why the children of mixed faith marriages should not be received by baptism or dedication, provided that the Christian parent is able to make the promises and that the other parent agrees. It would seem courteous however to recognise, eg in the preamble and in the prayers, that the child has another religious heritage beside the Christian one and that the other parent has the right to introduce the child to that.

49 Requests to conduct funerals will generally concern people not very closely connected with their own religious community, e.g. because of a mixed faith marriage. Nevertheless the minister would only conduct a Christian funeral if it was specifically requested. Otherwise the aim should be to enable the mourners to show respect in a way in which they will feel at home, and therefore readings and prayers from the other tradition will be in place. In the not unknown instance where a person or his/her family have asked for a non-religious funeral, the National Secular Society publish a suggested form. Whether a minister conducts such a funeral or not is of course a matter for the individual conscience.

50 The Committee's knowledge and experience is still limited, but it is willing to offer more detailed suggestions in particular situations. It would also be very grateful to receive further reports of similar occasions.

51 The Committee welcomes the recommendation in **Christians Together in Pilgrimage** that the Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths should continue in being until the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland has the opportunity to decide its future. We hope that its importance and value will be appreciated and reaffirmed. CRPOF is particularly important to us as our link with other faith bodies when it would be inappropriate for Christian denominations to be represented individually.

52 The term of office of the Revd Roger Tomes as Convener of the Committee comes to an end at this Assembly. We are thankful for his leadership and guidance. The Revd John Sutcliffe is to succeed him.

## APPENDIX 2

### A DIALOGUE ON DIALOGUE

**Smith:** We are meeting today to discuss our relationship as Christians with people of other faiths. As we all know, the mix of religions in some of our cities is as varied as anywhere in the world, and therefore it is very important that we think about this relationship. We represent different points of view in the church, and so we may not see it in exactly the same light.

**Brown:** I agree with you that this is an important matter, but does it affect everyone in the church? There are still areas of the country where other faiths are hardly represented.

**Jones:** Yes, but people in those areas help to make decisions which affect other faith communities. And people move. Someone brought up in a predominantly white area may be suddenly confronted by people of other faiths at university, for example, or in hospital work, or in a first teaching post.

**Smith:** I imagine we should all agree that we should treat people of other faiths courteously. That at least is part of "loving the stranger".

**Brown:** I should go much further than that, and say that it means going out of our way to meet them, so that we learn about them from themselves rather than read about them in books.

**Jones:** And then we need to build up some long term relationships, in which Christians and people of other faiths learn to trust one another. Isn't this what the Mission and Other Faiths Committee has been trying to do?

**Smith:** That has certainly been the intention, and with Jews and Sikhs in particular relationships of this kind have been forged. But many other people, ministers, teachers, community workers and ordinary church members have been doing this too on a local level.



**Brown:** In many cases Christians and people of other faiths have been able to work together on issues affecting local communities. We can do that without compromising our own faith in any way.

**Smith:** There seems to be general agreement that dialogue, in the sense of meeting people of other faiths, developing relationships of understanding and trust and working together in service to the community, is not only permissible, but our Christian duty in a multi-faith society.

**Jones:** I certainly believe that the BCC guidelines, which you are quoting from, are a good guide to the way we should live with all our neighbours, whether religious or pagan. But what is the aim of dialogue? You haven't quoted the fourth principle, that "dialogue becomes the medium of authentic witness" and everything depends on how that is interpreted. My hope for all my neighbours is that they should find faith in Christ. I don't envisage dialogue as a permanent state of affairs, with conversion to Christianity breaking the rules of the game, as it were.

**Smith:** So that you are raising the question of the status of other faiths in the purpose of God?

**Jones:** Yes. It seems to me that dialogue can be dangerous unless we enter it with a firm conviction that God has made himself known in Christ in a way that he has not done elsewhere and that everyone needs to hear about this. There is no legitimate response to the gospel short of conversion. People of other faiths are not yet where God wants them to be.

**Smith:** I can see that your position is one that has the weight of the Bible and tradition behind it. But dialogue is not just a one-sided presentation of the Christian case. We are committed in dialogue to listening as well, and so we hear others maintaining that their faith too embodies a distinctive revelation from God. We also discover goodness, spirituality and insight which we should find it hard not to ascribe to the work of God. What account should we give of this experience?

**Jones:** The appeal to religious experience is very subjective. It is true that other faiths have features which challenge us, and God may well have spoken through them. But those features were present in the faith of the Old Testament, and that did not make the coming of Christ any less necessary. We cannot avoid "the scandal of particularity": that God did what was needed for the salvation of the world through a particular person at a particular time.

**Brown:** Both of you are stressing something very important. Jones is emphasising the need to be faithful to the word of God, while Smith is emphasising sensitivity to present cultural conditions. It should be possible to shape a theology which combines both, though a Reformed theology should begin from a positive biblical

warrant for dialogue. I should find this in the universal nature of God's love witnessed to in the Old and New Testaments.

**Smith:** I'm not sure that it is possible to make out a case for dialogue from the Bible. As a strategy for evangelism, maybe, but not in the sense of giving serious consideration to the other person's claims to have truth, or divine revelation. You may remember that when the previous Mission and Other Faiths Committee document suggested that there was another way of taking some of the key texts it was criticised for trying to make them say the exact opposite of their clear intention.

**Brown:** It would be a pity if the debate degenerated into arguing about proof texts in isolation. It's more important to begin from the general thrust of Scripture, or at least from certain elements in Scripture which may at times have been a minority view but in due course were seen to be the truth after which the people of the Bible were feeling. The overall message is of God's universal, unconditional and non-exclusive love.

**Jones:** I question your use of the word "unconditional". People cannot respond to the love of God without repentance and faith, conversion and discipleship.

**Brown:** At the same time we cannot be content to leave all that is good in other faiths and outside faith at all completely unrelated to God's work in Christ. The same God created us all in his own image, and the work of the Holy Spirit is not confined to the church. When God became incarnate in Christ he took the whole range of human experience into the life of the Trinity, including the experience of Godforsakenness. The New Testament suggests that the Logos (the ultimate intelligibility of the world) which became incarnate in Christ was at work in the world from the beginning and that it is God's will that everything should find its completion in Christ, whether it acknowledges him now or not. Therefore we can meet what was incarnate in Christ elsewhere as well.

**Smith:** That sounds fine when Christians are talking among themselves, but when they are talking with others it sounds patronising and arrogant. It doesn't allow others to define themselves in their own terms. It only leads to claims and counterclaims and not to increased understanding. I know that analogies with the ecumenical movement are out of favour, but the experience of the Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) seems to me instructive. They found that if they put old controversies aside and studied the Scriptures afresh they discovered much more in common than they thought they had. If people of different faiths studied their respective Scriptures together (as is already happening in some places) they might well find that they had more in common than they thought.

**Jones:** But witness in dialogue is not a matter of searching for a common truth. It is trying to convince the other that the gospel is the truth and that anything else is only partially true at best.

**Smith:** I question whether we ought to be so confident about having "the truth". The gospel itself was shaped in a particular cultural situation and our understanding of it is similarly shaped by our cultural situation, so that our grasp on ultimate truth is bound to be partial. Language has its limitations: there are some things about the world which are better experienced through literature, art and music than through formal theology. Again, if God is "wholly other", how much of him and his purposes can we understand?

**Jones:** It disturbs me that you are so willing to be non-committal about the essential truth of the gospel. A Christian is a person who has weighed up the alternatives and taken the step of faith, believing that what the Bible says about Jesus is true.

**Brown:** There are not very many options. On the one hand there is pantheism, believing that God is to be found in every person and in all experience, and on the other there is Christianity, that God has revealed himself in a particular person at a particular time. Christianity has to make the same kind of choice now as it did in its early days. We have to learn from our history.

**Smith:** But we also have to learn from our present experience. As we talk to people of other faiths we find that some of them have reached similar convictions to our own by a different route - about the human condition and the grace of God, for example - and that others - Buddhists - have insights which the world may well need that we have never thought of. I'm not asking that we should surrender the truth about Christianity but only that we should suspend judgement about the standing of people of other faiths with God.

**Jones:** You may suspend judgement, but God won't. While you are toying with these ideas people who do not know Christ are being lost eternally.

**Smith:** I agree that the result of dialogue for Christians could be a re-affirmation of the traditional Christian position. But we ought not simply to maintain that position without honest and open engagement in that dialogue. There are several movements in theology today which urge us to begin our thinking "from below": from the experience of the poor, from the experience of women, from the experience of being black. How can we be sure that God is not trying to teach us something new by setting us in multi-faith communities?

**Brown:** What would be the criteria for a new initiative on the part of God?

**Smith:** I think one sign would be the ability of people of different faiths to face the world's problems together.

**Jones:** There could be no new initiative which compromised the centrality and uniqueness of Christ.

**Smith:** It looks as if we shall have to agree to differ for the moment about the aim of dialogue. Can I ask each of you to summarise that aim as you see it?

**Jones:** For me the aim is the better to know and love the person to whom Christ has sent me to preach the gospel.

**Brown:** I hope through dialogue to witness to what God has done in Christ and to reach a richer understanding of how that work extends beyond the boundaries of Christianity.

**Smith:** My aim in dialogue is likewise to witness to what God has done in Christ but also to appreciate what he has done through other faith traditions and to try to understand how this fits into his overall purpose. But it seems to me that dialogue needs to be the concern of all of us, whether we hope for the conversion of our partners or are simply trying to find a way of living and working together, and whether we believe we understand the way other faiths fit into the purpose of God or can find no satisfactory theology at present.

**Jones:** And we need to go on talking among ourselves.

**Brown:** The question is whether loyalty to tradition alone is the path of Christian obedience or whether God is leading us through our experience to a new understanding of his purpose.

#### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

**Convener:** The Revd Raymond Adams

**Secretary:** Miss Sheila Rudofsky

53 The Personnel Committee is concerned about helping people respond to their God-given call to share themselves in cultures other than their own, and to raise awareness in the Church of the many ways in which people can share in Mission today.

54 The range of the Committee's work was evident at one meeting when Miss Jean Waudby shared her experience of teaching English in China with the Amity Foundation, a programme co-sponsored by the URC through the British Council of Churches; the Revd Johnson Mbillah from the Presbyterian Church of Ghana spoke about Islam in Northern Ghana, the subject of his study as one of the current URC scholarship-holders at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak; Miss Helen Jones described her year's work in a home for mentally and

physically handicapped children in Hungary; and a member of the team of ten URC members who spent a month in Taiwan as guests of the Presbyterian Church on personnel exchange, reflected on the implications of that visit for herself and the URC. As opportunities increase for sharing in Mission, the Committee is concerned that individuals and local congregations know of them, and use the growing resource of people who have been involved and have their story to tell.

55 While Ghana, China and Hungary reflect the variety of URC links outside the CWM family, a major part of the Committee's work is concerned with selection, training, welfare, furlough and resettlement needs of URC personnel who serve in our partner Churches of CWM. How we as a "Sending Church" can best support them in their different and individual circumstances is the continuing concern of the Committee: those who are at the sharp end of what we mean by partnership in mission, and who act as a bridge between churches and cultures, need to be firmly anchored in the prayers and lively interest of the URC.

56 As a "Receiving Church", the care of overseas people in our churches should also be strengthened: steps are being taken to encourage Provinces and District Councils to create opportunities for URC scholarship-holders at St Andrew's Hall to visit churches on one-week placements. This will give them a broader experience of the working of the URC, and local churches can benefit from contact with members of partner Churches.

### Special Ministries

57 The Committee has reviewed the experience of nearly ten years of special ministries available for people from overseas partner Churches to work within the URC, and has reaffirmed the value of the scheme despite need for further development. Between 1980 and 1987, altogether eight special ministries were in operation; the 1988 General Assembly resolved that the five special ministry appointments within the allocation of the World Church and Mission Department should be available to lay people as well as to ordained ministers. At present the Revd Froukien Smit from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands is working at the King's Hall Interfaith Project in Southall for 3-5 years, from January 1988. The Revd Hakim Singh Rahi of the Church of North India has begun a second project in the Winson Green area of Birmingham, jointly funded by the URC, the Church of England, the Methodist Church and CWM, for a period of 3-5 years from September 1988.

58 The Committee was glad to endorse the proposal of Thames North Province that Vine URC, Ilford, be eligible for a special ministry in their ecumenical outreach to the town centre; the process of filling the post has begun. The World Church and Mission with Faith and Life Departments have agreed that a person be found to undertake a special ministry working closely with the World Affairs

sub-committee of FURY and occupying several short-term placements in different Provinces over a two-year period. We welcome the opportunity of strengthening world church awareness in FURY and the availability of a resource person in the Provinces.

## 59 Exchange Visits

59.1 The fund set aside for exchange visits was used to assist a group of fifteen young people from the URC who spent a month visiting the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman; a return visit to the URC is planned in 1989.

59.2 Financial support was made available to the Province of Wales for a two-year exchange programme with the Reformed Church in Hungary so that a final year theological student could gain experience working alongside a minister in a local church.

59.3 The experience of the team of ten which visited Taiwan early in 1988 can be read in their report **But we have this vision**. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has responded to an invitation and a group will make a visit to Britain in 1990.

## 60 Scholarships

The Personnel Committee has considered how to make some of the URC scholarships more available to Churches in areas of tension, minority situations and in the front-line states of Southern Africa, as well as to our traditional scholarship partners. Approaches have been made to Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the All-Africa Conference of Churches inviting them to nominate suitable candidates. The first scholarship holder in this category is Mr John Azapaka, sponsored by the Christian Council of Malawi, who is now studying at St Andrew's Hall.

## 61 People appointed to serve Overseas

### 61.1 Through CWM:

Mr Michael and Mrs Anne Schofield of Redditch, West Midlands Province, to the Fofata Centre, Madagascar.  
The Revd Christopher and Mrs Carol Baillie of North Allerton, North Yorkshire, Northern Province.

### 61.2 Through the Amity Foundation, as part of a team sponsored by member Churches of the BCC:

Mr Aidan Timlin (Roman Catholic) of Banbury, Oxfordshire, to the China University of Mining and Technology, Xuzhou, Jiangsu, in the People's Republic of China.

### 61.3 Short term experiences overseas:

Mr Martin Dunstone - 1 year at Debrecen with the Reformed Church in Hungary.

Miss Alison King - 1 year at Tunghai University, Taiwan, linked with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan.

62 **Missionaries who have completed their service with churches overseas** Dr Edward and Mrs Barbara Paterson: Hong Kong (through CWM).

The Revd John Humphreys: Hungary.

63 **Ministers serving the URC, recruited through the World Church and Mission Department from overseas churches**

The Revd Anthony and Mrs Beatrice Beeko: Presbyterian Church of Ghana - London Ghanaian Chaplaincy.

The Revd Chong Kah Geh and Mrs Shirley Chong: Presbyterian Church in Malaysia - London Chinese Chaplaincy.

The Revd Hakim B. Singh Rahi and Mrs Annie Rahi: Church of North India - ecumenical ministry at Winson Green, Birmingham.

The Revd Froukien Smit: Reformed Churches in the Netherlands - pastoral ministry with the King's Hall Interfaith Project, Southall.

64 **People from overseas receiving scholarship support from the URC**

Mr. John Azapaka: Christian Marching Church, Zimbabwe (sponsored by the Christian Council of Malawi);

The Revd Coo Yo Han: Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea;

The Revd Johnson Apenad Mbillah and Mrs Rose Mbillah: Presbyterian Church of Ghana;

The Revd Godwin Kwaku Osiakwa: Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana;

all at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak.

65 A full list of missionaries appears in the Year Book.

#### ST. ANDREW'S HALL

**Principal:** The Revd David Grainger

66 Kristin Ofstad left the staff after six years excellent work at St Andrew's. She had a term's sabbatical in Cork, Ireland, and has now commenced her studies at Westminster College in preparation for the URC ministry. The new Tutor is Verna Cassells from the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman; she arrived in the summer of 1988. Miss Sheila Rudofsky is the newly elected Convener of the College Council.

67 We have had a very busy year in terms of numbers and variety of students. We continue to offer an excellent range of opportunities for overseas and British students who join us. We are working closely with Westhill College in the improvement and development of the programme of training for CRCWs.

68 Many major repairs on the boiler and heating systems of the college have been undertaken. During the year we have also installed hand basins in the remainder of the bedrooms throughout the college.

69 In the autumn we were able to inaugurate a new children's playroom near the family flats. In addition we have installed special ramps to give access for disabled people to the college library, conference suite and chapel, and a special toilet has also been provided. A visitation group has been appointed by the College Council to visit us in the next few months and we hope to share something of the result of that visitation in our next report.

70 We give great thanks to God for all the support and encouragement we receive through the URC in the work of the college and in the work of the Selly Oak Colleges Federation.

### RESOLUTIONS

1. The Report is received.
2. Assembly commends to congregations for study and action the World Church and Mission Department's reflections on 'Guidelines for Sharing' the Report of the World Council of Churches Consultation on Resource Sharing held at El Escorial, Spain in October, 1987.
3. Assembly commends the annual observance by congregations of either Kassinga Day (May 4th) or Soweto Day (June 16th) on the nearest Sunday as a focal point for special concern in worship for Southern Africa affairs.
4. The Assembly of the United Reformed Church agrees to participate in the proposed ecumenical bodies for England, Scotland, Wales and Britain and Ireland as a member, as described in the report of the Inter-Church Meeting of 1989 Churches Together in Pilgrimage, and in consequence:

agrees that the Inter-Church Meeting, and in Scotland and Wales the appropriate equivalent bodies also, may make adjustments in detail to the proposals if the responses from churches make this desirable;

authorises the Inter-Church Meeting, and in Scotland and Wales the appropriate equivalent bodies also, if in their view sufficient acceptance of the proposals is received, to appoint Commissioning Committees to bring the new ecumenical bodies into existence, including the appointment of senior officers;

authorises the Inter-Church Meeting, and in Scotland and Wales the appropriate equivalent bodies also, on behalf of the



participating churches to seek any necessary funding to provide overlap with the existing councils; and

requests the existing councils to make such amendments to their contributions as will facilitate the transition to the new bodies.

# CHURCH AND SOCIETY DEPARTMENT

Convener: Dr Mary Ede

Secretary: The Revd John Reardon

1. In a series of speeches and comments over the past two years government ministers have challenged the churches with their own understanding of Christianity. They always stress the importance of the individual and the family but with little or no recognition of the significance of any wider community. Christianity in their view is reduced to a private system of belief and behaviour but that is a far cry from the much broader picture that is there in the biblical record and in the teaching of the Church through the ages.

2. This Department values individuals and does, from time to time, get involved in action on behalf of people whose human rights are denied. It also recognises how important personal integrity and initiative are and would always want to encourage them. But unlike those politicians who have lectured the churches, the Department is deeply concerned about the various forms of community - local, regional, national and international, - within which individuals find opportunity for growth, well-being and mutual responsibility and care. It is for that reason that the Department so often finds itself critical of policies which undervalue or even deny the importance of community life and which undermine the institutions which have developed as ways of encouraging and enabling individuals to influence and shape their lives together. In particular the sacrifice of community institutions on the altar of financial criteria alone devalues people and ultimately fragments community life.

3. **South Africa** Throughout South Africa the human rights of the majority of the population continue to be denied and countless people are abused by the apartheid system which is enforced with military power and legal restraints. The situation inside South Africa has dramatically deteriorated in the past year. The State of Emergency has been reimposed and is now in its third year. During the year a large number of organisations have been banned, sweeping restrictions on media reporting have been maintained, leaders from many sections of society have been imprisoned and the judgement in the Delmas Trial has rendered all non-violent opposition to apartheid treasonable. Even the churches have come under direct attack in the bombing of the headquarters of the South African Council of Churches and the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference and in numerous detentions of lay and ordained church people.

4. The Department welcomed the initiative of the British Council of Churches in organising a conference in February 1989 on the

anniversary of the march to the South African parliament by the leaders of the Christian churches and other religious leaders. That conference marked the beginning of renewed efforts within the churches in the United Kingdom to press Her Majesty's Government to adopt a new and more forceful policy with regard to South Africa. At the end of the conference a Call to Action Against Apartheid was issued, outlining measures which would support all who are seeking a democratic and non-racial South Africa. The statement of the Rt Hon Mrs Lynda Chalker, on behalf of the Government, made it clear that unless there is overwhelming support for a new policy among the public and among Members of Parliament, the Government's policy will remain out of step with the great majority of countries around the world.

5. Churches are encouraged to study the Call to Action Against Apartheid and to bring it to the notice of all who can influence the Government in the political parties and the commercial and banking institutions. The measures which it calls on the Government to implement include: the introduction of appropriate legal controls to strengthen and enforce existing British measures, in particular the arms and oil embargoes and a ban on new investment; a compulsory ban on all loans, trade credits and export credit guarantees; a compulsory ban on all "high tech" and computer exports to South Africa; a compulsory ban on the importing of coal and agricultural products from South Africa; an end to all promotion of trade and tourism to South Africa, and a suspension of airlinks; and an urgent examination of the possibility of the sanction on gold. The Call to Action expresses the hope that the Government will give increased support for the members of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference and for an independent Namibia and also urges the banks to make no new loans to South Africa and to insist on a rapid repayment of existing debt.

6. The whole Southern Africa region is in turmoil because of the continuance of apartheid in South Africa and the effect of the South African Government's promotion of destabilisation throughout the region. The prospect of peace in Angola and independence for Namibia are signs of hope in an otherwise grim sub-continent. Those signs could still prove to be false if the nations of the world fail to continue their pressure on Pretoria and their support for the people of the region. Reports through the World Alliance of Reformed Churches tell of widespread misery among the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons and refugees throughout the region and the continuing bloodshed and starvation in Mozambique. Christian Aid, together with other aid agencies, has done much not only to alleviate the suffering but also to publicise the plight of the people there.

7. **World Development** During the past year many countries have suffered devastating disasters and Christian Aid provided a channel for Christian compassion for the people of the Sudan, Bangladesh,

Armenia, Mozambique, Jamaica and Nicaragua. The URC's own 1% Appeal continued to provide a symbol not only of compassion but of the struggle for justice and long-term development for the world's poorest communities. Through the Appeal, which now raises over #300,000 per annum, work overseas channelled through Christian Aid has been supported in over twenty countries and in this country the World Development Movement, One World Week and several other educational initiatives have been strengthened as they seek to increase public awareness of world poverty and the necessary policies to overcome it.

8. Debt The payment of external debts has become one of the most critical issues facing many poorer countries today. Debt is just one aspect of an international economic system which perpetuates injustice and increases the poverty of those who are already poor. The outflow of capital in recent years has grown so heavy that it is cancelling out the positive effects of aid both from governments and development agencies. The origins of this crisis go back to the oil price rises of the 1970s which led to the flooding of the European, North American and Japanese banks with 'petrodollars'. The banks in turn encouraged heavy borrowing at very low interest rates particularly by the more industrialised countries of Latin America. Much of this money was then squandered on ill-conceived prestige projects or expensive consumer imports, used by military dictatorships to buy arms and, some of it, returned to the lending banks in the form of capital flight. Precious little of it was used to benefit the poor people in the borrowing countries. With the rise of world interest rates pushed up by the USA to cover its own trade and budget deficits and the collapse in price of many of the commodities exported by the developing countries, soaring debts in the Third World and less and less hard currency to pay them have created untold hardships for the poorest sections of those countries, compounded by the "adjustment programmes" of the International Monetary Fund. A world banking crisis has been averted but the cost has been drastic cuts in public education and health services, a huge rise in unemployment and the use of more and more land for export crops instead of food for home consumption.

9. The British Government, together with others, has pursued a humane policy of converting past loans into grants and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has proposed other measures for debt relief but has so far failed to win the agreement of other industrialised countries. Measures taken to date have not brought any significant improvement for those who have been forced into poverty.

10. The Department welcomes the publication by Christian Aid of its booklet **Banking on the Poor: the Ethics of Third World Debt** and the debate in the British Council of Churches Assembly in November 1988 based on it. That report tells of people being forced to eke out a living in degrading and inhumane ways, including salvaging

rubbish tips, prostitution and theft. Infant mortality rates are rising and many diseases like tuberculosis and malaria are spreading. Irreparable damage is being done to the environment through destruction of tropical rain forests for land for cattle rearing and cash crops. The report points to some biblical bases for action on debt not only in Jesus' preferential option for the poor but also in the vision of the remission of all debts in the idea of Jubilee in the Old Testament. Ethical questions have to be asked about some of the practices in which Third World peoples have been trapped by alliances between banks in rich countries and unjust stewards in poor countries. Churches throughout the most seriously affected countries, particularly in Latin America and the Philippines, are speaking out courageously on behalf of those who suffer most and call upon us for informed support.

11. **Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation** The World Council of Churches has invited all churches to engage "in a conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) to justice, peace and the integrity of creation". This means that at every level of church life and in every local area churches are challenged to respond to the forces and trends that threaten life in the world; to speak out against cruelty and poverty; to work for peace in a world of violence and to oppose the destruction of the environment. To promote this process the Department has a small Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group which has prepared an explanatory leaflet which has been used extensively not only within the URC but in other denominations as well. The Group is sharing in the preparation of the 1989 URC Forum at Swanwick on the theme Earth Shall be Fair. Two members of the Group represented the URC at the European Assembly, Peace with Justice, from 22nd - 28th May 1989, in Basel, Switzerland when 700 official representatives of the members Churches of the Conference of European Churches and the European Catholic Bishops' Conference met to consider the European contribution to this process of mutual commitment. Many local churches had an opportunity of focussing on these themes in One World Week 1988 under the slogan, Making Peace with the Planet, and the theme this year will be Value for People.

12. **Towards a Just Peace Church** Within the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation process there is a call for the churches to a mutual commitment or covenant. The purpose of such a challenge is to show ourselves and others that the well-being of God's world and his people is at the centre of our church life rather than at the periphery as is so often the case. Just as Jesus called his disciples into a living relationship with God and showed them what it means to live as God's people in the world as peacemakers and as those who strive for justice, often using the goodness of God's creation as a sign of his love, so Christians today are called to confront the forces of death and destruction that threaten human life and the planet itself. The Department has seen how two of our partner Churches in the USA, the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church, have moved justice and peace into the centre

of their understanding of what it means to be Christian. The Department believes that peacemaking, pursuing justice and caring for God's creation are essential marks of what Christian discipleship means in today's world. It therefore believes that throughout the churches there must be a renewed examination of what it means to be Christian and it hopes that the URC might be able to move towards declaring itself to be a Just Peace Church at a future General Assembly. The Department would be willing to assist the churches in considering what such a declaration might mean.

13. **Central America** One region of the world in which justice, peace and integrity of creation are constantly under attack is Central America. The six countries there suffer in varying degrees from problems that many other "Third World" countries also experience, e.g. unemployment, dependence on a limited range of low-priced commodities, huge foreign debt, inequalities in land ownership and conflict aggravated by lack of strong democratic traditions and by repressive military activity. In addition the region is seriously disadvantaged by the strategic interest of the United States. Internal conflicts in Guatemala and El Salvador lead to intimidation, violence and killing. The hurricane winds that destroyed Bluefields and much of the Atlantic Coast region of Nicaragua last October did not evoke the compassionate response from the British public that similar disasters elsewhere did even though Christian Aid and other agencies appealed for help. They have caused long term damage to the environment and the Nicaraguan economy already seriously crippled by the armed conflict it has borne for so many years.

14. The Department continues to support the work of Church Action for Central America and commends its recent report, **To See for Ourselves**, on the 1988 visit led by the Bishop of Gloucester and its regular newsletter which can be obtained by modest subscription. At this time, early in the new US Presidency, it is important that the churches around the world should continue to work and pray for a just and peaceful solution to the problems and conflicts of this region that has suffered so much in recent years but has so much to offer the world in the faithful Christian witness of those who struggle to see right prevail.

15. **Welfare State** Following the debate in last year's General Assembly about the questions which Christians wish to ask about welfare services and proposed changes affecting them, the Department produced a leaflet encouraging churches to consider what is happening to welfare provision in their local communities. Several churches were not only helped to question what is happening but also sent in their comments to the Department giving voice to widespread concern about some of the adverse effects of current changes particularly as they affect some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our society. In particular there is grave concern in the churches and in other voluntary bodies with which the Department has close contact about the housing crisis in

Britain and about the growing incidence of homelessness which will not be solved either by market forces or by attempts to define away the problem. The recent report from the Audit Commission sets out clearly how in most localities "a relatively modest adjustment of priorities could make a major impact on the most socially damaging aspects of the problem".

16. **National Health Service** There was already considerable discussion in the churches about the future of the National Health Service before the publication of the White Paper. Many reacted adversely to the introduction of charges for dental and eye tests. One of our local churches believed it would prove to be a false economy in a country that already spends less on health care and prevention than most other European countries with which we would expect to be compared. As well as the underfunding of the NHS the morale of a large number of people working in it has been low. Morale has been adversely affected by levels of pay, working conditions, the degree of stress borne by many workers and the shortages of adequately qualified staff, at a time when further changes will only add to the unsettling effects of the several reorganisations that have taken place over the past fifteen years. The opposition of a large section of general practitioners to the proposals set out in the White Paper is a worrying sign that the Government appears to be about to force through changes in spite of those who will be expected to implement them.

17. The Department welcomes the assurance by the Government that it intends to maintain the National Health Service. The NHS continues to be valued because it provides health care for all people in time of illness without the additional burden at those times of finding the resources to pay for that care. This fundamental principle reflects the Christian conviction that God's intention for humanity is a community of love and caring reflecting that communion with him for which humanity was created and redeemed. That community of caring is to be embodied in institutions that protect individuals and enable them to benefit in accordance with their need rather than their status or merit. The Department believes that the questions it prepared for last year's General Assembly will help the churches to evaluate the options and proposals for change in the provision of health care for the whole community. It also believes that far too few resources are presently being devoted to preventive health and health education. The Griffiths Report on community care, published in March 1988, deserves a much more positive response by the Government than the grudging reception it has so far received.

18. **Education** The passing of the Education Reform Act has brought with it new challenges for all who are concerned about education in England and Wales. Similar measures are proposed for Scotland in separate legislation. The Department has been involved in much ecumenical discussion about the new demands and pressures on

teachers, especially headteachers, not only in implementing the National Curriculum but also in new measures concerning financial control of budgets, in provisions for opting out and particularly with regard to new regulations for school worship. These latter regulations incorporated into the Act by compromise threaten to divide school communities on religious lines and place almost impossible burdens on some headteachers who will have to arrange for several sessions of school worship each day to cater for all pupils. Religious education has been given a special status in the curriculum but is now compulsorily extended to all pupils up to the age of 19. RE has been defined in terms which are more explicitly favourable to Christianity but this greatly increases the likelihood that some parents will exert their right to withdraw their children. Meanwhile the Standing Advisory Committees on Religious Education (SACREs) have been established in each Local Education Authority and the Department alerted the Provincial officers in November to the importance of ensuring adequate Free Church representation on them. Consideration is now being given to the training needs of those who serve on the SACREs who will play an important role in coordinating the religious education offered by the schools in their area.

**19. Church Action on Poverty** The Department encourages churches to affiliate to Church Action on Poverty which has recently appointed a new Coordinator. In July 1988 a broad coalition of Christians drawn from the Departments of the Churches and from a range of church-related agencies met to confer about the dominant culture of affluence and success in Britain today and the way in which that culture increasingly disregards those who are disadvantaged and impoverished by it and those who speak out against it because they want to see a more caring and inclusive society. As a result of the initiatives taken at that meeting and subsequent meetings arranged by CAP a confessional statement is being developed, inviting Christians to support those who are disadvantaged and to struggle with them for a fairer and more equitable society which enhances the dignity of all. The Department is involved in the development of this initiative and hopes to be able to promote support for it within the URC.

**20. Sunday Trading** The Department continues to believe that further extensions of trading on Sundays would adversely affect the quality of life in local communities and many families. The Keep Sunday Special campaign has consistently pressed for a reexamination and redefinition of the schedules of goods that can be sold on Sundays. The Government argues that such measures are difficult to justify or control. The Shopping Hours Reform Council which is closer to government thinking is pressing for all shops to be allowed the freedom of opening for the whole of Sunday afternoons from 12.00 noon until 5.00 pm with present freedom for smaller shops to open all day. Given the Government's wish for all shops to be allowed to open all day on Sundays the proposals for Sunday afternoon opening would be as likely to be contravened as



the present laws. The Department hopes that churches will study proposals for changing the law when they are announced with a view to making their views known to their Members of Parliament, making the point that the quality and rhythm of life are more likely to be preserved if Sunday is kept different from the rest of the week than if it is allowed to become just another weekday. Of equal importance is the need to study proposals for change to see their likely impact on a low paid and vulnerable work force.

21. **AIDS** The Department cooperated with the BCC and FCFC in a day consultation on HIV infection and AIDS and welcomes the report which is now widely available. The consultation underlined the urgency of the challenge of HIV infection and AIDS not only to the lives of those already affected but to the community as a whole. The work of the National AIDS Adviser continues to meet with much appreciation throughout and beyond the churches and the World Health Organisation invited him to present a paper to a recent international conference in Vienna.

22. **Interdepartmental Work** Considerable work is done with other Departments. In the past year this has included a consultation on community ministry, the further development of thinking about community work and its contribution to new understandings of ministry, the Urban/Rural Mission group, consultation about racism and the pursuance of anti-racism in the URC and the beginning of work on human sexuality and homosexuality.

23. **Ecumenical Work** The Department works closely with its counterparts in other denominations, particularly through the BCC, on a broad range of issues too numerous to report here. Much of the discussion is now taken up with planning for September 1990 when the new ecumenical instruments will come into being. It is clear that patterns of work will have to change and much more ecumenical commitment from all the churches will be demanded. It is also clear that some work now done ecumenically with the considerable assistance of BCC staff may have to be dropped because of an overall reduction in staff working in these spheres. The Department is considering the form in which its ecumenical commitment may be offered.

24. The Departmental Secretary took part in the British Council of Churches delegation to Israel and the Occupied Territories in March of this year. The visit, at the invitation of the Middle East Council of Churches, came at a time of great suffering and conflict and the delegation was able to meet many of those who carry responsibilities of leadership, particularly within the Churches of the region, and to assure them of the prayers and concern of British and Irish Christians. A report of the visit is being prepared by the delegation.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report of the Church and Society Department for debate.
2. The Assembly urges all churches and Christians to study the Call to Action Against Apartheid issued at the conference sponsored by the British Council of Churches on 28th February 1989 and to press Her Majesty's Government to adopt legal and economic measures to press the South African Government to end apartheid and begin negotiations for a new South Africa in which all the people can share in a free, democratic, non-racial government and society.
3. The Assembly encourages the churches to study the problems of international debt, welcomes the publication by Christian Aid of **Banking on the Poor** and urges the churches and individual Christians to press their banks to review what they are owed by debtor countries, especially where loans might have been made on less than a fully prudent banking basis, with a view to making concessions to assist economic recovery.
4. The Assembly welcomes the initiatives on international debt which Her Majesty's Government has already taken and urges it to continue and extend its policy of converting loans into grants and to press within the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for adjustment policies which take into account the needs of the poor.
5. The Assembly encourages the Church and Society Department to develop its proposal for the URC to declare itself a Just Peace Church, to engage the churches in study and discussions of the meaning and implication of such a proposal and to bring any appropriate resolution to a future Assembly.

# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Convener:** The Rt Revd Edmund A Banyard

**Secretary:** The Revd Bernard G Thorogood

1. The Committee met at Church House on 7 July 1988 and 2 March 1989, and at Damascus House, Mill Hill on 2/3 November 1988. The attendance was 53, 57 and 57 members.

## Reception of Local Churches

2. The Executive Committee received reports from Provincial Synods regarding applicant local churches. The Executive made positive decisions in respect of

The American Church in London (Thames North Province)  
St Luke's, Lodge Moor, South Yorkshire (Yorkshire Province)

and a positive recommendation in respect of

Alton Congregational Church (Wessex Province)  
Trinity Church, Yateley (Wessex Province)

The appropriate resolutions are offered to Assembly. (Resolutions 2 and 3)

## Advocacy Secretary

3. Following the 1988 Assembly decision that the United Reformed Church proceed to the appointment of a full-time Advocacy Secretary, correspondence was received about the difficulty of moving on the basis of a very small majority. The Executive discussed this and decided that since a simple majority is required by Standing Orders, and since the remit of the Committee is to carry out the Assembly policy, the process for an appointment should be started forthwith. The matter was therefore referred to Nominations Committee.

4. In March 1989 the Executive received the recommendation of the Nominations Committee and appointed the Reverend Bill Wright as Advocacy Secretary for three years from April 1989.

## Not Strangers But Pilgrims

5. The Committee received from the World Church and Mission Department a draft URC response to the Interim Report published in February 1988. Comments were made and the officers of the Department were authorised to amend the draft accordingly and submit it to the Inter Church Process.

## **Assembly Timetable 1989**

6. The Executive agreed to revised dates for pre-Assembly procedures, made necessary by the July date of Assembly.

### **Moderatorial New Year**

7. The Executive agreed to arrangements for a service at Palmers Green URC on 7 May 1989, when a commission of Assembly would attend, to mark the beginning of the year of office of the Rt Revd Keith Forecast.

### **Ordination Training and Finance**

8. The Ministries Department reported on the strain on the Ministerial Training Fund caused by a welcome increase in the number of students accepted, the limitations on local authority grants and the higher cost of college training. The Committee welcomed the plans being made by the Department and rejoiced in the gift of #250,000 from Thames North Province to the Ministerial Training Fund, made possible by the sale of redundant properties.

### **United Reformed Church Trust**

9. The Committee approved proposals to reduce the membership of the Trust body which had increased since all members of the Treasurership Committee had been appointed ex officio, without any retirement procedure. The effect will be to reduce the number from 25 to 15.

### **Ministers' Pension Fund**

10. The Finance and Administration Department asked approval for technical changes to the Rules of the Pension Fund as required by the Inland Revenue and these were agreed.

### **Future Assemblies**

11. The Committee accepted the advice of the Business Committee that the invitations from the West Midlands and South Western Provinces be accepted, as follows:

Wolverhampton, West Midlands, 14 to 18 May 1990  
Torbay, South Western, 29 April to 3 May 1991

### **Occasional Papers**

12. The Committee heard of plans to begin a series of Occasional Papers to enable a sharing in URC of more lengthy theological discussion than is possible in the pages of REFORM, and noted that Dr Clyde Binfield would edit initial issues, which would be distributed to subscribers.

## Moderator Review Groups

13. The Executive heard reports from the Moderator Review Groups for the South Western and Wales Provinces and refers the resolutions to the consideration of Assembly. (Resolutions 4 and 5)

## Secession.

14. St Andrew's, Bournemouth.

14.1. In May 1985 the General Assembly voted by 423 to 80 to disallow a Petition by this church to secede from the URC. In November 1987 the Executive received a Petition from the Church Meeting, which was forwarded by the Wessex Provincial Synod, without comment in the light of the previous discussion. The Petition is printed as the Appendix to this report. The Executive appointed a Commission, consisting of Mr Ray Heritage, Dr Mary Ede and the Revd Michael Davies, to visit the church and consult other parties concerned. Their report was received by the Executive in February 1988. At that time discussion had begun with the Church of Scotland about the possibility of a joint church at Trinity, Slough, and the Executive therefore, with the agreement of St Andrew's, Bournemouth, advised the Assembly not to consider the Petition at the 1988 General Assembly. That phase of discussion was completed in January 1989. The Church Secretary then informed the Executive that the instructions of the Church Meeting are still to proceed with the Petition to secede. The Executive therefore reconsidered the matter in March 1989, reviewing the course of events since the Assembly in 1985 voted not to allow secession. The Executive considers that remains the right course and so advises Assembly.

14.2 The Executive does not find in the Petition any grounds for secession not already considered. The grounds presented appear inadequate. The first is that the 1982 General Assembly voted approval of the Covenant Proposals which were never put into effect. The time to consider an act of secession is when a major doctrinal change is put into effect, not before. Second, it is said that the District Council has considered or is considering the closure or amalgamation of central Bournemouth churches. The District Council has no such plan under consideration and would, in any case, only be able to put forward such a proposal with the participation of the Church Meetings concerned. Third, the Petition repeats the objections to the Provincial structure of URC. The whole pattern of our intermediate levels of oversight has been a subject for regular review, the present one being initiated by the Executive in November 1988 and now referred to the North Western Province for examination and report. The URC is not in a fixed position but will only move if the will of the whole church is made plain that we should reform the present structures.

14.3 The Executive considers that secession would not be appropriate. It is one of the signs of grace that groups with different cultural, ethnic or family traditions may become part of one body of believers, and there are signs of this happening within the URC. It would be a move in the contrary direction if some of those now within URC were to separate because of their Scottish links and loyalties. The Executive believes that we should continue together, inform and encourage one another and so develop the understanding of the fullness of the Church.

14.4 The discussion held with the Church of Scotland officers in Edinburgh in January 1989 considered the joint church proposal made with regard to Trinity, Slough. Those representing the Church of Scotland expressed the view that such a proposal would be opposed because it would constitutionalise divided loyalty, it would encourage other congregations in the URC to look the same way, and it would extend Church of Scotland responsibilities in England, a move which it has no wish to make. There was encouragement for the URC to look towards a closer relationship with the Presbytery of England. This view clearly does not commit the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, but was that of those officers who would advise the General Assembly on such matters, and who had discussed the question in the appropriate committee. The report of the Edinburgh meeting has been forwarded to Trinity Church, Slough and St Andrew's, Bournemouth. The Executive Committee therefore does not consider that secession, with a view to joining the Church of Scotland, is a wise or constructive movement.

14.5 With these considerations in mind the Executive recommends as it did in 1985 that secession be not agreed, and prays that continued fellowship and mutual care within the URC will enable this congregation to be increasingly at home with us in the one mission to which we are committed.

14.6 Without prejudice to the procedure being adopted this year the Executive is seeking legal advice on future cases of this sort. In particular the Committee seeks clarity on whether the conduct of Appeals applies also to Petitions, in that the decision of the Assembly on an Appeal is final and binding and so cannot return to a later meeting of Assembly. (Resolutions 6 and 7)

#### **National Projects.**

15. As the Committee became aware of requests coming forward to Assembly for financial appeals for special purposes, it was decided to re-convene the National Projects Advisory Group with the Revd David Dale in the chair and Dr Mary Ede, Revd Alasdair Walker, Mr David Butler as members, the Revd Bill Wright as consultant and the General Secretary as staff. The remit of the Group was to advise the Assembly on the appropriateness, urgency and timing of national appeals for funds. The Report of the Group

with the basic information on the requests is provided to members as a separate paper, since this work had not been possible when the book of Reports was printed.

### Directions Towards Growth

16.1 In developing the overall Growth theme the General Secretary prepared a discussion paper on some major strategic issues in the life of the URC, which are not confined to any one department or council of the Church. The paper was considered at a residential meeting of the Committee in November 1988, and certain pieces of work were then to be taken forward in various ways.

16.2 Growing in Faith - how can we encourage deeper understanding of the faith among church members? One of the aspects considered was the position of the Doctrine and Worship Committee and whether its remit might be directed more to the missionary calling in our multi-cultural society. The Eastern Province was asked to consider the meaning of church membership, the distinction from adherents, and the relationship of membership to the sacraments and confirmation; the Doctrine and Worship Committee being fully informed.

16.3 Local Church and Ministry - how are we to stimulate or provide adequate ministerial/local leadership in our many small churches? Can it be done effectively through our traditional patterns? This question was referred to the East Midlands Province, in association with the Doctrine and Worship Committee, the Faith and Life Department and sister churches.

16.4 Intermediate levels of oversight - can we maintain our present District Council and Province structure and still be fully engaged in the emerging ecumenical groups at county level? This question was referred to the North Western Province.

16.5 Unity at National level - the World Church and Mission Department was asked to consider whether any steps might be taken to find out if sister churches are ready to move beyond the **Not Strangers But Pilgrims** commitment to a closer, continuous pilgrimage to unity. The Department, after a first consideration, recommended that no step be taken until the decisions on **Not Strangers But Pilgrims** have been made by the churches. The Executive also asked that enquiries should be made of the Methodist Church as to the possibility of joint central offices. At the time of the March meeting this matter was at a very preliminary stage, with nothing firm to report.

16.6 Central Organisation. In this area the Executive has done more detailed work and is discussing a radical change in our central functions. The aim is (a) to ensure that the missionary calling of the Church is determinative of our central activities, (b) to provide a forum where all our central functions may be

looked at together and so to help the church be clear as to priorities and purposes, (c) to provide a more flexible and dynamic style, and (d) to be economical with people's time and the church's money. The line of thinking at present is to conclude the Departmental structure and the Executive Committee and to replace these with a Mission Council to which all the central Programmes and Services would report and which would meet residentially twice a year. There would be opportunity to reconsider the identity of the various Programmes, and each would need its specialist groups, but there would not be central departmental committees as an intermediate level of report. The Conveners would be members of the Mission Council and would present their report and recommendations to the Assembly, which must be the point at which authority is given for the Programmes and Services to continue and budget to be provided. The Mission Council would also report to Assembly, giving its comprehensive view and any suggestion on shifting priorities. Much consideration needs to be given to the constitutional provisions and the methods of work, but the Executive commends the general direction of this review. (Resolution 8)

#### RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report of the Executive Committee.
2. The Assembly receives  
The American Church in London (Thames North Province)  
St Luke's, Lodge Moor, South Yorkshire (Yorkshire Province)  
  
as local churches of the URC.
3. The Assembly agrees that  
  
Alton Congregational Church (Wessex Province)  
Trinity Church, Yateley (Wessex Province)  
  
be received as local churches of the URC.
4. The Assembly re-appoints the Revd Michael Fortescue Hubbard MA BA as Moderator of the South Western Synod from 1 September 1989 for a period of five years.
5. The Assembly appoints the Revd John Lloyd Humphreys BA BD ThM, Moderator of the Wales Province Synod for a period of seven years  
from 1 September 1989.
6. The Assembly agrees to hear the petition from St Andrew's, Bournemouth.



7. The Assembly, on the advice of the Executive Committee, does not agree to the secession of St Andrew's, Bournemouth.
8. Assembly receives the report concerning central church organisation, requests further consultation and development, and hopes to consider detailed proposals in 1990.

#### APPENDIX

#### ST ANDREW'S, BOURNEMOUTH - APPEAL FOR SECESSION

#### PETITION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH BY ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, BOURNEMOUTH FEBRUARY 1987

1. We, the congregation of St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Bournemouth, humbly petition the Venerable, the General Assembly of the URC, to allow us to secede from the said Denomination. Our main grounds for this request are unaltered from those submitted in September 1984, but in view of comments made (a) by the District representatives who believe that arguments put before members in the referendum were **inaccurate and also misleading** and (b) by the Synod representatives who indicated that in their view the main point of the petition was based on **false premises or on misunderstandings** we stress the following:-

1.1 **Historic Episcopacy** We have been told on more than one occasion that, for us, the principle of Historic Episcopacy is dead. We still, however, adhere to the view that this may well be revived at some future time, particularly in view of the General Secretary's statement in the Church Times in December 1980, that I don't think there's any way forward to Unity in England except through Episcopacy.

1.2 **Closure of St Andrew's** We are assured by the higher Councils of the URC that there are no propositions or plans to merge the central town churches. We know, however, that since these assurances meetings have taken place in Bournemouth which have discussed the possibility of such an arrangement.

1.3 **Membership of St Andrew's** All meetings of the Congregation held since the previous petition was refused have repeatedly emphasised the continuing strong feeling of At Andrew's to achieve secession. Attention is drawn to the fact that in the 21 months since the petition was last presented 43 members have been admitted into the fellowship of St Andrew's, and each has been made fully aware of the course we are pursuing and has readily accepted the situation.

1.4 **Church of Scotland** Following advice from the Moderator and Secretary of the Wessex Province that we should contact the Church

of Scotland, we did so. As a result we have no reason to believe that a request for admission would be received unfavorably. This is contrary to suggestions made at the 1985 General Assembly and subsequently repeated by Visitation Committees to St Andrew's. 2.

(a) Once within the URC, St Andrew's accepted the fact that for some years there were bound to be teething troubles. However, after the settled down to the new structures and pattern of Church life, we found it to be top heavy. In particular, the Provincial Organisation seemed unnecessary. In 1972 it may have had some validity as the new Denomination was catering for a larger membership both immediately and looking to the future when other denominations might be absorbed but in our opinion the larger reduction in membership now down to 131,213 as a January 1986, does not warrent such a large administrative superstructure.

(b) Encouraged by the advice given at the time of Union, St Andrew's has from time to time attempted to initiate change from within culminating in our letter of 17th September 1982. As a consequence, the Dorset District put to the Wessex Province a resolution which, if passed to and by the General Assembly, would have abolished the Provincial Structure, but unfortunately this resolution was lost at Province on a casting vote.

(c) St Andrew's does not accept the need for the office of Provincial Moderator. (We would make it clear that this is no personal criticism of those holding office). Especially, we disagree with the seven years span of office which can be extended. and be, in effect, Moderator for life. This borders upon the traditional view of Episcopacy to which we are opposed because of the very strong Presbyterian background of so many of our members.

(d) It follows that we were greatly disturbed when a recent General Assembly voted to accept the principle of the Historic Episcopate if the Covenant then envisaged between the Church of England and other Churches came into being. At the same time, our Provincial Moderators made it known that they were willing to be set apart as Bishops in order to facilitate such a move. It was at this point that the strength of feeling in St Andrew's began to surface. Had the Church of England accepted the Covenant, there would have been moves at that time for St Andrew's to secede from the URC. However, the Church of England's action gave us further time to think on these matters. Upon reflection, we feel that the principle of the Historic Episcopate, having been accepted by our Denomination, may well be revived at some future time. We find, therefore, that we are at variance with the URC on this major issue.

3. (a) At a meeting with the Dorset District Officers on February that District thinking envisaged not three, as at present, but one URC congregation in the centre of Bournemouth in the future. Such a congregation, we were led to believe, would

centre upon Richmond Hill, which has a larger church building, more hall space and car parking facilities.

(b) We therefore had to consider realistically the whole future of St Andrew's. There seemed two possibilities:-

(i) To carry on within the URC for as long as possible under or difficulty could lead to closure. Such closure would not automatically increase the congregation of Richmond Hill by 300 members. St Andrew's is a very scattered congregation. Some 20 or so, living fairly centrally, might link up with Richmond Hill; some would join local congregations where they live; others, if they experienced the closure of a Church that meant much to them, might go nowhere in particular. So the fellowship of St Andrew's would scatter and cease to exist. It is possible to argue that this would be a good thing -~~Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and dies ...etc!~~ One congregation would cease that others might be enriched. We faced this thought clearly and realised its force. But in the light of very strong Presbyterian presence in this congregation we looked at an alternative possibility, namely:-

(ii) That there is a case for St Andrew's continuing and indeed thriving in the future if it presents, as we believe it does to a degree already, a different Christian emphasis. The URC is well Represented in the centre of Bournemouth; the Church of England has good representation so have the Methodists and Baptists. As a Church of Scotland, we believe that St Andrew's would have a new impetus and new life; already the prospect of such a possibility has greatly invigorated the congregation.

4. All of the above considerations were put to the test in a series of meetings and a Referendum.

(a) At an Elders' Meeting on 7 March 1984, 24 were present and voted holding a Referendum of the whole membership to ascertain their wishes with regard to seceding from the URC.

(b) The Church Meeting on March 17th 1984, at which 160 members were present, voted unanimously to hold such a Referendum.

(c) The Referendum was held between April 25th and May 31st 1984. Out of a total membership of 307, 303 votes were cast, of which 299 were in favour of secession and 4 against.

(d) At a Church Meeting on June 27th 1984, a resolution was passed instructing the Elders to proceed with a Petition for Secession. On this occasion, 146 members were present. 144 voted for secession and 2 voted against. Therefore, in both the Referendum and the Church Meeting, 98% were in favor of secession.

5. When we entered the URC, we did so with 119 out of a membership of 521 voting positively to do so. On such a

percentage of the whole membership, (23%), we were accepted. Now the membership had voted by 98% for secession. With such an overwhelming vote, it is quite plainly their wish that we should do so. It is significant that those still in the membership who were leading advocates for going into the Union have now, in the light of experience, been strongest in supporting session.

6. In the light of the present theological and administrative thinking of the URC, we firmly believe that the Church of Scotland will be a more appropriate spiritual home for St Andrew's and that a new beginning within that Church would give us fresh impetus. Therefore it is our prayerful hope that our problem be recognised and our position understood and that we be allowed to secede from the URC with dignity and in a spirit of mutual Christian love.

7. In conclusion, we draw particular attention to comments given at, or reported on following, visits by various representatives -

(a) District Council resolves that "the council recognises the difficulty, and questions the value of retaining the congregation within the URC against the expressed wishes of an overwhelming majority of its members." (Dorset District Council meeting 14th November 1984).

(b) Wessex Province representatives reported (i) "The inescapable background to the conversation was that both in a Church Meeting attended by 160 people and by means of a referendum, a majority of 98% had expressed the wish to secede. Nothing that was said made any apparent dent in the determination and unanimity of the Elders. (ii) St Andrew's is one of those isolated examples of Presbyterian tradition which came into the URC with hesitation, and found itself, as it feared, alone, in a wide area of Congregational understandings, language and ethos." (Wessex Province report 9th March 1985)

(c) The Reverend Alasdair Walker, a member of the Assembly Commission, stated at the Commission's visit, I have been impressed by the unity of your desire to secede. (Assembly Commission 17th July 1985).

(Signed) Keith R Brymer (Minister) Roy Alletson  
(Secretary)

**REPORT OF A MEETING HELD AT 7PM ON TUESDAY 5 MAY 1987  
AT ST ANDREW'S URC, BOURNEMOUTH**

1. The Revd Keith Brymer with 26 Elders and representatives of the local church were present. Those representing the Dorset District Council were Mr R J Potts, the Revds R O Balmer,

B. Rawling and K F Southern, those representing the Wessex Synod Executive Committee were the Revds Nelson W Bainbridge, J J Macro, G H Thomas and Mr D Butler.

2. The Moderator presided and led opening devotions. He said how sad the District and Synod were that St Andrew's URC Bournemouth felt the need to present again a petition to secede from the URC. The Church Meeting held on 25th June 1986 had unanimously approved the petition -there were 60 present at that meeting. Considerable consultation took place over the next 2.5 hours over many points within the petition from which it appeared that there were no new grounds for secession. The original petition said, we were told, what the church intended to say, they still intend to say it and have not changed their minds. The reaction from the St Andrew's members was that they were fully aware of that feeling. Whilst the depth of feeling is strong enough to encourage people to leave the church, it is the group's opinion that this is not a reason for secession.

3. We would wish to comment on one or two factual points, and these are set out under the headings of the petition from the local church.

4. **Historic Episcopacy** To claim secession on the grounds of what might have been seems to be a **non-starter**. Whilst the General Secretary wrote what he did in a letter to the Press, expressing his conviction that church unity would only come about with some measure of episcopacy, this does not mean that it is going to be the kind of episcopacy exercised by the Anglican Communion. The Revd J J Macro said that he was one of those who had opposed the Covenant and St Andrew's were not alone in this. It was of interest to see that the Revd Donald Hilton who had led the opposition to the Covenant ideas was, in fact, likely to be appointed a Provincial Moderator. It was pointed out that Provincial Moderators certainly do not serve for life, and the group's conviction is that this matter is now a dead issue.

5. **Closure of St Andrew's** The St Andrew's church people seemed very certain that although assurances had been given that there was no intention to close the church, meetings were still taking place about this. The District representatives explained that the only meetings that had taken place had been in connection with support for ministers and witness in Bournemouth, and these had been more of discussion type meetings - not called by the District Council. Assurances were given that as long as St Andrew's is viable no good reason could be put forward to close the church. The URC Acts were referred to by the group, who reminded the Elders that a congregation could not be closed against its wishes. Although assurances were given categorically that the distinctive witness of the St Andrew's congregation was valuable in the town centre at Bournemouth, this did not appear to be received.

6. **Membership** The St Andrew's congregation confirmed that the 43 new members that they had recently received did come from many areas outside of Bournemouth as well as from the town centre. These 43 had all joined in the knowledge of St Andrew's petition to secede from the URC. The group responded by stressing that unanimity does not necessarily mean that a thing is right.

7. **Church of Scotland** The local congregation seemed convinced that the Church of Scotland would be willing to receive St Andrew's, and again the group spoke of indications to the contrary. This is a matter which would only be determined in the end by an Assembly vote at the Church of Scotland.

8. **URC Structures** Whilst the petition says that the loss of membership is 80,000, in point of fact this is 60,000. The congregation said that they had made a mistake then by entering into the URC. A representative of the Church Meeting spoke at some length and said that although the assurances had been given by the District Council and the Synod, such assurances do not really affect the malaise; **St Andrew's is a misfit, and the depth of feeling is such that it is now too late for reason to take over.** This representative expressed fear that litigation might be resorted to by the General Assembly of the URC. It was thought that Assembly would be unwise to assume that St Andrew's will abide by a decision made not to allow the church to secede and said that they themselves might resort to litigation. Much discussion took place over the question of property.

9. **Other Matters** In general discussion it was stated that the URC are denying St Andrew's their rights, that freedom of choice is theirs, that the URC hides behind the rule book, makes veiled threats about its property, and despite all the visits that have taken place the URC response is still a negative one. It was pointed out that the URC has no right to deny St Andrew's the right to worship as they wish. The minister stated that there had been far too much emphasis on law and not on the Spirit, and suggested that the minds of the Council and Synod were already made up. In response the Moderator pointed out that it was possible that St Andrew's URC had also made up their minds; he also made it clear that St Andrew's would not and could not be prevented by the URC from following its own tradition of worship. Mr David Butler felt that the local church has much to contribute to the URC and should not be surprised that the URC wants that local congregation still to be within the fold.

10. **Conclusion** It would appear that there are no new points being made concerning the petition, and in the circumstances the Executive Committee of the Wessex Synod would be asking to suggest to the Synod that a resolution should be passed under the following terms:

The Wessex Province, having received the petition from St

Andrew's URC, Bournemouth to secede from the URC, and having read the report of the meeting held by representatives of the Dorset District Council and the Wessex Synod, with representatives of the local church, pass the petition to the Assembly Executive Committee with regret.

#### UNITED REFORMED CHURCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 4 February 1988

1. Report of a Church Meeting of St Andrew's Bournemouth with representatives of the Executive Committee of the URC, held in Bournemouth on Friday 8th January 1988. The Commission from the Executive Committee comprised Dr Mary Ede, the Revd Michael Davies and Mr Ray Heritage.
2. The Minister the Revd Keith Brymer and about 110 members were present. The Minister extended a welcome to the visitors, and expressed a special welcome to the Revd Michael Davies, who had stepped in at the last minute because of the illness of the Revd David Hannen.
3. The immediate past Moderator, Mr Ray Heritage, presided and opened the meeting with a reading from Scriptures and a prayer. He then thanked the Church for their welcome, and proceeded to outline something of the purpose of the visit, by saying that the thinking which prompted this visit, was a genuine pastoral concern for, and understanding of the concerns expressed by the Church in the recent petition submitted to the General Assembly, and presented to the last meeting of the Executive Committee, and that our visit was an expression of that concern and understanding. Mr Heritage stated that it was not the intention of the visitors to spend time commenting on the factual misunderstandings in the submission, since the District Council and Province had done this during their visit in May. He then reiterated a view expressed on previous occasions, which is that St Andrew's do have a distinctive part to play in the life of the URC in Bournemouth and beyond as a congregation with a Presbyterian heritage.
4. At this point the Chairman suggested that it would be helpful to the Commission if the members of the Church would care to state any matters that were new to those contained in the petition, which in the main was a repetition of the one submitted in 1985.
5. Many members spoke, not adding new facts, but repeating and underlining points in the petition. The tone in which many of these comments were made revealed a frustration and disappointment at the way that St Andrew's sees the URC functioning. The view was put that St Andrew's represented a home in a strange land, and a religious tradition that maintained their link with Scotland. The important fact since 1985 was that there had been no change whatever in the desire of the congregation to become a part of the Church of Scotland. The speeches, in the main, were made with considerable feelings of emotion and were almost always received with applause.

6. The Chairman then invited the Revd Michael Davies to present to the meeting an alternative way of moving forward from the present impasse. Mr Davies began by stressing his concern at the whole idea of secession being regarded as the best way of resolving differences. He then proceeded to speak of the way in which Trinity Church Slough were approaching the matter of Secession. They were prepared to give consideration to the possibility of becoming a union church with the Church of Scotland and the URC. Discussions about the possibility of this were proceeding with the Church of Scotland. If this were possible it would seem to offer St Andrew's the opportunity of being part of the Church of Scotland whilst still remaining a part of the URC. The matter of Financing in union situations between ourselves and other Denominations could be explained if the Church thought that this was a way forward. At this point the Session Clerk spoke quoting a minute of a Church Meeting of the 4th November 1987, when a proposal was made from the floor of the meeting which was similar to that being suggested by Mr Davies, which proposal also suggested that this course be pursued. This proposal was overwhelmingly opposed and the proposer withdrew it. We were assured that the matter had had full discussion. The Revd Michael Davies urged the Church to give time and thought to this possibility, but it was made clear that the decision of the 4th November last was definitive and they were not willing to re-open the matter.

7. The meeting went on to make further comments with feeling. It was suggested that there is not room in Bournemouth for two UR Churches. St Andrew's they said would make a more useful contribution as a Church of Scotland Church, and would then work more closely with UR Churches.

8. The plea which clearly came through was Please let us go otherwise the struggle will go on, and St Andrew's may be forced to take other action, one speaker mentioned the European Court of Human Rights. A further complaint suggested that the URC procrastinated, it took 6-7 years from raising their complaint, they said, until the petition was presented to Assembly in 1985. They also claim that what they thought would be two years delay after the 1985 Assembly turned out to be three years, again they saw this as procrastination.

9. The Unity of the Church said another contributor, was seen to be important but not when that unity was in opposition to the conscience of a whole congregation.

10. Finally reference was made to the Dorset District Resolution quoted in St Andrew's Submission. "The Council recognises the difficulty, and questions the value of retaining the congregation within the URC, against the wishes of an overwhelming majority of its members." (Dorset District 14th November 1984). The speaker went on to say that in 1972 the feeling of the Church was not



wholly in favour of union. A church meeting at that time voted 66% in favour and 33% against, We know we made a mistake in 1972 the speaker concluded.

# FORWARD POLICY GROUP

**Convener:** Professor Robert W. Steel  
**Secretary:** Mrs Connie Winter

1. The Forward Policy Group has met on 5 occasions between the Southport and York Assemblies. The membership changes year by year, perhaps a little more than is good for such a small group of seven members. We have been greatly helped by the attendance of the General Secretary at most of our meetings.

2. We are gratified that work done earlier on the central structures of the Church is being taken further by the General Secretary in discussions with the Departments in Church House and their committees. The Group sees this as, in part, an outcome of its resolution at last year's Assembly asking for a review of the numbers and size of committees.

3. Our 1988 resolution suggesting a popular report of the deliberations of the Assembly has been taken up and the Business Committee is recommending that there shall be a summary report produced within two weeks of the end of the York Assembly.

4. We undertook a small study of the use made by the Churches of the Information Service, and our conclusion was that the Service is very successful and is much appreciated by Church Officers and others.

5. The Group has been much stimulated by the discussion paper, "Directions Towards Growth" prepared by the General Secretary, and noted with pleasure his acknowledgement that he had been 'helped by many people who had shared their vision of the Church and particularly by the discussions of the Forward Policy Group'. Following on the Executive Committee's consideration of this paper at a residential meeting in November 1988, the Group was asked to 'continue work on the formation of priorities for the central life of the URC'.

6. We are aiming to obtain an overview of the forward planning of all the Departments and to this end we have asked to receive minutes as well as details of future plans. Of particular concern is the debate about the changing patterns of ministry, including the provision and financing of ministry, the ways in which Districts are resolving the linking or grouping of churches into pastorates, and the still unresolved issue of representation at General Assembly.

## RESOLUTION

1. The Assembly receives the Report of the Forward Policy Group for debate.

# ASSEMBLY PASTORAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

**Convener:** The Revd Arthur L Macarthur

**Secretary:** The Revd Bernard Thorogood

1. This report brings to an end the first six years of this Committee's existence. Its seven members have served continuously since our appointment in response to the report accepted by the Assembly in 1983. The nature of the business and the nature of those appointed have resulted in a fellowship of care which we dare to think has been of value to the Church. Continuity of membership has been of great advantage in these first years of the Committee's work. It is right now that there should be constant infusion of new views and experience. What was devised as something of a temporary expedient seems likely to be required for some time to come. We could wish that were not so, for our task has been by definition to give advice and take action in cases of difficulty. Over the six years some fifty cases have been brought to our attention. Some of these have been easily resolved without any substantial involvement on our part; others have stayed on our agenda for several years.

2. All the cases have come to our notice through reference from Provincial Moderators, District Councils and various Pastoral Committees. They have varied as widely as the personalities and the local church situations involved. Such action as we have been able to take has included pastoral counselling, financial support and the general advising of those who have had to handle problems at every level of our common life. Only in one or two cases have we had to advise that useful ministry had come to an end. All of this has brought a large and worrying correspondence to Bernard Thorogood's desk, and we want to pay tribute to the care and thought he has given to each case and the support and understanding he has given to those involved.

3. Throughout we have taken very seriously the implications of our title. Moderators, Councils, ministers need a point of reference that can to some extent represent the care of the whole Church, and that we have sought to be. But we have tried not to be substitute for the proper conciliar structures of the Church but rather to support and enhance them in the tasks that are inescapably theirs. We are deeply appreciative of the care that has been shown by those with whom we have worked in our supportive role.

4. The one element in our work that has by-passed normal constitutional practice has been in the matter of finance. We were given and have exercised the power to authorise payments from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund outside its rules and to a degree outside its purposes. We have exercised that power with discretion, but each year we have added a little to the expenditure of that Fund and thus to the assessments of local

churches. It is right that we should draw attention to this because we believe that in giving us this power the Church expressed its intention to give help to those who, for whatever reason, have been in need of special support.

5. The figure quoted at the outset, of fifty cases brought to our notice, will rightly be regarded as disturbing. It looks a little better when spread over six years. There is a perverse consolation in that it can be matched with figures for other denominations. Perhaps that only makes it the more serious. Lessons must be drawn from such a figure, though solutions and appropriate established practices will not easily be found or quickly achieved. The ministry and the Church are exposed to pressures from which earlier generations were shielded by custom and social expectation. This is true both in respect of doctrinal loyalty and personal patterns of behaviour.

6. The more open discussion of what it is that is most surely believed amongst us, made evident ever since the enormous sales of *Honest to God*, has removed some of the safeguards that surrounded the pulpit. The revival in some quarters of a more dogmatic attitude has in some cases heightened tension. Suffice to say the mere iteration of dogma is no longer the security it used to be.

7. We have been made painfully aware that the openness to new attitudes to sexuality, divorce and companionate relationships outside of marriage have been costly for the Church as for the wider society in which they have come to be accepted. The ministry has never been shielded from the challenge of the new thought forms that have led to these changes. Expectations in the Church have delayed some of the impact upon behaviour in the ministry itself. As this openness has become established and has been welcomed in many quarters as liberation from mere bondage to custom, it is not surprising that some ministers have sought a similar liberty. It would be easy to rest with condemnation, but it would be hypocritical merely to condemn in the ministry what has come to be tolerated or even welcomed amongst the laity.

8. These are generalised comments and do not cover many of the cases we have looked at. It is not for us but for the Church as a whole to work out the implications, and perhaps one day to define its attitudes with some precision. For that, the Church must seek at every level the guidance of the Spirit. What we have learnt is that every such clash between the traditional expectations of the Church and of the world and the actual experience and behaviour of the ministry, is costly. It destroys the confidence of the Church, it brings pain to many people and leaves wounds in manse families and in local churches which time alone will not heal.

9. It seems therefore that this Committee, as a reference point for Provincial Moderators, District Councils and local churches, will have a full agenda for the foreseeable future. It will be to

some extent in the eye of the storm as the Church discharges its ministry today and tomorrow. We can only ask the Church for its prayers for those who will carry on the work we have attempted; not least for Bernard Thorogood, who remains at the heart of the operation. We give thanks to God for the support we have received and the confidentiality that has been respected at every level of the Church. If our work has healed some wounds, saved some for the ministry and saved the Church from some of the costs of hurtful gossip we are content, for it would be false ambition to expect more of this Committee.

#### RESOLUTION

1. The Assembly receives the Report for debate.

# MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT

Convener: Revd Anthony G Burnham

Secretary: Revd Michael G Dunford

## INTRODUCTION

### MINISTRY IN THE URC

1. The debate about the nature and the development of Ministry in our church continues. With the help of District Councils we are seeking to discover what ministry is needed in our local situations, and together we must determine what is actually possible and desirable.

2. Meanwhile, we are constituting an examination of our various training courses and methods to see what improvements can be made. We are also exploring with the Faith and Life Department the possibilities of an integrated training programme for the whole church and for all our various specialist ministries.

3. Two matters have already emerged which call for urgent attention.

### Auxiliary Ministry

4. It is now ten years since it was decided to institute the Auxiliary Ministry. We thank God for this gift and for the devotion of all those serving in this way. The Central Committee of the Department is unanimous in the view that the title of 'Auxiliary' is the wrong one. We hope to bring some firm proposals to the Assembly next year, but any change of name would require an alteration to the Basis of Union and we would want to get it right.

### The cost of training Stipendiary Ministers

5. Secondly, as intimated at last year's Assembly, the cost of training stipendiary ministers has given cause for grave concern. We have examined all the facts carefully to see what savings can be made, and to consider the options for raising the extra capital and income required to provide the training we need. As a result of our work so far we have decided to pay particular attention to the development of the Alternative Programme with its non-residential components for mature and experienced candidates and thus reduce the costs of maintenance. We are setting in motion a review of our methods of training from an educational and a cost-effective point of view. Finally, we have seen the urgent need to build up the

capital of the Ministerial Training Fund and have made a submission to the Executive Committee which is the subject of a separate report.

### **TRAINING COMMITTEE**

**Convener:** Mrs Elisabeth Jupp

**Secretary:** Revd Michael G Dunford

### **INTRODUCTION**

6. The Training Committee has continued to oversee the training of candidates for the stipendiary, auxiliary and CRCW ministry and lay preaching. It continues to be open to test new procedures alongside our proven traditions, despite the overshadowing of the financial situation. However, positive responses from the churches are encouraging us in our work to provide ministers suitably and adequately equipped for their tasks.

### **INTERNSHIP TRAINING**

7. With commendable speed, the Revd Dr Leslie Green was able to submit his committee's report on Internship Training. The Internship period is already being regarded as a vital aspect of training. We have noted that attention must be paid to a number of practicalities, such as financial considerations, the training and support of local supervisors, and assessment of the work. The timing is important in relation to theological development, and we consider it is best undertaken in the penultimate training year. We see this particular experience as an essential part of the overall preparation for what we regard as 'fitness to minister'. It also benefits the local church, which must itself work hard to make the training effective. The views of the college authorities and the students themselves are being sought before new decisions can be taken and revised guidelines issued.

8. The first Internship students at The Queen's College, Birmingham are undergoing this part of their training. We welcome the possibility of setting up an Internship programme allied to the Welsh School of Ministry using the new United College at Aberystwyth as its base.

### **THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM**

9. The report of the Ecumenical Visit to the Queen's College in November 1988 has been welcomed by the committee as a helpful document. It touches on the important issues that must be faced, and points the way to significant improvements in the training provision. We remain confident in sending students there and continue to strengthen our relationships with the college through

our part in its government. We shall pay attention to responses from the college to the various recommendations of the Inspectors and ensure that the needs of our students are safeguarded and their training opportunities are enhanced.  
(See Appendix I and Resolution 2)

#### **NORTHERN FEDERATION AND NORTHERN COLLEGE, MANCHESTER**

10. The Governors have responded frankly to the report placed before the 1988 Assembly and continue to work on the agenda created by the visitors. Their conclusions are being fed into the committees which are responsible for the life of the college and the Federation.

11. The Federation Worship Committee has the task of planning worship which is an expression of the beliefs and aspirations of a broadly-based ecumenical community. Thought has to be given not only to striking the right balance between innovative and more traditional forms of worship and the training needs of prospective ministers, but also to the kind of community in Manchester and how this should express itself in worship. What the visitors said about the need to provide students with models for their future ministry in the way they do things is a challenge to make worship more of a collaborative exercise.

12. A good deal of time and effort has been put into the revision of the Core Curriculum by a working party representing staff and students of all the colleges under the leadership of the Education Officer, Dr John Ponter. The Core Curriculum covers areas not included in university courses: Ministry, Worship and Preaching, Mission, Pastoral Care and Counselling, Theological Reflection, Contemporary Society, Christian Faith and Life, Education and Communication and Free Church History. The visitors welcomed the diversity of course and method, drew attention to the need to develop methods of assessment and stressed the key role of the Education Officer, whose work is much appreciated. Changes have been made in the areas of Pastoral Care and Counselling, and Mission and Contemporary Society to provide more coherent courses. The responsibility for seeing how the various aspects of training fit together has been recognised to be the joint responsibility of the Federation, the colleges and the individual student, and experiments are being conducted with full student participation in the evaluation and planning of Core courses.

13. Internship training has been running at the college for nine years and the study of internship undertaken by Dr Leslie C Green provided a useful opportunity to review what is being done in this area.

14. Diversity is a feature of education and training in the Federation. Some students are training for the stipendiary ministry, others for the non-stipendiary. Some are on college-



based courses of training, while others are on congregation and community-based courses. Some students train for four years, others for only two. The task therefore of integrated training is not easy but the college and the Federation is exploring areas of co-operation.

15. With the increase in the number of ordinands recently there have been fewer places available at Luther King House for lay students. Concern has been expressed over this fact and this year more ordinands are living out of college with a consequent increase in the number of places available for lay students and for an increased number of overseas students.

16. The process of decision-making in the Federation and the monitoring of developments within the Federation are being looked at, and a report will be made later.

17. The visitors drew attention to the differences of theological viewpoints within the student body and expressed the hope that these could be handled in such a way that they would become an important resource when students later encountered differences and disagreements in their churches. The differences remain, and are likely to be with us as long as the college community reflects the diversity within the Church at large. Representatives from the Doctrine and Worship committee visited the college to discuss the issues concerning the place of Unitarians in Federation worship, which has concerned some members of the student body. That committee has offered some general advice which we have passed on to the college Governors. We are now pressing the committee to proceed further with their theological debate.

18. The use of the limited space available at certain times during the week at Luther King House for all who work, worship and dine there is being kept under review and ways of relieving the problem are in hand.

19. The idea of a Regional Centre which would serve as an extension of the Federation and also as a facility of the local churches for training in ministry is still being pursued.

20. A part-time Librarian has been employed. The integration of the libraries is now complete and surplus books have been disposed of.

21. The financial basis of the Federation is to change. Details still have to be finalised, but agreement has been reached on the principle of paying the Baptist College a percentage on all rooms rented to students and staff and on all conference income. This releases Northern College from the original agreement that its income from investments resulting from the sale of its previous premises would, in general, be used for the work of the Federation.

## **MANSFIELD COLLEGE**

22. Arrangements have been made for a Visitation to be carried out in the autumn of 1989, under the convenership of the Revd Robert Way.

23. After a decade of negotiations, the Charity Commissioners have approved the new Constitution which confirms the role of the Ordination Programme in a developing multi-disciplinary college.

## **THE CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE, EDINBURGH**

24. Following the decision of the Congregational Union of Scotland not to proceed to Union, it is hoped nonetheless to strengthen links with this college and its new Principal, the Revd Dr John Clark.

## **BALA-BANGOR, ABERYSTWYTH**

25. We await the new developments which will spring from the decision to unite Bala-Bangor College and the Memorial College, Aberystwyth, under the principalship of the Revd Dr Stanley John.

## **A CENTRE FOR BLACK RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE**

26. We are co-operating with other denominations in supporting the Church of England as it sets up an Institute to meet the particular needs of black ordinands and to be a resource for the Church's wider ministry. It is to be known as the Simon of Cyrene Theological Institute, and will provide courses in Black Studies, especially as these relate to the religious life of black people in Britain, Leadership Development, Theological Reflection and Pastoral Studies. It will also aspire to be a centre of excellence in research, innovative in educational method and contextual in training.

## **CRCW TRAINING REVIEW**

27. Attention is being given to the training programme for our CRCW candidates. The course at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham is being restructured in the light of our experience so far, and we are also exploring the possibility of an alternative pattern which will allow some of the training to be undertaken in a local situation and at a distance. We are aware of the problems associated with a limited programme and are encouraging ecumenical co-operation.

## **IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

28. Westminster College again arranged and hosted a successful Refresher Course for ministers. Mindful now of the needs of those auxiliary ministers unable to be available during the week, we are

providing this year an alternative course which will take place over a long weekend at the Windermere Training Centre. The extra course will also be open to stipendiary ministers.

#### **BOARD OF STUDIES FOR THE AUXILIARY MINISTRY**

29. The numbers in training for the auxiliary ministry remain at a constant 70, and this is most encouraging. The Board gives oversight to their training on ecumenical and URC-based courses, in preparation for our ministry. We are paying particular regard to the need to develop preaching and communication skills.

30. The URC Training Programme has been completely revised and brought up to date and is entitled **Preparing for Ministry**. We are ready to play our part in the research being undertaken into the training needs of the whole Church, and the possibilities of co-ordinated training.

31. We note that many of our students train alongside those preparing for stipendiary ministry on the Alternative Programme with its non-residential component. There are now opportunities for trainers from the different institutions to share their expertise and combine their skills.

32. Annual Summer Schools continue to be appreciated, and we are indebted to many tutors and assessors and our twelve Provincial Directors of training for their faithful work throughout the year.

33. The Revd Alan Dunstone has retired from his much appreciated convenership, and has been succeeded by the Revd David Jenkins.

#### **LAY PREACHING COMMITTEE**

34. A number of comments have been received from those who have completed, or who are continuing to study **Exploring the Faith** expressing appreciation for the way their faith has been deepened and enriched through doing the course. Much of the credit for this must go to assessors and tutors for the meticulous care they take in guidance and marking.

35. Nevertheless, the committee feel that the time has come to revise the training programme for lay preachers. The course has now been running in its present form for fourteen years. The number of those who have enrolled but failed to complete it is a matter of concern; since 1975, 1220 have enrolled for the course, 558 have withdrawn from it, 182 have successfully completed it and 480 are currently working through it. Numerous comments have been received from participants, tutors, assessors and interested parties and the committee is in the process of examining these and invites others to write in with comments. The Methodist Church, who with the Baptists, share **Exploring the Faith** with us, are involved in a major revision of their training programmes for local

preachers and we are discussing with them ways in which the URC can be involved in this.

36. The committee is endeavouring to ascertain the needs of lay preachers as they engage in service with, and to, the churches and the needs of the churches in connection with lay preaching. As part of this process all nationally accredited lay preachers are being asked to complete a questionnaire.

37. Attention is also drawn to an address given by the Revd A G Burnham to Lay Preaching Commissioners meeting in Birmingham last June, entitled **Lay-Preaching - an out-dated concept**. The address has been published and is available from the Communication and Supplies Department at 20p a copy.

#### **MINISTERIAL TRAINING FUND**

38. Following the report to Assembly 1988, concerning the financial reserves of the Ministerial Training Fund, we were greatly encouraged by, amongst others, the gift of £250,000 from Thames North Province, which removed the deficit for the year and left £90,000 for general funds. Radical action is still necessary. Urgent consideration is currently being devoted to this aspect.

39. As a gesture of our concern for the well being of the students, we have this year maintained the 10% additional grant. We are also taking up with the Secretary of State for Education and Science our concern about the effects of the proposed introduction of the Top-Up Loan Scheme for students.

40. The cost of student accommodation and the limitations this has on the placing of students in colleges is currently under consideration by each college, this committee, and the students themselves. Imaginative schemes are being explored, including the provision of suitable property to let at low rents, and a loan scheme to enable students to maintain mortgage repayments on their own homes. The publication of the booklet **Financing your Training** has been welcomed, and this sets out facts helpful both to those in college, and to those applying for entry.

#### **AUXILIARY TO STIPENDIARY MINISTRY TRANSFERS**

41. The richness and diversity of the backgrounds of people offering for ministry make a single pattern for transfer from Auxiliary to Stipendiary Ministry difficult. Assembly requires that the Training Committee shall consider the need for additional training in the case of any transfer, and has indicated its general policy since the inception of the auxiliary ministry. Normally there shall be required up to one year of study under the direction and care of a URC-related college, of a full time and college-based nature. Decisions about the content of this additional requirement are taken after full consultation with the Province and the

minister concerned. The factors involved should include the experience gained in the present ministry, the extent and nature of earlier training, age, and family circumstances. The objective of the training is to prepare the minister to exercise a ministry of a full-time and wider-ranging nature, normally based on a local pastorate.

## APPENDIX 1

### INSPECTION OF THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM NOVEMBER 1988

#### A Report from the Inspectors:

1. Revd Canon Ronald Coppin (Canon Residentiary of Durham Cathedral);  
Dr Clyde Binfield (Department of History, University of Sheffield and representing the United Reformed Church); Revd G Thackray Eddy (formerly Chairman of the East Anglia District of the Methodist Church); Revd June Osborne (Team Vicar of St Paul with St Stephen and St Mark, Old Ford, London, and Assistant Dean of Tower Hamlets); Mr David Temple (Treasurer of the Methodist Church Overseas Division).

#### INTRODUCTION

2. The Queen's College is an ecumenical college formed by the coming together of Handsworth College (Methodist) and the Queen's College (Church of England) in 1970. The college has always had a wider ecumenical concern and is recognised for the training of ministers by the United Reformed Church as well as the Methodist Church and the Church of England.

3. The Principal, the Reverend Dr James Walker, was appointed in 1987 and so has just completed his first full academic year in office.

4. The Reverend David Butler, now the Senior Methodist Tutor, was also appointed in 1987. The Reverend David Kennedy joined the staff in January 1988 and the Reverend Stephen Dawes in September 1988. There has thus been a major change in teaching staff; 4 of the 7 full time tutors being in their first or second academic year.

5. The college makes full use of the Theology Department of the University, and consequently recent changes in the staffing levels of that Department have had a considerable impact on the teaching programme of the college.

6. The college is in the process of preparing its submission to the ACCM Courses and Examinations Committee for the new assessment procedures approved by the House of Bishops of the Church of England.

7. The Inspection has come, then, at an important time in the development of the college.

8. The Queen's College has significant advantages in being in the City of Birmingham, set on the edge of the campus of a major University and near the Selly Oak Colleges. Birmingham itself offers the possibilities of discovering what it means to live in a large city with inner urban priority areas, sizeable ethnic communities and a vigorous commercial, industrial and cultural life: a context given to few other English theological colleges. The University and the Selly Oak Colleges offer a variety of educational resources and experience some of which are unique in Britain. Despite the constraints of timetabling, syllabuses, distances and money the college should be able to develop a range of ministerial education and training which takes the fullest advantage of this combination of assets. The College Council and staff have an exciting task in taking up the challenge which their situation offers.

9. We believe that the churches can send their students preparing for the ordained ministry to the Queen's College with confidence.

#### **THE GOVERNING BODY AND THE COUNCIL**

10. The Inspectors thought that the composition of the Governing Body with its large number of apparently honorific members and size could with advantage be reviewed.

11. Members of the Council are at present appointed for 3 years and their appointments may be renewed indefinitely. The scope of the council's responsibilities seems in its formal constitution to be rather restricted. The length of the first appointment might be increased to 5 years with renewal limited to one further period. Because the constitution depends on a Statutory Instrument it may take some time to make formal changes, however by means of observers it should be possible to strengthen the present membership of the Council and make it into a more useful body to the College, its staff and Principal.

12. The Council also needs to redefine its aims and purposes for similar reasons.

**Recommendation 1:** So, the Inspectors recommend that the Constitution of the Council be revised and the membership of the Governing Body be reviewed.

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

13. The new Principal has had to concern himself with a considerable amount of detailed routine administration especially in domestic affairs, dealing with matters which would more appropriately be dealt with by other members of the college staff.

It seemed to the Inspectors that the Principal should be relieved of these tasks and that this might be done through a redistribution of responsibilities. It might be advantageous to use as an adviser, on an informal basis, a local person with the relevant experience and skill.

**Recommendation 2:** So, the Inspectors recommend a restructuring of the College administration so as to relieve the Principal of detailed routine administrative tasks.

#### **TEACHING STAFF**

14. The teaching staff are impressively well-qualified, dedicated and hard working. As part of their work they continue active academic research and make significant contributions in their churches by serving on such bodies as the Methodist-Roman Catholic Conversations. By carrying out these commitments the staff are also able to bring wider concerns into the life of the College.

15. Just because they are so able and dedicated they do not always find it easy to work together and to make positive use of their varying points of view and styles of teaching. We believe that they need to continue to work at how they may best fulfil their common task, using their Quiet Days and residential planning sessions with the help of a staff consultant, as many other Colleges do.

#### **TEACHING SYLLABUS AND TIMETABLE**

16. The College is in process of preparing a new syllabus and assessment procedures in response to the Church of England report **Education for the Church's Ministry**. (All Colleges and Courses which prepare students for the Anglican ministry are taking part in this general procedure). At Queen's it is providing a valuable opportunity to consider how best to reduce the pressures on the timetable which are at present considerable. Some of the pressure follows on recent changes in courses at the University which have increased demands on the College teaching staff.

17. The connections with the University provide an important stimulus for students and staff and the College can make its own contribution to the University Department. As far as the constraints of time allow, the fullest advantage should be taken to develop these various possibilities.

**Recommendation 3:** So, the Inspectors recommend that in re-shaping the syllabus for the new assessment procedure every effort is made to secure more un-timetabled time.

18. An extremely important part of the teaching programme in the College and one which is valued by the students is the tutorial system which includes both academic, teaching tutorials and

personal, pastoral tutorials. Because they are so important the Inspectors have recommended that the present system be overhauled so as to make sure that there are clearly understood arrangements for all students, including a regular pattern of pastoral tutorials.

**Recommendation 4:** We recommend a revision of the tutorial system

#### **LIBRARY**

19. The Library is most efficiently run and cared for by the part time librarian making the Library a well-used resource for the College. The only problem is that the annual sum spent on books has not been increased to keep pace with inflation. It is probably unrealistic to expect the backfall to be made good all at once but the annual budget needs to be increased and regularly reviewed.

**Recommendation 5:** So, the Inspectors recommend that the Library budget be revised.

#### **PASTORAL STUDIES**

20. The present pastoral studies tutor will retire in 1989 and the need to appoint a new member of staff, to draw up a fresh job description will provide the opportunity to consider, not only the content of the pastoral studies, but how the pastoral studies programme is related to the other theological teaching of which it is a part. The thorough integration of theology, reflection and pastoral practice is a daunting task faced by all involved in ministerial training, and one which has to be persevered with if ministers are to be adequately prepared for their ministry.

21. The Handsworth Project\* has been an important new initiative for the College's pastoral studies teaching programme. If the students are to gain the maximum possible benefit from the project, the work that is done there, by the small number of students able to be placed in Handsworth, needs to be more systematically brought into the teaching programme of the whole College.

22. The Black Christian Studies Unit\* is another significant initiative and in due course the experience and the knowledge gained through it will need to be incorporated more generally into the College's programme.

23. So, the Inspectors make two recommendations:

**Recommendation 6:** that the arrangements for the teaching of Pastoral Studies be completely reviewed.

**Recommendation 7:** that the work of the Handsworth Project be more thoroughly integrated in the College teaching programme.

\*For description see Appendix B.



## WORSHIP

24. The great care taken to see that everything in the Chapel is done well reflects the sensitivity of the staff to the worship needs of a community made up of members coming from very different traditions.

25. The Inspectors were encouraged to hear that almost all the students say how much they come to value the worship in the Chapel, not least the opportunity for frequent Holy Communion.

26. Despite the efforts made in encouraging those who take services to reflect their own traditions, there is some feeling that there has been an Anglican take-over in the Chapel. The new Eucharistic Rites which are to be used experimentally from January 1989 instead of the present single Queen's Rite, will provide a greater variety in the form of service. These changes may help to offset that feeling and make it even more possible for different emphases to be more easily expressed.

27. The College requirement for one attendance at Chapel each day was, as far as we could tell, being observed.

28. The Christian Discipleship course is greatly appreciated by students in helping them to form their own prayer life and spirituality. They are encouraged to make use of a local minister or parish priest and some have a spiritual director. In this general area we believe our suggestion about the personal tutorial will be of help.

## COMMUNITY LIFE

29. The community life of the college is vigorous and there is a strong, positive atmosphere even though all members of the community feel to some degree or another the considerable pressures of all that has to be done during their time there. The Inspectors endorsed the view of their predecessors in 1982 and of the majority of the students that the community would be greatly helped if there were to be a part-time Chaplain to the College community.

Recommendation 8: So, they recommend that a part-time chaplain to the College be appointed.

## HOUSING

30. Although when the ecumenical college started good provision was made for housing married students, there are now many more older married students with bigger families and older children. Several married students now have to live off the college campus, and because the immediate neighbourhood of the college is an expensive one for houses they have to live further away. More help is needed in assisting new students to find housing and generally

to look after married students' housing.

31. There are also some problems over staff housing caused by similar circumstances. In particular there is an urgent need for a Principal's house, that is a house well suited to the needs of a Principal, not simply meeting the wishes of a particular Principal.

**Recommendation 9:** So, the Inspectors recommend that better provision be made for the housing of the Principal, the teaching staff and student families.

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

32. Some matters of detail in fulfilling the Health and Safety at Work legislation have been neglected, as for example the permanent posting of Regulations in the appropriate places. The Inspectors were satisfied that immediate action would be taken to put these matters right, so that the law would be fully observed.

**Recommendation 10:** Nevertheless, the Inspectors formally recommended that the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work legislation are implemented.

#### CONCLUSION

33. The Inspectors wish to express their warm appreciation of the friendly and helpful way in which they were received by all the members of the College community, in particular the teaching staff and students, and especially the Principal. We were met everywhere with unfailing courtesy and the interruptions and extra work we made were coped with patiently.

#### APPENDIX A

##### 34. Teaching Staff and Subject Areas

Revd James B Walker, MA BD DPhil (Principal) Church of Scotland.  
Revd David Butler BSc, MA (Church History) Methodist Church  
Revd Stephen B Dawes, MA PhD(Hebrew,Old Testament) Methodist Church  
Revd David J Kennedy, BA MTh (Liturgy) Church of England  
Revd David C Parker, MTh DipTh (New Testament, Greek) Church of England  
Revd Iain R Torrance, MA BD DPhil(Ethics,New Testament)Church of Scotland.  
Revd John Wilkinson MA DipTh STB (Pastoral Studies - half-time) Church of England  
Revd Barbara K Wollaston BSc (Pastoral Studies) Church of England

## APPENDIX B

35. The College has responded in two ways to the larger ethnic communities in Birmingham, and to the small but increasing number of its own black students.

### THE HANDSWORTH PROJECT

36. Three or five students per year, at present all white, spend the third year of their college course in rented accommodation in Handsworth. They have placements one day a week with various agencies serving that area, and are attached to churches, some black-led, some mainstream but with largely black congregations. They spend one full day a week in the College. In Handsworth they have seminars and lectures, work in their placements, organise their own corporate devotions, and study under the guidance of tutors who are local clergy working closely with the ethnic communities. One inspector was able to spend a day with them and their course tutor before the main inspection period; but much longer contact would be necessary for an adequate evaluation, so we were pleased to have access to a recent assessment by the Revd Laurie Green, who reports very favourably on the project and offers constructive comments.

### BLACK CHRISTIAN STUDIES

37. Because this course is new and needs to establish the confidence of the participants, it is at present confined to black students. It has the active participation of two local black clergy and Bishop Patrick Kalilombe, a Roman Catholic, from the Centre for Black and White Christian Partnership. Teaching is mainly through seminars, to a comprehensive and well-thought out syllabus.

38. This pioneering course will presumably be able to co-operate with the Simon of Cyrene Theological Institute as it develops its work. The Tutor in charge of both these undertakings is a half-time member of staff, who is submitting a thesis for a higher degree in the University, embodying research related to his experience in this field.

39. The importance of all this for the whole life of the College must be clearly recognised, even though the numbers directly involved are small at present.

## APPENDIX C

### RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER BODIES

#### A. The West Midlands Ministerial Training Course

40.1. The Course was originally an extension of the Queen's College and as such largely staffed and administered by the College. It now has its own Principal and Course committee, through which it has structural links with the College, the Chairman and the Principal being members of the College Council.

40.2. The Course is now independent of the College for its staffing, but is able to make good use of the facilities, such as the Library, which the College offers.

40.3. Course and College benefit from such mutual help and sharing as they are able to manage. It is a pity that the pressures of time on both sides do not easily allow of a greater mixing and a sharing of experience between the two groups of students, nor of the varieties of teaching methods by the members of staff.

#### B. The United Reformed Church

41.1. There are at present five United Reformed students at Queen's. This is a development to be welcomed though it brings certain problems into relief.

41.2. For many years the attraction of Queen's for United Reformed students lay in its consciously ecumenical style. Since few URC students came, it is to be presumed either that was not after all an attraction or that the denomination consciously discouraged serious enquirers.

41.3. Queen's ecumenism is less distinctive (and may even be *vieux jeu*) now that the Federations at Manchester and Cambridge provide URC ordinands with what is perhaps a more realistic ecumenism.

41.4. Nonetheless the particular nature of the Queen's experience and the outstanding opportunities presented by a training in Birmingham should remain as opportunities to be freely presented to URC candidates.

41.5. If this is to happen, it is clear that the URC students best placed to benefit from Queen's - where they will inevitably be in a small minority - should be clear, indeed mature, in their churchmanship.

41.6. It will be necessary for the college staff to relate more consciously than they do (though what they do is done most

conscientiously) to communicate that Reformed tradition which the URC represents (and which differs inevitably and significantly from those distinctive and distinguished aspects of the Church of Scotland's Reformed tradition currently presented at Queen's).

41.7. It will also be necessary for the URC as a denomination to relate to Queen's: Thus:

(a) might the Queen's URC students formally relate (perhaps in an occasional seminar) to the URC's CRCWs current training at Selly Oak?

(b) might the provincial moderator (as the most easily identifiable representative figure) consciously and actively convey elements of the URC culture? (for example different church structures breed differing attitudes to probationary ministry, and such a college as Queen's needs to be alert to these).

(c) Might there not be a meeting at Queen's between ministers and students before the commencement of internship? This is the practice in URC colleges; and at Queen's, which fully support internship, it would be a helpful rather than a divisive recognition of a differing culture. A pattern, after all, is to be set, and common guidelines are surely necessary.

41.8. This question of internship is important. There is the strongest case for it to be in the third year rather than the fourth year. It has been observed that the Queen's method is to strip the ordinand down, so that the rebuilding process begins in the internship period, to be completed thereafter. Internship in the third year is clearly sensible in such a scheme - the more so for those who find themselves to a greater or lesser extent cut off from URC life.

41.9. We have stressed the need for sensitivity to the URC culture as a contribution to ecumenism rather than to ongoing denominationalism in an old-fashioned sense, and it is proper to observe that the college shows sensitivity: one instance is the periodic celebration of communion according to URC practice.

41.10. There is one particular aspect of sensitivity which is to be applauded: One of the URC students has been allowed to combine his internship at a church in North Wales with the preparation of his dissertation. This is a flexible marriage of the academic and the pastoral. One hopes for more such marriages and is glad that such untidiness daunted neither the college (which championed it) nor the denomination (for which, perhaps, it provided a precedent).

### C. Oscott College

42. The annual exchange with Oscott is seen as a highlight of the year not only because of its immediate impact (see teaching), but also in addition to being a stimulating 'model' and 'method', it leads to interaction with the Roman Catholics and to the establishment of enduring friendships.

### D. The Selly Oak Colleges

43.1. The Selly Oak Colleges provide a unique complex of theological resources. Yet a closer relationship between them and Queen's is far more easily advocated than consummated. A prime reason for this difficulty is geographical. Selly Oak lies two to two-and-half miles away, with no easy public transport between the Colleges and Queen's. This makes time-tabling a major problem. Only one College within the Selly Oak constituency lies off its campus and that is Newman College, twinned with Westhill, and three miles further south. A second reason for the difficulty is financial. Each of Selly Oak's nine federated colleges pays c.£10,000 p.a. to the Federation. That is a deterrent to Queen's, and given the geography of the matter it is hard to see what advantages can be gained other than by the existing pattern of mutual visits and general goodwill.

43.2. There is a common denominator in the University. Selly Oak is constitutionally and technically separate from the University, although Westhill, its biggest college, is validated by the University and it is negotiating (with Newman) for the status of a **School** of the University within the Faculty of Education. In addition several of the Selly Oak units have relationships with the Department of Theology. The University and Selly Oak share Walter Hollenweger as Professor of Mission, and Selly Oak teaches Islamic Studies to master's and doctoral level. Selly Oak now has five postgraduate, one-year, full-time diplomas (Judaism, Islam, Mission, New Religious Movements, Christian Education) validated through the University's Department of Theology. In addition its Centre for Black and White Christian Partnership awards a Certificate of Theology taught through the University Extra-mural Department, which can qualify candidates to enter the second undergraduate year. And fifteen of the University's recognised lecturers are Selly Oak lecturers.

43.3. These mechanisms make for increasing relations with the University and through these at least The Queen's College shares. For example, all the Department of Theology's first year students have to study either Islam or Judaism, and this is done at Selly Oak in a weekly class. This at least has to be time-tabled and brings some Queen's students physically onto the Selly Oak campus.

43.4. One of Selly Oak's prime thrusts is education for a multi-

cultural world, e.g. the Black and White Partnership, Multi-Faith, Islam and Judaism Centres. Courses and experiences on the Multi-cultural city and religious integrity and experience are being developed: one such, planned for 1989, is a three week course for people from Europe. Here the contribution of the Revds John Wilkinson and Andrew Wingate is invaluable and is a pointer to further collaboration.

43.5. None of these links is new, though all are developing. In March 1985 John Ferguson, then President of Selly Oak, prepared a seventeen point paper on Selly Oak and Queen's. Several of its points remain pertinent.

#### APPENDIX D

##### RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY

44.1. One of the attractions of a course at The Queen's College must be the opportunity for relationships with the University. The University campus, which is far more attractive than those who do not know Birmingham would ever credit, is in close proximity. For students at Queen's College the opportunities provided by undergraduate and postgraduate courses, both taught and research-based, are manifold. The college alone could not expect to offer them. For staff at Queen's there must be stimulus in links with members of the University's Department of Theology and there ought to be stimulus with cognate departments. For staff and students alike there are the library facilities of a major civic university. The relationship is by no means only one way. The Department of Theology is considerably helped by the fact that The Queen's College provides Staff who are recognised as lecturers by the University and by the quality, liveliness and motivation of many of the Queen's students.

44.2. Nonetheless the way in which academic theology is perceived by many in the churches means that such links are increasingly open to question. Indeed, the relationship is easily misunderstood even by those well-placed to understand it. For example, at a preliminary meeting, the Chairman of the College Council expressed concern at the implications for the College of the changing emphasis on the way in which University staff use their time - more research and more writing for publication. But that comment would raise a hollow laugh in any senior common room today. The Chairman also raised the question of the method and context of theological teaching in the University when what is important for the Church is training its ministers in the context of a believing, pastoring community, training people to work in an increasingly secularised environment. That this comment reflects a widely held concern is undeniable. It also fails to do justice to theology at Birmingham and it changes the Queen's College from a theological college whose disciplines liberate mind and soul to a training college whose task

is simply to instil, perhaps to perfect, certain skills. This is so fundamental an issue and of such general significance for the Churches and their colleges that it is worth more detailed consideration.

44.3. The feeling that the academic enterprise is alien to pastoral ministry comes from several quarters in the churches - from some parts of the Evangelical and Catholic wings as well as from what might be called the Faith in the City wing. It owes much to the vigour with which university departments of theology consciously made their discipline academic in the 1960s. One result is that with the present crisis in the universities there is little understanding from the churches of the importance to them of theology in the universities. This is accentuated by the churches' desire for that confessional theology which is precisely what secular universities cannot provide. There is here a tension and a dilemma which, if acknowledged, might be immensely fruitful for the churches.

44.4. In the context of Birmingham, for example, there could be no question of restricting an advertisement for a post in the Department of Theology to a committed Christian: that would run counter to the University's Charter. This means that Birmingham's Department of Theology, like that of any other university, has to balance the three strands in theology: the confessional, the critical, the whole area of religious studies (that is to say, sociology of religion, culture, comparative religion and so on). These three strands interact: the confessional, for instance, always in fact has to respond to the critical. What has to be recognised is that academic theology consciously holds these strands in balance. It is not solely critical: it is concerned with conserving and transmitting the tradition: it is concerned with taking seriously the confessional side. And this vision of theology is of the utmost importance for the churches, for it is a vision more effectively glimpsed by the universities than by the denominational colleges, even ecumenical colleges. It is a vision which is not afraid to see theology in a secularised environment. Such a vision is a major opportunity for any theological college in a university city.

44.5. It is not the only opportunity. In the recent University Grants Committee's national Research Selectivity Exercise Birmingham's Department of Theology was rated above average: an accolade to be savoured. Nevertheless the Department has been seriously affected by the retirement of three senior members and by a university climate in which the fashionable models are those of management (with heads of department as middle managers rather than as the Olympian figures of former years) and in which the defining factors are solely financial. The situation could help the relationship between Queen's and the department but it would first be necessary for Queen's to resolve the tension in its own ranks between the academic and the action-reflective. Here it suffices



to observe that the academic and the action-reflective need each other, for what and how do you reflect if you have done no theology? But when that tension is resolved (or at least acknowledged and used) then the opportunities for further relationships between College and Department might be pursued. Universities are increasingly aware of the need to tap the resources of their community. Birmingham is a city with major theological resources. Of course by no means all of these will measure up to university standards; and the university's own methods give its Department of Theology inadequate credit (and this has financial implications) for the work which it does in and for the community; nonetheless there is a door here in which Queen's already has its foot.

## APPENDIX 2

### COLLEGE REPORTS

#### MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

##### Students and Staff

1. There are 23 ordinands for the URC currently in training at Mansfield and another 15 in theology out of a total of 160 students in the college. We have 5 theological staff on site, another 10 who do regular tutorial teaching. The SCR had 4 visiting theologians and the MCR had 4 visiting ministers in residence during 1988. We take advantage of university lectures and staff from the other eleven theological colleges to help in theological training. Good relations exist between all the theological colleges, especially between ourselves and Ripon College, Cuddesdon, where our students are paired with theirs in theology. Charles Brock, the Director of Ministerial Training at Mansfield, teaches liturgy at Ripon which, up to this point at least, has been known for its production of Archbishops of Canterbury.

2. The Director's sabbatical in Trinity Term included many visits to Urban Priority Areas as Convener of the Urban and Rural Mission Committee of the URC. He found many depressing aspects of contemporary city life but much good heart among the dedicated ministers and people in the devastated areas of this country. Becoming connected with the urban scene has led to changes in the ethics course. The course now includes among other things the study of economics as a crucial area for ministerial awareness. This change is to make sure we move beyond ambulance work in pastoral care.

3. Justine Wyatt has been active with the Internship Programme which, though constituting a heavy administrative task, is working well as an integrated method of practical and reflective training. Justine has also organised interesting spirituality sessions,

including a class on Shaker dancing led by one of our ordinands. We found our students were rather good at it, but we do not expect to export it very far. Donald Sykes, George Carras, Tony Tucker and Yvonne Workman give input to the teaching and a lot in that elusive but crucial area of presence.

4. The Sermon Class, which is the oldest tradition of teaching in the College, has been adapted to become the Worship Class with more group work so that team efforts can be tried and tested. Initially the request for a change in Sermon Class came from the students, and the broad outlines of the new course were negotiated with staff. Each student still presents a complete service at least once in his/her time at the college.

5. A 3-day retreat was held at Barnes Close and we hope to have this on a yearly basis.

### **The Constitution**

6. The Charity Commissioners have given us a new constitution after 15 years of struggle. This brings us legally up to date as a mixed Institution where seminary and ordinary Oxford college teaching happen in the same place and where we try to relate the two. We are looking for a new Principal to help guide us through the maze of gaining full collegiate status in Oxford, to raise enough money to keep us afloat, and to start a new building programme for student rooms. The Appeal has reached £1 million but more is needed. There have been some generous gifts for theological training. Approximately £250,000 has come from the Morley-Adlam Bequest and Revd Ralph Ackroyd did a sponsored walk on the 50th anniversary of his ordination and donated £500 to the college.

### **The Future**

7. The College is in good heart. We are grateful that Dr Mike Mahony has been an effective Acting Principal. The Ministerial Training Committee meets twice a year for oversight and that is much appreciated. We are negotiating the buying of a house or houses in some of the depressed areas of Oxford where students could live more cheaply and develop a link with the urban mission work in the nearby local churches and community organisations. We find 3 eight week terms per year quite restraining for effective training and hope the URC will make it possible for more time to do extra work.

### **NORTHERN COLLEGE (United Reformed and Congregational), MANCHESTER**

8. We continue to discover the advantages of living and working on a single site. Another batch of new students once again accepted the challenge of being part of an ecumenical community and are making their own particular contribution.

9. At the beginning of the session we welcomed Dr David Peel as Tutor in Community-based Training. His appointment takes account of two points made by the visitors to the college, viz the changed nature of theological training nowadays and the need for continuity in the staffing of the college by appointing a younger person. Dr Peel is well equipped for his task. His study of theology has been matched with sustained pastoral work and experience in the business of identifying theological issues of our socio-political life. Whilst minister in the North Teesside Group he worked with the unemployed youth of the North East and served as a tutor of the North East Ordination Course.

10. The Revd Fred Noden has had to relinquish his responsibilities as part-time chaplain of the college. We are grateful to him for investing so much of himself in the pastoral work of the college community. He is succeeded by the Revd Jean Forster. We wish her well in her new undertaking.

11. We are pleased that students of the college continue to have the opportunity of doing part of their training overseas. Andrew Dawson used the College's Travel Award, together with additional money which he himself raised, to undertake an educational tour in Central America during the summer vacation. The visit, which included El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, proved to be an education in more senses than one. Plans are now in hand to enable another student to spend some time in Kingston, Jamaica.

12. This year's overseas student is Mrs. Lucy Hong Lu Ming. She comes to us from the YMCA in Shanghai. We are learning a great deal from her about the church in China.

13. This year's College Mission was held at Lower Chapel, Darwen. The Revd R J McKelvey and the second year students worked with the minister and members of the congregation throughout the winter in identifying needs within the church and the community and found the mission to be a very challenging experience.

14. How we do the college mission and the extent to which it relates not only to the training needs of the students but also to the challenges facing the church in Britain today was the subject of the annual governors', staff and student conference in February. We are working on the outcome of our findings.

15. The College, as everyone who is familiar with it knows, depends greatly upon the faculty of theology in the University of Manchester. It is important therefore that the Church should be alerted to the effects which government policy is having on the Faculty, in common with other faculties in the country, by switching funding from the arts faculties (including theology) in favour of scientific and technological subjects. This is causing the future of theology in the universities to be uncertain. The Manchester faculty has already lost a number of lecturers and

anxiety is increasing over the future of the prestigious John Rylands chair. This trend cannot but be viewed with distress by all who believe that theology is best studied in the open environment of the universities. Its practical consequences for the college may soon need to receive our attention.

#### **WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE**

##### **Student numbers**

16. Numbers on the college roll have been high for the academic years 1987/8 and 1988/9, exceeding forty when overseas students and those taking the alternative programme as external students are included. While this has put demands on financial, administrative and training resources, it has brought a welcome sense of confidence to the community and the atmosphere of the college is notably good. Small gifts from local churches, £500 from the Revd Ralph Ackroyd's sponsored walk on the 50th anniversary of his ordination, a generous gift from members of St Andrew's URC, Cheam, in memory of Ernest Todd, tutor here from 1950-1952, have all given encouraging evidence that the church wants the programme of training and the life of the students to go forward on a sound basis.

##### **Administration**

17. The Management Committee is responding to this evidence by taking very seriously its long term planning with the consultant architect for the buildings and for the financial viability of the whole exercise based at Westminster College.

18. Wesley House, the Methodist partner in the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges, has entered into the shared part-time employment of professional help for the Library, and Mrs. Marian Foster has been appointed. She has a diploma in Library Studies and is a theology graduate and researcher.

19. The absence on sick leave for two months of Mrs Mary Bradford, the College Secretary, has called for and received loyal support from all concerned in filling the gap, particularly Mrs Eve Ross of St Columba's URC, Cambridge: the Management Committee will need to consider how to minimise the vulnerability of the college to the illness of any member of its small and hard-working team.

##### **The Friends of Westminster and Cheshunt Colleges**

20. All those involved in the work of the college are grateful for the help of the Friends. In particular, they have provided funds for items not easily given priority in direct URC funding of the college programme. They are currently engaged in fund-raising for repairs to the chapel organ.

## Developments in the Federation

21. There have been several staff changes in the Federation and a new development at Ridley Hall in the shape of a programme seeking to relate theology to commercial and industrial life (**God on Monday**). The Federation Liaison Committee, on which each sponsoring church is represented, has welcomed as its first Moderator Dr Alan Webster, former Dean of St Paul's Cathedral. Also for the first time a staff member other than a Principal is chairing the Federation Council, in the person of Revd Dr Maggie Guite, Anglican deacon, jointly employed by Westcott House and Wesley House. The Federation is seeking further to broaden its ecumenical base by adding contacts with the Cambridgeshire Baptist Association to its existing links with Roman Catholics.

## Sabbaticals

22. The Principal was on sabbatical leave for the Lent Term, 1988, and visited Korea for part of the period. Dr Mayor was Acting Principal for one term. Dr Houston is away for the Easter Term, 1989. There is a great need for academic staff to renew their awareness of developments in their fields of teaching by sabbaticals and other means of giving time for study.

## Mission and Evangelism

23. Mission Audits have been undertaken by student teams in two very different situations. Both the Principal and the Revd Janet Sowerbutts have been involved in contacts with theologians and trainers in partner churches, through CWM. This area of preparation for ministry remains high on the college agenda of needed developments.

### APPENDIX 3 STUDENTS IN TRAINING 1988/89 (as at February 1989)

#### NORTHERN PROVINCE

##### Stipendiary

Ruth Crofton (Northern), Tim Hopley (Northern), John Kingsley (Northern), Jean Gordon (Northern). **Auxiliary**  
Kenneth Aitchison (URC & NEOC), Douglas McFarlane (NEOC).

#### NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE

##### Stipendiary

Stephen Brown (Northern), Elizabeth Byrne (Westminster), Alison Chart (Northern), Christopher Searle (Northern), Duncan Goldie (Westminster), Philip Nevard (Mansfield), Lythan Nevard (Mansfield), Robert Warwicker (Mansfield), John Mitchell

(Northern), Norman Riley (Northern), Stephen Sutcliffe (Northern).

#### **Auxiliary**

Audrey Boon (MCI), Brenda Ford (MCI), David Lee (MCI), John Mackereth (MCI), Barbara Plenderleith (MCI), Jack Thompson (MCI), Paul Brewerton (URC), Howard Farson (MCI)

#### **MERSEY PROVINCE**

#### **Stipendiary**

Andrew Dawson (Northern), Sandra Dears (Northern), Paul Holmes (Northern), Heather MacLeod (Northern).

#### **Auxiliary**

Peter Brown (MCI), Susan Flynn (MCI), Trevor Legge (MCI), Robert Thomson (URC), Kathleen Watts (URC), Linda Elliott (MCI), William Clarke (URC).

#### **YORKSHIRE PROVINCE**

#### **Stipendiary**

Peter Clarkson (Northern), Paul Ellis (Northern), Margaret Herbert (Westminster), William Nicol (Mansfield), Derek Redfern (Northern), David Fraser (Westminster), Rowena Francis (Northern), David Haslam (Northern), James Kissack (Mansfield), Fran Kissack (Mansfield).

#### **Auxiliary**

Iain Bentley (MCI), Tresna Fletcher (NEOC), Julia Martin (MCI), Mirella Moxon (MCI), George Perrott (MCI), Marjory Swift (MCI), Brenda Sugden (MCI).

#### **EAST MIDLANDS PROVINCE**

#### **Stipendiary**

Paul Barrett (Westminster), Colin Biggs (Westminster), Cecil Macaulay (Mansfield), Martyn Coe (Northern), Graham Maskery (Northern), Andrew Willett (Northern), Angela Wood (Northern), Enid Slater (EMMTC and Northern), Maxwell Shepherd (Queens), Jacqueline Petrie (Westminster), Ruth Haward (Northern).

#### **Auxiliary**

Leslie Watson (URC), Revd Reginald Moore (EMMTC), Dr. Rodger Charlton (URC), Alison Brooks (EMMTC), Douglas Watson (URC).

#### **WEST MIDLANDS PROVINCE**

#### **Stipendiary**

Thomas Bayliss (Westminster), Janet Loveitt (Mansfield), Jane Stranz (Mansfield), Josephine Williams (Queens & WMMTC), Gethin Rhys (Queens), Timothy Huc (Westminster), Kristin Ofstad (Westminster), Paul Stokes (Westminster), Peter Cruchley

(Mansfield), Simon Walkling (Mansfield).  
Bill Frame (West Midlands).

#### **Auxiliary**

Roger Woodall (MCI), John Bassett (MCI), Kenneth Newborough (WMMTC).

#### **EASTERN PROVINCE**

##### **Stipendiary**

Roy Cole (Westminster), Margaret McKay (Westminster), Allan Smith (Mansfield), Craig Bowman (Northern), Geoffrey Clarke (Northern), Fleur Houston (Westminster), Bill Thomas (Mansfield).

##### **Auxiliary**

Colin Knight (URC), Jacqueline Knight (URC).

#### **SOUTH WESTERN PROVINCE**

##### **Stipendiary**

Ray Sowersby (Westminster), David Pickering (Mansfield), Sandra Pickard (Mansfield & SDMTS), Erica Beglin (Queens), Harold Bignell (Westminster), Peter Crocker (Westminster), Susan MacBeth (Mansfield & SWMTC).

##### **Auxiliary**

Dora Frost (URC), Andrew Pugh (URC), Pat Ford (SWMTC), Heather Pencavel (URC), Richard Gray (SDMTS), Myra Dillistone (URC), Valerie Price (SWMTS).

#### **WESSEX PROVINCE**

##### **Stipendiary**

Douglas Burnett (Westminster), Susan Cox (Westminster), John Wilkinson (Westminster), Daphne Williams (Mansfield), Eddie Boon (Northern), Brian Clarke (Northern), Kenneth Ellis (Northern), Brenda Russell (Northern). Andrew McLuskey (Mansfield), Richard Turnbull (Northern), Samantha Caton (Northern and MCI).

##### **Auxiliary**

Frank Cochrane (SDMTS), Bill Connell (SDMTS), Kate Pryde (SDMTS), Pamela Richardson (SDMTS), Maureen Ponsford (SDMTS), Thea Jones (WMMTC), Birghitta Johnson (SDMTS), Anne Collins (SDMTS).

#### **THAMES NORTH PROVINCE**

##### **Stipendiary**

Revd Robert Maitland (Westminster), Derek Jones (Westminster), James Pettitt (Westminster), David Witts (Westminster), David Yule (Westminster), Mia Kyte (Mansfield), Stephen Newell (Mansfield), Marlene Brown (Northern), Keith Hagon (Northern), Simon Thomas (Northern), Richard Bittleston (Westminster), Taco

Bos\*(Westminster), Heather Gleeson (Westminster), James Brown (Westminster), Martin Kitchener (Westminster), Revd Jacqueline Woods\*(Westminster).  
\*till December 1988.

#### **Auxiliary**

David Aplin (Oak Hill), Stewart Bullen (St.Albans), Malcolm Childs (Southwark), Norman Croft (URC), Brenda Denvir (Southwark), Robert Green (Oak Hill), Martin Legg (Oak Hill), John Maitland (Southwark), Margaret Latham (URC), Christine Willis (URC) Jonathan Hyde (Oakhill).

#### **SOUTHERN PROVINCE**

##### **Stipendiary**

Paul Bedford (Westminster), Jean Black (Westminster), Rudolph Dixon (Westminster), Jeanne Ennals (Westminster), David Harkison (Westminster), Alan Wharton (Westminster), David Hilborn (Mansfield), Simon Copley (Northern), Robert Day (Northern), Russell Furley-Smith (Northern), Sally Willett (Northern), Ranald Macdonald (Westminster), Neil Thorogood (Mansfield), Valerie Reed (Northern), George Watt (Mansfield).

##### **Auxiliary**

William Gray (URC), Mary Read (SOC), Karen Street (URC), Marie Thistle (URC), Alex Aldridge (URC), Marina Jeffrey (URC), Meriel Chippindale (URC).

#### **PROVINCE OF WALES**

##### **Stipendiary**

Wyn Evans (Westminster), Andrew Mills (Westminster), Shirley Mountcastle (Northern), Philip Webb (Northern), Keri Eynon (Westminster), Sally Thomas (Northern).

##### **Auxiliary**

Marina Kennard (URC).

#### **COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION**

##### **Stipendiary**

Gwen Collins (Westminster)

#### **CHURCH-RELATED COMMUNITY WORKERS**

Simon Loveitt (West Midlands), Alison Jiggins\*(Thames North), Marie Trubic (Thames North), Helen Madden (West Midlands), Marilyn Allen (West Midlands).

\*Commissioned January 1989.

#### **Auxiliary Courses**

CDTI Carlisle Diocesan Training Institute  
MCI Manchester Christian Institute



EMMTC	East Midlands Ministry Training Course
NEOC	North East Ordination Course
Oak Hill	Oak Hill Non-Stipendiary Ministry Course
SADMIS	St. Albans Diocese Ministerial Training Scheme
SDMIS	Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme
SOC	Southwark Ordination Course
SWMIS	South West Ministry Training Scheme
EAMTC	East Anglian Ministerial Training Course
WMMTC	West Midlands Ministerial Training Course
URC	URC Auxiliary Ministry Training Programme

#### APPENDIX 4

#### TRAINING STATISTICS

	Total in training at Feb'88	Total in training at Feb'89	Entry into URC service				Entered Service in 1988
			1989	1990	1991	1992	
Westminster	36	40	8	14	12	6	12
Mansfield	15	23	6	2	5	10	3
Northern	44	44	11	7	16	10	9
Queen's	5	5	1	1	1	2	-
Totals	100	112	26	24	34	28	24
Auxiliary	70	67	18	16	10	23	23
CRCWs	5	5	1	1	2	1	1
Grand totals	175	184	45	41	46	52	

#### SUPPORT COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Peter Brain

Secretary: Revd Michael C Diffey

#### 'SPECIAL CATEGORY' POSTS

42. It is perhaps disappointing to report that we have only approved three new special category posts this year; but only three fresh applications were received. Thirty stipends were set aside by Assembly when agreeing the working of the MoM Fund, to encourage new outreach and innovative styles of ministry, as well as allowing the URC to place chaplains in higher education and industrial mission. Of course all is not straightforward: applications have to be carefully processed, submitted by Provinces and scrutinised by this committee. And there is the not inconsiderable matter of

raising the local costs. But we would wish we had to seek approval for a thirty-first post because there were too many exciting applications.

43. As to the 30 posts: during the year two ceased to be **special category**, eight will have been thoroughly reviewed with visits, and direct contact maintained with several of the others. The posts agreed (as at January 1989, including vacancies) are 11 in institutional chaplaincies (4 in higher education, 7 in industry), 13 in new outreach and 6 in one-off particular ministries.

44. It is good to report that agreement has been reached with the MoM committee whereby applications for funding of what was called **Ministry in Other Situations** will be handled by this committee, using similar criteria to those applied to the 30 **special category** posts. The intention is to rename this category **Ministry in Ecumenical Situations** which describes it more precisely. There will thus be greater flexibility between the two, in particular encouraging more local ecumenical options.

#### **MINISTERS IN SECULAR EMPLOYMENT**

45. During the year a brief questionnaire was circulated to ministers listed A and D on the Roll. Among the findings, which have been shared with the Department's other committees, was the realisation of a need for recognition, training and support by some ministers who are in full-time secular employment, whether they would describe that employment as ministry or not.

46. From 131 replies from Auxiliary Ministers, 66 are in employment. Only 8 of these are model 4, where the workplace is given as the main sphere of ministry. But we do not doubt that the other 58 are known to be ordained and are themselves concerned to minister in the workplace.

47. From 68 replies from ministers listed D, some 46 are in secular employment, again showing a wide range of skill and experience.

48. The committee will therefore be examining how better to support these ministers and will be writing to them again.

#### **SPECIALIST MINISTRIES**

49. The United Board which oversees URC and Baptist chaplaincies in the armed services has maintained its numbers and, through its secretary Revd Philip Schofield, its care of those in post. We hope that before Assembly meets a URC woman minister will have started work in the RAF as the first woman chaplain in the services since the war. The committee will continue its contact with the Board even though its secretary has finished his period of service on the committee. It is still important that the names of young

people joining the services should be sent to him.

50. The sub-committee which oversees the work of chaplains in higher and further education has agreed to stay in being, pending more progress on the ecumenical or united Free Church front. Its secretary, Revd Kevin Swaine, offers a link and a support for serving chaplains, the vast majority of whom are local ministers devoting a little time to a local college. It is still important that the names of young people leaving home to go to college or university should be sent to the chaplain there or to this sub-committee.

51. The committee's link with industrial mission is now Revd Tina Pinnell. This responsibility is shared with the Church & Society Department, who co-sponsor the annual consultation in November. Issues old and new are being actively addressed, from the plea for greater recognition of this work by the church to the possibilities for industrial mission being thrown up by the Channel Tunnel along with the excavations.

#### **A DIVERSE EXPERIENCE OF MINISTRY**

52. We need to discover ways of sharing more helpfully with the wider church some of the experiences that lie behind the previous paragraphs. There are increasing numbers of non-pastorate-based ministries, with important lessons being learned by ministers working in industrial mission, in the various chaplaincies, in training roles and in pioneering development work in urban or rural priority areas. These posts are not special in any sense of value judgement, implying that other ministries are not. But they are forerunners of a greater diversity and specialisation which will be the mark of the stipendiary ministry in the next century.

#### **MINISTRIES IN THE COMMUNITY**

53. In early 1989 5 CRCWs are in approved posts, paid from the MoM Fund. This includes one part-time post in which one of our workers has been temporarily seconded to the BCC to help the Community Work Resource Unit.

54. There are inevitably extra problems when trying to run a small-scale programme, not least in maintaining continuity when workers leave. There are other issues, e.g. how to target help to the more deprived areas (urban and rural) and how better to train our CRCWs in both community work and theology. After nearly ten years, there are lessons to be learned as we develop the potential in this type of ministry. For these reasons, the sub-committee which oversees ministries in the community has determined, aided by a grant from the Cadbury Trusts, to carry out a comprehensive review of our CRCW programme, using some field-work and two consultations. The sub-committee Convener, Revd Ernest Cruchley, will welcome comments or evidence for the review.

55. In conjunction with the Church & Society Department a successful consultation for those involved in community churches and ministries was held in Halifax in June. The report of this meeting is available from either Department and further consultations are being planned.

#### **EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE REPORT**

56. This was referred specifically by Assembly to District Councils for a response by mid-1989. The extended consultation period allows this opportunity to remind Districts of that resolution. Some Provinces and Districts will have already implemented the recommendations in the report insofar as they concern them. Other recommendations await a fuller debate in 1990.

#### **PRE-RETIREMENT COURSES FOR MINISTERS AND SPOUSES**

57. Following a recommendation in this report in response to an expressed need, a pilot pre-retirement course was held at Windermere in November. This has been evaluated and such courses will become a regular feature, with minimum cost to the participants and spouses.

#### **VOCATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Convener:** Revd Michael B Stolton

**Secretary:** Revd Michael G Dunford

#### **ROLL OF MINISTERS**

58. The following is a list of those added to or deleted from the Roll as set out in the minutes of our meetings in June and October 1988 and February 1989:-

#### **Admission to the Roll of Ministers**

59. (a) By ordination - stipendiary

Julian Thomas, Michael Moss, Robert Jones, Philip Tiplady, Joseph Clemson, William Spurling, Nicholas Stanyon, Rikki Twigg, Christopher Ball, Elizabeth King, Simon Ellis, James Whateley, Alexander Mailer, David Legge, Brian Stops, Ian Knowles, Peter Meek, Christopher Strong, Tracey Jones, Gordon Hearne, Peter Southcombe;

60. (b) By ordination - auxiliary

Malcolm Deacon, Christine Key, Nina Mead, Stanley John Dews, Isa Napier, Laurence Dixon, Margaret Renton, Mary Wheatley, Emily Browne, Leslie McNeil, Doreen Vick, Anthony Cottam, Lewis Reynolds, Evelyn Ridout, Julia Stone, Stephen Knapton, John Ellis, Denise Megson, Nancy Morgan.

61. (c) By transfer from other churches

Revd John Cribb (Congregational Union of Australia)  
Revd John Crocker (Church of Bangladesh)  
Revd David Crowther (Baptist Union)  
Revd Graeme Allan (United Free Church of Scotland)  
Revd Chong Kah Geh (Presbyterian Church in Malaysia)  
Revd Martin Henninger (Evangelische Kirche der Pfalz)  
Revd Tom Arthur (Presbyterian Church, USA)

**Deletions from the Roll of Ministers**

62. (a) By resignation

Peter Bending, Margaret Slessor, Derek Casson, Dr. Fred Kaan, Daniel Wall.

63. (b) By transfer to other churches

Revd Stanley Whitfield (Baptist Union)  
Revd William Ward Murray (United Presbyterian Church USA)  
Revd Frederick Blundell Stow (Uniting Church in Australia)

64. (c) By committee decision

David Reed Brett  
Ashley John Hills

**Transfers within the Roll of Ministers**

65. Auxiliary to stipendiary: Revd Stanley Crane, Revd Jacqueline Woods  
Revd Tom Ormandy  
AR to stipendiary: Revd David Bunney

**Ministers of other Churches serving the URC**

66. Revd Keith Johnson (Methodist), Revd George Pottinger (Uniting Church in Australia), Revd George Hughes (Congregational Federation) Revd Thomas Benjamin Hope (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), Revd Lois Sundeen (United Church of Christ, USA)

67. Certificates of Eligibility to serve in the URC have been

granted to 10 ministers in the past year.

68. We note with sadness that 30 ministers have died during the past year and tribute will be paid to them in the Assembly.

#### **RECRUITMENT OF MINISTERS**

69. The response to our recruitment programme in recent years has been exceptionally high and statistics reveal the highest number ever in the URC of students training for the stipendiary ministry in the four colleges. The level of recruitment for the Auxiliary Ministry remains consistently high and we have five in training for service as Church-related Community Workers.

70. However, we must not relax our efforts for the need is great and we have to recruit at a high level merely to hold to the status quo with high numbers of retirements and deaths to counteract before we start responding to new calls for leadership. To this end we continue to hold Enquirers' Conferences with the help of Provinces, and an annual Ministry Experience Week. We try to take account of the broad nature of ministerial service today and of those who offer for lay as well as ordained service.

71. We recruit from Overseas and have paid particular attention to tightening up the screening procedure, and encouraging local churches, Districts and Provinces to help those newly arrived to settle into our culture and churchmanship.

72. Revised editions of our publications **More about the Stipendiary Ministry** and **More about the Auxiliary Ministry** are now available and we recommend to Assembly that we encourage churches to observe **Vocations Sunday** on the 19th November 1989 or on some other suitable date.

(Resolution 3)

#### **ASSESSMENT CONFERENCES**

73. A major responsibility for our committee is the provision of national Assessment Conferences to make recommendations to Provinces in respect of all candidates for the stipendiary and auxiliary ministry and for church-related community work. This requires expertise in many areas and experience in discerning both problems and potential, and we are well served by the Assembly Panel of Assessors. During the past year we have decided to hold one national conference in a year for stipendiary candidates to enable us to plan properly our financial obligations to students, and also to keep a comprehensive eye on standards and new insights and gifts. The experience of the 1989 conference will be analysed before future plans are confirmed. We do record that this is clearly not an attempt to limit recruitment but rather a desire to monitor the intake more closely.

74. Attention is being given to the make up of the academic boards which work alongside the assessors, to ensure that all four colleges are properly represented and that we now take fully into account what is being offered through part-time regional courses. Since the inception of the URC the balance of responsibility between the Provinces and the national assessment panel has been a matter of divided opinion and currently we are researching the whole issue. We will report our findings to a later Assembly. We are also seeking to give more guidance to District Councils and churches as they play their important roles in the assessing process.

75. There is a constant need to improve interview techniques to take proper account of our expectations of the ministry, but also to grow in our understanding of changing patterns. We must take very seriously the practical, spiritual and psychological aspects of candidates. Finally we have to discover a clear and fair method of conveying our recommendations to the church through the provinces. Experiences and suggestions shared with us have been most helpful.

76. The pattern and the programme has been greatly modified and improved in recent years and we see this as a continuing process. What is most humbling and gratifying is the constant flow of excellent candidates offering to serve us in the future.

#### RESOLUTIONS

1. The Assembly receives the report of the Ministries Department for debate.
  2. The Assembly welcomes the report of the ecumenical visit to The Queen's College, Birmingham in November 1988, supports the recommendations of the Inspectors, and calls for a further report in 1990 on their implementation.
  3. The Assembly encourages churches to recognise the 19th November 1989 as Vocations Sunday, thus reminding all members of the need for ministry and leadership both at home and overseas.
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# FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Convener: Mr Angus M Grimmond  
Secretary: Mr Clem Frank

## Contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and the Unified Appeal 1988

1. The Budgets for 1988 approved by Assembly 1987 (Record pages 18 and 20) provided for expenditure which was to be financed by contributions of £6,571,000 to the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and £1,488,000 to the Unified Appeal. The Unified Appeal amount was a little more than the Provinces considered they would be able to bring. In the event the amount received for both the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund and Unified Appeal exceeded the target, but the Unified Appeal total includes a credit of approximately £16,000 which is a late contribution for 1987. (Appendix 1).

2. Once again the loyal support of the Churches and the hard work of Provincial and District Officers provided the money to pay the basic stipends, salaries and expenses that are essential to the work of the Church at all levels. We offer our sincere thanks to all those involved in this process and to the Churches who are the source of almost all our funds.

## Stipends of Ministers Holding Assembly Appointments

3. Information about the stipends and the conditions of service of ministers holding Assembly appointments is given in Appendix 2.

4. As requested, the Department has reviewed the question of the amalgamation of the Appeals made for Central Funding. The Department's Interim Report is shown as Appendix 3.

## MAINTENANCE OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd John D Waller  
Secretary: Mr Alan A Taylor

## Performance for 1988

5. The Committee received the draft of the accounts for 1988 and were grateful to note that many churches had heeded the request for additional finance and had made contributions 'over and above the Provincial Maintenance of the Ministry contribution'. Despite the fact that one Province unfortunately failed to reach its Provincial target, the total amount received from churches amounts to £71,000 over budget. After taking into account other income, the total



income exceeded budget by some £90,000. There was a saving in costs of £12,000, mainly as there were fewer ministers paid than expected. This resulted in a surplus to the fund of £78,000.

6. The Committee expresses thanks to church members who gave over and above the sum required to provide for ministers' stipends.

7. In view of the requirement of the funds in 1989 and the not unsatisfactory level of our reserves, no further allocation to reserves was suggested in 1988.

### Stipend 1989

8. Finding the right level of basic stipend for the ensuing year is a task the Committee undertakes with care each year. It looks at a number of outside indicators, compares its ideas with stipends paid by a number of other denominations, as well as forming a view on the likely ability of local churches to provide the resources. This has led the Committee to decide on a 6% increase in basic stipend from 1st July 1989.

9. Last year's report indicated that the Committee was undertaking a radical review of the whole of its operation, and it brings the initial results of that review to the Assembly in the form of a number of detailed proposals and a longer-term statement of policy.

10. The review was prompted mainly by the introduction of new Government legislation providing for the Community Charge; by the fact that our ministers are becoming classified as "higher paid" for certain income tax purposes; and also by the recent actuarial review of the Pension Fund.

11. While it is not the role of the church to protect ministers from any adverse effects of changes in personal taxation, ministers do face a considerably increased tax bill as the result of becoming "higher paid" without any change in income.

12. The taxation law relating to "higher paid" employees has for some years applied to all those whose income, plus certain benefits and expenses, exceeds £8,500 p.a. The Committee expects that most of our Ministers will come into this category by the end of 1989/90. The likely consequence is that ministers will have to pay income tax on heat and light and internal decoration of manses limited to a maximum of 10% of taxable emoluments, and those ministers who have a pastorate-owned car will have to pay tax on car benefit on a sliding scale. The exact consequence for each minister will vary.

13. The introduction of the Community Charge in 1990 (1989 in Scotland) abolishes domestic rates (at present a charge on property and payable by churches) and puts in its place a tax on

individuals payable by ministers and all other adult occupants of manses.

14. The Committee trusts that local churches will be ready to increase their contributions to the Fund in 1990 and subsequent years in order that money previously used to pay domestic rates on manses may in future be used to help pay a Community Charge Supplement to ministers.

15. The proposal for a Community Charge supplement is that the actual Community Charge (grossed up for National Insurance and Income Tax,) in respect of each stipendiary minister remunerated from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund, shall be paid as a non-pensionable supplement. A further supplement may be payable in respect of spouses. The Committee is bringing a resolution (6.) to change the PLAN to give effect to this proposal.

16. The Committee has given consideration to the question of additional tax liabilities arising as the result of ministers being treated as "higher paid" by the Inland Revenue. To mitigate the immediate effect of the taxation of the heat and light benefit, the basic stipend has been increased with effect from the 1st April 1989 by £300 to £6,720. It is estimated in 1989 this special increase will cost the Church £226,000 approximately, which will be met from savings in costs in 1989 and from reserves.

#### **Budget 1990**

17. The Committee considered many proposals with regard to the budget for 1990. The final decision was that a budget should be accepted allowing for a 6% increase in stipend in July 1990, in addition to the Community Charge Supplement. This was felt to be the minimum increase that can be recommended. The cost of this programme is calculated at £8.334 million and the sum of £8.168 million will be required from the churches to meet it. Offers from Provinces towards this target fell considerably short. Based on the offers, a stipend increase of 1% is barely sustainable. Letters have been sent to each Synod drawing their attention to the situation. The matter will be reconsidered by the MoM Committee before Assembly, and a further report and resolution with regard to the Budget for 1990 will be brought to Assembly.

#### **Pensions**

18. The 1988 Assembly Report promised a further detailed statement for all members of the URCMPF. This was held up by lack of final detail regarding Government changes to National Pensions, but in the meantime the principles set out in our circular of April 1987 still hold. The actuarial valuation result has, as anticipated, enabled adjustments and improvements to be proposed for the Pension Fund and these are set out in the following paragraphs. It was seen, therefore, to be more helpful to delay a new summary of

benefits and opportunities until these had been agreed.

19. In accordance with Assembly policy, it was agreed to increase the annual rate of pension for ex-Congregational ministers in respect of service prior to 1971 by a further £5 per annum with effect from 1st July 1988. This brings the total entitlement to £38.70 p.a. in respect of each year of service.

20. In order to offset the eventual 20% reduction in entitlement to SERPS now enacted, it is recommended that the rate of pension for current years of service should be increased from 1/120th to 1/100th of basic stipend with effect from 1st July 1989. The cost of this improvement would be met by an increase of 1.1% (to 9.1%) per annum in the church's future contributions, leaving the minister's contribution at 3.25% per annum. Further, in the light of the favourable valuation result, it is recommended that the increase to 1/100th for each year of service should be back-dated to April 1978 in respect of all members, whether serving or retired, again with effect from 1st July 1989. The authority to bring these recommendations into force are to be found in Resolutions (3 & 4) below.

#### **Pastors Superannuation Fund and Pastors Widows Fund**

21. Negotiations have continued with the Charity Commissioners to prepare a fresh Scheme for the administration and operation of these Funds, allowing for the interests of the Congregational Federation and others not joining the URC in 1972. Whilst it was then decided not to partition these funds, a point has now been reached where the needs of different bodies and beneficiaries vary, and it has, therefore, been accepted that the new Scheme drawn up by the Charity Commissioners will divide both Funds on an agreed basis. Our new URC Scheme will provide for greater freedom of action in making grants, will enable the two Funds to be combined and will make benefits available, where appropriate, to all retired URC ministers and their widows.

#### **Future Stipend Policy**

22. During the next few years, in response to changes in legislation, the URC will be paying additions to the stipend, plus local payment of manse heating and lighting. Any tax benefit in the latter method will soon be eroded. There would be advantages in incorporating these extra payments in the stipend and, if possible, making them pensionable. The Committee realises that this would be a major change in our financial practice. It is not without risk, for it is hard to judge developments in the ministerial and financial situation of the church, quite apart from any legislation planned by the Government. The Committee, therefore, will undertake wide consultation about the desirability and practicality of an inclusive stipend before bringing a recommendation to the Assembly, but hopes that some steps in this

direction may be possible within the next three years.

23. The Committee hopes that its stewardship of existing resources, its response to need and this brief indication of thinking for the future will give confidence to churches, ministers and pensioners in an enterprise in which we are truly partners in both giving and caring.

#### **Pulpit Supply Reimbursements**

24. As envisaged last year the Committee took to the Executive the following Resolution:

Executive, acting in accordance with the authority of Assembly, (Minutes of Assembly 1987, page 17) agrees that with effect from January 1st 1989, Para 10 of the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration shall read:-

#### **10. Pulpit Supply Costs**

- 10.1 When a church changes its pastoral situation, notice shall be given to the District Treasurer. A decision will then be made, in accordance with Provincial practice, as to whether a change in the church's agreed Maintenance of the Ministry contribution shall be made. Advice of any change in the church's agreed Maintenance of the Ministry contribution shall be given to the Central Maintenance of the Ministry Office as soon as possible.
- 10.2 When 1. a minister has reported to the Central Maintenance of the Ministry Office that the minister is unable to work due to ill-health, and is receiving Statutory Sick-Pay.  
Or 2. the Moderator of General Assembly is a minister in pastoral charge.  
Or 3. a minister is absent on a sabbatical term which lasts for a period of more than four weeks.

the actual costs of pulpit supplies incurred by the minister's church arising because of the minister's absence, to a maximum decided upon from time to time by the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, will be reimbursed from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund to the minister's church, upon receipt of an application in the Central Maintenance of the Ministry Office for such reimbursement. In group pastorates and part-time pastorates, reimbursements shall be available only in respect of services which would have

been conducted by the absent minister.

This Resolution was approved by the Assembly Executive.

#### CHURCH BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Julian Macro  
Secretary: Mr Tegid Peregrine

#### Guidelines

25. The guidelines for giving financial assistance from the Church Buildings Fund are now as follows:-

- i) Assistance will be given to those projects recommended by Provinces which the Committee deems appropriate in all the circumstances.
- ii) To encourage Churches to employ professional consultants to advise on property matters, loans will be made of 50% of professional fees, subject to a maximum loan of £15,000. Such loans will be interest-free for the first two years. Thereafter the loan will be repayable by quarterly instalments of not less than 4% of the sum advanced and the balance outstanding will bear interest of 7%.
- iii) Applications for loans for building works will be considered only if the total cost of the project will not be less than £30,000. Loans will be limited to not more than 50% of the total cost of the project and no loan will exceed £50,000. Repayment will normally be by quarterly instalments of not less than 4% of the sum advanced, and the balance outstanding will bear interest at 7%. The Committee's resources will be sufficient to finance only a few loans each year on this basis.

#### Loans

26. Unless there are special circumstances loan applications are now dealt with by the Committee's Officers acting under delegated powers. The time taken to reach a decision on applications has been shortened considerably. During the year one application was considered by the full Committee and 8 by Officers. The amounts involved were £288,000 for building works and £72,000 for professional fees. The sum available for loans in 1989 is likely to be in the order of £200,000.

#### Proceeds from the Sale of Redundant Churches.

27. During the year the Committee undertook a survey of current

practice in Provinces on the disposal of the proceeds from the sale of redundant churches. With minor variations Provincial policies proved to be remarkably uniform. In cases of church closure proceeds almost invariably go to the Provinces, most of which give preference to claims on the money arising from the District where it originated. Where churches join together part of the proceeds are normally made available to the united church. The Committee feels that no further action is needed on its part.

### Value Added Tax

28. Following a ruling by the European Court of Justice the Government has announced its intention to make certain changes in relation to the law governing VAT. These changes are due to take effect on 1 April 1989.

### RETIRED MINISTERS HOUSING COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd. David Skidmore  
Secretary: Mr. Bob Carruthers

29. The Retirement Housing enterprise expanded in 1988: it was providing housing for 149 retired ministers and 71 ministers widows at the year end.

30. The differential purchase ceilings, on a Province by Province basis, which were introduced in October 1987 enabled the Society to provide adequate housing in localities where all applicants wished to live except in the final quarter of 1988. Then it was necessary to make an upward adjustment of the ceilings to meet the needs of three applicants, who had been put at a disadvantage by the upward spiral in property prices in the late summer and early autumn.

31. The Committee has continued its practice of setting purchase ceilings based on a national building society's house price review. The new purchase ceilings applicable from January 1989 are

Province	Society/Trust Ceilings	Joint Purchase Ceilings
Northern, North Western, Mersey, Yorkshire & Wales	£42,000	£63,000
E. Midlands, W. Midlands	£51,000	£76,500
Eastern, Wessex, Thames North South Western, Southern	£56,000	£84,000

32. From 1989 an applicant who wishes to join with the Society in purchasing a property costing more than the joint ceiling quoted in paragraph 3, may do so to a limited extent subject to a reduction in the Society's contribution. The purchase cost is the purchase price plus the cost of repair, improvements and/or extensions

identified as necessary at the time of survey of the property prior to purchase.

33. In 1988 18 houses were purchased, two properties were received as gifts from Dorset Congregational Association and 5 properties were received by way of legacies. These properties have provided housing for 15 retired ministers and four ministers widows and rehousing for one retired minister and one widow.

34. During the year 9 properties were sold including two of the properties received as legacies. All these properties were located in areas of country in which no applicant wished to reside in retirement: the same applies to five properties offered for sale at the year end.

35. At the year end a further four properties were in the process of purchase and it was known that there were eleven applicants in need of assistance with retirement housing during 1989.

36. The level of standard rent was maintained at £8.05 per week throughout 1988 and increased to £9.25 per week from 1 January 1989. From that date the basis of payment was changed from quarterly to monthly.

37. During the 12 months to 31 December 1988, about £119,000 was received in donations for retirement housing and £487,000 in legacies.

38. The Committee is grateful for the foresight of friends who give or bequeath property or sums of money for the housing of Retired Ministers. In particular we acknowledged a gift of £60,000 made by Mr. Jim Vinson in memory of his grandfather Edwin Vinson and his father Oswald Vinson, who with himself, had served as Chairman of the Kent Congregational Association. A form of words for bequests to or in favour of the Society may be obtained from the Secretary.

39. The increase in property prices during 1988 has created a greater need for donations from Churches and individuals and the Committee looks to the Provincial Synods and District Councils to take positive steps to encourage more generous regular giving.

40. The Committee is grateful to those individuals who devote their time and expertise to oversight of retirement properties. Their work is greatly appreciated by the retired ministers and widows who benefit from their care. During the year the Principal Officers of the Society made visits to 9 applicants, 57 tenants and 24 properties.

41. The Revd. David Skidmore will complete his term of office as convener of the Committee immediately following the General Assembly. He will be succeeded by the Revd. David Hannen. The

Committee wishes to record its appreciation and thanks to Mr. Skidmore for the significant contribution he made in the development of Retirement Housing to meet the needs of increased numbers of applicants.

#### **WELFARE & EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE**

**Convener:** Revd Cyril C Franks

**Secretary:** Mrs Judy Stockings

42. While some members of society find that their current economic situation improves, it is certainly not true of all. For some who have not been able to accumulate capital, unanticipated necessary expenditure proves too much for their budget.

43. During the past year we have been able to provide help in circumstances as varied as care for a handicapped child, re-decoration of a home, and visits to a spouse in hospital. In these and other circumstances it has usually been possible for the Province concerned to make an added contribution.

44. In addition, grants are made available to ministers and widows and some retired ministers.

45. We have been informed by the Inland Revenue that some of the grants provided by the Committee will be treated as income, and therefore taxable in the individual's hands. In these circumstances, we shall attempt to maintain a level of grant that will enable the recipients to benefit to the degree that has been our former practice.

46. We have received letters of gratitude which indicate that, in most cases, the help of the denomination has been appreciated and has often enabled beneficiaries to overcome a crisis.

#### **TREASURERSHIP COMMITTEE**

**Convener:** Mr Desmond Davies

**Secretary:** Mr Clem Frank

47. After protracted negotiations with the Inland Revenue, we finally were granted a dispensation in respect of certain expenses incurred by Church House Staff, having brought our procedures for authorising the reimbursement of these expenses within acceptable controls.

48. Over the period of years covered by negotiations, certain benefits in kind were not taxed pending clarification and during the year it was agreed that the Inland Revenue would accept an offer from us of £27,500 to settle all outstanding assessments up



to 5 April 1988. Since this settlement covered a number of years and included payments from Welfare Funds, the Officers of the Church decided that this should be shown as a separate item in the accounts rather than being spread arbitrarily over Departments and Funds.

### Investment Management.

49 Following a decision to employ James Capel Fund Managers Limited to manage the Pension Fund portfolio, it was decided to use the same Company to manage the Common Investment Fund and the Investment Pool and an Agreement was signed with James Capel Fund Managers Limited in the Autumn of 1988.

### APPENDIX 1

#### Contributions to the Maintenance of the Ministry and Unified Appeal 1988

Membership 1.1.88	Province	Maintenance of the Ministry		Unified Appeal	
		£	£ per member	£	£ per member
10,897	Northern	505,430	46	95,764	9
13,629	North Western	615,000	46	148,001	11
8,708	Mersey	454,000	52	101,249	12
8,549	Yorkshire	465,000	54	108,600	13
7,955	East Midlands	389,000	49	88,777	11
10,598	West Midlands	525,262	50	115,435	11
9,529	Eastern	524,500	55	120,398	13
7,883	South Western	437,884	56	100,491	13
12,102	Wessex	659,479	54	137,788	11
11,602	Thames North	797,519	69	181,155	16
17,883	Southern	981,304	55	242,509	14
<u>6,813</u>	Wales	<u>297,373</u>	43	<u>43,027</u>	6
<u>126,148</u>	Total from Provinces	£6,651,751	52	£1,483,194	12
Other receipts				3,798	
1987 Arrears -Mersey Province				<u>16,643</u>	
				1,503,635	
Amount required by Budget		<u>£6,571,000</u>		<u>£1,487,500</u>	
Surplus		<u>£80,751</u>		<u>£16,135</u>	

## APPENDIX 2

### Ministers holding Assembly Appointments Stipends and Conditions of Service from July 1988

1. The stipend of Provincial Moderators is £9,168 per annum (plus any children's allowances). They are provided either with a house free of maintenance costs, rates, heating and lighting, or with a house allowance in lieu. Travelling expenses, telephone costs etc., in connection with Church business are refunded. A car is provided, maintenance and running cost being met by the Church subject to an adjustment for private use. The Moderator may provide his own car and claim mileage allowances.

#### Ministers at Central Office (86 Tavistock Place)

2. Stipends range from £9,168 per annum for Assistant Secretaries to £13,260 for the General Secretary (plus any children's allowances). The other arrangements are similar to those for Provincial Moderators but fares between home and Central Office are met by ministers.

#### Preaching Fees and Travelling Expenses

3. When Moderators and Staff Secretaries visit a church or attend a meeting in the course of their official duties, any fee or reimbursement of travelling expenses paid to the Officer is accounted for to the central funds of the Church.

#### Academic Staff at Westminster College

4. Stipends range from £9,168 to £10,032 per annum (plus any children's allowances). The housing provisions are the same as those for Provincial Moderators.

## APPENDIX 3

### The Amalgamation of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund with the Unified Appeal and reorganisation of the Central Finance and Administration Department

1. Assembly 1988 resolved as follows:-

"Assembly requests the central Finance and Administration Committee to consider the establishment of one central fund to replace the present MoM Fund and Unified Appeal and to report their findings together with a recommendation within three years." [Record of Assembly 1988 p17.]

2. We would offer the following advantages to the proposal that only one appeal should be made by the Church centrally for routine expenditure:-

1. Each local church will be asked for only one sum for central Ministry and Mission. Priority will be decided by the Budget Committee, and this may save problems in local churches.
2. So far as the District, Province and Central Office are concerned only one fund will ease administration, saving in voluntary labour, and cost.
3. The monthly collection of the one contribution will help cash flow, and improve returns from interest, thus reducing costs.
4. With the change in concept from the Unified 'Appeal' to a firm commitment, budgeting will be made easier in the centre, and also in the local church.

We believe that the dilution of the objectives in the Unified Appeal may make the concept of the one fund more difficult to understand.

3. If the proposal to create one fund is accepted, then we suggest that the fund be called the Ministry and Mission Fund.

4. We envisage the funding of the following expenses from the Ministry and Mission Fund:-

- Maintenance of the Ministry\*  
(including Ministers Pension Fund)
- Day to day functioning of the Church, Youth Work, Moderators, Church House Staff etc., etc.
- Council for World Mission etc. Support
- Welfare Fund\*
- Ministerial Training Fund\*
- Retired Ministers Housing\*, if necessary.

Items marked with an asterisk currently managed by separate Committees.

### The Budget Committee

5. The Budget Committee which will become a committee within the Finance Department will be responsible for equating the central expenditure of the Church with the committed income. The membership of Budget Committee will be a convener and a representative of each province.

Conveners and Secretaries of 'spending' committees may attend any meeting of the Budget Committee, with full right to speak, but will have no vote in the committee.

### Setting Targets

6. The Budget Committee would meet to consider subordinate budgets prepared by or on behalf of the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee, the Ministerial Training Finance Committee, the Welfare Committee, departments, and any other committee that requires to raise funds from the Church as a whole. The resources available to this committee would be all the regularly recurring income of the Church, including dividends on invested funds, short term interest, etc., etc., and the pledged contributions of provinces to the 'Ministry and Mission Fund'

### Collecting the commitments

7. Each Autumn schedules of local Church commitments will be sent to the finance department, who will collect from local Churches monthly, by direct debit, as presently done for MoM contributions.

### Provincial and District expenses

8. Where any province is ahead of its proportional contribution in any part of the year, a remittance may be made from Central Office to the province, to be debited against that province's commitment. Any sums received in excess of the provincial commitment at the end of the year will be carried forward to the province's credit against the succeeding year. Provinces, having made a commitment will be expected to honour that commitment by the end of each year.

### Overspends

9. In these proposals there is no room for significant overspends. It is not possible to envisage that the proceeds for the Ministry and Mission Fund will be more than the commitments made, without the agreement of the provinces.

In any year the Church receives legacies which are credited directly to reserve. They vary from year to year but it is not thought prudent to rely on these legacies for routine expenditure. However, they do offset, to some extent, minor overspends on current account, and inflation.

The authority to approve overspends is held by the Treasurer of the Church, who may take such advice as he requires to make a decision concerning this approval.

## Committee structure

10. In the light of these proposals, we propose the following committee structure within the Department:-

11. Department to be renamed 'Finance Department'.

12. Budget Committee to consist of:-

The Convener who may be a Former Moderator of Assembly, or the Treasurer.

A representative of each province, who will necessarily be a senior member of the province, probably the Provincial Treasurer.

The other ex-officio members of the present budget committee will be non-voting members of the committee:-

The Secretary who shall be the Chief Accountant

The Treasurer, if not Convener of the Budget Committee.

The Convener of the Finance (Treasurership) Committee.

The Convener of the Retired Ministers Housing Committee

The General Secretary

The Office and Personnel Manager

The Advocacy Secretary.

The Convener and/or Secretary of each spending Department or Committee (eg. Maintenance of Ministry, Welfare, Ministerial Training Fund, etc., etc.)

Only the Provincial Representatives will be able to vote, save that in the event of an equality on voting, the Convener will have a casting vote.

13. Finance Committee to consist of:-

Convener (who may be the Treasurer of the Church)

Secretary who will be the Chief Accountant

Treasurer

Secretary for Church Buildings

A Secretary of United Reformed Church Trust

4 members (one of whom may be an Accountant, and one a Solicitor).

The duties of this committee will be those currently undertaken by the Treasurership Committee (including the management of the reserves of the Church), and the Church Buildings Committee.

14. Maintenance of the Ministry Committee to consist of:-

Convener  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Chief Accountant  
Convener of the Pensions Sub-Committee  
1 Provincial Moderator  
5 members one of whom may be a minister in pastoral charge and one a minister's spouse.

15. The duties of this committee will be to continue the work done by the current MoM Committee, and will include the preparation of a budget for consideration by the Budget Committee for the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund.

16. Welfare Committee as currently constituted.

17. The Retired Ministers Housing Committee as currently constituted.

18. The Central and Church Buildings Committees will be disbanded.

#### Function of the Central Committee

19. The Central Committee, which has spent much of its time in past years in receiving reports from Committees within the department and in dealing with matters which will now be handled by the Budget Committee, feels that it has served its purpose, and may now be disbanded. The co-ordinating role will be exercised by the Convener, and the Secretary. Each Province will be represented on the Budget Committee, and this is the place where Provinces may, in future, show their interest in the central finances of the Church.

#### Church Buildings Committee

20. The central functions currently carried out by the Church Buildings Committee, will in future, be carried out by the Finance Committee, guided by the Secretary for Church Buildings. Two of these functions are to manage the Church Buildings Fund, and to provide general advice to the Church on building matters. The establishment of Provincial Buildings Committees has largely taken over the role of adviser on building matters. The management of the Church Buildings Fund has become very much a matter for officer's decision, and these will be reported and confirmed by the Finance Committee in future. The Secretary of the Church Buildings will also act as "Depository" for information about property matters, and will circulate to Provincial Buildings Committees matters which are thought appropriate for further circulation. Any items of major interest might well be the subject of a meeting of Provincial Buildings Representatives, which might be called from time to time by the Secretary for Church Buildings.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. Assembly receives the report of the Finance and Administration Department for debate.
2. Assembly adopts the Accounts for 1988.
3. Assembly agrees that with effect from July 1st 1989, the Employer's contribution to the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund shall be increased to 9.1% of basic stipend.
4. Assembly approves the following changes to the rules of the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund.

### Rule 18.2

Re-number as 18.2.1 and delete 'plus' at the end.

### Insert Rule 18.2.2.

"With effect from 1st July 1989 all future pension payments shall be based upon one-hundredths instead of one-hundred and twentieths of the pensionable stipend per year of pensionable service between the 6th day of April 1978 and the attainment of normal pensionable age; plus".

5. A Resolution will be brought to Assembly with regard to the Budget of the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund for 1990.
6. Assembly approves the following additional wording to the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration:-

### Include as Para 6.4:

#### 6.4 Community charge supplement.

- 6.4.1 With effect from April 1st 1990, community charge supplement is payable to all ministers in receipt of a stipend from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund. In order that the amount of the supplement may be assessed, a claim is required.
- 6.4.2 A further supplement is payable in respect of the spouses of ministers paid from the Maintenance of the Ministry Fund, if it is claimed and a certificate that the spouse's income (excluding state benefits) is less than a prescribed sum is signed by the minister.
- 6.4.3 The prescribed sum for any year commencing April 1st shall be one third of the annual rate of basic stipend, at that date, rounded up to the nearest

£100, or such other sum as the Maintenance of the Ministry Committee shall decide.

- 6.4.4 The supplement will be the amount of the community charge payable by the minister, grossed up for income tax and national insurance (at the rate payable by a minister receiving basic stipend). The supplement will not be a pensionable emolument so far as the United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Fund is concerned.
- 6.4.5 Where the spouse's income is marginally above the prescribed limit consideration to any circumstances will be given by the MoM Committee. Normally, in such cases, the spouse's supplement will be reduced by £1 for each £2 of income over the prescribed limit.
- 6.4.6 Community charge supplement is payable in 12 monthly instalments (covering the months April to March) with the minister's stipend. If the minister is in part-time pastorate, or is paid for only part of the year the amount of the supplement and spouse's supplement will be reduced accordingly.
- 6.4.7 In the case of ministers married to ministers, the supplement which will be most beneficial to the couple will be paid. However, in no circumstances will more than one supplement be paid in respect of one person.
- 6.4.8 Any anomalous situations brought to its attention will be considered by the Committee, whose decision in any particular case will be final.

**Include as the penultimate sentence of Para 6.3.1;**

For the avoidance of any doubt, community charge, which is a personal local tax, is not regarded as rates.

7. The Assembly receives the proposals for the reorganisation of the Finance and Administration Department, contained in Appendix 3 of the report, and remits them to the Provinces for consideration and comment by 31st December 1989.



# BUDGET COMMITTEE

Convener: Revd Alasdair J.G.Walker

Secretary: Mr Clem Frank

1. The Income to the Unified Appeal in 1988 achieved almost 100% of the target set by the Assembly. After taking into account arrears paid in respect of 1987, income exceeded the target by some £16,000. This is an excellent result and all those involved in raising it deserve the thanks of the whole Church.
2. At the same time, expenditure fell short of budget, mainly because there was a vacancy in one YLTO post and missionary furlough costs were less than anticipated. Certain unbudgeted costs were also taken into account. Nevertheless, the budgeted deficit of £22,000 was turned into a surplus of over £9,000.
3. The budget proposed for 1990 shows projected expenditure of £1,909,000, with a requirement from the Unified Appeal of £1,717,000. Provinces have promised a minimum of £1,711,000, leaving a budgeted deficit of £6,000. This is within generally accepted budget tolerances, and the Committee recommends acceptance of the budget as presented in the Book of Accounts.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. Assembly receives the report of the Budget Committee.
2. Assembly approves the Budget for 1990 which provides for an expenditure of £1,909,000.

# PROVINCIAL MODERATORS' REPORT

**"A small church is not a failed large church,  
it is simply different"**

1. That statement calls for a new kind of life-style which in turn raises questions about worship, mission, ministry, resources, ecumenical relationships, oversight by District Councils and the responsibilities of the wider Church. In this Report we wish to affirm the life and potential of many of our smaller congregations.

2. In the United Reformed Church, out of a total of 1,832 churches, more than 700 have a membership of less than 50. The number of churches with 30 members or less is in the region of 500, almost a third. We have not yet grasped the significance of these statistics. Small churches are a significant part of the pastoral responsibility of ministers and elders, of moderators and District Councils. They are mostly to be found in rural areas and in the inner-city which, strangely, often gives these churches a common agenda. Sometimes strong arguments are made in favour of closing churches below a certain membership because it is thought that small numbers do not create a viable unit. In some cases it is true. Churches do close to the glory of God. On the other hand, many such churches have had to struggle with the hard questions about what it means to be the church today and have come alive as a result of what they have discovered. They are a vital part of our mission strategy as well as of pastoral care.

**What is the Church for?**

3. Every church is called to be:

a) **a centre of celebration**

where people of all ages worship God and celebrate the faith that Jesus Christ is Lord of the Church and of the world.

b) **a place of belonging**

where disciples learn the Christian way and where all are welcomed and accepted, with no strings attached.

c) **a base for mission**

where good news is proclaimed, lived and shared setting the whole church free to reach out in love to all those beyond its walls.

d) **a community of hope**

putting flesh and blood on the gospel we profess and challenging the values of society which seems often to have got them all wrong.

4. Yet every church does not need to be large. Many smaller churches are responding in exciting ways to the demands of their God-given purpose.

#### Turning the Church in a new direction

5. A reduction in financial resources, spiritual energy and numbers can take some churches - large as well as small! - past what seems like the point of no return in their mission and growth. How does such a church turn the tide of its life and move in the opposite direction? There are no easy answers but we see churches where it has happened.

6. It can be that one new family, or a single person arriving in the local church provides the growth point. If so, it involves an openness in the longstanding members to new ideas offering hope.

7. Sometimes a declining church has become aware of its plight and is determined to act. The church community has 'put itself under the microscope' in a series of meetings which combine study, prayer, an honest examination of the community in which the church is set, and a realistic look at its own life. 'Mission Pursuit' has proved helpful. Resources and opportunities which were present but not noticed become points of growth.

8. As churches move from being a 'gathered' congregation to becoming a 'parish' community, the realisation can dawn that serving and liberating the local community are as important as developing a worshipping and nurturing congregation. A style of ecclesiology emerges which is more appropriate for contemporary needs: a gathered congregation developing a parish-based mission, taking into its vision all aspects of the life of the local neighbourhood.

9. There are churches which seek the help of a church nearby or the District Council and are ready to accept the critical, objective comments of other Christian friends. This has sometimes involved a grouping of churches and a sharing of ministry; the end result has been new life.

10. Pastoral visits to local churches undertaken by District Councils provide the opportunity for a shared consideration of the church's present and future. A 'quinquennial' visit to a tiny church at the heart of a growing commuter village where the URC is the only Free Church, led to a request to Westminster College for students to complete a mission audit. Two years later there is a thriving youth club of 35 on the church premises, led by a young person from the town church eight miles away. Other small churches across the country, apparently feeling hopeless about their long-term future, have responded to the challenge of the District Council's report, especially when stronger, neighbouring churches have offered help and encouragement.

11. There is no doubt that the lively, informal worship and direct personal challenge present in churches experiencing "renewal" have proved attractive to some, particularly young people and younger families. Whilst, sadly, the charismatic movement has been divisive in some churches, in others it has brought real growth. Four years ago, one of us conducted worship for a congregation of 5 in a church showing signs of delapidation. The moderator was the youngest by a good 20 years. Visiting again three years later, the church was full, pews had been removed, the whole place redecorated and, apart from two members of the original congregation, the same moderator was the oldest by a good 20 years. This 1662 church has come alive as two group ministers and community worker, in partnership with others, have embarked upon lively worship and tough social action.

12. Ecumenical links have sometimes provided the dynamic. An ecumenism based only on the desperation of imminent death has a poor beginning but where genuine sharing combines with a call to mission in the area, it has often proved to be the trigger of a new impetus. One URC/Methodist Church, small in membership, has completely refurbished its premises and is growing rapidly.

#### **SOME OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

##### **Discovering and developing an appropriate life-style**

13. To live beyond the church's resources, whether organisational or human, leads inevitably to frustration and a sense of failure. We know some of these churches well and are aware of the feeling of hopelessness they often reflect. We know, too, of those churches which have tried creatively to come to terms with their situation. One advantage of a small church is that the members can know and care for each other at a deep level of fellowship. Sometimes such a close fellowship can become a closed fellowship; but it can also enable the church to act easily and quickly as a task force in service and outreach.

14. Worship is rooted in the neighbourhood, taking in the down-to-earth realities of language, culture and needs of the community. Simplicity, openness, flexibility, integrity, relevance, silence as well as words, and a wide range of music, are the marks of a living liturgy. Priorities for the people of God in each place shape the agenda and programme of church life rather than imitation of a church with a hundred and fifty members in a different context. The appropriate life-style for some churches will be not to have a choir, organ or uniformed organisations.

15. The acceptance of a changed situation can be hard for a church, once large, active and "successful" but now numerically small, and finding its heritage of buildings, status and expectations a mill-stone dragging it down rather than a spring-board into new ventures of mission. However, there are

illustrations of churches daring to respond to the challenge to change. An inner-city church, no longer able to maintain its buildings, has purchased two shops and is converting them to premises more appropriate to its worship and mission. We draw attention to, among others, the ministry of the Revd Peter McIntosh, Southern Province Training Officer, whose work with a variety of churches has led to the recent publication of a practical guide-book, 'New Life for Small Churches'.

### **Providing Ministry**

16. The undertaking to provide ordained ministry for all our churches, however small, is an agreed practice in our Church. It is a sign of our commitment to each other and of our sense of community; but it is always readily achievable. There are sometimes points of tension as District Councils attempt to be faithful to this responsibility. Where churches are linked together in joint or group pastorates, the partnership is often productive in offering mutual support and releasing people's gifts in ministry and mission. On the other hand, where the dynamic of the relationship is negative and sometimes even obstructive of growth, the life of the churches and of individuals within them suffers.

17. Ideally, each church needs its own local ministry of Word and Sacrament and pastoral leadership. The development of auxiliary ministry brings the possibility nearer. Some elders are also completing courses as part of their continuing in-service training. Ministers, elders and lay preachers are increasingly called to fulfil their collaborative ministry in the life of one or more of the smaller churches rather than to be "preaching friars" in a much wider area. It is usually not long before signs of growth can be identified. Growth may be in greater commitment, richer fellowship, wider vision, livelier faith, maturing discipleship, deeper involvement in the community, even larger numbers.

### **Developing Local Leadership**

18. Few of our churches are devoid of leadership, although at first it may not be very apparent. Leadership is there, to be spotted and nurtured among the people who reveal clues of their vision, imagination, faith, commitment and willingness to take risks. While the whole Church is committed to ministry, each member has a unique gift of ministry to be offered to the total co-ordinated life and mission of the Church.

19. There are lively gifts of leadership among young people whose membership is affirmed when the Church is prepared to take seeming risks in calling them to serve as elders and to accept other responsibilities within local churches, District Councils, Provincial Synods, ecumenical bodies and committees at all levels. Their participation in decision-making is already giving new direction to the Church in many aspects of the URC's life.

20. The fact that some of our smaller churches have produced lay people who have served in significant ways both inside and outside the Church, and that the same churches have often nurtured in the faith those who have been called to serve as ministers of the Word and Sacraments, demonstrates their potential in enabling leadership within their membership.

### **Equipping the ministry of the people of God**

21. Since most pastorates are now made up of two or more churches, and at least one of these is likely to be a small church, there are implications for the whole Church. We believe that local churches and District Councils, ministers and ordinands, and those responsible for assessment, selection and training of ministers need to pioneer the different styles of ministry required for today's and tomorrow's Church.

22. We are both encouraged and challenged by the members of inner-city and rural churches who are seeking 'breadth' training or a foundation course similar to that outlined in 'Faith in the City', including modules on the Bible, Christian doctrine and church life, worship and mission. Opportunities are increasing for such training to be undertaken on ecumenical courses with all the advantages of learning alongside Christians of other traditions.

### **What are the responsibilities of the wider Church?**

23. The conciliar nature of our Church establishes quite clearly that everyone cares for everyone else, but the District Council has special responsibilities laid upon it for the pastoral care of all local churches. In particular, the small church is affirmed where it is treated as part of the District's mission strategy. The shaping of this strategy is a priority for each District, with Provincial and Assembly help, where necessary. It calls for a high level of commitment and a great deal of hard work but it is crucial to our future development.

24. One District Pastoral Committee recently traced the history of URC churches in a large provincial city over the past 30 years. Several had been closed through various kinds of decline. In some cases, looking back, the decision made seems to have been the right one. In two, at least, however, the small church had been closed in the middle of an area of opportunity for witness and outreach. The decisions had been allowed to take themselves and were not thought out in the light of mission. Fortunately, the District was alerted to the need to work with the churches next on the list for decline and closure. The continuing task is time-consuming but the positive developments have already proved worthwhile.

25. The story could be repeated across the Provinces. The Thames North and Southern Provinces have set up an Urban Churches Support Group, four people (for one of them a half-time ministry, the

others giving one day a week voluntarily), whose main task is to provide support and encouragement for small churches in urban priority areas and estate churches. Twice a year, for example, they gather church secretaries from these churches for a day consultation. These have been greatly appreciated and some constructive ideas have already emerged. Some of our small churches faced with significant opportunities are among the most vulnerable. A response on the basis of mission can turn the tide.

26. The District mission strategy calls for the careful deployment of ordained ministers, both stipendiary and auxiliary. Sometimes that may require a larger church to 'send' its stipendiary minister to undertake a special piece of pioneering ministry with a small church while an auxiliary minister, together with elders and other lay leaders, provide 'ministry' which may still be regarded by some as the property of the stipendiary minister.

27. Our Church is also greatly helped by the number of members and elders who have undertaken further training, while not necessarily seeking ordination. They are proving to be a valuable resource in the changing pattern of ministry to which our Church has become accustomed. Ministry needs to be provided where the local situation cries out for it.

28. A church in a huge housing estate (where it is often alleged the URC cannot flourish) with high unemployment and deprivation, was at the point of closure four years ago, when the District Council gave concurrence to the call of a minister who saw the possibilities within the situation. An unofficial twinning with a larger church nearby has provided additional resources. Ministry has enabled the church to give a lead in examining some of the social issues, relevant to the estate, e.g. Social Security changes, and local authority housing. The church serves as a natural meeting-place where counselling is sought and found. The membership has grown from 27 to 94, many being brand new Christians. Within the church, emphasis is placed on "biblical fellowship in order to consolidate the congregation in their new-found faith".

29. A mission strategy requires the wider Church to provide vital resources of people and money when the local church is not able to meet these commitments itself. For example, economic pressures place an intolerable burden on a large group of small rural churches and on inner-city congregations. Here is the acid test of our 'one-anotherness': is the Church, through its congregations acting together in District Council and Provincial Synod, prepared to risk placing precious resources where they are most urgently needed?

**"There's a spirit in the air..."**

30. How true that is within the URC. Among the signs of new life

we would affirm the smaller churches who are caught up in the mission and ministry of the Church in a period of great change. These are some of the most exciting days in which to belong to the Church of God.

**Bob Bendith**

31. Soon after this Assembly we shall bid farewell to John Morgans who has completed two terms of service as moderator of the Synod of Wales and who has given so much to our moderators' meeting. He has accepted a call to become minister of a congregation recognised and supported by the eight denominations in the Council of Churches for Wales on the high-priority estate at Penrhys in the Rhondda, a community where 90% live on housing benefit. Travel well, John, in your pilgrimage in ministry.



# COMMUNICATION AND SUPPLIES COMMITTEE

Convener: The Revd David Netherwood  
Secretary: Mrs Carol Rogers

## PUBLICATIONS

### Reform

1. Reform has had to put its price up rather sharply for 1989 after running into the red for the first time since it was launched in 1972. It will continue to break even only with some difficulty, conscious that it's readers are not all in the upper strata of the Affluent Society, but needing to balance its books if it is to be a blessing to the United Reformed Church and not a burden. Despite the increase the number of subscriptions has remained steady. New arrangements for the printing of Reform have been made.

2. Many readers have voluntarily expressed their appreciation for the present style and content of Reform during the year, and we ask all readers to commend it to non-readers of their acquaintance, so demonstrating their own desire see Reform continue and grow and giving a hand to the much-appreciated efforts of our voluntary distributors in the churches. Reform remains the only means of communication between every member of the URC and if every member were reading it the Church would feel the benefit.

3. Additional copies of the September 1989 edition of Reform, which will contain full Assembly coverage, will be printed.

### Annual Book

4. The annual book for 1989 'Children of the Wilderness' by David Jenkins and Stephen Thornton will be published in time for Assembly. It is hoped that this book which contains programmes for study will be widely used in local churches. Previous titles 'Communicate or Die', 'For Everything a Season' and 'Come Wind, Come Weather' continue to sell steadily. New contacts have been established with Christian Bookshops ensuring that these books are now receiving the wider readership which they deserve.

### Year Book

5. The 1988/9 Year Book was published in October 1988 and all copies were sold by January 1989. In order to make entries as accurate as possible, early notice of amendments and additions would be welcomed by the editors.

## Diary

6. The new style URC Diary has not met with universal approval. In response to many requests the 1990 diary will revert to a Sunday start while retaining the new shape. All copies of the diary were sold by December 1989 and the print run will be increased in 1990. Please order early to avoid disappointment. It is hoped that copies of the diary will be available from the Assembly Bookstall.

## Press/P.R.

7. Brian Cooper continues to act on behalf of the URC. The Basic Information Pack sent to the media has proved to be most successful and is regularly updated and enlarged.

## Distribution and Supplies

8. This part of the section seeks to service the requirements of individuals and local churches with material produced and promoted by URC departments, books which develop areas of concern in these departments and miscellaneous goods which may be difficult to obtain elsewhere. The catalogue which is distributed regularly through the Information Service lists all such material. The function of Distribution and Supplies is to distribute the material as orders are received, to promote what is available in response to enquiries and to ensure that adequate stocks of material are available.

9. The use of the Book Promotion Agency, A. Guy Taylor has ensured that a selection of URC material is now being made available to local Christian Bookshops throughout the country and is being taken up by them.

10. In response to numerous enquiries new suppliers of church requisites have been sought and stocks of items including Hymn Board Numbers and Baptismal Registers are available. It is also possible to obtain portable communion sets and accessories on request.

11. The Assembly Bookstall will include a wide range of materials and it is hoped that Bernard Thorogood, David Jenkins and Stephen Thornton will be available to sign copies of their new book.

## Broadcasting

12. A response to the Government White Paper "Broadcasting in the Nineties: Competition, Choice and Quality" has been sent to the Home Office on behalf of the URC. The Secretary has met with representatives of other denominations and with the FCFC to ensure that the viewpoint of the churches is well known to the government.

## Ecumenical Involvement

13. Association for Christian Communication: The URC withdrew from full membership of the AFCC as a result of the cutting back of the UK communications programme. The church is still a general member represented by the secretary, and thus ensures a continuing interest in the work of AFCC.

14. Churches Advisory Council for Local Broadcasting: The secretary continues to serve as a member of CACLB, representing the URC. The appointment of a full time officer has enabled the Council to extend its work and to provide a mouthpiece for the churches in this expanding area.

15. Media Awareness Project: The secretary is a member of the ecumenical committee of the project as well as one of the working party on materials. The workshops arranged by MAP across the country have been enthusiastically received. As yet there has been only a small number of URC participants but it is hoped that new contacts can be made and people encouraged to attend workshops in their own areas.

## In House Printing

16. A large number of 'in-house' publications are produced within the section. The updating of existing equipment has meant that a wider range of materials is able to be produced. There are still many lessons to be learned about the equipment but pressure of work makes experimentation difficult.

## Information Service

17. The Information Service continues to send to all church secretaries and to some 300 personal subscribers. Volunteers pack and despatch the material three times each year. The 'Info Sheet' has meant that the number of separate sheets is kept to a minimum. Extra copies of the sheet are available on request. The survey of the Information Service carried out by the Forward Policy Group concluded that the service is well used by most churches and is a successful method of ensuring that churches and ministers are well informed of what is happening nationally and locally at both denominational and ecumenical levels.

## Video

18. The number of titles in the video library has been extended and the number of loans continues to rise. A list of titles available together with a brief description can be supplied on request. Borrowers are asked to return videos promptly in order to avoid disappointment for other borrowers. Titles chosen for the library are usually those which can be used in house groups or similar gatherings as discussion starters. The secretary is a

member of the ecumenical Religious Audio-Visual Viewing Panel which meets regularly. The reviews produced are published in LOOK HEAR (formerly AVA Magazine and Media Review).

### **Christian Resources Exhibition**

19. The United Reformed Church was part of an ecumenical stand at the Exhibition at Sandown Park Esher, in 1989. The stand entitled 'Pilgrims Together' was being shared by the Baptist Union, The Church of England, The Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church together with the British Council of Churches. Originating from an idea within the URC Communication and Supplies Section this is the first time that such a venture has been undertaken. The stand endeavoured to show how each denomination is working in similar areas singly and together through the BCC.

### **Copyright**

20. New legislation on copyright matters will be passed during 1989. Communication and Supplies is anxious that all churches operate within the law particularly in regard to the production of hymn sheets, loose leaf hymn books, orders of service for special occasions, transparencies for use with overhead projectors and the reproduction of any material covered by the law of copyright. The secretary is willing to advise on copyright matters and if requested will seek permissions on behalf of local churches or individuals. Copies of 'A Question of Copyright' by Eric Thorn have been sent to each Provincial Office and are also available from the Assembly Bookstall. This small book helps to clarify the law as it applies to churches.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

1. Assembly receives this report for debate.

# UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY

1. The 1988 Annual Meeting took place during the General Assembly at Southport and was followed by supper and an illustrated talk on Zion United Reformed Church, Hulme, Manchester given by Dr Ian Sellars. Dr David Thompson was elected Treasurer of the Society.
2. The Council continues to consider the advice it should give the Church on the Library at Tavistock Place. There has been correspondence with the Association of County Archivists in an attempt to agree a policy on the deposit in local archives of some of the records at present held centrally. Some portraits of former distinguished Presbyterians have been accepted on permanent loan by churches and other institutions with which they were associated. This still leaves problems of space and the Council continues to search for alternative proposals so that the Library may be better housed. Even people who regularly visit the church offices seem unaware of its existence and importance.
3. The resignation of Revd Norman Leak from the Council further diminishes the small band of those who have served with us since the inception of the Society in 1972 and who came from the two merging committees. We are grateful to Norman for his long service and his devotion to church history, including much local encouragement.
4. We are meeting at 11.30 a.m. on Saturday 1 July at the University of York for our Annual Meeting, followed at 12 noon by the Annual Lecture, given by Professor M C Cross, under the title, **A metamorphosis of ministry: the service of former Yorkshire monks and friars in the sixteenth century English Protestant Church.**

## SCHOOLS LINKED WITH THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

1. In 1988 the Heads and Governors of the Five Schools met once, for their Annual Conference which was held in the Autumn at Silcoates. The principal speakers were the Rt Revd David Konstant, Bishop of Leeds, on "The Role of Christian Schools Today", the Revd Alan Loosemore, formerly Staff Inspector for Religious Education, on "Religious Education, Past, Present and ...Future?" and Dr Clyde Binfield, Chairman of the Silcoates Board of Governors, on "Cats and Kings. May Governors Look at Heads?" There were Group presentations on Moral and Health Education, there was an Evening of Words and Music, there was a Service of Communion, and the northern weather was at its clearest and best.

2. In acknowledging grants made by the United Reformed Church from its share of Memorial Hall Trust, and by the Milton Mount Foundation, the schools also acknowledge their responsibility to their denominational community. These grants contribute to the education of the children both of serving ministers and missionaries and of women and men preparing for ordination.

3. In acknowledging their relationship with the URC, the schools would wish to stress the generous range of bursaries and allowances which it is often possible for each of them to make to members of the Church. Enquiries are always welcome. Each of the schools is in good heart and each still seeks to share the continuing opportunity for Christian education with those churches whose determination led to their foundation.

### CATERHAM SCHOOL

4. Our President, Sir Oliver Humphreys, CBE, opened the new Assembly Hall and Music School last September. It was most appropriate that the hall was dedicated during our Founder's Day Service, by the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt Revd Edmund Banyard. He reminded the school of its Christian heritage and of its foundation in 1811 by the Revd John Townsend, for the sons of Congregational ministers. Mr Banyard's message was clear. Just as the school was founded to provide Christian education for the young of the denomination, so it must continue to advance Christian values against the individualistic materialism of contemporary society. The following Sunday, the Revd Lord Soper preached at a service of celebration arranged for parents and pupils.

5. Handel's **Messiah** was sung as the opening musical concert in the new hall and a Christmas Revue at the end of term was the first production on the new stage.

6. We are indebted to three Old Caterhamians, whose generous

gifts have made this building possible. They all came from church families and were boys here together during the First World War.

7. We were pleased to welcome the Rt Revd Samar Bairagi, Bishop of Barrackpore, to the school. The bishop conducted worship in the Preparatory and Main School and spoke at Caterham URC. He was minister of the former UCNI church in Calcutta, to which a number of CWM missionaries went, before his appointment as a bishop in the Church of North India.

8. The school was pleased to be presented with an Archimedes Computer for winning the BBC 1 "First Class" quiz, televised on Saturday afternoons through 1988.

9. We congratulate one of our ministers' sons, Iain MacKenzie, who gained a place at Oxford, along with other boys from the school.

10. There are at the school thirteen URC ministers' sons and one son of a Congregational minister.

#### ELTHAM COLLEGE

11. Eltham College can report another happy and successful year; for which we thank God.

12. Sixty-three members of the sixth form went on to take up places at universities, polytechnics, art colleges and medical schools. Fifteen of these obtained places at Oxford and Cambridge. The first GCSE results were most gratifying -an average of ten "A-C" passes per candidate.

13. Speech Day was held on 15th July 1988, and Mr Bobby Robson, the England Soccer Manager, was the chief guest. He spoke of the need for a sense of strong personal pride and for positive attitudes in today's world.

14. Chapel services have been held daily. At the Easter service the Revd A D Lewis was our speaker, and at the Parents' Service in October the Revd Dr R O Latham, Chairman of the Eltham Board of Governors, spoke on the contemporary issue of parental responsibilities.

15. The school play, Becket, by Jean Anouilh, played to packed houses on four nights and was much appreciated.

16. The music department has continued to thrive with excellent mid-term concerts in the now completed Performing Arts Centre; beautiful music was provided for the carol services. The Junior School carol services were equally moving.

17. The 1st XV had an excellent season, producing many fine

performances, including a splendid victory over the powerful touring Marlborough College side at the end of term.

18. There are at the school ten sons of missionaries, five sons of ministers and one son of a minister in training.

#### SILCOATES SCHOOL

19. The number of pupils in the school reached 550 in September, and the sixth form now totals 115 boys and girls. There are, however, no plans for any further extension of numbers. The governors have affirmed their intention that Silcoates should remain a school for boys from 7 to 18 with girls in the sixth form, with a strong commitment to boarding education.

20. Work is well under way for the creation of extensive new sports fields for the provision of improved games facilities for rugby, cricket, hockey and athletics.

21. The school choir and the chaplain, the Revd Tony Jones, have led worship at three United Reformed Churches during the past year, Stainbeck in Leeds, Trinity in Sheffield and Dewsbury.

22. Silcoates is one of six schools in West Yorkshire with denominational backgrounds who have formed themselves into the Ridings Group for the purpose of in-service training of academic staff.

23. Three dramatic productions were staged during the year -Robin Hood by the Junior Department, ~~The Thwarting~~ of Baron Bolligrew by the Middle School and Macbeth by the Seniors.

24. Two boys represented English schools at rugby in 1988, making a total of five during the past four years. The 1st XV was unbeaten in school matches in 1988.

25. There are eighteen ministers' children in the school: ten United Reformed, five Church of England and one each from the Congregational Federation, the Baptist Union and the Chinese Rhenish Church.

#### WALTHAMSTOW HALL

26. This special year in the school's history marked the 150th anniversary of our foundation in 1838. We began it with a Service of Thanksgiving in Westminster Chapel which was attended by some two thousand past and present members of the school, parents and friends. The Revd Dr Robert Latham led the worship and the address was given by Bishop Lesslie Newbigin.

27. Celebratory events continued throughout the year: a major concert in May, an Old Girls' Reunion in June, and in July a



Commemoration Ball, organised by the Friends and Parents' Association, a Fun Day for the school, and the boarders' production of **Portrait of a Queen**.

28. In the autumn we mounted a four-day exhibition, sponsored by Liberty's of Regent Street, on the school's history. Visitors were particularly touched by the letters from early missionaries' daughters who were not to see their parents again for six or seven years.

29. The celebrations ended in December with a remarkable and moving production of **The Nativity** - an adaptation of the mediaeval mystery cycle by Tony Harrison - and a carol service in our local church, so that we ended the year as we had begun it with praise and thanksgiving.

30. It was a pleasure to report excellent academic successes this year, with Advanced Level and GCSE pass-rates of about 90% and ten places at Oxford and Cambridge.

31. We were also delighted by the success of the Anniversary Appeal which has raised over £350,000. The new music and drama centre was begun in August.

32. There are eleven daughters of ministers and missionaries in the school: three United Reformed, three Church of England, four Baptist and one Congregational.

#### WENTWORTH MILLION MOUNT

33. There are 344 girls in the school, of whom 165 are boarders.

34. We record with great sorrow the death of Mrs Gillian Mellowes, Vice Chairman for one year and a member of the Board of Governors for twenty-two years. She gave us the benefit of her wealth of local knowledge and her gift of seeing to the heart of the matter. The new Vice Chairman is Mrs R E Goodfellow. We thank Mrs J Boulind for her expert contribution to the Board over the last eight years; her place as a representative of the Milton Mount Foundation has been taken by Mrs G Hall.

35. The visitor of the day at Speech Day was Miss Jocelyn Barrow, OBE, a Governor of the BBC.

36. The Editor of **The Bournemouth Echo** opened the new changing rooms adjacent to the swimming pool.

37. Staff rose to the administrative as well as to the pedagogical challenges of GCSE and the pupils responded positively to the more broadly based testing. Results in GCSE and Advanced Levels were again good and the craft work of one candidate in Art is to be shown in the Examination Board's national exhibition.

38. Our leavers' choice of courses includes Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Neuro-Sciences, Speech Science, Chemistry, Typography and Graphic Communication, History, German, Education, Politics and Business Studies.

39. The Miltonian Guild celebrated its Centenary this year. Special events culminated in a weekend at the School, which involved present pupils and Old Girls, the age range spanning 9 to 92 years.

40. We have been pleased to welcome the Revd R Hall, minister of Richmond Hill URC. Our contributions to leading worship have continued and the school orchestra played at a local Songs of Praise at All Saints' Church, Southbourne.

41. In the totality of our school life we have sought, as always, to nurture mind, body and spirit and to give "our neighbours"; and we give thanks to God for all the blessings of the past year.

42. There are fifteen daughters of ministers in the school: fourteen United Reformed and one Church of England.

# UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

**Convener:** The Revd A J Knight

**Vice Chairman:** Mr P J Hoskins

**Hon Treasurer:** Mr S R Harvey

**General Manager:** Mr D Jones

**Secretary:** Mr B R Mullinger

1. Sixty years ago the Presbyterian Church of England opened its first block of nine flats in Poplar, in the East End of London. It was a small but welcome response to the appalling housing conditions which were all too common in those days. Sadly, they are still common today: many people are forced to live in dwellings which are not really fit for human habitation; homelessness in all its forms seems to be increasing, and many elderly people find it difficult to cope with the expense and responsibility of maintaining their own properties - which are often quite unsuitable for their needs anyway.

2. The United Reformed Church Housing Association builds on the foundations laid in Poplar in 1929. We now have 154 dwellings in management and a development programme which should bring the total to over 250 in the next two years. We are not exactly giants in the Housing Association world, but we believe that we make a worthwhile contribution to the immense task of meeting housing need, and we do this on behalf of the United Reformed Church.

3. We have a small, London-based central office, and local management committees which are responsible for much of the day-to-day running of our houses. We believe that the local management committee is one of our strengths. The criticism of much public sector housing management has been that it can easily become distant and faceless. Local management of schemes - in the main by members of local United Reformed Churches - is immediate and responsive, and many of our residents benefit from the pastoral care provided by the local church.

4. There is little doubt that the future will see many changes. The 1988 Housing Act is already beginning to have an effect upon the Housing Association movement. 'Future Policy' is now a regular item on the agenda of our hard-working Committee of Management and sub-committees, and I hope that our next report to the Assembly will be able to indicate our strategy for the next few years.

5. In the meantime we are grateful to our staff, to our professional consultants and advisers, to the many members of churches who serve on central and local committees of management, and to the individuals and churches who have made generous gifts over the years which have greatly supported our work.

6. We are planning to publish an occasional Newsletter. If you would like to be placed on the mailing list, please telephone or write to the General Manager at our London address.

# STANDING ORDERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

## 1. The Agenda of the Assembly

At its meetings the Assembly shall consider reports and draft resolutions prepared by its Departments and Committees, resolutions submitted by Provincial Synods, and resolutions and amendments of which due notice has been given submitted by individual members of the Assembly.

The Business Committee shall prepare, before each meeting of the Assembly, a Draft Order of Business, and submit it to the Assembly as early as convenient in the programme.

The resolutions arising from any report or section thereof shall be taken in the following order:

- (i) resolutions of the Department or Committee of which due notice has been given.
- (ii) any relevant Synod resolutions.
- (iii) duly seconded resolutions submitted by individual members of the Assembly.

If notice has been given of two or more resolutions on the same subject, or two or more amendments to the same resolution, these shall be taken in the order decided by the Moderator on the Advice of the General Secretary.

## 2. Presentation of Business

2a. All reports of Departments and Committees, together with the draft resolutions arising therefrom, shall be delivered to the General Secretary by a date to be annually determined, so that they may be printed and circulated to members in time for consideration before the date of the Assembly meeting.

2b. A Provincial Synod may deliver to the General Secretary not less than six weeks before the commencement of the annual meeting of the Assembly notice in writing of a motion for consideration at the Assembly. This notice should include the names of those appointed to propose and second the motion at the Assembly. If the motion introduces new business to the Assembly, the Synod may, subject to the agreement of the General Secretary and the Chairman of the Business Committee and at its own expense, circulate a statement in support.

2c. A local church or District Council wishing to put forward a motion for consideration by the General Assembly shall submit the motion to its Provincial Synod for consideration and, if thought fit, transmission to the Assembly, at such time as will enable the

Synod to comply with Standing Order 2b above. In the case of a local church the motion must be submitted to the Synod through the District Council.

2d. A member of the Assembly may deliver to the General Secretary not less than 21 days before the date of the meeting of the Assembly a notice in writing of a motion (which notice must include the name of a seconder) to be included in the Assembly agenda. If the subject matter of such a notice of motion appears to the General Secretary to be an infringement of the rights of a Synod or District Council through which the matter could properly have been raised, the General Secretary shall inform the member accordingly and bring the matter before the Business Committee which shall advise the Assembly as to the procedure to be followed.

2e. Proposals for amendments to the Basis and Structure of the URC, which may be made by the Executive Committee or a Department or Committee of the General Assembly or a Provincial Synod, shall be in the hands of the General Secretary not later than 12 weeks before the opening of the Assembly.

The General Secretary, in addition to the normal advice to members of the Assembly, shall, as quickly as possible, inform all Synod Clerks of the proposed amendment.

### 3. Resolutions

3a. When a report has been presented to the Assembly the first motion on the report shall be "That this Report be received for debate". On this being passed, and before any consequent recommendations are proposed, any member may speak to a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion. It shall not be in order to move an amendment or a reference back motion to this motion. The passing of this motion shall not be deemed to commit the Assembly to the acceptance of any matter contained in the report.

3b. During the meeting of the Assembly and on the report of a Department or a Committee, notice (including the names of proposer and seconder) shall be given to the General Secretary of any new resolutions which arise from the material of the report, and of any amendments which affect the substance of resolutions already presented. The Moderator shall decide whether such resolution or amendment requires to be circulated in writing to members before it is discussed by the Assembly. During the course of a debate a new motion or amendment may be stated orally without supporting speech in order to ascertain whether a member is willing to second it.

3c. No motion or amendment shall be spoken to by its proposer, debated, or put to the Assembly unless it is known that there is a seconder, except that resolutions presented on behalf of

a Department or Standing Committee, of which printed notice has been given, do not need to be seconded.

- 3d. A seconder may, if he/she then declares the intention of doing so, reserve his/her speech until a later period in the debate.
- 3e. It shall not be in order to move a resolution or amendment which:
- (i) contravenes any part of the Basis of Union, or
  - (ii) involves the Church in expenditure without prior consideration by the appropriate committee, or
  - (iii) pre-empt's discussion of a matter to be considered later in the agenda, or
  - (iv) infringes a decision reached by the Assembly within the preceding two years, or
  - (v) is not related to report of a Department or Committee and has not been subject of 21 days' notice under 2d.

The decision of the Moderator on the application of this Standing Order shall be final.

- 3f. An amendment shall be either to omit words or to insert words or to do both, but no amendment shall be in order which has the effect of introducing an irrelevant proposal or of negating the motion.
- 3g. If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved. If an amendment is rejected a further amendment not to the like effect may be moved.
- 3h. An amendment which has been moved and seconded shall be disposed of before any further amendment may be moved, but notice may be given of intention to move a further amendment should the one before the Assembly be rejected.
- 3i. The mover may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly, alter a motion or amendment he/she has proposed.
- 3j. A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly. Any such consent shall be signified without discussion. It shall not be competent for any member to speak upon it after the proposer has asked permission to withdraw unless such permission shall have been refused.

#### 4. Speeches

- 4a. Speeches made in presentation of the report and resolutions of any Department and its committees shall not in aggregate exceed 45 minutes, and speeches made in support of the report and its resolutions of any other non-departmental committee having direct access to the Assembly shall not in aggregate exceed 20 minutes, save by the prior agreement of the Business Committee. The proposers of any other motion of which due notice has been given shall be allowed an aggregate of 10 minutes, unless a longer period be recommended by the Business Committee or determined by the Moderator. Each subsequent speaker in the debate shall be allowed 5 minutes unless the Moderator shall determine otherwise.
- 4b. When a speech is made on behalf of a Department or Committee, it shall be so stated. Otherwise a speaker shall begin by stating his /her name and accreditation to the Assembly.
- 4c. Secretaries of Standing Committees and full-time officers of Departments who are not members of the Assembly may speak on the report of the Department when requested by the Convener concerned. They may speak on other reports with the consent of the Moderator.
- 4d. In each debate, whether on a motion or on an amendment, no one shall address the Assembly more than once, except that at the close of each debate the proposer of the motion or the amendment, as the case may be, shall have the right of reply, but must strictly confine himself/herself to answering previous speakers and must not introduce new matter. Such reply shall close the debate on the motion or the amendment.
- 4e. The foregoing Standing Order (4d) shall not prevent the asking or answering of a question which arises from the matter before the Assembly or from a speech made in the debate upon it.

#### 5. Closure of Debate

- 5a. In the course of the business any member may move that "The question under consideration be not put". Sometimes described as "the previous question" or "next business", this resolution takes precedence of every motion before the Assembly and as soon as the member has explained his/her reasons for proposing it, and it has been seconded, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that such a motion is an unfair use of the rules of the Assembly. Should the motion be carried the business shall immediately end and the Assembly proceed to the next business.
- 5b. In the course of any discussion, it is competent for any member to move that the question be now put. This is



sometimes described as "the closure motion". Unless it appears to the Moderator that this motion is an abuse of the rules of the Assembly, the vote shall be taken upon it immediately it has been seconded. When an amendment is under discussion, this motion shall apply only to that amendment. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. The mover of the original motion or amendment as the case may be retains the right of reply before the vote is taken on the motion or amendment.

- 5c. The resolutions described in Standing Orders 5a and 5b above are exceptions to Standing Order 3c, in that they may be moved and spoken to without the proposer having first obtained and announced the consent of a seconder. They must, however, be seconded before being put to the vote.

## 6. Voting

- 6a. Voting on any resolution whose effect is to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis, the Structure and any other form of expression of the polity and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church, is governed by paragraph 9(5)(xi) of the Basis of Union (cf The Manual).

- 6b. Unless the Assembly decides that there shall be a ballot, every other question shall be determined by a majority of the votes of members of the Assembly present and voting as indicated by a show of hands.

- 6c. To provide for voting in the case of a paper ballot, and to assist in taking a count of votes when the Moderator decides that is necessary, the Nominations Committee shall appoint Tellers for each Assembly.

## 7. Questions

- 7a. A member may, if two clear days' notice in writing has been given to the General Secretary, ask the Moderator or Convener of any Department or Committee any question on any matter relating to the business of the Assembly to which no reference is made in any report before the Assembly.

- 7b. A member may, when given opportunity by the Moderator, ask the presenter of any report before the Assembly a question seeking additional information or explanation relating to matters contained within the report.

- 7c. Questions asked under Standing Orders 7a and 7b shall be put and answered without discussion.

## **8. Points of Order, Personal Explanations, Dissent**

- 8a. A member shall have the right to rise in his/her place and call attention to a point of order, and immediately on his/her doing so any other member addressing the Assembly shall cease speaking until the Moderator has determined the question of order. The decision on any point of order rests entirely with the Moderator. Any member calling to order unnecessarily is liable to the censure of the Assembly.
- 8b. A member feeling that some material part of a former speech by him/her at the same meeting has been misunderstood or is being grossly misinterpreted by a later speaker may rise in his/her place and request the Moderator's permission to make a personal explanation. If the Moderator so permits, a member so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.
- 8c. The right to record in the minutes a dissent from any decision of the Assembly shall only be granted to a member by the Moderator if the reason stated, either verbally at the time or later in writing, appears to him/her to fall within the provisions of paragraph 7(10) of the Basis of Union.
- 8d. The decision of the Moderator on a point of order, or on the admissibility of a personal explanation, or on the right to have a dissent recorded, shall not be open to discussion.

## **9. Admission of Public and Press**

Members of the public and representatives of the press shall be admitted to the Assembly unless the Assembly otherwise decides, and they shall occupy such places as are assigned to them.

## **10. Circulation of Documents**

Only documents authorised by the General Secretary in consultation with the Chairman of the Business Committee may be distributed within the meeting place of the Assembly.

## **11. Records of the Assembly**

- 11a. A record of attendance at the meetings of the Assembly shall be kept in such manner as the Executive Committee may determine.
- 11b. The minutes of each day's proceedings, in duplicated form, shall be circulated on the following day and normally, after any necessary correction, approved at the opening of the afternoon session. The minutes of the closing day of the Assembly shall normally be submitted at the close of the business and, after any necessary correction, approved.

- 11c. A signed copy of the minutes shall be preserved in the custody of the General Secretary as the official record of the Assembly's proceedings.
- 11d. As soon as possible after the Assembly meeting ends, the substance of the minutes together with any other relevant papers shall be published as a "Record of Assembly" and a copy sent to every member of the Assembly, each Synod, District Council and local church.

## 12. Suspension and Amendment of Standing Orders

- 12a. In any case of urgency or upon motion made on a notice duly given, any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting so far regards any business at such a meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of the Assembly present and voting shall so decide.
- 12b. Resolutions to amend the Standing Orders shall be referred to the Business Committee for report before being voted on by the Assembly (or in case of urgency, by the Executive Committee). The Business Committee may itself from time to time suggest amendments to the Standing Orders, which shall be subject to decision by the Assembly.









