

THE MINISTRY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD (1988)

01 Foreword

The Report on the Ministry of the People of God was brought to Conference in 1986. A commission was set up (i) to prepare detailed proposals to implement it; (ii) to receive comments from individuals and all appropriate bodies; and (iii) to present the Report with any necessary modifications for adoption by Conference in 1988 (Resolutions 1&2 in the original Report, not reprinted here).

To judge by the response and the care with which the submissions have in general been prepared, the Report has excited considerable interest among the Methodist people. We are grateful for all that has been sent to us. Together these submissions provide considerable help in assessing what the next steps should be.

A summary of the responses is included in tabular form in the appendix.

02 Method of procedure

- (i) In this preface there is a reply to certain general criticisms of the Report and an indication of the reasons for the direction of our proposals in the main areas of concern.
- (ii) There then follows the Report itself, incorporating such modifications as the commission felt to be necessary. Those parts which are new are marked by vertical sidelines in the text, or, where only details have been altered, by an asterisk in the left hand margin.
- (iii) Finally, we have made proposals for new standing orders and provided a list of recommendations.

03 Response to general criticisms

(i) *The Report was too complex and printed in type too small to be suitable for general discussion.*

We acknowledge the force of this criticism. On the one hand, it is important that matters of this kind should be dealt with in adequate theological depth; on the other, there are economic pressures affecting the format of the Agenda of Conference, from which the Report was reprinted.

We think that in remitting comparable reports for study in future, Conference should provide a summary in more accessible form and language.

(ii) *The Report was so far from being what was required that it needs to be rewritten in its entirety.*

This criticism does not reflect the general tenor of the submissions which we have received. Quite apart from the question whether it is justified, we have felt that such radical treatment of the Report would go beyond the intentions of the 1986 Conference resolution. This certainly envisaged modification, but not the substitution of entirely different proposals.

(iii) *The practical proposals in the Report do not reflect the theological discussion by which they are introduced.*

The objection here is that whereas the early paragraphs of the Report made a case for widening the notion of ministry to embrace the whole of Christ's church, the practical proposals were dominated by concern for the ordained ministry. The suggestions for a Methodist Order for Mission and Ministry, far from helping this situation, it is said, only made matters worse.

(a) To an extent we accept this criticism, and our proposals for lay ministries have been substantially altered to take account of it. We appreciate the danger that the original proposals might be divisive and that it could contradict the whole notion that every member has a ministry.

(b) On the other hand, the objection takes insufficient account of the need to rationalize arrangements for lay workers – particularly those in the paid employment of the church. Moreover, new initiatives in the use of ordained ministers need to be explored.

(c) The Report had a twofold objective. *One* aim was to open up for discussion the whole subject of ministry in the church, and to point out the need to explore further both the full employment of people's gifts within the fellowship of the church and the scope for ministry outside the confines of the church to the world at large. The Report did not make any claim to deal exhaustively with either of these matters. There is in any case a limit to the extent to which topics and concerns of this kind can be legislated for. Some of the positive things said here should enable greater experimentation in ministry particularly in the practice of team leadership. Furthermore, we understand that the President's Council is bringing to Conference proposals for an enquiry into the whole realm of expressing Christian ministry in the world.

The *second* aim was to give greater definition to a number of specific issues. Some of these are concerned with the ordained ministry. Others relate to lay people. It is to miss the point to complain that our practical proposals do not all address the first aim. But, of course, the solution of the problems offered here has to be consistent with that first aim.

(iv) A number of respondents were concerned that insufficient account had been taken of the ecumenical aspects of the matters with which the report dealt. Without any doubt, the authors of the Report were concerned about this issue, for it forms the background to all our work today. But we judge that we have an opportunity to speak primarily to the situation facing Methodism. The ecumenical context in which the local church and circuits exist varies greatly. We cannot deal here with all the difficulties in particular situations. We are proposing a process of development within which Methodism can deal with unrecognised problems as they become apparent. We believe that the general direction of our proposals will be understood and welcomed by our ecumenical partners.

04 **Issues relating to lay ministries**

i) The proposals in the original report

In the Report, it was proposed that a new lay order of ministry should be set up – the Methodist Order of Mission and Ministry. Two factors have led to the

abandonment of this proposal: (a) the reopening of the Wesley Deaconess Order to receive candidates; (b) widespread dissatisfaction throughout the connexion with the proposals in the Report for the envisaged lay order.

Earlier it had been thought that if the Deaconess Order were reopened, it might have been possible to encompass it within the proposed new order. This never looked easy, and we decided to move in a different direction when the objections to this new order became apparent. The main difficulty has been felt to be that it would amount to giving some members of the church a label which all active Christians should really wear, and thus introduce what could only be invidious distinctions.

(ii) The future direction of the Wesley Deaconess Order

In the past, the Order has been open only to women, and its ministry has overlapped with that of presbyters (for the use of this word, see below para 05). Indeed this latter factor has been so dominant that when women were admitted to the presbyteral ministry, the effect was drastically to reduce for a time the number candidating for the Order, until in 1978 recruitment was suspended altogether.

Much of the speculative thinking about the different patterns and forms of diaconal ministry within Methodism has been overtaken by the fact that the 1986 Conference directed the Wesley Deaconess Order, through the Division of Ministries, to reopen for the candidature of both men and women. Certain requirements have been laid down to implement this by the Order. These, though settled for the time being, are not final.

There is to be a commitment to life-time diaconal service, and to full-time ministry until retirement, in whatever appointment is most appropriate, and wherever required in the itinerant system, except in compelling circumstances and with approval. There is also to be commitment to the fellowship and discipline of the Order.

The Order is connexionally based, and constitutes part of the ministry of the whole people of God. It is one expression of diaconal service, which is distinctive and complementary to presbyteral ministry. Hence members of the Order will not normally be placed in pastoral charge of churches. They will work alongside ministers and those who are not ordained, preferably within leadership teams.

The pattern emerging is thus an order parallel with that of presbyters, but distinct in function. Its name will be the 'Methodist Diaconal Order' (MDO), the men being called deacons, and the women deaconesses. After probation, they will be ordained as deacons and deaconesses in the church of God. As the Order is renewed, we believe that the contribution and value of this diaconal ministry will bring enrichment not only to Methodists, but also to the wider church of Christ.

(iii) Lay Workers

One of the contributory factors to the setting up of the original working party was the haphazard development of Lay Pastoral Assistant appointments (para 008). Not only has there been inadequate co-ordination, but anomalies have been unjust.

We recommend the use of the term 'Lay Worker' for appointments under SO 581, to indicate that there is a distinctive and complementary ministry to that of the ordained ministry and the Methodist Diaconal Order. We therefore propose that the term 'Lay Pastoral Assistant' be no longer used.

We wish to affirm the wide range of work done by Lay Workers and therefore recommend that these ministries should be strengthened by being brought within the oversight of the Division of Ministries:

- (a) to offer fellowship and pastoral support to those covered by SO 581, including the recommendation of a connexional annual conference for all Lay Workers.
- (b) to report judgement on schemes for proposed appointments under SO 581 in order to secure a degree of uniformity in conditions of service sufficient to redress the injustices of past practice;
- (c) to provide training and opportunities for mutual encouragement;
- (d) to promote interest in and development of these forms of lay ministry.

We recommend a widening of the appointments covered by SO 581 to include all those in a covenanted relationship with the church at district, circuit and local level, in pastoral, evangelistic and also administrative work related to the co-ordination and mission of the church. The work need neither be full time, nor even paid, provided that it cannot appropriately be done under the existing offices of class leader, local preacher etc.

The Division of Ministries must be provided with the resources to do the work envisaged here. The Division has, until 1991, a total budget for training in lay ministry of about £25,000 per annum. Of this only about £3/4,000 has been available for the training and support of Lay Pastoral Assistants. Depending on the personnel and training involved, this will need to be supplemented to provide ongoing funds of something in the order of £40/50,000 per annum.

(iv) The ministry of all church members

The problems relating to certain forms of ministry figure largely in the practical section of the report. This is because it was explicitly part of the brief of the original working party to deal with these matters. But it has led to the impression that there was little concern in the minds of its writers, in spite of the title, for the role of the whole people of God. We have already addressed this criticism. Here we need to add that it is not by legislation but by effective teaching that the church is to be convinced that it is not a theatre in which the few are performers and the many spectators, but an organism in which every member contributes a distinctive ministry, both within the church and the world.

We are anxious to lose, however, none of the proposals contained in the Report (086e) for the extension of training in our church. We prepare Local Preachers with some thoroughness, but there is scope for training pastoral visitors, house-group leaders, treasurers and personal evangelists, to name but a few, as well as doing more to enable church members to express their ministry outside the church. However, we understand that the Division of Ministries is already preparing a programme to meet these needs, with the title,

‘Sharing in Christ’s ministry’. The Division is concerned to help churches and circuits recognize the possibilities for deploying a greater number of people in a wide range of non-ecclesial and ecclesial ministries and to provide suitable training.

The initiative taken by the President’s Council to help our people in the kind of ministry to the world which is achieved through the effective performance of a secular task will make an important contribution at this point (See 03 iii c). We draw attention too to what is said in the Report (para 073), which speaks of the dangers of professionalization in the ordained ministry and the consequent devaluing of the ministry of the whole people of God.

05 Issues relating to the ordained ministry

It may seem strange that in a report which emphasizes the point that all members of the body of Christ have a ministry we use the word ‘minister’ to refer exclusively to one who is ordained. But it is felt that the move, for example in the Service Book, to introduce the word ‘presbyter’ to refer to an ordained minister has not been successful, and that it is wiser to accept what is the widespread usage of our church.

(i) Itinerant ministers

The proposals of the Report which affect itinerant ministers have been well received. These should enable a more collaborative approach to ministry, opening new approaches to the organization of a circuit, three of which are as follows:

- (a) a team is set up consisting of some or all of the circuit ministers with or without other leaders operating in an employed or covenanted capacity;
- (b) a team is set up consisting of circuit ministers and others with pastoral or preaching gifts, who may well have employment as lay people in a secular capacity;
- (c) a team is set up consisting of the circuit ministers, the circuit stewards and other representative leaders to initiate policy for the Circuit General Purposes Committee.

The same models may be used within the more limited context of any one local church.

(ii) Ministers in Local Appointments

We deal below with objections to the proposals in the Report concerning Ministers in Local Appointments. But the commission does not wish to be defensive with regard to this category of minister. We remain persuaded that the concept offers both a means of meeting clamant needs within our church’s life and outreach, and also of affording scope for the exercise of the gifts of those who are suited for appointment to this sphere of ministry, who do not feel a call to itinerant ministry, or whose circumstances prevent it. The difficulties which have been pointed out in the responses we have received are seven in number and we list and answer them as follows:

- (1) The objection is raised that such a person will not be seen as a proper minister, and for this reason his or her status will be in doubt.

There should be no such doubts, since there is every intention of securing parity of all ordained presbyters, and no question of seeing those who fill this role as second-class.

- (2) The question will be: 'When and how will such ministers' appointments come to an end?'

Their secular job may continue indefinitely in the same place, and they will probably own a house from which they will not want to move. However, from the beginning, it will be clearly understood that the appointment will be, like that of an itinerant minister, for an initial term and subject to periodic extensions at the wish of the circuit. When the term is concluded, these ministers may (a) move their work and their home to another area where a local appointment is open for them, (b) take up another local appointment in a circuit close by, or (c) become 'ministers without appointment', a situation which was not provided for (as it is now), when comparable proposals were before the Conference previously.

- (3) If, as is envisaged, training is to be given of a quality such as to secure the parity of all presbyters, this may lead to a time of great stress during that period.

Certainly this objection indicates an important area of concern. Some have overstretched themselves and their families while training for the itinerant ministry under non-residential schemes. The solution may lie in the pace of the training. Involvement with the local church must be properly controlled during the period of training. Normally, training will take place before the appointment begins.

- (4) If Ministers in Local Appointments are in pastoral charge of a church, what will be the position when pressing pastoral needs arise, to which there will not be the possibility of immediate response?

Such ministers will not work in isolation. Their responsibilities and availability for service within the circuit will have been very carefully assessed. Such situations therefore as those envisaged can be met as appropriate by members of the circuit staff, colleagues in other denominations or lay pastoral leaders.

- (5) When the secular job done by a Minister in a Local Appointment comes to an end, and a move is necessary for that reason, what will be the status of the minister in the new circuit?

It is important to understand that ministry in local appointments, as here proposed, depends not only on the sense of call of the person concerned, but the existence of suitable work in the locality, based upon a scheme approved at circuit and district level. A minister in this category would become a minister without appointment until such time as a suitable opportunity presented itself.

- (6) The most suitable people to exercise such a ministry are likely to be situated in places where there is the least need for it.

Those with an urgent enough call might be able to move to an area where their services could be used, or travel from their existing homes to available ministerial work. But simply because some suitable people might not find scope for exercising their gifts is no reason for not implementing such an arrangement where it is feasible.

- (7) There is a danger that the emergence of Ministers in Local Appointments will inhibit the proper use of church members, and feed the illusion that it is only the ordained who are capable of carrying forward the work.

Presbyters, far from doing work that others can do, should stimulate others to work hitherto unattempted.

The concept of Ministers in Local Appointments has three objectives. (a) It will extend the opportunities for ministry. (b) It will open up possibilities for those who are called to the work, but for whom the itinerant ministry is inappropriate. (c) It will also help relieve the burden created by the present shortage of ministers. Where someone was given a limited assignment in a circuit, even if engaged in other work, whether secular or ecclesial, much could be done which at present is being left undone on account of excessive pastoral loads. It must be stressed that there is no question of foisting ministers in this category on circuits with misgivings about them, but rather the aim is to enable them to be used by those who want to use them.

(iii) Ministers in Sector Appointments

Here we are concerned with a category that already exists under the name 'Ministers in other appointments', though we propose to return to the use of the word 'sector'. This is a sociological term to describe an area of working life in the community at large, in which such ministers make their distinctive contribution. We are grateful for the work that has been done on the Report by a group serving in such appointments, who have given us their own insights into ministry. Some of their contributions have been incorporated into the body of the revised report in paras 117 onwards.

The critical comments and questions which have been made concerning that part of the Report which deals with Ministers in Sector Appointments have indicated the persistent opinion within some parts of the Methodist Church that such ministers are doing a job which could equally well be done by lay people. Conference has examined this viewpoint on a number of occasions and each time has reaffirmed its commitment to ministry in the Sectors. Some of the work done by those working in this area is innovative and pioneering; some arises from a deep sense of call and commitment to a particular sector; some is an indication of specific skills which some of our ministers possess or have been encouraged to acquire. Much of it brings new insights and resources into the life of the churches.

Some responses from circuits have questioned the desirability of allowing candidates for the ministry to offer for appointment in the sectors, or to move immediately after training into such a post. We believe that such cases are likely to be very rare and exceptional, and will in general be controlled by the ordinary process of candidature. Nevertheless, we propose that, if candidates have this clear intention, it be examined carefully, and specific recommendations concerning their offer be brought to Conference.

Other responses have indicated that some have found difficulty in discerning the difference between a Minister in a Sector Appointment and a Minister in a Local Appointment. In all forms of ministry there is some blurring at the edges. This is as true within the itinerant ministry as between the itinerant ministry and other forms. To some extent, it is a matter of emphasis. We wish to see this 'blurring' as a positive factor, rather than a negative one. But we do see an important distinction between Ministers in the Sectors and Ministers in Local Appointments depending on where they see the major thrust of their commitment, whether in the sector where they work, or in the local Christian community. Ministers in Sector Appointments will, of course, contribute in a variety of ways to local churches, though the primary arena for their ministry is the sector where they work. Ministers in Local Appointments, correspondingly, never cease to be ministers, whatever they do, though their main sphere of ministry is ecclesial.

The original Report, recognizing both the variety of sectors which ministers serve and the fact that some ministers are with ecumenical or church-servicing agencies, suggested that ministers should be identified in the Minutes of Conference as being either Ministers in Sector Appointments or Ministers in Other Appointments. Since the publication of the Report, Conference has decided to amend the format and content of the Minutes of Conference. Section 21, which has hitherto listed all ministers serving in the sectors will be deleted in future. We have amended para 117 of the Report, to take account of this.

One circuit pointed out the need for all ministers to receive pastoral care, and certainly there is a danger that Ministers in Sector Appointments may be deprived of this. But our proposals take account of this and we hope that the framework which will emerge will give these ministers both the freedom and the support, as well as the discipline, which is appropriate.

06 **Conclusion**

We recognize that the implementation of this report will not by itself achieve all that is necessary to reform the church's conception of ministry. It is important to emphasize that not everything can be effected by legislation, and that it is unrealistic to attempt too many far-reaching changes at once. But we believe that the practical proposals which we have made are both consistent with a biblical view of the church and constructive as contributions to the contemporary ecumenical debate. More important than the practical proposals is the challenge which we bring to every local church and every church member to address themselves to the need at every level to realize the ministry of the whole people of God.

THE REPORT ON THE MINISTRY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

As presented to the Conference in 1986, with the Commission's amendments marked by vertical sidelines, or by asterisks for minor details or omissions.

Introduction

The Faith and Order Committee reported to the Conference of 1983 that a working party had been set up to study *'The Ministry of the People of God'*, taking account of all the work already done in this area by the Division of Ministries and the committee's own study on Vocation' (*Agenda* p.62).

In 1984 the Conference accepted the suggestion of the President's Council, commenting on a diversity of views regarding the introduction of episcopacy into Methodism after the failure of the Covenanting Proposals, that the period following the judgement of the Conference concerning the Report on the *Ministry of the People of God* 'will provide an appropriate context for discussing the possible acceptance within Methodism of various forms of ministry that are compatible with the understanding of ministry that the Conference has adopted (*Agenda* p.14)'.

The report of the President's Council noted in the same context that the Conference was committed to making a response in 1985 to the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* statement. In similar vein, the Division of Ministries reported to the Conference of 1984 that the policy of its Board was that 'no further recommendation for the diversification of ministries be brought to Conference until it had defined its response to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* and the report on the Ministry of the People of God to be brought by the Faith and Order Committee' (*Agenda*, p.210).

SECTION A: THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCUSSION OF MINISTRY

001 The Conference last adopted a report on ministry in 1974. It was entitled *Ordination*. That theme highlighted a recurrent concern which, because of its very complexity, merits reconsideration a decade later. A number of developments and concerns lead us to a fundamental re-examination of the ministry of God's people. We set out a number of items which, we believe, indicate the direction in which the Spirit is moving the church.

002 Emerging creative pressures

(a) A positive pressure is the church's increasing concern for and confidence in pursuing its mission. The emergence of a multi-faith society in the UK and more acutely the developing awareness of the secularity of the modern world have drawn forth new resources of imagination and courage. The Conference report *Sharing in God's Mission* (1985) examines the meaning of the church's mission and encourages the church to devise strategies for mission. This programme will require the use and development of all the manifold gifts of the whole people of God. Many Methodist aspire to understand their ministries in fresh ways; to explore new forms of Christian community and Christian proclamation; or to offer themselves to the church's mission for full-time or part-time paid employment. In this last instance, the offer of paid

service may not fall along the lines of our traditional authorised ministries (ordained minister, local preacher, class-leader or pastoral visitor, or worker with children or young people; see SO 581 [1] and [2]).

003 The emergence of the charismatic movement in Methodism has ‘encouraged Christians to expect and use the many gifts the Spirit gives, for building up the Body of Christ, and for witness and service to Christ in the world. These gifts include some which have commonly been neglected or undervalued in the church – for example, gifts of healing, prophecy, discernment and speaking in tongues. The most balanced exponents of the movement have, however, stressed that these in some ways more spectacular gifts must not detract from the centrality of gifts of caring, ministry and humble service’ (Dr J. Newton, *The Charismatic Movement in the life of the Church*, a paper commissioned by the President’s Council; *Agenda*, 1983, p.17).

004 (c) One significant aspect of the church’s rediscovery of the priority of mission is summarised in the phrase, ‘Mission alongside the Poor’. In calling for new awareness of the church’s responsibility to share God’s ‘bias to the poor’ and new resources to fund the programme of work, the Conference has introduced into Methodism an emphasis which may produce a radical redeployment of our normal resources of personnel and finance. If stationing policy should be significantly altered, better to express a strategy for mission, we shall need new ways of understanding how God calls into new life the latent skills, commitment and personal qualities of all his people. Only in this way, with limited resources, can we both initiate the new things God lays upon us and nurture the treasures in our contemporary church life.

005 **The call to Christian ministry**

The call to ministry can easily be misunderstood to refer only to the calling of an ordained minister.

All church members are called by God to exercise Christian ministry in general, and also specific Christian ministries.

All Christians are faced at different stages in their pilgrimage with challenges of life-style, commitment, change of direction and new areas of service and ministry.

The use of the word ‘minister’ as shorthand for an ordained presbyter must not lead us to think that the ordained are the only ones called to ministry. The confusion would be greatly reduced if the word ‘presbyter’ could be used to denote ‘ordained minister of word and sacraments’. But the attempt to popularize this word (if that is what the authors of the 1974 Ordinal intended) has not been successful. The continued use of the word ‘minister’ has to be conceded.

006 **The heritage of ecumenical debates about ministry**

Church unity discussions have occupied much time and energy in recent decades. The failure of the Anglican-Methodist Unity Scheme and the Churches Covenanting Proposals may be partly attributed to the massive and almost exclusive concentration in associated reports on ordination and the ordained ministry.

007 In 1985 the Conference formulated its response to the WCC statement, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. While welcoming much of the material about ministry in this statement, it judged that ‘too much space is devoted to the ordained ministry’ and affirmed that ‘greater attention to the ministry of the whole people of God might have revealed a convergence that would have facilitated discussion of the vexed questions relating to ordination’ (*Agenda*, pp. 572, 581).

008 **Haphazard developments in non-ordained ministries**

Without systematic reflection on the ministries of the non-ordained, the church is left with pragmatic *ad hoc* developments. Methodism has had a goodly number of these in recent years; for example: the decision not to recruit further to the Wesley Deaconess Order (1978); the emergence of lay pastoral assistants working full-time or part-time in circuits under the direction of the Superintendent and within the terms of an agreed contract; the participation of non-ordained people with ordained in leadership teams and in experimental local church constitutions; and the confused discussion of the proposal to create a diaconate within Methodism. For new proposals concerning a Methodist diaconate, see above Preface, para 04 (ii) and paras 084-088.

009 **Haphazard developments in ordained ministry**

While so much energy has been diverted to discussion of ordination in inter-church debate, little energy has remained for careful reflection upon the development of ordained ministry *within* Methodism. The result is a confusing array of discussions, decisions and developments. For example,

- (a) The 1978 Conference refused to institute a local ordained ministry, but agreed a motion which declared that ‘the coming great church will be congregational, presbyteral and episcopal in its life and order’. In 1981 the Conference recommended for study a report on *Episcopacy in the Methodist Church*, and this matter has not yet been resolved (*Agenda*, 1984, pp. 14-16).
- (b) In many parts of the church’s life, leadership teams or ‘collaborative ministry’ have become important themes. But CPD offers no definition of team ministry, nor any insight about the relationship of team ministry to circuit ministry. (See now, however, Preface para 05 (i) and proposed new standing orders). The Home Mission Division recognises certain team ministries (SO 540 [3]), but they are not indicated on the list of Stations.
- (c) Conversely, informal evidence suggests that in many circuits ministers have become increasingly confined to the section of their circuit where they have pastoral charge, and decreasingly ‘circuit-conscious’.
- (d) Women have been ordained in the Methodist Church since 1974, but there has been little discussion of how our understanding and practice of ordained ministry should be influenced by our experience of the ordained consisting of a community of women and men.

SECTION B: EXPLORING THE TRADITION

010 In this section we examine notions such as ministry, vocation and leadership, giving special attention to the way these and related themes occur in the Bible and touching on aspects of their development in the history of the church. These discussions provide a pattern of thinking with which to review our understanding of ordination.

B.1. MINISTRY

011 The ministry of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the revealer and focus of God's mission in and to the entire created order. Jesus Christ proclaimed and enacted God's saving love for creation; he articulated and lived out the human response which God desires and God's love makes possible – love of God and love of one's fellow human beings. (Mk 12:28-31; Mt 5:43-48). The words of Jesus, his actions, his passion and death on the cross together constituted his ministry (Mk 10:45). Though this is all anchored in its place in history, the spirit of the risen and ascended Christ gives his ministry efficacy in every generation.

012 In the ancient world, the word 'ministry' signified menial and lowly tasks; originally a minister was a waiter at table. Jesus constantly emphasized that the proclamation of God's kingdom and obedience to God's will required humble and costly love (Lk 22:25-27; Jn 13:1-17).

013 The ministry of the church

The church of Jesus Christ has come into being as a result of God's free and sovereign choice (Eph 1:4). God's spirit creates, sustains and guides the church. The aims of the church on earth are:

to worship God who has graciously revealed himself and effected salvation for the world in Jesus Christ (Col 3:16-17);

faithfully to participate as a community in God's continuing mission to the world (Mt 28:18-20; 1 Pet 2:9);

to enable its members to build up one another in faith, hope and obedient love (1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4:11-13).

These aims constitute the church's ministry. The authenticity of the church's ministry is judged by its desire and capacity for witnessing to Jesus Christ.

014 Faith and ministry

The church comprises all who respond in faith to God's mercy in Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2:4-10). By faith we become new beings in Christ; we enter a new life in the Spirit and in the fellowship of God's people. The Spirit sanctifies us (1 Cor 6:11; II Thess 5:23), make us God's saints, set apart for God's service (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2). Our service, or ministry is the life of love for God and for others which the Spirit makes possible (Rom 5:5). Thus every Christian at the time of being called to faith (1 Cor 1:26) is called also to ministry. *This is the general calling into ministry of the people of God: all Christians, in*

receiving God's grace, hear also God's demand to become transformed into the image of Christ, who is Lord and who is perfect love (II Cor 3:18; 1 Cor 13:1-14:1; Mk 10:42-45; Gal 5:13).

015 **Ministry in the world and in the church**

In the New Testament period, converts heard the apostolic preaching and became linked with the worshipping community. Baptism was the way of entering the church; it also focused powerfully the relationship between God's saving grace, the response of faith and the commissioning which all Christians receive to a life of love and service (para 014; Acts 2:38, 10:37-38; Rom 6:1-14; 1 Cor 12:13). Within the continuing worship of the churches, the early Christians experienced activities and relationships which symbolised life in the kingdom of God. Prominent among them were the generous sharing of gifts and possessions (Rom 12:8; Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37); slaves and free sharing equally in the Lord's supper (1 Cor 11:23-34); and the welcome of Gentiles and Jews into the people of God on the same terms (Acts 10-11; Gal 2:1-9, 3:28). None of these was without controversy (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 11:17-22; Gal 2:11-21).

016 The community at worship provided metaphors which illuminated God's call to ministry in daily life and work as well as in the church. Obedience to God in the world was perceived as a sacrificial offering to God (Rom 12:1-2; 1 Pet 2:18-21), analogous to the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving in the worship of the church (Heb 13:15). In general, cultic language was transferred to the total life of the whole people of God. All Christians without distinction were by one author called priests (Rev 1:6), or were said by another author to constitute a priesthood (1 Pet 2:5,10). Christians as Spirit-filled individuals or as a spiritual community became God's temple (1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 2:21-22). This theme was built upon the insight that God's presence was not confined to the church at worship, but was available everywhere (Jn 4:20-24), so that traditional distinctions between sacred and profane were transcended (Hebrews *passim*), or at least drastically altered (II Cor 6:14 - 7:1; Mt 7:6).

017 There were, however, practical distinctions between the outworking of Christian ministry in the world and in the church. In the world, Christians were dispersed and involved in groups and institutions dedicated to ends other than the glory of God in Jesus Christ (Section B.2). Each church was a gathering in community of Christian believers, with its own internal needs and distinct functions in the service of God's mission (Section B.3).

B.2 CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES IN DAILY LIFE AND WORK

018 **The New Testament picture**

The New Testament letters gave more attention to the nurture of the church than to Christian discipleship in the world. This emphasis reflected the early churches' needs; it reflected also the minority status of Christians in the secular world, and their expectation in the near future of the Lord's return and the consummation of God's kingdom. General ethical advice was given about life in the world (Rom 12:14-21, 13:1-7), which in some writings was expressed almost as codified Christian wisdom for living within secular

institutions (Col 3:18 – 4:1; Eph 4:21 – 6:9; 1 Pet 2:18 – 3:7). Paul was especially concerned for Christians to make a good impression in the world (1 Thess 4:11-12; 1 Cor 6:1-6, 10:32).

019 **Historical perspectives**

In the early centuries of the church, discussion of daily life and work continued largely to emphasize the general notion of being a Christian wherever the individual happened to be in society (para 014). As far as the evidence allows us to judge, relatively little attention was given to helping individual Christians to face the question where God wanted them to be and what God wanted them to do in society (a specific 'secular vocation', i.e. a vocation as a Christian centred upon daily life and work in the world); or to become aware of distinctive gifts which God had given them for the service of others (a specific ministry in society).

- 020 In the Middle Ages there was a tendency for a double standard of ethical behaviour to prevail. Christians in the secular sphere had indeed to live by the commands of the gospel, but a more intense form of holiness (sometimes called 'counsels of perfection') had to be practised by those who were ordained or in religious orders. The religious orders (which later included the orders of friars) were open to the non-ordained. Over the centuries there was a tendency too for the male orders to become increasingly clerical. In reaction to this restricted idea of vocation, Martin Luther and John Calvin encouraged the abolition of the religious orders. The orders were forcibly suppressed by Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell in Britain. Today they again provide a way of prayer and devotion to some who feel called to the contemplative life.
- 021 Luther also held that a person's social position, civic duties and daily work were a gift of divine providence. He applied the word 'vocation' to every Christian, ordained and non-ordained alike. Christians were to see their occupations as means of rendering obedience to God through serving their fellow-citizens. This way of thinking was one aspect of the notion of the priesthood of all believers. Within the Lutheran Church 150 years were to pass before Philipp Spener developed that theme on a considerable scale and gave it particular expression in Pietism.
- 022 In other streams of Protestant thought, notably the Reformed tradition, importance was attached to the discernment of and the honest and undistracted pursuit of a Christian's calling, which was now identified with paid employment. This sometimes left little room for sympathy with the plight of the unemployed or of those who were able to obtain only casual employment.
- 023 In Lutheran and Reformed thought a strong sense of vocation attached to the person who was called to pastoral charge of a congregation. In him, vocation in its highest sense, pastoral charge and a revised notion of clerical order came together. This clear picture of the ordained person was less characteristic of the Church of England, which continued to have a body of ordained men who were not in pastoral charge, – a lingering echo of medieval traditions. Methodism has cause to be grateful for this phenomenon, because it gave us John and Charles Wesley.

024 Methodism after the Wesleys largely adopted the Protestant pattern, in which a strong sense of vocation is attributed to an ordained person, who is normally set apart full-time for pastoral and evangelistic ministry. Understanding of ordained ministry in Methodism has been influenced by many diverse developments in social life and theological fashion, and the way in which Methodist ministers have been deployed has changed accordingly. A corporate discipline, linked to the idea of an order, has provided continuity.

025 A call to preach, as distinct from a call to the ordained ministry, has been a feature of Methodism not fully in accord with classical protestantism. Though the vocabulary of vocation has not been used to refer to the self-understanding of non-ordained church members reflecting on the relation of faith to daily work, however, Victorian Methodism was characterized by a great ethical earnestness and concern for the wider community. This was often expressed through service in national and charitable organizations and particularly in local government. Certain occupations and types of leisure activity emerged which reflected 'holy living' in the world. Significant contributions were made to the development of trades unions and to social and political life at all levels; Methodists found their way in great numbers into the caring professions, such as teaching, medicine and nursing. In their leisure they worked – voluntarily as a rule – with children and young people and showed a special care for the elderly and the destitute. A sense of responsibility and even self-sacrifice is characteristic of many Christians in these spheres today.

026 God's call to every Christian to serve Christ in today's world

In contemporary society a bewildering range of opportunities and frustrations face Christian people as they attempt to discern particular jobs or activities about which they say, 'God has called me to do this'. That all life should be dedicated to the way of costly love is clear (para 014). But how are choices to be made between one career and another? On what criteria does a mother or a father balance competing claims between career development and bringing up a family? How does paid employment relate to leisure or to community service? What meaning can be given to a potential career cut short by unemployment or the rapidly changing needs of society?

027 The church needs constantly to develop pastoral skills to assist its members in dealing with questions of these kinds, and in connecting such answers as may emerge to the variety of callings from God to every Christian to serve him inside and outside the life of the church.

028 Each individual brings to the discussion of 'God's call to every Christian' a rich and complex story. Church members should be given greater opportunity to express and share this part of their testimony.

029 (i) A Christian needs to reflect on those daily occupations and areas of service which bring a sense of personal fulfilment. Sometimes the individual Christian is aware of powers, gifts and potential which cry out for further development and expression. In consultation with others a Christian may look for new or additional contexts where newly awakened gifts and newly acquired skills can be employed in witnessing to Christ and serving either the well-being of society or the true harnessing of the natural order.

- 030 From the perspective of faith, these experiences constitute an invitation to discern where one's obedience might lie and to reflect on one's calling. There is a balance to be kept between the call to respond to situations of need which require little more than willingness to serve and the call to direct our lives in the paths indicated by abilities one has been given, or experiences one has accumulated.
- 031 It is important to affirm the enormous range of activities (paid work, voluntary service and in the area of family relationships) which can become for Christian people the context for their call to serve.
- 032 The call to serve God in a specific situation outside the life of the church can vary in length. Some Christians are given one particular ministry which is lifelong. Others discover that they are given a short-term call, and when it is complete or ended by circumstances, they await or seek a further call from God in some new arena of service.
- 033 (ii) Sometimes, however, Christians feel keenly restrictions and restraints preventing significant choices in life. Personal capacities (e.g. physical strength, intellectual abilities, practical skills) are severely limited. Economic necessities, or arbitrary circumstances of birth and upbringing, may drastically limit possibilities. Many Christians in such situations then accept as graciously as possible the limits of the contribution they can make to the well-being of society and the natural order; what tasks can be done are gladly performed to the glory of God. In such circumstances, however, the concept of a calling is not normally appropriate; but the gospel leaves such Christians in no doubt of their worth as people, nor of their general calling into a life of love and service (014).

B.3 ECCLESIAL MINISTRIES

034 To build up the church

'Let all things be done for edification' (1 Cor 14:26) is a theme which underpins all the particular ministries in the church for which God chooses or sets apart individuals. Because the church is part of human history, it is exposed to the dangers of false teaching, the intrusion of worldly values and the ravages of sin (Gal 1:6-9; 1 Jn 2:18-25; 1 Cor 5:1-5; Mt 13:24-30). Individual Christians err and fail, and conflicts arise between Christian brothers and sisters. Ministry can be sacrificial, since it is a consequence of the life-giving of the cross which we share (II Cor 5:14-6:10; Col 1:24-27; Phil 3:10-11; John 10:7-18). Christians therefore need to minister to one another (Mt 18:15-20); and the church as a whole, embodying the richness of the grace manifested in Christ (Eph 4:11-16), must guide, support and discipline its members (1 Cor 5:4; 1 Thess 5:19-22), and assess critically its continuing relationship to the gospel message (1 Cor 15:1-2; Gal 1:6-9). Only those who know their need of God's grace and humbly receive ministry from their fellow-Christians can be channels of God's self-giving love (Jn 13:1-10).

035 All Christians share in the ministry of Christ

In the Pauline churches it was taken for granted that each individual Christian was given a specific ecclesial ministry. In 1 Cor 12, each Christian is said to receive a gift or gifts from the one Spirit, and these gifts constitute the various functions within the body (also Rom 12:4; 1 Cor 16:1-4; Eph 4:7-16). Certainly the worship of the church was the corporate responsibility of all the participants (1 Cor 14, especially vs 26). It is not clear whether this picture was taken for granted by all the NT authors and churches; but our conviction is that the church is most truly what God wants it to be when each Christian, with the help of the Christian community, discerns, develops and uses the Spirit's gifts in ministry.

036 Discerning vocation to ecclesial ministries

The matching of gifts to individuals with their tasks in and for the church is a subtle and sensitive procedure, involving discernment and testing. The following patterns have been evident in the church throughout its history:

The whole church, together with the individual concerned, recognises in a person the gifts needed for a particular piece of work or long-term task.

The church recognises in an individual the gifts and graces needed for a specific ministry; even though those concerned may be unaware of their potential in that area of service or reluctant to offer themselves for the work required, the church calls them to fulfil this ministry.

An individual is inspired by the Spirit to initiate a particular project or serve a need; the church fails at the time to discern the Spirit's work and only belatedly recognises and honours such a prophetic ministry.

The church has important needs which on the surface seem incapable of being met with the limited talents of its members; God through his Spirit gives the gifts through which the church may continue and grow in its mission.

037 Varied in length and nature

There is a rich diversity of words and phrases in the NT (30 in all) used to describe the tasks of individual Christians. Specific forms of church service were diverse in nature (1 Cor 12:5; Rom 12:6-8) and in length. For example:

The Seven were chosen to attend to the needs of the neglected widows in Jerusalem (Acts 6:3-5), so that their work was limited in scope.

Others were appointed to short-term tasks, such as those who gathered up the collection for the Jerusalem church (II Cor 8:17-19).

Paul was set apart for the life-long task of preaching the gospel among the Gentiles (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:15; Acts 9:15).

038 (a) There is nothing in the NT which implies that the importance of a specific ministerial task is related to *the time that must be devoted to it* for its proper fulfilment.

039 (b) The importance of particular ministries is not judged on whether or not *they merit income* for those who fulfil them from the wider church community. In the NT period some did receive payment; others did not (1 Cor 9:3-18; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:17).

040 (c) It is also unwise to discriminate rigidly between ministries in terms of the form of commissioning used for any specific task. In the NT churches there was a wide range of acts of commissioning. These included verbal commissioning (Mk 3:14; Jn 20:17, 21-23); negotiated agreements sealed with the right hand of fellowship (Gal 2:9); election by show of hands (II Cor 8:19); prayer and casting lots (Acts 1:23-26); prayer and laying on of hands (Acts 6:6), accompanied sometimes by fasting (Acts 13:2-3). In the last mentioned category we can discern in the Pastoral Letters the beginnings of the custom which in the later church became the regular method of ordaining elders (1 Tim 4:14, 5:22; II Tim 1:6). We must recall, however, that the NT is silent about the form of commissioning used in a wide range of varied ministries. And even some of the well-established forms carried subtle variations of meaning and significance in different contexts in the rapidly developing life of the churches in the first century. Imposition of hands, for example, expressed not only the idea of appointment, or ordination, to office in a congregation, but also, in different situations, the meanings of blessing (Mk 10:16), healing (Acts 9:17) or conveying the Spirit to new converts (Acts 8:17).

041 Leadership

Issues of *authority and leadership* were inevitably part of the church's experience from the beginning (1 Thess 5:12-13). Leadership is among the relatively small handful of ecclesial ministries given great prominence in the NT (Acts 1:15-26; Rom 10:14-17, 12:6-8, 15:16; 1 Cor 12:28-30; Eph 2:20, 4:11-13; Heb 13:7, 17). There can be no church community without a leader or team of leaders.

042 Leadership is given by the Spirit

Thus (a) In the Christian view, attention is focused on the personal and spiritual qualities of those with a vocation to lead. Autocracy, authoritarianism, self-seeking and manipulation of other people are unacceptable. Servanthood modelled on the ministry of Jesus is basic (Mk 10:45; Jn 13:1-17). Leadership is a ministry. In Paul's experience (II Cor 4:1-12) leadership involved the capacity to enter deeply into another's weakness, hurt and confusion, and to speak creatively out of the leader's own vulnerability so that the other person found new life and courage.

043 (b) Leadership cannot be confined to those formally authorised as leaders. Leadership can arise spontaneously or from an unexpected quarter when a situation demands that an initiative be taken (1 Cor 6:5, 12:28, 16:15). Those formally authorised as leaders exercise their oversight by encouraging church members to contribute their gifts and, where appropriate, to take initiatives, and to enable and sustain the gifts of their partners in ministry. They also carry responsibility for the church remaining true to its nature and mission (II Cor 11:28; Phil 1:9-11).

044 New Testament examples of leadership

(a) Paul the apostle

Paul's primary task as an apostle was to pioneer the life of Christ in new places (Rom 15:20-21). His particular vocation to preach to the Gentiles (Rom 15:16) was part of a larger task of proclaiming the gospel and creating Christian communities among Jews as well as Gentiles (Gal 2:9; Rom 11:13ff), and of drawing all into one in Christ (Gal 3:28).

045 Paul's authority derived from: his sense of call from God through the risen Christ (II Cor 4:1; Gal 1:12-16); his sharing in the common tradition of faith (1 Cor 15:1-11); the recognition given to his work by other accredited authorities (Gal 2:9); his founding of churches (1 Cor 9:2; II Cor 11:2); and the sincerity and integrity of his life (II Cor 1:12, 4:2). He embodied the life and the dying of Christ (II Cor 4:11; Gal 6:14, 17). So he could address the church: 'Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ' (1 Cor 11:1).

046 Paul did not work alone. His co-workers were indispensable assistants (1 Cor 1:1; II Cor 8:6); he always relied upon material and prayerful support from existing congregations (Phil 4); he expected other ministries to overlap with and complement his own (1 Cor 1:14-17, 3:5-9). There should be no simplistic view of the situations described in the New Testament. Leadership and its style were often conditioned by crisis situations. James the brother of Jesus is a crucial example of one who exercised strong leadership. Clearly there were tensions between James and Peter on the one hand and Paul on the other (Gal 1:19; Gal 2; Acts 15). Questions of continuity, as far as we know, did not loom large in the apostolic period. The apostles had a unique role in the foundation of the church, which precluded repetition (Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor 15:1-11).

047 (b) Elder

The Greek word *presbuteros* is a fluid word which, in different contexts, can take one of a range of meanings. It can mean 'old', 'venerable' or 'elder/presbyter'. Thus in 1 Tim 5:1-2 older persons are referred to; in 1 Tim 5:17 'elder' is the most natural translation. Behind this flexibility of meaning lies an assumption taken for granted in the ancient world, that wisdom and leadership belonged naturally to the older members of society. Greater age elicited greater deference. Longevity thus becomes an aspiration because it merited respect, influence and authority (Ps 91:16). In the Jewish synagogue the elders played their part as leaders because of their social standing in the wider community. At least by the end of the first century and possibly earlier, some Christian churches were organizing local leadership on a similar pattern (fn 3).

048 Elders operated a team leadership (1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5), and it may be that the 'bishop' referred to in 1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:5-6 was head of the team of elders. Appointment was by laying on of hands (1 Tim 5:22; II Tim 1:6). Although the institution of elders may have owed much to Jewish precedents, it was given a distinctively Christian colouring: elders must display high moral qualities (Tit 1:5-6; 1 Pet 5:1-11); leadership must be open to all, as God calls, and not just to the elderly (1 Tim 3:1, 4:12); their authority depends on their

faithfulness in handing on the apostolic tradition of faith and teaching (1 Tim 6:20; 11 Tim 1:14, 2:20).

049 **The trend of historical developments**

Within the New Testament, churches began moving at different rates and along different routes from communities which expected an imminent end to history towards settled institutions preparing for a long-term future. When a single descriptive term is used for a particular ministry, we cannot assume that within the literature, the name carries a fixed meaning. The Greek work *diakonos*, for example, is variously translated in different contexts as 'minister', 'servant' and 'deacon'. In the second and third centuries there continued to be diverse patterns of leadership and varied theological understandings of leadership (including some whose origin lay outside the NT). Increasingly, however, a single pattern of ordained leadership emerged of bishops, presbyters and deacons. This represented the church's experience that the true nature of the church and its mission were expressed in a leadership which was combined in various ways with the *ministries of the word, the sacraments and pastoral care*. The fact that these ministries were integral to the church's life did not negate the truth that in local situations there were always other important and needful ministries determined by local circumstances; or that in different periods a rich variety of groups and communities arose to witness to aspects of Christian faith in danger of being neglected.

050 **Methodist styles of leadership**

(a) One of the distinctive features of Methodism is its adoption of *collective forms of leadership*, most notably in the Conference (e.g. Deed of Union clauses 3(a) and 22), in the Circuit Meeting (SO 512) and in the Church Council, whose responsibilities are defined as follows: 'The general oversight of the Local Church shall be undertaken by the Church Council, exercising leadership over the whole field of the church's concern' (SO 616).

051 (b) *Individual forms of leadership* find their place and purpose within the representative decision-making groups. For example, SO 623 defines the general responsibilities of church stewards as follows: 'The church stewards are corporately responsible with the minister or probationer having pastoral charge of the Local Church for giving leadership and help over the whole range of the church's life and activity. They are particularly charged to hold together in unity the variety of concerns that are contained within the one ministry of the Church. To this end it is their responsibility to uphold and act upon the decisions and policies of the Church Council'.

052 (c) Significant and distinctive leadership is provided by *ordained ministers* who have 'a principal and directing part' within the great duties of being 'Stewards in the household of God and Shepherds of His flock' (CPD pp. 61-62).

053 (d) The key to effective leadership in the church is to ensure that the reasons for the existence of the church and its short-term objectives, following from those reasons are understood, agreed and owned by all the members of the church (para 013). Leadership of this kind gives to all members an equal

responsibility in achieving the church's aims, and liberates them to take initiatives in pursuing these aims. It cannot be stressed too strongly that *good leadership releases, encourages and facilitates the putting to good use of the enormous variety of gifts among all God's people in the service of the church.*

- 054 (e) A neglected form of leadership is the *ministry of visitation*. In the biblical tradition the verb 'to visit' characteristically describes God's looking up individuals or the people with a concern for their welfare. His visitation was focused in Jesus (Lk 1:68, 1:78, 7:16, 9:1-10); it brought blessings to the weak and disadvantaged (Mt 25:36, 43; Jas 1:27), but judgement to the disobedient and blind (Lk 19:43-44). The ministry of visitation to churches is practised by a leader (or a team of leaders) visiting a church from outside to bring a fresh and critical perspective to its understanding of its life and work (Acts 11:22-24, 15:36).
- 055 John Wesley exercised such a ministry to the earliest Methodist societies. The ordained ministers carried on this tradition through the short-term itinerancy and the particular responsibility of the quarterly visitation of the classes (SO 525 [1]). Visiting preachers made an informal contribution. It has traditionally been expected that the superintendent minister will visit all the churches of a circuit to encourage, support and challenge the members of the society. However, contemporary Methodism does not have a widespread system of classes which meet; and expectations about length of appointment of ministers have changed considerably in recent decades, as have the expectations about the relationship of an ordained minister to the locality where he or she resides and to churches in his or her pastoral charge.

056 **Ministers of word, sacraments and pastoral care in the Methodist tradition**

The Ministry of the Word

This has many aspects. It includes:

- witness and evangelism in secular contexts, by which men and women are called to faith;
- the creation of new Christian communities and groups in situations where Christ is not known or honoured;
- study and exposition of the scriptures;
- preaching the gospel and teaching within the worship of the church;
- parents in the home and teachers in Junior Church teaching children about God;
- the work of theologians (an increasing number of whom are not ordained).

057 **The ministry of the sacraments**

Baptism and Holy Communion are corporate acts of celebration involving the whole congregation. Participation by a range of individuals in the preparation of these services (e.g. church and communion stewards, baptismal roll secretary) and in their conduct (reading from the Bible, preaching, leading intercessions, accompanying hymns, assisting with the distribution of bread and wine) enhances the corporate nature of the event. In Methodist practice

and discipline it is normal for an ordained person to administer the Sacrament of Baptism and to preside at the celebration of the Lord's Supper; Conference makes arrangements for variation from this rule (MSB p.A3, para 122; SO 011; 'Lay Presidency at the Lord's Supper', *Agenda*, 1984, pp. 24-27).

058 The ministry of pastoral care

Pastoral care involves Christians in God's continuing work of healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling and enabling people to co-operate for the well-being of human communities and in the struggle for justice, freedom and peace. This ministry too takes many forms, and is strengthened by many and various contributions, formal and informal, from church members. One main purpose of pastoral care is to enable Christians to develop as ministers in the general sense, i.e. increasingly to dedicate their lives to the way of loving service. Necessarily, therefore, pastoral care includes the help given to Christian people to discern their vocations, in the church and in the world.

059 General observations on the ministries of word, sacraments and pastoral care.

(a) *Each of these ministries is normally exercised in a variety of ways by a large number of Christians* both in the world and in the church (fn4). The ministry of the word, for example, can happen informally when a Christian bears testimony to his or her faith; or it can happen more formally when an accredited local preacher or ordained minister delivers a sermon. Thus the exercise of these crucial ministries should be viewed as a collaborative activity.

060 (b) *Each of these forms of ministry needs its own leadership.* A leader of such a ministry carries great responsibilities. It is therefore vital for the well-being of the church that such a leader be accountable to the church as a whole. This requires a rigorous discipline and proper authorisation for leaders in these ministries, but not necessarily for all who share in these ministries with the leader. Thus in the circuit situation it is obviously right to give connexional recognition and commissioning to a local preacher after appropriate training and examination. It seems right also to continue the established custom in local churches of formally recognising and commissioning class leaders, pastoral visitors, and workers with children and young people.

061 (c) *Leadership* in the ministries of word, sacraments and pastoral care needs to be exercised in a manner which encourages church members to share in them. (See again note 4). The impression is sometimes given, both to those authorised to these ministries and also to members not so authorised, that the performance of these ministries, which are crucial to the church's identity and purpose, may be left to those formally recognised and commissioned. Then proclaiming God's word is confined to the local and ordained preachers, pastoral care to class leaders, and so forth. Gifts and insights of diverse and enriching kinds in the congregation lie unused; or church members lose confidence in the value of their informal contributions. By encouraging its members to share in these important ministries, the church broadens the ways in which they may be understood. Gifts of healing or teaching, for example, widen the church's experience of pastoral care and the ministry of the word respectively (paras. 056-058). The quiet, supportive and prayerful ministry

which many church members give to those who carry specific responsibilities or who initiate new ministries is an invaluable contribution in itself; it is also the means of sharing in those tasks upon which the church's identity and purpose rest.

062 (d) We believe it would be valuable if churches could *recognise in informal ways* the many and various ministries which the Church needs and needs to release. The Covenant Service is one appropriate context for this; in addition particular persons and specific ministries could be mentioned regularly in the prayers of the church.

063 **The relation between leadership ministries and the ministries of word, sacraments and pastoral care**

It is not *necessary* for those appointed to positions of leadership (eg church and circuit stewards, Divisional Secretaries [fn 5]) also to exercise formal and accredited roles in the ministries of word, sacraments and pastoral care, though they may do so.

064 Ordained ministers may, in the first instance, be defined as those persons who are called by God to a ministry which combines a ministry of oversight (which may be exercised at circuit, district or connexional level) with formal leadership in the ministries of the word, sacraments and pastoral care.

065 **The meaning of ordination**

The office, or role, of the ordained minister focuses the calling of the church as a whole (see paras 013, 043).

066 Those whom God calls to the ordained ministry cannot expect adequately to fulfil the role, either individually or collectively. However, to point as accurately as possible to the ideal, the church tests a vocation to ordained ministry at every level of its life, looking for appropriate gifts or the potential to develop appropriate gifts, and seeking also evidence of personal Christian maturity and openness. It trains accepted candidates and places them under discipline with respect to stationing, character, fidelity and competence (SO 481 [iii]). In the Methodist Church, commitment to the ordained ministry has been understood to be life-long.

067 The 1974 report on *Ordination* summed up the theology of ordination as follows: 'As a perpetual reminder of (the calling of the people of God) and as a means of being obedient to it, the Church sets apart men and women, specially called, in ordination. In their office the calling of the whole Church is focussed and represented, and it is their responsibility as representative persons to lead the people to share with them in that calling. In this sense they are the sign of the presence and ministry of Christ in the Church and through the Church to the world' (para 014).

068 **The focus of the church's ministry: individual and corporate.**

The ordained ministry, like every other ecclesial ministry, must be set firmly within the church and its aims. Some account must therefore be given of the precise relationship between ordained ministry and the focal significance for

the church of non-ordained leadership in the ministries of the word and of pastoral care [fn 6] and of all other ministries of leadership. Distinct emphases may be discerned in the Methodist tradition.

069 Some have seen *the ordained minister as an individual always leading and focusing the diverse leadership ministries in the church.*

070 Others have seen *the ordained ministry in partnership with all other leadership ministries together focusing in each context the calling of the whole church.*

071 We wish to underline our belief that the pluralist nature of the contemporary Methodist Church and the history of the Methodist tradition require us to recognize that Christ's ministry in his church is validly expressed both through a focal person and through conciliar and collaborative models of leadership. Methodism flourishes when these models of ministry are seen as complementary and mutually enhancing.

072 In each Methodist community Ministers and Ministers in Local Appointments, Deacons and Deaconesses, Lay Workers, Local Preachers, Stewards, and other lay leaders and workers will often need to work as a team in ways that some of them may never have done before. If new leadership and collaborative skills are to emerge, this approach will require reflection, planning and training.

073 **Professionalism and the ordained ministry.**

In recent generations the professionalisation of the ordained ministry has increased in line with the professionalisation of much of society. The emergence of the professions has been a mixed blessing. The benefits to the ordained ministry have been demonstrated in a deeper concern for standards of training, levels of competence in the performance of tasks, and accountability of ordained ministers to one another. These gains have derived from an understanding of professionalism which stresses that skills and knowledge are developed among professionals with a view to the professionals working with other people and enabling others to take a responsible share in appropriate tasks. Our congregations expect competence and theological knowledge from ordained ministers. They have an important part to play both in transmitting theological knowledge and in enabling their congregations to think theologically and to realize their own theological skills and insights. However, theology is not confined to the experts, but is for all. There are familiar difficulties which arise in all professions from the fact that members of a profession do acquire a body of knowledge and experience which separates them from other people. Thus: the gap between the training and competence of the professional and the relatively undeveloped gifts and skills of those who are not professionals is so large that co-operation becomes difficult if not impossible; professional groups are constantly tempted to believe that they are the sole guardians of expertise and insight in their area of competence; professions can therefore become defensive, self-perpetuating, oppressive and indifferent to the needs and wisdom of those they are intending to serve; and conversely, non-professionals easily become unduly dependent upon professional expertise and lose confidence in their own gifts and skills.

- 074 The benefits and the difficulties of the professionalisation of the ordained ministry are evident within Methodism. The difficulties need to be more widely and critically discerned throughout the church. Ordained ministers need to develop their professional practice with a clearer understanding of its strengths and limitations in the life of the church and the world. Issues to be faced in the pursuit of collaborative styles of leadership include the following:
- 075 (a) *New styles of leadership.* What may appear as a too highly professionalized style of leadership, owing to the preponderance of men in the ordained ministry, ought not to provide the only model of leadership. Alternative styles of leadership should be encouraged. Insight from women, ethnic minority groups and social groups other than the predominantly male middle or lower middle class would be helpful.
- 076 (b) *Using conflict creatively.* In a highly institutionalised community like Methodism with established professional leadership in the ordained ministry, it is difficult for leaders also to be self-critical, and thereby to fulfil a prophetic ministry.
- 077 Leaders in secular communities have frequently recognised the value of the person without status who brings a profoundly critical perspective to the prevailing values and concerns of those in authority; hence the jester in the king's court, the clown in the circus, or the role of the investigative journalist in modern society. Ordained ministers in particular need structures where they can listen attentively to others, especially the young, as well as to those with experience and styles of leadership outside their normal world-view.
- 078 (c) *Liberating ordained ministers from destructive levels of stress.* Ordained ministers do not carry ultimate responsibility for the church. God himself carries responsibility for it. That responsibility he graciously shares with all his people. Leadership in the church, itself a collaborative ministry of ordained and non-ordained, operates well when it is set within this context and is therefore able to operate within reasonable boundaries (para 053). Ordained ministers have much to learn from many church members who have to cope with inordinate levels of stress in contemporary society.
- 079 Ordained Ministers, Deacons, Deaconesses and Lay Workers, whose primary focus of ministry is within the life of the local church or circuit, need time for their families, other interests and leisure pursuits. Much of the conflict in these areas is in fact shared by other busy and committed Christians in their lay ministries within the church and also by those ministers in connexional and other appointments.
- 080 (d) *All Christians represent Christ.* The church flourishes when all its members, ordained and non-ordained, affirm one another as representatives of Christ and the church to the world and as signs of the presence of Christ in the church. When the strong in the church (who usually include the ordained ministers) defer to and encourage the weak, and when the weak bear their testimony to the strong, the collaborative ministry of the whole church is enriched.

SECTION C: MINISTRY & CHURCH STRUCTURES

C.1 CONTINUITY & CHANGE

- 081 The basic structures which have served Methodism throughout most of its history, focused in the local church and the circuit, will continue into the foreseeable future (SO 600). These structures can be used imaginatively to nurture the ministry of all God's people. At appropriate levels of the church's life, significant adaptations of Methodist Church structures and disciplines may be necessary.
- 082 Church structures can frustrate or encourage individual Christian discipleship. Supportive structures are those which cohere with the insights about ministry, vocation and leadership which are widely subscribed to in the church. Section B attempts to summarise these insights.
- 083 There is no simple way of deducing appropriate church structures from a limited statement about the church and Christian ministry. In practice structures evolve from what may be learned from the Bible, Christian history and current developments and pressures both in the churches and in non-ecclesiastical institutions. In what follows we set forward outlines of what we believe to be the next important stages in the development of Methodist Church structures. We are not offering rigid blueprints to be imposed on the church, but guidelines within which appropriate groups may be able to envisage possibilities for themselves. In the not too distant future we expect that the Conference will receive further recommendations, for which these current proposals will be seen as having prepared the way.

C.2a THE METHODIST DIACONAL ORDER

- 084 At this point in the original report, proposals were made for a Methodist Order for Mission and Ministry (MOMM). As explained in the Preface (para 04), two factors have led us drastically to alter what was envisaged.
- 085 The first is that during the period of the production of the report the Wesley Deaconess Order has reopened to receive both male and female candidates.
- 086 The second is the widespread opposition to the Methodist Order of Mission and Ministry which was recorded in the responses. The objections were of various kinds (See Appendix):
- (a) that the operation of the proposed system on a district basis was unsatisfactory;
 - (b) that it would upset the balanced relationship between ministry and laity;
 - (c) that it would create confusion with the Wesley Deaconess Order;
 - (d) that it did not take account of Local Preachers, so that it was not clear how they would relate to the new order, if at all;
 - (e) that the proposals would involve a grouping whose scope was so wide that the variety of workers comprised by it would be unacceptable;
 - (f) that the scheme would create problems of cost;

(g) that it would raise the question ‘Would not every Methodist member feel eligible?’ Hence the proposals for the Methodist Order of Mission and Ministry were divisive, as drawing an invidious distinction between first and second class Christians.

087 Of these difficulties, we regarded some as answerable, but the last, especially in view of the strength of the negative reaction on this score, as sufficiently telling to lead us to alternative proposals.

088 Not only will the proposed Methodist Diaconal Order (MDO), as it develops from the Wesley Deaconess Order, be open to men as well as women; it will cover a different range of work. But it must not be thought that the Methodist Order of Mission and Ministry is being introduced under another name. The three factors – ordination, life-long commitment and availability for stationing – indicate a parallel with the ordained ministry, from which it will be distinguished by being diaconal rather than presbyteral.

C.2 LAY WORKERS

089 The change in the proposals for the Methodist Order of Mission and Ministry affects the provision made in the Report for those lay workers who have hitherto been covered by SO 581. These will not be part of the Methodist Diaconal Order. Such changes as are thought necessary are listed in the Preface [para 04(iii)], and dealt with in new standing orders. It is hoped that such lay workers as those in OASIS or Cliff College evangelists, who do not fall strictly under the categories of SO 581 may be able to relate to and profit from opportunities that are provided for training and fellowship by the proposed committee within the Division of Ministries.

090 In addition to creating specific offices such as those of the minister, the local preacher or the junior church leader to further the ecclesial ministry, the church has also appointed paid workers with training in secular disciplines so that they may add their skill to the total ministry. Social Workers in the National Children’s Home, Youth Workers, as employed by a number of churches, and those who serve in Methodist Homes for the Aged exemplify such specialist workers. We wish to affirm all these kinds of ministry and hope that the church will continue to do so. The variety of training, skill and understanding available through such workers adds to the resources of any leadership team in the church.

091 Standing orders make provision for a local church to employ a full-time youth worker, youth and community worker, or worker with children (SO 618[3]); for a circuit to employ such a worker (SO 581 [11]); and for a district to employ a Youth Officer (SO 462). All such appointments are now made subject to the authorization of the District Policy Committee (SO 438A). Such appointments are commended.

092 Two important factors are noted concerning such appointments. The first is that many have only become possible when large sums of money have been made available to the Church by external bodies who recognize the value of this form of ministry in the community. The availability of this funding frequently tends to determine the location of the worker.

093 The second is that the management and support structures for such full-time workers can be, and often are, used to promote the appointment of part-time paid workers. Such workers are normally employed on a sessional basis, and again they are often externally funded.

C.3 TEAM LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL CHURCH, CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT

094 The recommendations of the original report on Team Leadership have met with a most encouraging response. (See the appendix). The church has captured a vision of the improved leadership which can result from the widened skills and perspectives of the proposed teams. Section B outlined the central role that collaborative understandings of leadership play in our theological reflection upon the church. In summary, the advantages of team leadership, involving ministers and other workers, are these:

- (i) a team leadership more fully represents the diverse insights and concerns of the Christian community;
- (ii) team leadership facilitates a sharing of responsibility, pastoral support, reflection and action;
- (iii) team leadership opens up the consultative and decision-making process to professional skills available among church members and to the insights and aspirations of church members whose experience is complementary to the world view of ministers.

We commend, with eager expectation, the place of the leadership team in local churches, circuits and districts.

095 The purpose of team leadership, set within a collaborative view of the ministry of the whole church, is: to draw out and use well the ministerial gifts of church members and ministers, and, as a by-product, to liberate ordained leaders to enjoy a more relaxed and coherent understanding of their role and the limits of their responsibility.

096 In what follows, we have drawn upon the insights of the report on *Team Ministries* (Agenda, 1967, pp. 540-548) and the accumulated experience of the Team Ministry Committee (now called the Committee for Collaborative Ministries).

097 Issues to be faced in setting up team leadership

There is a need to evolve *well-defined, flexible and self-critical leadership teams at every level of the church's life*. We recognise that models of team leadership cannot be imposed on churches, circuits and districts; many ministers will feel temperamentally ill-equipped for participating in teams, or will be anxious about the significant changes of authority and methods of working which involvement in teams inevitably brings. Some of the structural and practical issues which need to be faced are the following.

098 (a) Circuits have become increasingly sectionalised. At this point our practice and our constitution differ. CPD includes the concept of an ordained minister having pastoral charge of a local church, but there is no constitutional place for

a 'section'. However, a section is a highly significant feature of a minister's self-consciousness. While appointments are technically to circuits, in practice they are defined in terms of a section, where it is usually assumed the minister will be the person in whom alone leadership is focused. The circuit often becomes the backcloth, an administrative convenience, or even an irrelevant encumbrance drawing people's attention from their true interests, rather than the natural unit of belonging and mission – for both ordained ministers and local churches. So deeply ingrained has become the identification between an individual ordained minister and a section that considerable effort is put into estimating equivalent workloads among the different sections of a circuit. On occasions this leads to irrational deployment of a minister's pastoral responsibilities – as when, to balance the number of members in each section, churches which have no geographical relationship with each other are lumped together in a section.

- 099 The alternative picture which team leadership of circuits presents is this: Methodist members have the right of fairly ready access to dependable and skilled pastoral care; they need to know to whom they may turn for help, and when and where. However, there is no necessary reason why the person appointed to lead the ministry of pastoral care in a local church should also be the one who will carry the whole range of leadership functions for that church (fn 11). Rather, the circuit leadership team, incorporating all the ordained ministers appointed to the circuit, carries that wider responsibility corporately. In practice this means that a circuit, having guaranteed pastoral care for its members, will be able to assist ministers to find a balance between the following: concentrated effort in a limited area of work (which will in turn be shaped by an individual's aptitude, skills and experience); and the effectiveness of the team.
- 100 (b) The ecumenical movement has encouraged close working relationships between Methodist ministers and ordained ministers of other denominations. The benefits of this co-operation have been incalculable. *Many Methodist ministers will think it is much more natural and creative to enter into ecumenical leadership teams in a locality than to expend considerable effort in generating team leadership in a Methodist circuit at the expense of ecumenical co-operation.*
- 101 Close collegiality between ministers of different denominations has highlighted a further complexity in the self-understanding of Methodist ministers. The latter have sometimes adopted patterns of relationship with congregations and with their colleagues which have, perhaps unconsciously, imitated those characteristic of other denominations. By and large, the denominations with which closest co-operation has evolved have developed more individualistic perceptions of ordained ministry than were traditional within Methodism. In extreme cases this has led a Methodist minister, given responsibility for a considerable number of churches in a section, to repeat many times over the relationship between a minister and a single congregation which has been prevalent in Anglican and Reformed traditions.
- 102 (c) The development of modes of behaviour and of self-understanding characteristic of the professions has been muted but evident among Methodist ministers. Team leadership calls for more thoroughgoing professional practice

among ministers in a way which incorporates critical reflection upon professionalisation in contemporary society. (See paras 073-074).

103 **Basic elements in leadership teams**

It is expected that at different levels of the church's life, and in different locations, a large variety of team leadership structures will emerge and evolve. The unity of leadership patterns will be provided by there being common basic elements in most situations. By way of illustration there now follows an outline of some of these fundamental constituents in relation to circuits. It is hoped that *churches, ecumenical groupings and districts as well as circuits may envisage possibilities appropriate to their own situations and aims.*

- 104 (a) Leadership teams will normally include ministers, deacons, deaconesses, lay workers, circuit stewards and other persons appointed because of their relevant skills.
- 105 (b) The appointment of ministers to circuit leadership teams will need to take account of:
- (i) A significant additional factor in judging the appropriateness of the appointment of a minister to a circuit will be the ability of the prospective new team member and the remaining team-members to work together in the service of the circuit as a whole, and to renegotiate the terms on which they exercise their joint responsibilities.
 - (ii) Circuit stewards will be *ex officio* members of the circuit leadership team, and in this setting will exercise their role in regard to the invitation of ministers.
 - (iii) It will be less exceptional for superintendents to be appointed by the Conference upon nomination from among ministers already serving in the circuit. While there may be some circuits where it is, for example, on geographical grounds, desirable for the superintendent to be stationed at a particular centre, there are others where it could be beneficial for the superintendency to be detached from the churches with which it has been long associated.
- 106 (c) The purpose of the circuit leadership team is to enable the Circuit meeting to fulfil its responsibilities as set out in SO 512. To this end, a statement of purpose, closely imitating the mood of SO 623, will be a valuable asset for leadership teams. Particular functions for the circuit leadership team (under the Circuit meeting) will be:
- to provide support, resources and training for local churches and particularly for local church leaders;
 - to provide resources for the mission of the church at circuit level, by stimulating awareness of the need and contributions to it;
 - to exercise a ministry of visitation to the local churches (para 054), (fn 13) or to ensure that visitations take place.
- 107 (d) Team leadership, by its very existence is a structural encouragement to churches to discover the advantages of collaborative ministry in the church as

a whole – releasing gifts among church members, sharing skills, encouraging imaginative tasks, providing support through interdependence, deploying gifts and skills flexibly. It is the task of the local Church Council to identify for the local church its most important ministries at any point in time and to consult with the circuit leadership team how appropriate resources might be found in the local church itself, in neighbouring churches or in the circuit leadership team.

(e) The Chairman of the District is required and expected to use God's gifts and graces as pastor to the ministers, probationers, deacons, deaconesses and lay workers of the district, and to lead or encourage the total ministry of the district in preaching, worship, evangelism, pastoral care, teaching and administration. During the initial stages of new patterns and styles of collaborative team leadership at circuit and local church level the involvement of the Chairman, together with other gifted people, will be a vital step in such developments.

108 **The Diversity of existing ecclesial ministries**

At the same time as Methodism gives formal recognition to different expressions of ordained ministry as well as to the Methodist Diaconal Order and to the work of those now operating under SO 581, it is essential that we should reaffirm the existence and value of a rich variety of ministries and the need to train those who exercise them.

(a) A single corporate act of worship can require the gifts of many trained individuals quite apart from the vital contribution of the congregation itself. In each worshipping community there is a constant demand for the calling and training of flower arrangers, door stewards, communion stewards, choristers, musicians, directors of drama, makers of banners, operators of audio-visual equipment, leaders of intercessions and readers of the Scriptures, as well as local preachers and the duty church stewards.

(b) The building up of the local Christian community requires the calling and training of leaders and workers with young people's clubs, fellowships and organizations; leaders of children's and young people's groups, fellowships for all ages, clubs for the house-bound and elderly people, besides class-leaders and pastoral visitors (with a new appraisal of their responsibilities) and teachers in Junior Church.

(c) Local church life can be transformed by the pastoral and administrative skills of committee secretaries, caretakers, property stewards, hosts and hostesses, stall-holders, caterers and treasurers.

C.4. DEVELOPMENTS IN ORDAINED MINISTRY

109 Among ordained ministers there is a wide diversity of understanding of the nature and functions of their ministry. In recent decades ministers, attempting faithfully and imaginatively to respond to their calling and to the complexities of contemporary society, have pressed for more flexible patterns of deployment for the ordained ministry. In reviewing these processes, sufficient basic common understandings and adequate minimum, flexible structures must be provided to guard the principle that Methodist ministers belong to one ministry (para 24).

110 Appropriate structures need to be developed to enable the diverse components of the ordained ministry to enrich one another, to foster mutual awareness, support and identity.

111 Structures cannot guarantee to create a sense of mutual belonging among ministers. Personal qualities of trust, understanding, respect and co-operation are called for. Ordained ministers have not always found this easy, especially when perceptions about priorities have differed sharply.

112 **Varied forms of ordained ministry**

Ordained ministry is an ecclesial ministry (see B.3, note 1). One way of understanding the diversity of forms of ordained ministry is to identify the primary focus of the ecclesial ministry exercised by an individual ordained minister. For example,

- (a) The itinerant minister works primarily within, for, and from the churches in a circuit.
- (b) Some ministers are called to work primarily at District or Connexional level, in a variety of ways (e.g. President and Secretary of Conference, Divisional Secretaries, College Tutors, District Chairmen).
- (c) A few ministers are seconded to other denominations or ecumenical agencies in ministries whose primary focus is comparable with the range of possibilities covered by (a) and (b).
- (d) A considerable number of ministers pursue their ministry primarily in a secular context, either in a particular institution or in a sector of contemporary secular life. (See further C.4.1 below).

113 Within these broad categories there are many variations, e.g. a minister who works part time in a circuit and part time in a connexional job. We wish to develop further the diversity of ways in which ordained ministry may be exercised by commending Local Ordained Ministry (See C.4.2 below) (fn 15).

114 **Appointment, Station and Residence**

Traditionally ‘appointment’ and ‘station’ were interchangeable terms for Methodist ordained ministers, and both were linked with residence. This remains the case for most circuit appointments. However, to cope with the increasing diversity of forms of the one ordained ministry, it may be helpful to distinguish appointment and station as follows.

115 An ordained minister’s *appointment* identifies the primary location of his or her ecclesial ordained ministry; the *station* indicates the context in which an individual minister may find structured pastoral support within the church and accountability to the church at large for his or her ministry.

116 In the case of ministers with district or connexional appointments, appointment and station remain interchangeable terms but are separated from residence. In the case of ministers in other appointments, appointment and station are

clearly distinguished. Similarly, ordained ministers without appointment nevertheless have a station linked to residence.

C.4.1 Ministers in Sector Appointments and Other Appointments

117 The category of ministers in other appointments now includes all ordained ministers, who, with the permission of the church or at the behest of the church, work whole time in an institution or context outside the gift of the Methodist Church. This category replaced 'Sector Ministry', which in 1969 had itself replaced 'Permission to serve external organizations'. The present category is arguably too broad and imprecise. We recommend that the Advisory Committee on Ministerial Appointments continue to be responsible for Ministers without Appointment, and for two further categories of ordained ministers: (i) Ministers in the Sectors and (ii) Ministers who serve other denominations or ecumenical agencies.

118 The ministry of the people of God derives its nature and purpose from the life and work of Christ, and the kingdom he came to proclaim and inaugurate. All ministry is derived from Christ and the church, and is exercised for the sake of the kingdom. In response to the changing nature of the contemporary world, God calls his people to exercise their distinctive and diverse ministries to the full. Thus Ministers in the Sectors, like all other ordained ministers, represent and focus both the ministry of Christ and the ministry of the whole church: like all ordained ministers, Ministers in Sector Appointments seek to encourage and train Christians so that they fulfil their calling in their places of work. Methodism must continue to train its people in the art of effective and sensitive witness in their daily occupation. Ministers in Sector Appointments share a particular responsibility for this task.

119 Ministers in the Sectors and in other appointments perceive the area of their daily work as the primary place in which they exercise their calling. They work alongside Christians of all denominations, learning from them, enabling them and stimulating them to discern the shape and form of individual and corporate Christian presence and witness in their place of work. They also work alongside men and women who own no allegiance to any Christian church. A Methodist minister, appointed to work in a secular setting is a sign to the church of the urgent need to work towards collaboration between all ministries across denominational boundaries, and towards the emergence of one church renewed for mission.

120 The development of Ministers in Sector Appointments within Methodism has been complemented by the growth of similar forms of ordained ministry in other denominations (for example, work-focused non-stipendiary ministry in the Church of England). Methodist Ministers in Sector Appointments seek to co-operate and share their insights and resources with sector ministers of whatever title, in other churches.

121 Ministry in the Sectors and Circuit-based Ministry

There is one ordained ministry. Those who are based in the circuits, together with all other Methodist ministers, participate in it equally, and together constitute its unity. The prompting of the Holy Spirit towards ordination is acknowledged and affirmed by the church for ministers in secular employment

as it is for those working in circuits. All ordained ministers are alike required to share in a Synod service of rededication, which at present incorporates the Resolutions on Pastoral work (CPD p418). Resolution 6 reads: ‘We resolve afresh to seek every opportunity to minister in Christ’s name to those who work in industry, local government, and other sectors of the life of the community’ (CPD p573). By and large, circuit ministers fulfil this obligation by pastoral conversation in domestic and local settings with lay people involved in various sectors, and by local chaplaincies. Ministers in secular appointments exercise the same ministry from within one of the distinct sectors of modern life. Thus ordained ministers (a) in circuit appointments, (b) in sector appointments, and (c) in other appointments complement one another, so that co-operatively they may seek every opportunity of furthering the ministry of the whole people of God in and through their daily work.

- 122 The present Standing Orders (Section 74) address the situation where an ordained minister takes the initiative in applying for an appointment within a sector of contemporary society. Such appointments are integral to the mission of the church, and serve (among other objectives) to support the laity exercising their calling in such sectors. The Advisory Committee on Ministerial Appointments should take opportunities to invite appropriately qualified men and women to apply for appointments in secular institutions and contexts, as well as encouraging suitable candidates who take the initiative themselves to explore such possibilities. This task should be performed with an awareness of key contemporary issues.
- 123 Ministers in Sector Appointments are accountable to, and should be supported by their employers, and also by the local church from whom they should receive prayerful encouragement. In the case of the church, there must be a two-way process of mutual responsibility and support. This needs clear and constant recognition and great care by all concerned.
- 124 Each Minister in a Sector Appointment will continue to be stationed. Special attention should be given by District Chairmen, Superintendents and local leadership teams when a Minister in a Sector Appointment or in Another Appointment is entered in the stations. Such a person’s ecclesial ministry needs constant and wide affirmation within the circuit. Ministers in the Sector Appointments should be given adequate opportunities (within the demands of their daily work) to preside at the Lord’s Supper, to preach in the local circuit regularly and to be an integral part of a particular congregation.
- 125 The original report suggested the possibility of some Ministers in Sector Appointments being placed in a station on a District list (rather than a circuit station, as at present). We have concluded that this issue should be referred to the group proposed in para 127, below.
- 126 In all cases it should be the responsibility of the District Chairman, in consultation with the Ministers in Sector Appointments and the Circuit Superintendents, to ensure that appropriate structures for mutual support and accountability are established. Care should be taken to incorporate appropriate lay people and circuit ministers in the supportive structures.

127 It is recommended that there be instituted a representative group of District Chairmen and Ministers in Sector Appointments to draw up further guidelines concerned with mutual accountability and support. This group should be appointed by the Division of Ministries and convened by the Secretary of the Advisory Committee on Ministerial Appointments. This group should consider the possibility of establishing, with Divisional involvement, an annual meeting of all ministers in Sector Appointments. The group should report to Conference through the Board of the Division of Ministries.

C.4.2. Ministers in Local Appointments

128 The concept of a local (that is, a non-stipendiary and non-itinerant) ordained ministry has been discussed by the Conference on a number of occasions, most notably in 1977 and 1978. The *formal definition* provided in the 1978 Report was:

Ministers in local appointments, like all ministers, believe themselves called of God to the ordained ministry. This call the church tests and recognizes. They are trained for that ministry so that they are competent to exercise it. Like all ordinands, upon the recommendation of their District Synod, they are received into full connexion by the Conference and ordained. They are leaders of worship, preachers of the Gospel, pastors within and outside the life of the Church, enablers and administrators. They are accountable to the Conference, and stationed in circuits by its authority. Their conditions of service and their relationship to the Conference are different from those of stipendiary ministers in that they are not entitled to a manse, stipend or pension, but only to agreed expenses incurred in the course of their circuit duties, and they are not subject to itinerancy.

129 It is unclear to what degree, if any, the Conference can be said to have accepted this concept in principle (fn 17). Conference is invited to look freshly at its implications in the light of Section B of this report. The discussion of ministry, vocation and leadership in Section B provides a framework of thought which makes possible the notion of a local ordained ministry, alongside of and working co-operatively with the stipendiary, itinerant ordained ministry.

130 *The arguments in favour* of Ministers in Local Appointments are twofold.

(a) What section B permits in our conception of ordained ministry:

(i) Paras 038, 039 imply that ordained ministry is not essentially whole-time or stipendiary.

131 (ii) Para 079 refers to the balance of ecclesial and secular vocations in the total discipleship of a stipendiary, itinerant ordained minister. The relative weight given to ecclesial and secular vocations has for many years varied from one minister to another. This has also been true for many other church members. We therefore conclude that there will be some who, throughout their ordained ministry or for a portion of their ordained ministry, will experience a call to work in paid, full-time (or part-time) secular employment and exercise their ecclesial ministry as ordained persons on a non-stipendiary and part-time basis in a circuit. (In occasional circumstances some stipend

appropriate to part-time work might be paid in addition to expenses). Thus the difference between a Minister in a Local Appointment and an Itinerant Minister of the traditional type is not a difference in kind, but a difference of *balance* in the outworking of their faith and obedience *between ecclesial and secular vocations*.

- 132 (b) Emphases in section B which can be given clear institutional expression through local ordained ministry.

Two emphases are noteworthy here: the stress on collaborative styles of ministry; and the encouragement to all Christians to discern their secular vocation as a significant focus of their discipleship.

- 133 (i) Traditionally the Methodist minister in rural and many urban areas was available to any particular church in his circuit or section only for limited periods on specific days. Frequently he acted almost as a chaplain, who visited some of the churches from time to time and worked intensively in the period available in areas of ministry considered to be of greatest importance, leaving the effective oversight of the churches between his visits to local leaders. During the twentieth century, the rapid improvement in communications and ease of travel have dramatically affected the relationships between ministers and congregations in all social settings. Sometimes this has led to undue dependence upon and unrealistic expectations of ministers, and to excessive stress in the life-style of ordained persons. A Minister in a Local Appointment will be available only within restricted periods of time for the duties of ordained ministry. This fact will help church members and ministers to discern the importance of working together and sharing responsibility for the church's well-being. It is not envisaged that a circuit will be staffed wholly by Ministers in Local Appointments, so there is no danger of normal expectations about pastoral support in emergencies being undermined. However, a local church, assessing in consultation with the circuit its resources of ministry and its needs and priorities, will have to ask: How can we best use this minister in this local appointment?

- 134 (ii) This proposal will also enrich the ministry of the whole people of God by the Minister in a Local Appointment displaying in his or her own life serious Christian obedience in a secular as well as ecclesiastical setting. This will facilitate church members identifying more readily with their minister, and in turn will help ministers to empathise more deeply with the needs and diverse claims upon time and energy experienced by Christian people endeavouring to live their lives well in both church and society.

135 **Ministry in Local Appointments builds on the experience of some circuits**

In practice the advent of Ministers in Local Appointments will not cause undue disruption in the ministry of leadership offered to circuits and churches. There is already in Methodism experience of ordained ministers being available to churches only part-time, and within restricted periods. We instance: supernumerary ministers doing part-time work in circuits; some part-time circuit appointments (the other part of an ordained minister's time being devoted to, say, a connexional job); and the limited voluntary ecclesial ministry sometimes offered by Ministers without appointment, and by Ministers in other appointments.

136 **Earlier unease about Ministers in Local Appointments**

When the issue of Ministers in Local Appointments has been discussed previously by the Conference, many have expressed unease at any deviation from the notion of an ordained minister being available whole-time for his or her work. We suspect the springs of this unease are fourfold: the importance of whole-timeness as a sign of a profound commitment to Christ; the parity of all presbyters; the effects on congregation and minister of a near-permanent relationship; and the future of itinerancy. Our comments on these themes are as follows.

- 137 (i) It is true that part of the witness of ministers is to be a sign to the church of the depth and of the unconditional character of commitment to Christ that baptism lays upon every Christian. That testimony is shared with many others in the church who are not ordained. However, the quality of such witness in an ordained person is expressed in a life lived 'in every part' in Christ-like love and service, and is not confined to an ordained person's ecclesial ministry. It therefore becomes of less significance whether an ordained ministry is whole-time or part-time in the service of the church.
- 138 (ii) Ordained ministry in the Methodist Church has already experience of diverse structures (varied forms of initial training; Ministers in other appointments; Ministers without appointment). The advent of Ministers in Local Appointments need not threaten the unity of the ordained ministry as a whole. Until Methodism has experience of incorporating such ministers into its polity, we suggest that it is essential that the conditions and process of candidature for such ministry shall be identical to those for itinerant ministry; and that the initial training for Ministers in Local Appointments shall take place within one of the patterns recognised for the training of itinerant ministry. This will ensure interchangeability between local and itinerant ministers, a flexibility which will be to the advantage of the church and of ministers themselves. Such interchangeability emphasizes what is in any case true, that the validity of the ordination of a local ordained minister is not confined to a limited geographical area; a Minister in a Local Appointment shares with all other presbyters ordination into the church of God.
- 139 From the point of view of the ordained minister, his or her sense of participating in the body of ordained ministers will be enhanced by a developing self-understanding as a professional person. A minister's identity, confidence and competence can be secured through appropriate training, probation and acceptance within the discipline and ethos of the corporate body of ordained ministers. Continued recognition and 'status' are compatible, as in other professions with time off from the practice of the profession and with part-time or unpaid, voluntary practice of the profession.
- 140 (iii) Many congregations will fear that if they are served by a Minister in a Local Appointment who is not subject to itinerancy, problems may arise: if relationships between ordained minister and congregation become difficult, or if an ordained minister becomes so settled in a church that he or she loses the capacity to challenge a congregation to new understandings of the gospel or new ways of exercising its ministry, how can the relationship be significantly changed or concluded? A number of factors may help in such situations:

no congregation or Minister in a Local Appointment will exist in isolation from other churches or other ordained ministers in the circuit, and this wider context may help towards reconciliation, mutual understanding, or redeployment of pastoral oversight;

we believe that a scheme for the exercise of such a ministry, including a job description, will provide a useful contribution to agreed expectations and responsibilities for both the Minister in a Local Appointment and for the church; the job description may include an initial term of service prior to a thorough review of the working arrangements;

in the event of a reduction in circuit staff, the District Chairman, Superintendent and the circuit leadership team must be careful not to off-load the extra work on to a Minister in a Local Appointment whose workload has already been determined;

an increasing confidence in a ministry of visitation, a periodic critical evaluation of the relationship between a church and a Minister in a Local Appointment, and a careful programme of further training appropriate for Ministers in Local Appointments will enhance the capacity for personal growth and sensitivity.

141 There may be a number of situations where it will be necessary to terminate the engagement of Ministers in Local Appointments, who might then become Ministers without Appointment. However, long before such action would become necessary, congregations and ministers will be called upon to deepen those qualities of trust, patience, honesty and generosity which underlie all attempt to build community. It is essential that such qualities underlie the whole development of Ministers in Local Appointments.

142 (iv) We expect that in the immediate future, Ministers in Local Appointments will constitute a small proportion of the whole. Problems relating to the itinerant principle may, in due course, need to be considered by Conference upon advice tendered by the Stationing Committee.

143-145

C.4.3 Some consequences of the above proposals

C.4.4 Ministers without Appointment

Matters dealt with under these headings in the original Report are now covered in the proposed new standing orders. But one further consequence emerged in preparing the legislation for Ministers in Local Appointments. At present, the calculation of each circuit's lay representation to the Synod is based upon the number of ministers in the full work and probationers appointed to that circuit [SO 410 (1) (v)]. However, we believe that, regardless of our proposals for the introduction of this form of ministry, the time has come for a fresh look at whether this basis of representation is still appropriate in view of the diversities of ministry already existing, and we therefore bring forward Resolution 6 d) below.

C.4.5 Episcopacy

- 146 The Methodist Church has been enriched by many forms of 'episcopate' (oversight). 'This oversight is exercised both corporately and individually. It is exercised corporately, for example, by Conference, Synods, Circuit Meetings, Pastoral Committees and individually by the President, Chairmen, Superintendents, Ministers, Class Leaders' (*Episcopacy in the Methodist Church*, Section C.3). This report summarises and comments on this Methodist practice in paras 050-064, and provides its theological basis in paras 041-048.
- 147 We judge that the time is not right for Methodism to introduce the historic episcopate into its system, for the following reasons.
- (a) Sections C.2-4 of this report propose far-reaching changes in the structure of the Methodist Church. Their detailed implementation will absorb energy and imagination, if Conference approves them in principle. Concentrated application of resources to secure these changes in such a way as to win general approval throughout the church is a high priority for the Methodist Church as it pursues its mission in contemporary society.
 - (b) Any move unilaterally to take the historic episcopate into our system would at present be damagingly divisive within Methodism.
 - (c) we perceive the ecumenical situation to be uncertain and changing, so that the ecumenical implications of any such step would be unclear.
- 148 We recommend that if and when the church judges it right to incorporate the historic episcopate into its polity, it will espouse an understanding of episcopacy which coheres with the theology of leadership in Section B of this report, the recommendations of the report *Episcopacy in the Methodist Church*, and the guidance given in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* ('Ministry', paras 20-25).

C.4.6 Nomenclature

- 149 Questions of this nature are dealt with elsewhere, particularly in the Preface (05 [i]).

Notes

1. (B.3) We prefer 'ecclesial' to 'ecclesiastical' because the latter tends to carry with it a picture of the church as a settled, rather inward-looking and bureaucratic institution. An 'ecclesial' ministry, properly understood, is a fluid concept, which refers to a wide range of imaginative forms of service which clarify and strengthen the Christian identity of the church as a human community and which furthers the church's outreach into every facet of the world's life.
2. (041) Omitted.
3. (047) Church leaders are referred to as elders in the NT as follows: Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:4, 6, 22, 16:4, 20:17, 21:18; I Tim. 5:17-19; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; II John 1.

4. (059) The exception to this might be the ministry of the sacraments. In the Deed of Union it is explicitly declared that no-one has an exclusive title to the preaching of the gospel or the care of souls. Discussion of sacraments takes place at a different point in the Deed of Union, and no attempt is made to discuss whether or not ordained persons have an exclusive title to preside over the sacraments. Our practice and discipline are summarised in para 057.
 5. (063) Thus the Conference of 1980 adopted the proposal of the President's Council (Agenda pp 8-9) that a lay person may be appointed as a General Secretary of a Division. No conditions were set forward in the report, nor in SO 302, regarding the experience or the status of any candidate for such an appointment.
 6. (068) See Note 4 and para 059.
 7. (075) On the contribution of women to the ministry, see 009.
- 8-10 (C.2, 084, 085) Omitted.
11. (099) Omitted.
 12. (104) Omitted.
 13. (106) SO 525[1] is now amended to clarify this function.
 14. (108) This paragraph has been altered, so that the footnote no longer refers. It mentioned the need for training in the local church particularly in the area of pastoral care. We understand that the Pastoral Care Project being promoted within the Division of Ministries is concerned with this matter, along with others. In due course, Conference may need to respond to particular proposals from the Division.
 15. (113) Omitted.
 16. (122) This paragraph has been altered, so that the footnote no longer refers. But account has been taken of its proposal to alter the title of SO 745 from 'Return' to 'Transfer to appointment within the control of the church'.
 17. (129) The representative Session of the 1977 Conference adopted Notice of Motion 15 (Daily Record, p47) which included the clause 'Conference . . . adopts the general principle of auxiliary ministry'. Previously the Ministerial Session had declined to adopt the report presented by the Division of Ministries on Auxiliary Ministries, while the Representative Session had adopted it by a narrow majority. The 1978 Report, 'Ministers in Local Appointments' was not adopted by the Conference.
 18. (130) These points have already been accepted by the Conference in adopting the 1960 and 1974 reports on Ordination (Ordination in the Methodist Church [1960] p8; Ordination [1974] para 25).
 19. (131) Now incorporated in the text.

**APPENDIX
ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE**

1. Reaction to main proposals

Table of various categories of respondents, indicating whether they were for, or against the Report's proposals, or felt some area of the proposals was problematic

		A	B	C	D	E	
MOMM	For	-	1	8	-	3	A. Individuals 10
	Against	3	5	22	5	6	B. Churches 10
	Problem	2	3	27	4	2	C. Circuits 77
MLA	For	1	2	16	2	2	D. Districts 12
	Against	3	3	16	1	-	E. Groups 14
	Problem	1	3	37	3	2	TOTAL 123
MSA	For	-	-	6	-	2	MOMM: Methodist Order of Mission & Ministry
	Against	2	1	3	-	-	MLA: Ministers in Local Appointments
	Problem	1	3	15	2	2	MSA: Ministers in Sector Appointments
Team	For	1	4	24	4	3	Team: Proposals for collaborative ministry
	Against	-	-	2	-	-	
	Problem	-	-	7	-	-	

**2. General reaction to the Report
Table showing main areas of response**

	A	B	C	D	E	
(i)	4	8	38	7	4	(i) Agree with main thrust of the Report
(ii)	1	4	27	7	1	(ii) Bad style & layout; hard to understand
(iii)	3	3	16	6	1	(iii) Undue concentration on ordained or limited areas of ministry
(iv)	-	-	9	2	1	(iv) Inadequate attention to ecumenical issues
(v)	1	-	1	-	-	(v) Report regarded as generally irrelevant

3. Problems with the Methodist Order of Mission and Ministry

	A	B	C	D	E	
Total	2	3	27	4	2	A, B, C, D, E: As above
(i)	-	-	4	1	-	(i) Unsatisfactory interface with ordained ministry
(ii)	2	2	15	3	3	(ii) Hierarchical, divisive
(iii)	-	2	10	-	-	(iii) District base thought unsatisfactory
(iv)	-	-	9	3	2	(iv) Confusion with the Wesley Deaconess Order feared
(v)	-	-	3	-	-	(v) Financial concern
(vi)	1	-	11	-	-	(vi) Local Preachers left unaccounted for
(vii)	-	-	5	1	-	(vii) Thought to cover too diverse an area of ministry

**4. Problems with Ministry in Local Appointments,
called in the Report 'Local Ordained Ministry'**

	A	B	C	D	E	
Total	1	3	37	3	2	A, B, C, D, E: As above
(i)	1	2	20	-	1	(i) Uneasily suspended between ordained ministry and laity
(ii)	-	1	13	1	-	(ii) Problems envisaged in terminating appointment
(iii)	-	-	10	-	-	(iii) Stress foreseen at time of training
(iv)	-	2	9	-	-	(iv) Problem of reconciling demands of secular employment with urgent calls of ministry
(v)	-	-	4	1	-	(v) Ministerial status of one who moves secular employment
(vi)	-	-	6	-	-	(vi) Maximum offers likely from places of minimum need
(vii)	-	-	4	2	-	(vii) Danger of inhibiting proper use of lay people

See Preface pp 5-6

5. Problems of Ministry in Sector Appointments

	A	B	C	D	E	
Total	1	3	15	2	2	A, B, C, D, E: As above
(i)	1	2	10	1	-	(i) Sector appointments seen as lay employment
(ii)	-	-	7	-	1	(ii) Opposed to immediate stationing in the Sectors
(iii)	-	1	3	-	-	(iii) No distinction between these and Local Appointments
(iv)	-	-	1	-	-	(iv) Anxiety about pastoral care of those in such posts

6. Problems with Team Ministry

TOTAL	7	CIRCUITS
Concern about creating a new kind of hierarchy by singling out some lay people for special leadership roles		3
Concern about upsetting the leadership balance in circuit or section		5

Notes

1. Twelve districts responded (38%) and seventy-seven circuits (11%).
2. Where problems were indicated, some mentioned more than one, others none at all.

RESOLUTION 1

The Conference adopts the Commission's replies to the responses made by circuits, districts, other groups and individuals to the original Report.

RESOLUTION 2

The Conference adopts those parts of the Report which affirm the wide range of existing lay ministries in the church and the world and encourages their development.

RESOLUTION 3

- a) The Conference adopts the proposals relating to *Lay Workers* [para 04 (iii); 089-093].
- b) The Conference amends Standing Orders as follows:

I. Add to Section 33 as a new Standing Order 339:

339 Lay Workers

(1) The Board shall appoint as one of its committees the Advisory Committee on Lay Workers, which shall have general responsibility for all matters relating to the development, training and support of lay workers employed under the provisions of Standing Order 405 or 581.

(2) The Committee shall consist of:

- (i) the General Secretary of the Division and a treasurer of the Division;
- (ii) two representatives of the Home Mission Division;
- (iii) one representative of the Division of Education and Youth;
- (iv) the secretary of the committee;
- (v) up to fifteen other persons, including two persons currently employed as lay workers under Standing Order 405 or 581.

(3) For the purposes of discharging its responsibilities the Committee shall:

- (i) develop and co-ordinate the provision of training for lay workers and monitor its use and effectiveness;
- (ii) ensure the provision of pastoral support and assistance to lay workers and develop the opportunities for mutual support of lay workers at every level of church life including the convening of regional and connexional meetings of all such workers;
- (iii) offer these opportunities for training and support to such persons not employed under Standing Order 405 or 581 as may wish to benefit from them;
- (iv) promote interest in the ministry of lay workers and encourage the development and support of new forms of lay ministry, particularly those directed towards the mission of the church;
- (v) provide information and advice to Districts and Circuits and to persons considering the possibility of offering service in this area, and establish, where appropriate, a link between the two;
- (vi) report its judgment upon schemes for proposed appointments submitted under Standing Order 405 or 581;
- (vii) receive and make comments upon annual reports from Synods upon the operation of schemes under those Standing Orders;

- (viii) ensure, so far as local circumstances permit, some parity of treatment between lay workers.

II. Add to section 40 as a new Standing Order 405:

405 Lay Workers

(1) If it is desired to employ a lay person in pastoral, evangelistic or administrative work in a District, otherwise than as a youth officer, in circumstances in which Standing Order 581 would apply to a comparable circuit appointment, a scheme shall be prepared by the district Policy Committee dealing with the matters specified in clauses (2) and (3) of that Standing Order and the procedure of clauses (3) to (7) and (9) of that Standing Order shall be followed.

(2) Any person appointed under this Standing Order shall act under the direction and pastoral care of the Chairman.

III. Standing Order 581: Amendments

1. Rename the Standing Order: 'Lay Workers'.
2. In **clause (1)** after 'evangelistic work' insert ', or in administrative work related to furthering and co-ordinating the mission of the Church,'.
3. For the first line of **clause (2)** substitute:
'Subject to clause (5B) below the Circuit Meeting shall in every such case prepare a scheme'
and at the end, delete
'and with the amount of remuneration, if any'.
4. At the end of **clause (3)** add
(viii) that adequate financial arrangements have been made for the support of the worker.
5. Add as a new **clause (3A)**:
(3A) The sub-committee, after considering the scheme, shall submit it, with its comments, to the Advisory Committee on Lay Workers for its judgment.
6. For the existing **clause 4**, substitute as **clauses (4) and (4A)**:
(4) If in the light of its own consideration and the judgment of the Advisory Committee on Lay Workers the sub-committee thinks it desirable to do so, it shall refer the scheme back to its promoters for further consideration; if the scheme is then submitted in substantially modified form, it shall be re-submitted to the Advisory Committee for its further judgment.

(4A) In all cases the sub-committee, having taken into account the judgment and, if any, the further judgment of the Advisory Committee, shall make its recommendation to the Synod through the district Policy Committee and if the scheme is adopted by the Synod it shall be implemented. In each case the decision of the Synod shall be reported to the Advisory Committee.

7. In **clause 5** after 'sub-committee' insert
' , after obtaining the judgment thereon of the Advisory Committee on Lay Workers,'.
8. Add as a new **clause (5B)**:
(5B) Where it is more appropriate to do so the scheme may be submitted for approval in principle to the district sub-committee and the Advisory Committee on Lay Workers before a name is proposed for appointment. Where this is done, the details of the person proposed for appointment shall later be submitted to the sub-committee which shall, after consultation with the Secretary of the Advisory Committee on Lay Workers, report to the Synod through the district Policy Committee. Except where clause (5) above applies, the scheme shall be implemented only after the Synod has approved these details.
9. In **clause (6)** in the first line for 'Home Mission Division board' substitute 'Advisory Committee on Lay Workers',
and delete everything after the semi-colon.

IV. Consequential Amendments

1. In **Standing Order 330 (2)** after '335' insert 'and 337 to 339'.
2. In **Standing Order 410 (1) (xiv)** add at the end:
' , and all lay workers employed in the District under Standing Order 405'.
3. In **Standing Order 510 (1)** for head (vii) substitute:
'(vii) any full-time youth worker, youth and community worker or worker with children, and any lay worker appointed under Standing Order 581, who in either case is a member in the Circuit and employed by the Circuit Meeting;'.
4. In **Standing Order 610 (1) (iv)** delete 'pastoral' before 'worker'.
5. In **Standing Order 967 (2) (ii)** before '462' insert '405,'

V. Agenda amendments

District Policy committee Meeting I. (C.P.D. p. 420)

Question 5B: delete 'by Circuit meetings';
for 'in pastoral or evangelistic work' substitute 'under Standing Order 405 or 581';
for 'Home Mission Division' substitute 'Advisory Committee on Lay Workers'.

Meeting II. (C.P.D. p. 424/1)

Question 34B: delete 'by Circuit Meetings';
for 'in pastoral or evangelistic work' substitute 'under Standing Order 405 or 581';

for 'Home Mission Division' and 'Home Mission board'
substitute in each case 'Advisory Committee on Lay
Workers'.

RESOLUTION 4

a) The Conference adopts the proposals relating to *collaborative ministry*, including the ministry of visitation, (para 05 (I); 094-107) and encourages districts, circuits and local churches to consider how such forms of ministry might be developed in their own particular situations.

b) The Conference amends Standing Orders, Agendas and Guidance as to Invitations as follows:

I. Collaborative Ministry

Circuits

1. In **Standing Order 512** add a new **clause (3)**:

The meeting shall, where appropriate, encourage the circuit stewards to build a circuit leadership team to be appointed by the meeting to assist it to fulfil its responsibilities under this Standing Order. This team, where constituted, should include the ministers appointed to the Circuit, the circuit stewards and such other persons as are thought appropriate and should meet reasonably frequently at a time convenient for all.

2. **Circuit meeting Agenda, March** (C.P.D. p. 433):

In question 7, add '(c) Do we decide to appoint a circuit leadership team?'

In question 13, add '(i) members of the circuit leadership team (if constituted)'.

3. **Guidance as to Invitations** (C.P.D. p. 575ff):

Section B, first paragraph: in line 7, after 'stewards' insert '(and other members of leadership teams, where constituted)';

(1)(b)(ii); insert before the semi-colon, ', in conjunction with the circuit leadership team, where this has been constituted';

Section C(2)(b): after 'review' insert ', in conjunction with the circuit leadership team where this has been constituted,'.

Local Church

1. In **Standing Order 623**: add at the end:

'In the discharge of their responsibilities they are encouraged wherever possible to draw other members with appropriate gifts and skills into a leadership team to be appointed by the Church Council.'

2. **Church council Agenda** (C.P.D. p.449):

In question 8 add '(d) Do we wish to appoint persons to work with the minister and church stewards as a team in providing leadership in our church?'

In question 11(a) add '(xvi) members of the church leadership team (if constituted)'.

II. The Ministry of Visitation

1. Insert after Standing Order 521:

Standing Order 521A Visitation (1) The Superintendent shall also visit all the Local Churches in the Circuit to provide encouragement, challenge and support.

(2) the Superintendent is further encouraged to gather, in conjunction with the Circuit Meeting, a group of people, who, in the name of the Circuit, may visit a Local Church which needs help in fulfilling its ministry in any way more effectively.

2. **Circuit Meeting Agenda, March (C.P.D. p.433):**

Insert **Question 6A:**

'Is there any Local Church which needs the help of the Circuit in fulfilling its ministry more effectively? If so, whom do we appoint to visit that church?'

III. Other items

1. In the title of **Standing Order 454**, delete 'Lay'.

RESOLUTION 5

- a) The Conference adopts the proposals relating to **ministers in sector and other appointments** (para 05(iii); 117-127)
- b) The Conference directs the Division of Ministries to establish the representative group referred to in paragraph 127, to carry out the tasks referred to in that paragraph and paragraph 125;
- c) The Conference amends Standing Orders and Agendas as follows:

I. Definitions

1. **Standing Order 005.** Add a new **item (iiiA):** 'ministers in sector appointments' means ministers in appointments within the scope of Standing Order 740(1).

In **item (iv)**, for 'Section 74' substitute 'Standing Order 740 (2)'.
In **item (v)**, before 'other appointments' insert 'sector or'.

2. Substitute a new Standing Order 740:

740 Ministry in sector and other appointments.

(1) Ministry in sector appointments includes full-time ministries in such areas of community life as education, industry and the social services and ministries exercised in organisations not directly controlled by the Methodist Church or by any other denominational or ecumenical body or agency.

(2) Ministry in other appointments includes full-time ministries exercised in any denominational or ecumenical body or agency.

(3) Appointments to the principalships and chaplaincies of Methodist schools and colleges and the National Children's Home and chaplaincies to Industrial Missions are not within the scope of this Section.

II. Other principal changes

1. Standing Order 335:

Rename the Standing Order 'Ministry in Sector and Other Appointments'.

In **clause (2)** before 'other appointments' insert 'sector or'.

In **clause (3)** add at the end of subclause (i) 'and in ecumenical agencies, and, where appropriate, encourage ministers with suitable qualifications to consider applying for such appointments';

in subclauses (iii) and (iv) before 'other appointments' insert 'sector or'.

2. Standing Order 705

Add a new clause (5)

If the committee recommends any candidate who wishes to serve, after training, as a minister in sector or other appointments, a reasoned case for the recommendation shall be brought to the Conference.

(Ministerial Session)

III. Consequential amendments

1. In **Standing Order 741 (1)** for 'such an appointment' substitute 'an appointment within clause (1) or (2) of Standing Order 740'.
2. Rename **Standing Order 745** 'Transfer to Appointments within the control of the Church'
3. For 'Section 74' substitute 'Standing Order 740' in the following Standing Orders: **714(3); 767(6); 788(1)**.
4. Insert 'sector and' before 'other appointments' in the following Standing Orders: **250(1)(ii); 252; 730(8)**; and in the title of **Section 74**.
5. Insert 'sector or' before 'other appointments' in the following Standing Orders: **365(3)(a) and (13); 522(1); 562(3); 606(5); 737(1); 737(2)(a); 752(1)**; and in **Circuit Meeting Agenda (September)** (C.P.D. p.431) question 10(a).

RESOLUTION 6

- a) The Conference adopts the general principle of **ministry in local appointments** as set out in the body of the Report (para 05(ii); 128-142) and in the proposed legislation below:
- b) The Conference amends Standing Orders as follows:
In section 74, insert a new **Standing Order 746(1)**:
'There shall be a category of ministers in local appointments, who will not be required to be itinerant and will not normally be provided with allowances or accommodation by the Church.';
- c) The Conference directs the Division of Ministries to present the remainder of the proposed legislation, in its present form or with revisions, to the appropriate sessions of the Conference of 1989 for adoption, subject to the due confirmation of the amendment contained in resolution b) above;

- d) The Conference directs the General Purposes Committee to consider the basis upon which the circuit lay representation to the Synod is calculated under Standing Order 410(1)(v) and any alternative bases which might be more appropriate, and to bring recommendations thereon to the Conference of 1989.

Proposed amendments to Standing Orders and Agendas (see (a) and (c) in RESOLUTION 6 above.

I. Changes in definition section:

- S.O.005. a) In item (ii) after 'Standing Order' insert '746(8)'.
b) Add a new item (x):
'ministers in local appointments' means ministers appointed to Circuits under the provisions of clauses (6) and (7) of Standing Order 746.

II. New principal Standing order: 746 Ministers in Local Appointments

- (1) There shall be a category of ministers in local appointments, who will not be required to be itinerant and will not normally be provided with allowances or accommodation by the Church.
- (2) A candidate for the ministry in this category shall meet the requirements of Standing Order 700 clauses (1) to (5). Standing Order 700(7) shall also apply but not Standing Order 700(6). In addition, such a candidate will be expected to show such maturity and flexibility as to be able to exercise this ministry and also do justice to his or her secular employment and family commitments. Such a candidate shall normally be at least 30 years old.
- (3) Before nomination the Superintendent shall discuss with such a candidate the possibility of exercising his or her ministry in the Circuit, both at work and in the church; such discussions shall, wherever possible, involve the Circuit Stewards and other appropriate Circuit leaders. Should there be no suitable opportunity there, the Superintendent shall consult with the Chairman about the possibility of the candidate's exercising such a ministry in another Circuit, such possibility being then discussed similarly between the candidate and the Circuit concerned. The candidate shall be nominated at the Circuit Meeting of the Circuit in which he or she is a member and Standing Order 701 shall apply, with the omission from clause (6) of the words '(if the candidate is married or to be married before entry into college)'. The Circuit in which it is envisaged that the candidate will exercise such a ministry shall send to its District Policy Committee an outline of the proposed scheme.
- (4) Standing Orders 702, 703, 704, 705 and 707 clauses (1) to (5) shall apply, but not Standing Order 707(6). A candidate in this category can be considered only for service based in the territory in which he or she is a member, and Standing Order 706 shall accordingly not apply.
- (5) Standing Orders 710, 718 and 719 shall apply, but not Standing Orders 711 to 717. The connexional Candidates Examination Committee shall

recommend in each case the nature of the training required. Training shall be under the general direction of the connexional Probationers' Oversight Committee in consultation with the Probationers Committee of the District in which the candidate is a member or, upon being stationed, is a probationer. The candidate shall spend at least one year before ordination stationed as a probationer in circuit work appropriate to the type of scheme under which the appointment under clause (6) is proposed to be made. When the connexional committee is satisfied that the requirements of training and probation have been fulfilled, the candidate shall be presented to the Conference for reception of the district Synod.

- (6) Standing Order 548 shall not apply. If as a result of the discussions referred to in clause (3) above or of further consultations after nomination (which it shall be the responsibility of the Chairman to initiate whenever necessary) a scheme for the exercise of the candidate's ministry in a Circuit, containing clear provisions as to the particular responsibilities of the proposed appointment, has been agreed between those concerned and approved by the Circuit Meeting and has received the necessary approval under Standing Order 438, then upon reception into full connexion and ordination the minister shall be appointed to that Circuit. For the purposes of Section 54 the minister shall be deemed to have received an initial invitation to that Circuit, and Standing Order 543 to 547, 549 and 736 shall apply accordingly. If no such scheme has been duly agreed and approved, clause (8) below shall apply as at the end of an appointment and it shall be the responsibility of the Chairman to continue to seek a suitable first appointment in which the above conditions as to agreement and approval of the scheme are fulfilled; when such an appointment has been found the minister shall at the next available opportunity be stationed accordingly under the provisions of this clause.
- (7) If the appointment of such a minister to a first or subsequent Circuit comes to an end, the minister shall not be appointed to a local appointment in any other Circuit unless (i) it is one in or near which the minister resides or intends to reside when the appointment takes effect, (ii) a scheme for the exercise of the minister's ministry in that Circuit, containing clear provisions as to the particular responsibilities in that appointment, has been agreed between those concerned and approved by the Circuit Meeting, and (iii) the necessary approval under Standing Order 438 has been obtained. Subject to these requirements the minister shall upon invitation in accordance with Standing Orders 540 to 542 be appointed by the Conference to that Circuit and Standing Orders 543 to 547, 549 and 736 shall apply to that appointment.
- (8) If the appointment of such a minister to a first or subsequent Circuit comes to an end and the minister is not immediately appointed to another Circuit in accordance with clause (7) above, the minister's name shall, until he or she is so appointed or becomes supernumerary, appear in the stations under the Circuit in which he or she resides as 'without appointment'. Such a minister shall then have the rights and privileges of a church member in that Circuit and shall be expected to give such help to that Circuit as he or she is able.

- (9) A minister in a local appointment who wishes to become subject to normal stationing and entitled to the normal allowances and benefits, shall consult and give all relevant information to the Chairman of the District, who shall be responsible for obtaining a report from the medical sub-committee of the General Purposes Committee and for supplying all necessary information to the Secretary of the Conference for the consideration of the Stationing Committee which may grant or refuse the application.
- (10) A minister who is subject to normal stationing may apply to become a minister in a local appointment. The application shall be made to the Advisory Committee on Ministerial Appointments and that committee shall make a recommendation to the Stationing Committee which may grant or refuse the application. Consideration shall be given to the scheme by which the local ministry will be exercised, and no application shall be granted unless an appointment complying with clause (7) above can and will be made. It shall also be considered, in any event, whether taking account of all the circumstances it would be more appropriate for the applicant to apply to be without appointment under Standing Order 762.
- (11) Except where expressly excluded above the Standing Orders otherwise in force apply to persons who are or wish to become ministers in local appointments.

III. Other changes in part 7

1. **Standing Order 701.** Add a new clause (8):
The Circuit Meeting in voting upon a candidate for ministry in a local appointment shall whenever possible have placed before it an outline scheme of the way in which the candidate's ministry will be exercised in that or another Circuit.
2. **Standing Order 703.** Add a new clause (4):
The district Candidates Committee in voting upon a candidate for ministry in a local appointment shall whenever possible receive the comments of the relevant district Policy Committee on the proposed scheme for the exercise of a candidate's ministry in a Circuit.
3. **Standing Order 705.** Add a new clause (5):
The committee in voting upon a candidate for ministry in a local appointment shall have placed before it the proposed scheme for the exercise of the candidate's ministry in a Circuit.
4. **Standing Order 730(8).** Add at the end of the first sentence 'or to become ministers in local appointments'.
5. **Standing Order 731(3).** Insert at the beginning: 'Except where Standing Order 746 applies'.
6. **Standing Order 737(1).** In the fifth line, after 'that minister is' insert 'a minister in a local appointment or' and at the beginning of the eighth line insert 'local appointments or'.

7. Rename **Section 74** as 'Ministers in sector, local and other appointments'.
8. **Standing Order 751** Add a new clause (7)
The above clauses of this Standing Order shall not apply to ministers or probationers in appointments under Standing Order 746, except that they shall be entitled in accordance with clause (2) above to have all essential expenses incurred in the discharge of their responsibilities defrayed in full by the Circuits to which they are appointed.
9. **Standing Order 752(1)** In the second sentence, after 'supernumeraries,' insert 'ministers in local appointments,'.
10. **Standing Order 753** Add a new clause (6):
This Standing Order and clause (2) of Standing Order 754 shall not apply to ministers and probationers in appointments under Standing Order 746, who shall be wholly responsible for the provision of their own accommodation and furniture.
11. **Standing Order 762** Add a new clause (10):
This Standing Order shall not apply to a minister who is without appointment by the operation of Standing Order 746(6) or (8) or Standing Order 763(3).
12. **Standing Order 772** In clause (1) after 'Standing Order' insert '746, 762, 763(3)'.
13. **Standing Order 773** After 'connexion' insert ', other than ministers in local appointments,'.

IV. Consequential changes

1. **Standing Order 335** In clause (3) add
(viii) perform the functions prescribed by Standing Order 746(10) in relation to ministry in local appointments.
2. **Standing Order 365** In clause (3)(a) after 'other than' insert 'ministers in local appointments,'; in clause (13) after 'becomes' insert 'a minister in a local appointment,'.
3. **Standing Order 438** Add a new clause (3):
The provisions of clause (1) above shall not apply where a Circuit applies for the appointment of a minister to a local appointment under Standing Order 746. In every case where such an appointment is sought the Circuit shall submit the proposed scheme to the committee, which shall consider and make recommendations thereon to the Synod. No such appointment shall be made without the approval of the Synod.
4. **Standing Order 528** In the title delete 'Additional' and number the existing Standing Order as (1);
Add a new clause (2):
When a Circuit desires the appointment of a minister to a local appointment under Standing Order 746, application shall be made through the district Policy Committee to the Synod.

5. **Standing Order 606(5)** After 'other appointments' insert 'ministers and probationers appointed to the Circuit under Standing Order 746 but without pastoral charge,'.
6. **Standing Order 967(2)** In head (ii) after '618(3)' insert ', of a minister in a local appointment under Standing Order 746'.

V. Changes in Agendas

District Policy Committee

Meeting I (C.P.D. page 420)

Add a new question 5E: Has any scheme been submitted by a Circuit for the exercise of ministry in a local appointment where the proposed person is at present a candidate for the ministry? What comments upon the scheme do we make to the district Candidates Committee?

Meeting II (C.P.D. page 421/2)

in 17 insert a new question:

- (dd) the proposal by any Circuit for the appointment of a minister to a local appointment,

RESOLUTION 7

The Conference adopts the recommendation that no move should at present be made to introduce the historic episcopate into the Methodist system.

RESOLUTION 8

The Conference adopts the remaining parts of the Report not dealt with in the foregoing resolutions.

(Agenda 1988, pp.823-879)

The Conference adopted Resolutions 1, 4, 6 and 8, and resolved that Resolution 7 be not put.

The Conference adopted Resolution 2, deleting 'and encourages their development' and adding 'and in order to encourage their development directs the President's Council to ensure that the allocation of resources by the Budget Committee recognises their priority'.

The Conference adopted Resolution 3, in 339 *Lay Workers* (2)(v) deleting 'including two persons currently' and inserting 'of whom at least eight shall be persons currently or recently'.

The Conference adopted Resolution 5, adding in section (c) to SO 740(2): 'other than one directly controlled by the Methodist Church', and amending SO 740(3) by substituting 'industrial chaplaincies' for 'chaplaincies to Industrial Missions'.