

CHAPTER 25

Linked Pastorate

There was much uncertainty in Great Chishill as to future links with other churches, whether to continue the association with Saffron Walden URC, or to consider the link which was being mooted with Melbourn, Fowlmere and Bassingbourn United Reformed Churches. This last grouping, under the title 'Melbourn Linked Pastorate', had been suggested at a special meeting of representatives of the churches south of Cambridge in February 1988.

The new plan was given much impetus when it was learned that Rev. Reginald Rooke, who had served as minister of a similar group of churches in south-east Cambridgeshire since 1982, had expressed interest in becoming minister of the new group.

It was stressed, however, that there were reservations over the method in which the earlier Royston Group had been administered, and the new association should be organised as four parallel churches, coming together in order to sustain ministry for each.

A meeting of Elders of the four churches met Mr. Rooke on 3rd June 1988, and a call was subsequently given, which Mr. Rooke accepted. The Induction Service was held on 1st October at Melbourn URC.

Mr. Rooke was born on 9th March 1930 in Bethnal Green, East London, and became a member of the Congregational Church there in 1947. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from Nottingham University in 1952.

He was invited to become lay pastor of Ramsay Road Congregational Church, Forest Gate, in 1964. He subsequently studied for the Roll of Ministers examination which would allow him to be ordained. This occ-