

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND ACCOUNTS 1999 — PREFACE

A preface to the Accounts is submitted herewith.

This takes the form of a memorandum Central Income and Expenditure Account and a graphical illustration in relation to this Income and Expenditure.

This Income and Expenditure does not form part of the Audited Accounts of the Church.

1998 Column is period to 31 December 1998.

1999 Column is year to 31 December 1999.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME

	Grand Total		Contributions from Congregations		Congregational Assessments		United Appeal	
	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998
	General Board	25	21	4	6	—	—	21
Business Board	10	9	—	—	—	—	—	—
Communications Board	349	392	—	—	—	—	150	120
Inter-Church Relations	461	366	446	344	—	—	—	—
Overseas Board — Designated	455	564	—	—	—	—	—	—
Overseas Board — Others	1,218	1,065	8	9	—	—	785	740
Home Board	820	715	61	25	5	4	505	500
Social Witness Board	4,444	5,645	9	14	—	—	169	146
Evangelism & Christian Training	608	477	8	9	—	—	305	265
Youth Board	435	501	—	71	—	—	226	207
Education Board	239	154	—	—	—	—	155	150
Board of Studies	1,062	891	49	4	—	—	327	448
Finance & Administration	1,339	1,195	—	—	952	891	—	—
United Appeal	364	365	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ministry & Pensions	3,951	3,790	—	—	3,121	3,070	—	—
Presbyterian Women's Association	821	813	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sundry Other	346	355	298	280	—	—	—	—
Grand Total	16,938	17,318	883	762	4,077	3,965	2,643	2,591

EXPENDITURE

	Grand Total		Employee and Ministry Costs		Printing Stationery, etc		Administration	
	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998
	General Board	13	16	11	6	1	—	2
Business Board	10	11	—	—	9	10	1	1
Communications Board	351	397	104	108	207	220	40	35
Inter-Church Relations	386	372	—	—	9	—	1	1
Overseas Board — Designated	386	481	—	—	—	—	—	—
Overseas Board — Others	1,252	1,057	113	104	19	25	86	67
Home Board	645	645	90	76	9	8	81	71
Social Witness Board	4,245	3,961	2,566	2,526	431	395	107	98
Evangelism & Christian Training	540	536	323	339	47	87	34	29
Youth Board	451	491	141	131	67	54	36	35
Education Board	311	206	131	127	26	11	32	30
Board of Studies	712	768	348	332	162	174	7	6
Finance & Administration	1,178	1,095	496	446	191	160	145	132
United Appeal	10	11	—	—	10	11	—	—
Ministry & Pensions	3,561	3,431	3,292	3,194	14	13	188	161
Presbyterian Women's Association	889	825	678	563	58	50	45	46
Sundry Other	319	302	—	—	—	—	1	1
Grand Total	15,256	14,605	8,291	7,952	1,259	1,218	805	716

— MEMORANDUM CENTRAL INCOME

1999 Per Board £000's

Trust, Investment		Rental		Donations		Loan		Sales:		Grants	
Income and		Income (net)		and Bequests		Repayments		Periodicals		and Fees	
Bank Interest								& Property			
1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	9	7
-10	-13	—	—	3	—	—	—	206	284	—	1
9	15	—	—	6	7	—	—	—	—	—	—
23	19	—	—	432	545	—	—	—	—	—	—
150	137	—	—	276	179	—	—	—	—	—	—
97	99	11	11	86	62	56	14	—	—	—	—
242	180	3,003	2,914	246	288	111	59	292	1,675	373	369
18	12	—	1	179	90	—	—	99	100	—	—
8	9	62	83	70	100	—	—	—	—	69	31
4	2	—	—	68	—	—	—	3	2	9	—
271	236	7	6	33	79	—	—	251	—	124	118
-38	-114	382	376	14	14	—	—	20	28	—	—
364	365	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
798	688	—	—	32	32	—	—	—	—	—	—
81	95	—	—	673	667	—	8	67	43	—	—
14	15	—	—	—	—	34	60	—	—	—	—
<u>2,030</u>	<u>1,745</u>	<u>3,465</u>	<u>3,391</u>	<u>2,118</u>	<u>2,063</u>	<u>201</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>938</u>	<u>2,132</u>	<u>583</u>	<u>528</u>

Travel		Building		Upkeep of		Loans		Home and Over-		Missionaries	
Expenses		Costs		Property		Issued		seas Projects		Field	
etc								and Grants		Costs	
1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	376	371	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	386	481	—	—
14	16	—	—	24	20	—	—	226	240	770	585
—	6	311	207	7	20	14	20	134	237	—	—
31	25	196	174	749	635	160	105	5	3	—	—
42	42	—	—	47	3	—	—	1	3	46	33
6	3	12	12	47	48	—	—	142	208	—	—
9	9	—	—	23	14	—	—	90	15	—	—
8	9	—	—	48	67	—	—	139	180	—	—
48	61	—	—	207	208	—	—	92	88	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65	59	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	4	—	—
15	4	—	—	7	6	—	12	88	131	—	13
—	—	—	—	—	—	25	20	292	281	—	—
<u>237</u>	<u>267</u>	<u>519</u>	<u>393</u>	<u>1,157</u>	<u>1,021</u>	<u>199</u>	<u>157</u>	<u>1,972</u>	<u>2,250</u>	<u>816</u>	<u>631</u>

REPORTS: JUNE, 2000

BELFAST

GENERAL BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The 1999 General Assembly referred three matters to the General Board – the consideration of Presbytery and Board responses to the remit on statistics, the matter of elders serving as Presbytery Clerks and the possibility of retirement for those elders who may wish it. All three subjects were considered during the year by the Board, which now reports as follows.

ELDERS AS CLERKS OF PRESBYTERY

2. A Memorial from the Foyle Presbytery to the 1999 Assembly drew attention to the issues arising when an elder who has been an ex-officio member of Presbytery and Clerk ceases to be a member of the court. The Assembly granted the prayer of the Memorial and asked the General Board to consider the issue of the eligibility of persons for the Clerkship as prescribed in the relevant paragraphs of the Code.

3. The membership of a Presbytery is governed by Par 61; a Presbytery has no power or authority to add any other person to its roll of members. Code Par 65(2) further requires that “The Clerk shall be appointed by the Presbytery from among its members.” It follows that Presbytery could not appoint as Clerk an elder who was not already a member and likely to continue as such for a period of years.

4. There are some elders who are ex-officio members of Presbytery by virtue of their being members of the Judicial Commission, Assembly Conveners, etc, but they are few in number and the Presbytery has no control over their tenure of such office.

5. Certain Presbyteries include Ministers in Recognised Service, Theological Professors, Associate Ministers, etc. As Presbytery appoints their “corresponding” elders, it could easily reserve one such place for an elder-Clerk. Other Presbyteries without such “corresponding” elders might ask the relevant Kirk Session to appoint the elder-clerk as their representative elder indefinitely, or they might arrange for a number of Kirk Sessions to commission the elder-Clerk on a rota basis, but such arrangements could be regarded as artificially contrived and alien to the spirit of the rules.

6. Another option would be a change in the Code. As Presbytery is a fundamentally important court of our Church, any change in its membership should only be undertaken after due thought, and would probably involve Barrier Act procedure.

7. In this situation there are at least three possibilities:
- (i) to leave things as they are;
 - (ii) to remove the requirement for a Clerk of Presbytery to be a (voting) member of the court;
 - (iii) to introduce legislation to make an elder (and possibly a minister without charge) an ex-officio member of Presbytery if appointed as Clerk.

Option (i)

Option (i) needs no further explanation.

Option (ii)

Par 65(2) of our Code requires that “The Clerk shall be appointed by the Presbytery from among its members”, but that is not essential to Reformed polity. In the Church of Scotland the Clerk need not be a member of the Presbytery.

If we recommend that our Church follow suit, then an overture would be required to delete the words “from among its members” from Par 65(2).

Option (iii)

Alternatively, Par 61 of the Code, which defines the membership of Presbytery, could be amended to provide for a Clerk (being a minister or ruling elder within the bounds of the Presbytery) to be an ex-officio member of the court.

9. Having considered the issues involved the General Board decided to recommend option (iii), and a resolution is appended to test the mind of the Assembly on the matter. If this resolution is approved detailed legislation can be prepared for the next Assembly. As indicated above, Barrier Act procedure may then be necessary.

ELDERS (RETIRED)?

10. The 1999 Assembly received a Memorial which posed the question “Should appointment to the eldership be for life? If not, should there be an accepted retiring age for elders?” The Memorial referred to Reports 1976 p100, which quoted the view of some “that elderly members of Session should be allowed to ease off in work, or give up altogether, in which case there might be an elder emeritus status for such.”

11. The Assembly asked the General Board “to examine further the suggestion of an accepted age at which those ruling elders who so wish could retire.”

12. Practice throughout the Reformed and Presbyterian family of churches is not uniform. Indeed the differences between churches which have inherited the theology of Geneva are quite marked. G D Henderson writes, “Precisely what limits must be set to the flexibility of the Presbyterian system of conciliar church government it is impossible to decide categorically.” (“Presbyterianism” p128).

13. This confirmed by Robert W Henderson in a study prepared for the WARC and entitled "Profile of the Eldership 1974". In the light of that it could hardly be argued that the suggestion contained in the Memorial is fundamentally incompatible with the polity of the Reformed Church.

14. It is generally accepted that ordination is for life but that need not mean that membership of a Kirk Session is for life. In some churches, such as the PCUSA, appointment to Session is for a fixed term of years which may be renewed but which may be interrupted by an obligatory "year out". At a certain age an elder may simply decide not to seek re-appointment.

15. A similar arrangement was suggested in the Church of Scotland some years ago, but the proposal was rejected.

16. The Presbyterian Church in America (a smaller body than the PCUSA) has the following rule.

When a deacon or ruling elder becomes infirm or reaches the age of seventy (70), he may at his request and with the approval of Session be designated deacon or elder emeritus. When so designated, he is no longer required to perform the regular duties of his office, but may continue to perform certain of these duties on a voluntary basis, if requested by the Session or a higher court. He may attend Diaconate or Session meetings, if he so desires, and may participate fully in the discussion of any issues, but may not vote.

(Book of Church Order: Par 24-9)

17. The Presbyterian Church of Wales recently received the following report, but referred it back for further consideration.

We recommend that the practice of the Presbyterian Church of Wales is to ordain elders for life. The call to eldership is a call to voluntary service, and it is recognised that circumstances may arise when an individual elder will wish to retire from this work, or take a sabbatical period from it. For the avoidance of doubt, therefore, it is confirmed that any elder may resign from being a serving elder in his/her church, for a sabbatical period or permanently; by informing the church secretary and the Presbytery Clerk. Such a non-serving elder will continue as a full member of Presbytery, with the privileges and responsibilities of eldership in the Connexion, but will not be a managing trustee of the local church. The Panel suggests that the Assembly declares that the taking of such a step by an elder is entirely honourable, and that no non-serving elder shall be required to resign his/her orders unless he/she infringes the discipline of the Church or ceases to be a member of the Church.

(Panel on Doctrine and Worship)

18. Presbyterian Church of East Africa's Manual of Practice and Procedure contains the following rule:

Retirement

Though an elder is ordained for life, experience has shown that as age advances, a reduced capacity for positive effectiveness begins to show up. The General Assembly has, therefore, ruled that elders should retire from the pastoral concerns of the elders' districts after attaining sixty-five years of age. Should the Session see any justifiable reason for further extension, permission shall be sought from the Presbytery. After such retirement, the

elder can attend Session meetings at will, but not as a representative of any district. The act of retirement shall be held in a way and in such a manner that shall safeguard the honour of the office. (12.27)

19. Even within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland it is not unknown for an announcement to be made that an elder has retired, but this seems to be an informal arrangement meaning that the elder in question is no longer actively discharging the duties of office, eg visiting a district. In most Kirk Sessions ageing elders are quietly excused from further duties on request.

20. It would therefore seem that it would be consistent with Reformed Polity for the General Board to recommend any one of the following options.

- (a) To make no change;
- (b) To formalize the present informal arrangement whereby ageing elders are excused further active duties;
- (c) To allow “retiring” elders to leave the Kirk Session and to be received as “elders without charge (retired)” under the care of Presbytery;
- (d) To introduce a fixed term of office (renewable).

Option (b) would leave the retired elder in a position similar to that of a Senior Minister, whereas option (c) would represent a clear break.

21. Having considered the issues the Board decided to recommend option (b) and an appropriate resolution is appended. Whether it is approved or not, it will still be possible for elders to resign from their Kirk Session in the usual way.

REMIT ON STATISTICS

1. The 1999 General Assembly resolved “That Boards and Presbyteries consider all the available statistics on the continuing decline in families and persons in membership, especially among younger people, and forward their comments to the Clerk of Assembly by 30 November, 1999”.

2. There was a good response to this remit, though the returns varied considerably. Very diverse explanations for decline were advanced and equally diverse remedies were suggested. One Presbytery found the remit “too vague, and would have preferred a more specific agenda to consider”.

3. A few had a global perspective. “The relentless decline in membership ... is a trend affecting Christianity across the Developed World”. Some had a Church-wide perspective, stating eg “Decline in sacramental numbers may be due to a distinct theological change in emphasis”, or that “It is noticeable that the only occasion within the last 30 years when there has been recorded growth in terms of total persons, total families and contributing families, was following the “Flame 74” initiative, when statistics show an increase of 1.1% of total persons between 1974 and 1975. No such discernible overall growth can be detected following the Special Assemblies of 1990 and 1997”.

4. Others commented “We are too obsessed with numbers”. Decline is not always a bad thing. If standards are being applied, then His Church will honour God and the Church, although smaller, will in fact be stronger”.

“Numbers are not the whole story. God may be purifying the Church before it grows again”.

“The people who are leaving never really were our people in the first place”. (A proposition difficult to prove or disprove).

5. Other Presbyteries concentrated on their own immediate district, some having lost significantly through demographic change, while a few quoted corresponding improvements in their local statistics.

6. The Presbytery of Donegal applied an analysis learned from the wider world to the situation in Ireland. Citing the recent survey by the Youth Board of a random sample of churches, the Presbytery commented “As one would have expected, the rural figures are uniformly better than the urban. This is little comfort, given the continuing late transition of Ireland from being a largely agrarian society to a modern hi-tech economy, a “late” transition in the sense that Ireland is one of the last European countries to have to cope with the whole phenomenon of modernising.

7. “We are now starting to encounter what Britain, France and Germany experienced a hundred years ago. In other words we are seeing the break-up of “traditional” communities (whether in country or town). There is no reason to suppose that this process will not continue: towns and cities will expand and the proportion of the population involved in traditional rural activities will decline. Accordingly, any Church which prides itself on being stronger in rural areas than urban should pause for thought. It is true that many people may commute from the countryside to work in the urban areas. However, over a period of time this means that the focal point for such people is not the traditional way of life, for that way of life is declining. If a new type of community does evolve, it is essential to realise it is just that: new. It will not be the traditional way of thinking. Such people will not live according to the seasons – as in farming – but in response to modern work practices.

8. “In other words, the same factors which are sharply eroding faith in the towns and cities will affect rural communities as well. Which are? It is simplistic to imagine that simply moving from countryside to city causes people to lose their faith. If people abandon their faith when they arrive in the city, it means it was not much of a faith to start off with. It was a by-product of tradition, ie it was the “done thing” to go to Church. Such a faith is easily eroded. It remains so long as there is little attractive alternative. But that is exactly what the modern world offers”.

9. Many returns devoted considerable space to quoting statistics, either local or Church-wide, and to analysing the possible causes of decline. The Presbytery of Down gave a comprehensive list of reasons, many of which were echoed in other returns.

- The major factor is spiritual. God’s Spirit is not moving. Perhaps this is due to the widespread spiritual apathy and lack of concerted prayer and seeking of the Lord. This needs to be addressed above all other factors or else we are in danger of “rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic”.
- There is a change in the culture of today. A post-modern culture that is challenging church authority/absolutes, etc.
- Church/God seen as peripheral not central.
- Increasing secularism.
- Toleration of all faiths and none.

- Church seen as irrelevant by the young.
 - Ministers out of touch with youth culture.
 - Widening gap in musical styles.
 - Culture of change. The Church cannot keep up.
 - People in our churches not welcoming enough.
 - Church buildings uncomfortable.
 - Lack of discipling of our membership.
 - Inability of ordinary members to witness effectively.
 - Church too Minister and meeting orientated.
 - Lack of articulate apologists to refute post-modern world views.
 - Increased range of alternatives to Church – TV, Cinema, Video, Computers etc.
 - Maintenance more emphasised than mission.
10. Additional reasons for decline were suggested in other returns.
- Paramilitary influences, especially in the intimidation of families.
 - The problems associated with working mothers.
 - The situation of congregational areas with church buses from other groups or denominations, driving the people away.
 - CFC style groups are growing because there is something alive and vibrant in their worship.
 - The changing patterns of people's lives on Sundays and the influence of leisure activities the whole family can participate in; working mothers using Sunday for housework, family shopping and Sunday sports fixtures.
 - The young people going away to University.
 - Buildings so large with declining numbers produce a feeling of isolation rather than the warmth of fellowship.
 - Evangelistic Missions now supported mostly by the converted and the presence of those outside the Church is very low.
 - "At one time some said that if we ended our ties with bodies like the WCC it would lead to a revival of spiritual life. It is many years since we ended our membership of that body and it could be argued that spiritual decline has increased since then".
 - "We draw attention to the need for spiritual and missionary leadership. It is time for Kirk Sessions to create a management team which would work with the minister in giving visionary and dynamic spiritual leadership to the congregation. In appointments to influential positions in the wider church, the 'safe' candidate is chosen while the person with flair is rejected."
 - "Theological training for the ministry pays too little attention to training in purely spiritual matters. Some never received any training in personal devotion. We were never taught how to evangelise."
 - Both partners working to pay for ever-larger mortgages, and expectations in work to perform and meet tighter deadlines inevitably means time for church activity is squeezed.
 - Loyalty to a single church as "my church" has diminished.

- People have greater expectations when they come to any event, including the hour of public worship.
- Over the past thirty plus years there has been a proliferation of new independent churches, or it might be that people prefer a smaller meeting.
- Young families, having moved, have not joined another church but have lapsed in membership through indifference.
- Part of the decline is obviously because of the decline in the (Presbyterian) birth rate.
- The failure of our denomination to broaden its appeal beyond middle class professionals.
- Many Sunday School and Bible Classes have failed to keep their programmes interesting.
- The practice of lengthy sermons.

11. Suggestions for action were numerous. “The current malaise requires action, not analysis. Action is needed and requires leadership at every level” . Ideas included the following.

- Paid personnel, particularly youth workers.
- Suitable buildings, particularly where new additions are being mooted.
- Timing of worship and Sunday Schools.
- One programme which some churches have benefited from, and which has relevance to leadership, is Network, a Willowcreek initiative, which looks at the area of an individual’s gifting and their utilisation within the Church.
- Church Life. Efforts must be made to encourage the people of God to live as such in the local community, rather than in running organisations where the community can meet the Church.
- Mothers & Toddler’s Groups as a place of friendship and support reaching out to the loneliness that is characteristic of so many.
- Help groups for folks with addiction, a place of acceptance for people with dependence on alcohol or drugs.
- Ministry to single people has been a blessing in other churches, particularly single mothers who have given up on the Church long ago, but a programme of friendship and inclusion on Saturday evenings has had the result of attracting a number back regularly to Church.
- Family centred ministry has caught the vision of many. Parents knowing the pressures awaiting their offspring are increasingly aware of their own inadequacies in bringing up children and respond to church initiatives, such as parenting courses based on biblical principles and family services of worship. Some churches make the most of contacting parents with special days in Sunday School, making the contact and drawing parents further into the life of the church.

- Modern means of communication, majoring in the visual: televisions, overhead projectors, video projectors, power point presentations in worship to engage the thought process.
 - Alpha courses and other discipleship course such as Christianity Explained, Coming Alive, Emmaus have caught the enthusiasm of many who are as yet outside, and have been used to tremendous effect in arousing spiritual interest.
 - By no means least, the vital importance of prayer.
12. Other noteworthy suggestions for action included the following.
- “See youth mission as a cross-cultural mission. Know and understand what they face. Why not spend 25% of our congregational budget on youth ministry?” “Involve other people and young people in worship”.
 - “Transfer the Church’s available resources away from centrally organised conferences and special Assemblies towards the promotion, encouragement and resourcing of local, congregational-based outreach.” (Note – If a budget of £50,000 were divided equally among 400 pastoral charges, that would provide £125 per charge – once in 6 years).
 - “Churches have been moving from engagement in social action to partnership in the community, but as yet no coherent theology of such developing partnerships has emerged and is much needed.”
 - “The missing generation is the 20’s to 40’s. The Church at every level seems reluctant to adequately address this drift away”.
(One congregation seeking an Associate Minister specifically asked for someone with gifts in relating to the “young marrieds”).
 - “That congregations revise worship practices and willingly balance the new with the old.”
 - “That the General Assembly issue a call to pray and to prayerful self-examination.”
 - “Efforts to preach and teach the Word of God should be re-doubled.”
 - “That the General Assembly appoint Evangelists – not necessarily ministers.”
 - “While many “use” the church, we should never cease to be a caring community expressed in pastoral visitation by Minister, Elders and church members. This should include the building of relationships with those outside the Church, again expressed in pastoral care.”
 - “Ministers should keep visiting and invite people to church.”
 - “An analysis should be carried out of congregations which have been extremely successful and those that had been extremely unsuccessful in attracting and retaining members.”
 - “Models of successful Christian growth at home and abroad should be examined to determine which are biblically compatible and consistent with Presbyterianism”.
 - “A special group should be set up to complete a report on the position.”
13. The April meeting of the General Board recommended that this matter should be referred to the new Board of Mission in Ireland.

STATEMENTS

During the year the Board issued statements as follows:

GENERAL BOARD RESOLUTIONS 14 October 1999**The Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement**

1. In the spirit of the gospel, which declares that it was while we were yet sinners that Christ died for us, the General Board believes that the pursuit of peace is one in which all of us need to be involved through reaching out to our enemies, seeking to meet their genuine concerns as well as being aware of our own.

2. The General Board calls upon the congregations and members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to bring the matter of the paralysed implementation of the Good Friday Agreement to God in faith and prayer, so that God in His mercy may deliver us from the legacy of past sins and bitterness, that we may treat one another with the grace and generosity which He has shown to us so that we, erstwhile enemies, may walk into the future together.

The Patten Report

3. The General Board records its appreciation of the service and the sacrifice of members of the RUC and their families and requests the Government, in implementing any recommendations of the Patten Commission, to bear in mind the sensitivities of both sections of our community, of the continuing need for adequate security and the goal of developing a modern and well trained policing body. The challenge to create a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole, is one faced by us all and not only by the Government.

The Farming Crisis

4. The General Board assures members of the farming community and associated industries that they are aware of the difficulties and challenges which they currently face and assures them of their pastoral concern and support.

5. The General Board asks Government to offer realistic help to pig farmers, in particular, in view of their disadvantaged position in comparison to others in Great Britain and Europe.

6. The General Board urges the public and the large multiples to support the local farming community by choosing to purchase Northern Ireland produce.

Overseas Concerns

7. That prayer be made in our congregations on Sundays 24 or 31 October, 1999 for the people of Pakistan, Sudan and Indonesia, including the East Timorese, for peaceful resolutions to their problems in the near future.

8. That the General Board requests the European Union, the British and Irish Governments and the Eukumindo group of Missions to continue monitoring the situation of the East Timorese in Indonesia and take appropriate action.

What sort of European Community?

9. When it comes to projecting the European Union's influence and policies beyond its borders the General Board encourages the Irish response to be in favour of generosity and a broad interpretation of the EU's international human rights obligations.

GENERAL BOARD RESOLUTIONS 24 February 2000

1. That the General Board, disappointed that it proved necessary to suspend the Executive and believing that since God has loved us and commanded us to demonstrate our faith by loving our enemies:

- (a) encourages Presbyterians to continue to pray and be diligent in the pursuit of peace in their own localities;
- (b) thanks elected politicians for the work they have done in the interests of the citizens of both parts of Ireland;
- (c) requests both Governments and elected politicians to persevere in the slow and demanding task of seeking an inclusive and just society free of the threat of violence, being aware of the needs of others as well as of their own;
- (d) in accordance with the overwhelming desire of the people in both parts of this Island, to have finished with terrorism in all its forms for ever (as expressed in the Referenda) the General Board encourages all paramilitary groups to become the explicit servants of the democratic process.

PWA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Following the untimely death of Miss Elizabeth Brian a special meeting of the General Board was held on 7 September, when due tribute was paid to her work as PWA Executive Secretary. It was then resolved:

- (i) That, in accordance with previous practice, a Joint Nominating Committee be appointed and empowered to submit a name, or names, to the next General Assembly for appointment to the post of PWA Executive Secretary.
- (ii) That, in accordance with previous practice, the Joint Nominating Committee be constituted as follows:
 - six representatives of the Nomination Board
 - six representatives of the PWA
 - four specialists, one each to be appointed by
 - the Home Board
 - the Overseas Board
 - the Board of Finance and Administration
 - the General Board
- (iii) that the General Board's representative be Rev R F S Poots.

CALLS

On the recommendation of the Forces Committee, Calls to work as Chaplains to H M Forces were issued to two Licentiates, Rev Philip W Patterson and Rev Jonathan Wylie. On the recommendation of the Chaplains Committee,

a Call was issued to Rev B R Hughes to be a full-time Chaplain at the Belfast City Hospital.

PANELS

At the close of last Assembly a request was made for details of the various Panels, which currently are as follows:

Overview of Funding

Moderator, Clerk (Convener), and Financial Secretary, Convener of the Union Commission, Convener of the Committee on Finance and Staffing, Convener of the Board of Finance and Administration, Two Representatives of the United Appeal Board, Convener of Incidental Fund Committee, Two Representatives of the Board of Ministry and Pensions, Mr Paul Ballentine, Rev David Clarke.

Review of Boards and Committees

Moderator, Clerk (Convener), Deputy Clerk, Rev John Dickinson, Dr Donald Watts; D F Adair.

Conciliation

Moderator, Clerk, Deputy Clerk (Convener), Very Rev Dr John Dunlop, Revs Dr D C Irwin, S A Finlay, Dr D M Scott, D Baker, Princ J C McCullough; J Campbell, G Strong, Mrs E Armstrong.

Job Evaluation Panel (Under Finance and Staffing Committee)

Convener of Finance and Staffing Committee, Convener of Board of Finance and Administration, Clerk of Assembly, Financial Secretary, Personnel Officer, Rev R J T McMullan.

OVERVIEW OF FUNDING

1. The Panel on the Overview of Funding recently held two meetings and interviewed the representatives of some agencies.

2. A new post proposal from the Board of Social Witness in respect of a Support Worker, at Gray's Court, costing £11-12,000 per annum, to be funded indefinitely by the Habinteg Housing Association, was approved.

3. A request was received from the Kinghan Mission for approval of expenditure of £25,000 in 2001 and 2002 to cover the cost of an overlap arrangement for a successor to Rev Dr George Grindle. It was decided to ask the Kinghan Mission Committee to consider

- (i) the sale of the Manse
- (ii) other sources of funding and
- (iii) any possible savings within their own budget.

Meantime, it was recommended that the United Appeal grant £15,000 for 2001.

4. A request was received from the Presbyterian Residential Trust for approval of a programme of capital expenditure over the next five years to upgrade or replace a number of its homes. The Panel considered the question of how far the Church should be spending its resources on the provision of residential or nursing homes, which could be provided by other bodies.

5. The Trust has 9 homes, most of which are old and unsuitable, and there is no capital development fund. Present and future legislation will require

higher standards and significant expenditure. The Panel recommended that by next autumn the Residential Trust should produce a strategic business plan for the next 5-10 years, and should consider the means of raising the necessary capital.

6. A request was received from the Committee on Marriage and the Family for the appointment of a part-time co-ordinator for its counselling service. The request was approved.

7. A request was received from the Chaplains' Committee for a sum of £10,853 towards the appointment of a full-time Presbyterian Chaplain at the Royal Group of Hospitals.

8. The Panel supported the proposal to make such an appointment, but suggested that enquiries be made about possible funding from other sources, that the contribution from the hospital be inflation proofed, and that the possibility of mutual back-up between the chaplains in the Royal Group and the City Hospitals be explored.

9. A proposal by the Home Mission to build a new Church in Waterford was considered. It was agreed that assistance should be sought from Church Extension which currently has a substantial credit balance.

10. A letter from the Youth Board provided information on the role of the Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland and the importance of this field post for local congregations. There is Assembly approval on the books for continuing the post until November 2000.

11. The Panel agreed to recommend to the United Appeal Board that the post be funded for the year 2001 while the Youth Board continues to seek other sources of funding.

12. The Panel considered the funding of the post of Clerk Designate (for the year 2001-2002 when there will be an extra person in post), the salary for which has not yet been fixed. The Incidental Fund was asked to consider the apportionment of this year's salary between the Incidental Fund and General Expenses, which are levied across all funds and agencies.

13. General Expenses have recently risen by 16%, due mainly to various temporary appointments in the Cash Office to cover illness, etc. The appointment of a part-time Secretary to the Personnel Officer was approved, though it was decided that in future approval should be sought before any steps are taken to create such posts. Funding will be required to finance the appointment of a new Financial Secretary some months before the retirement of Mr W H Henry, but this may not result in an increase in General Expenses over last year's figure.

14. The General Board's Sub-Committee on Declining Statistics was asked to consider the long-term implications of the contraction in the number of contributing members, especially in view of the age profile of the contributors.

15. The Panel noted that the Overseas Board had finished 1999 in deficit, and that an overdraft facility should be requested.

16. The overdraft on the Video Unit has been substantially reduced and should soon be paid off.

17. The Public Worship Committee requested approval for staffing costs for a Worship Resource Centre.

18. The Panel recommended that any such Centre should be self-financing in co-operation with Familybooks and the Christian Training Centre.

19. It is proposed to hold a further Assembly Conference in 2003. It was agreed to recommend that this event be self-financing.

COLLEGE AND TRAINING REVIEW COMMITTEE

Rev R F S Poots reports:

1. The 1999 General Assembly authorised the Committee to proceed to the refurbishment of the Union College building provided:

- (a) the Committee failed to identify an appropriate site for a purpose-built college which would result in significant savings on the cost of refurbishment of the present College, by 31 December, 1999 and
- (b) the cost of refurbishment being met within the resources of the Union College Management Committee and the Committee of the Magee Fund Scheme.

Greenfield Site Option

2. As a first step, the Committee sought to determine the commercial value of the College. A select list of 16 developers were invited to place their valuation on the property. Two only of the 16 responded and the highest unconditional valuation was £1,755,000. When this amount was set against the estimated cost of a new building £2,632,500, plus the purchase price of a site this option was clearly unviable.

3. The search for a site was continued and, up to December, 1999, the only available site in the district was a disused building at Shaftesbury Square which was judged inappropriate.

4. In December negotiations began with Queen's University about a site at 76 Malone Road, in spite of the location being less favourable than that of Union College. However, the purchase of this site would have entailed the transfer of the College to the University and a cheque for £1,000,000.

5. The Committee, consequently, decided that every avenue had been explored and the only remaining option was the refurbishment of Union.

6. The following resolution was passed unanimously:

That the Committee, having fulfilled the requirements of the resolution of the 1999 Assembly, and having failed to identify a 'greenfield' site which would enable a new college building to be provided, as set out in the resolution of the 1999 Assembly, now, in accordance with the decision of Assembly, proceed to prepare the way for the refurbishment of the Union College building.

Refurbishment Option

7. Our architect has been instructed to prepare sketch plans for consideration by both the College and the Magee Fund interests. Two possible plans have been discussed.

- (i) The refurbishment of the building to a high standard to provide modern facilities for learning, administration, professors and other

studies as well as modernised en-suite bedrooms and increased day-to-day use of the chapel. The estimated cost is £2,100,000.

- (ii) This scheme envisages similar refurbishment to the existing building as that described at (i) with the omission of the ‘matrons house’ annex. In addition a social/conference building would be provided with linkages to the courtyard. The estimated cost is £2,811,360 which, subject to planning permission, could be reduced by the sale to a developer of the ‘matrons house’ and part of the ground at the rear of the property for the building of apartments at an estimated £900,000 leaving a shortfall of £1,911,360.

Financing the Project

8. The Committee is indebted to Mr David Clements, Hon Treasurer of the College Management Committee, for the time he has given to a search for the terms in which major bequests to the College are held.

9. The Committee is confident that a minimum of £1,600,000 can be realised through the disposal of investments relating to property funds of the College. With the addition of capital from the Magee Fund Management Committee, the refurbishment project is manageable without having to dispose of some investments within the “General Funds” of the College.

Completed Task

10. Throughout the year, reports were presented to the General Board which, at its February meeting, received a report that the Committee had completed the task given to it by the General Assembly and that it should be discharged.

11. The Board of Studies has been asked to take over the management of the refurbishment, with the suggestion that a small group, representative of all legitimate interests, should be set up as an interim arrangement until the new Board of Studies and Christian Training, to which a College and Magee Management Committee will report, is appointed in June.

A supplementary Report will be presented to the Assembly by the Board of Studies.

CONCILIATION PANEL

Rev R F S Poots reports:

1. “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity” (Ps 133.1). “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12.18). “I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord” (Philippians 4.2).

2. The biblical exhortation underlies and guides the work of the Conciliation Panel whose training and procedures have been put in place to assist individuals and groups to work out their differences so that the Church may know the “pleasure” of brothers together in unity.

3. Over the past year only two requests for assistance have been received, one of which is on-going. During this period the Panel has planned to

raise the profile of the service available to the Church through the group of trained conciliators and is hoping that one of this group will agree to undertake this important task.

4. Mr I H Wallace, CB, who acted as co-ordinator for the service and guided it expertly through its early development, has resigned. Miss Daphne Gilmour, Clerk of Session in Armagh Road, Portadown and formerly Religious Education Advisor to the Southern Education and Library Board, has agreed to assume the co-ordinator role.

5. The Panel would urge individuals and groups to seek help as soon as a difficulty appears on the horizon and to seek “to agree with one another in the Lord”.

PAR 272(5) OF THE CODE

The present wording of Par 272(5)(c) of the Code presents two problems.

- (i) Taken literally, it seems to say that part-time chaplains are appointed upon condition that full-time chaplains report in writing, etc, which is obviously not the intended meaning.
- (ii) The reference to the Speakers of the Parliament of Northern Ireland is now obsolete. The reference to “public institutions” is adequate to cover any similar appointments that may be necessary in the future.

An amending overture is therefore submitted along with another to enable the General Board to call chaplains to work in hospices as well as hospitals.

MILLENNIUM WORKING GROUP

Mr Stephen Lynas reports:

1. To celebrate the Millennium congregations were encouraged to reflect the true significance of the Millennium to their communities in a manner appropriate to their situation. These celebrations focussed on Advent and Millennium Sunday, January 2.

2. The Public Worship Committee prepared worship suggestions for Advent and Millennium Sunday which were distributed to all ministers.

3. Following the suggestion that the Millennium be a time for rededication and recommitment, bookmarks, one for every member, incorporating the millennium theme and the Mission Statement of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, were distributed to all congregations.

4. A successful millennium advertising campaign promoted by the Four Church Leaders was supported by the Presbyterian Church.

5. The Presbyterian Church was represented at the Northern Ireland Millennium Service in the Waterfront Hall on Sunday 2 January, with many attending on behalf of Presbyteries, Agencies and Boards.

6. Plans to celebrate the Millennium at the 2000 General Assembly were passed to the Business Board to proceed with in consultation with the Moderator-Designate.

PANEL ON BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

1. The Panel on Boards and Committees held one meeting. The main development this year is the amalgamation of the Home Board with the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training and the consequent transfer of certain committees from one Board to another as described in Reports 1999 pp12-14. Plans for the amalgamation seem to be progressing satisfactorily. The necessary overtures were placed on the books at last Assembly. As the PWA are now bringing a separate overture to replace all of the present Par 308 of the Code, the General Board's overtures anent Par 308(5), (6)(c), (8) and Par 308(6) will be withdrawn, if the Assembly gives leave to do so.

2. Responsibility for the assignment of students to assistantships now transfers to the re-named Board of Studies and Christian Training. The Panel agreed that this work could be done adequately by the Board and the present 12 member Interviewing Committee, and that the large 26 member Assembly Committee has now become redundant. The Panel is also happy with the proposal that the new Ministerial Development Committee and Staff Committee should have the status of Board committees rather than full-scale Assembly committees (see Board of Studies report). While certain committees with major responsibilities, such as the Doctrine, Church and Government, Church Architecture or CMF, obviously require the status of Assembly committees, there could be other areas where Board committees, with greater flexibility of membership, programme of meetings, etc, would be equally effective, if not more so. This matter will be considered in the ensuing year along with the function of Board Standing Committees.

3. Last year the Standing Committee of the Board of Social Witness submitted a paper outlining a possible alternative structure for that Board, preserving the general outline but considerably reducing its size. Any other Board that wished to submit proposals for an alternative structure was invited to do so by 31 December (Mins 1999 p42 res 21) but no responses were received. Discussions with the Board of Social Witness Standing Committee are continuing.

4. The Panel also plans to see if any lessons can be learned from other Churches in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches on how they provide collective leadership and handle the decision-making process.

PRESBYTERY VISITATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

Rev J I Davey reports:

1. After last year's General Assembly approved running a pilot scheme under the new consultation process, a training evening was held for representatives of the four Presbyteries in which the piloting is taking place. So far no major difficulties have been reported. A debriefing will be held in the autumn and final proposals will be brought to the 2001 Assembly.

INTER-CHURCH COMMITTEE ON NORTHERN IRELAND

1. The Inter-Church Committee on Northern Ireland held its annual meeting at Ulster Television on 5 November, 1999. Our Church's

representatives were Very Rev Dr John Dunlop, Rev M L Johnston, Sir Eric McDowell and the Clerk of Assembly.

2. Mr Alan Bremner, Head of Programmes, outlined the contribution made by UTV to religious broadcasting and described media perceptions and analysis of the Northern Ireland situation, which he illustrated by a variety of video material of programmes transmitted. Mr Rob Morrison, Head of News, described the changes that have recently come about because of the peace process. Compared with earlier years there is now much less coverage of events like bombings, shootings and court cases, and greater coverage of more normal issues.

3. There was then general discussion on the latest developments in the Northern Ireland situation.

4. The Business Education Initiative, which was originally started as one of several minor projects organised by the Committee alongside the "Rev Tours", the Summer Institute for American visitors, etc, continues to go from strength to strength.

5. During the academic year now ending 155 students from Northern Ireland and the Border Counties have been undertaking business studies at 125 church-related colleges in the USA, which have generously waived tuition fees, while the accommodation and other costs are met by the Training and Employment Agency, the International Fund for Ireland and the European Union at a cost of around £1.2 million.

6. The main aim of the programme is to enhance the skills, experience and qualifications of the participants so that they return to this country better qualified to make a contribution to the success of business here. They are also encouraged to give talks to business, church and student groups while they are away.

7. The Inter-Church Committee gratefully acknowledges the help of all who are making this project such a spectacular success.

CHURCH HOUSE STAFF

Very Rev Dr D H Allen reports:

1. The Committee appointed by the General Board to consider senior positions in Church House (Reports 1999 p6) did not have any further business to transact up to the time that the Blue Book went to press. If there are any subsequent developments a supplementary report will be printed in the Daily Minutes.

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

1. The Doctrine Committee continued to meet during the year and prepared an initial report on the theological foundations of ministry as charged by the General Assembly of 1997. It also prepared for publication a summary of its exegetical work on the Biblical passages dealing with divorce and

remarriage, as requested by the General Assembly 1999. This is included in the Appendix.

‘Ministry’

1. The Doctrine Committee was charged by the General Assembly of 1997 to report on the ‘theological foundations of ministry’. From our deliberations it seemed clear that the task was remitted to us because the concept of ministry in Scripture is broader than the way it is normally used in the Reformed and other Christian traditions, namely to refer to an office into which someone is ordained.

2. A full report on the Christian Ministry would fill the ‘Blue Book’ and more. What we present below is an examination of the wider Biblical concept of ministry and of leadership in that context, since theology and practice must always be tested by Scripture. However, specific forms of ministry are never direct expressions of Biblical principle and precedent produced in a vacuum. The environment and culture in which the ministry is to be exercised along with the history and traditions of the specific church play a part in shaping appropriate forms of ministry. So this report needs to be supplemented by discussions of forms of ministry as seen in the Confession of Faith and the history and traditions of the PCI. That being said, however, we would insist, with the Westminster Confession (Article 1), upon the supremacy of Scripture, and, therefore, our commitment to a radical transformation of our theology and practices, if necessary, under the Word of God.

3. The New Testament gives us no formal definition of the Church. Instead, within its pages, we find a rich diversity of images that highlight differing aspects and facets of the Church’s nature and ministry. To take just a few, we may say that the Church is the people of God chosen to declare his marvellous deeds; it is the body of Christ gifted by the Spirit to prepare its members for works of service (ministry); it is the fellowship of and in the Spirit of those who follow Jesus on the path of discipleship (1Pet 2.9; Eph 4. 11-13; Acts 2.42-47; Lk 9.23). From these and other strands of the Biblical witness we can begin to formulate our theology of ministry. We set out

Four Fundamental Statements on Ministry

- The Church’s ministry is the ministry given it by the triune God.
- The model for all ministry is the ministry of our Lord while on earth.
- The power of the indwelling Holy Spirit is essential to carry out effectively such ministry.
- Ministries performed by individual Church members can only be understood and practised in the light of the overall ministry given to the Church, the whole people of God.

Since we consider it our task to focus on the so-called ‘ordained’ and ‘lay’ ministries we shall unpack only some of these fundamental statements.

4. The commonly drawn distinction between ordained ministers and laity is foreign to the Bible. ‘Word and Sacrament’ is not the exclusive domain of any specially ordained group in the New Testament. The churches, as evidenced in the Epistles, are concerned about order at the Lord’s Supper but do

not give any direct indications as to who is to preside. Further, while the Great Commission, with the command to baptize, was given by the risen Christ to the apostles, there is no evidence that they thought that only they and their specially appointed associates should administer it. The whole people of God is called to ministry. All are called to serve as Christ served. The words 'servant', 'deacon' and 'minister' in our English New Testament usually have the same Greek word underlying them. It is used broadly referring to service in general, and also in a narrower sense to refer to the 'office' of deacon; but even here, the work of the diaconate is rooted in the service of the whole people of God. The word 'laity' comes from the Greek for 'people'. So we are all the laity of God and we are all ministers of God.

5. The significance of this is more than terminological. Of course there is leadership in the churches in the New Testament. The terms which refer to that leadership are translated in various ways such as 'elder', 'presbyter', 'overseer', 'bishop'. The difficulty is that our distinction between clergy and layperson usually signals an unbiblical approach to the church. People think in terms of the pulpit and the pew; the individual minister, on the one hand, and the large corporate body, on the other. Minister and congregation added together (with elders in the middle) make up the church. But our thinking about ministry must begin with the one body of Christ, of which we are all members, and upon which God bestows his gifts. The most noteworthy exposition of the point comes in 1 Corinthians 12. There Paul stresses three things. First, there is **diversity** of gifts (vv 4-11), whose range is great (see too, Romans 12.4-8; Ephesians 4,11ff). There is no thought of the gifts of the ascended Christ being given through the Holy Spirit to one leader or even a team of leaders. Second, there is **unity** in the body (vv 12,13). The church is not made up of various individuals who come together. It is a single body, and individuals are to regard themselves as members of it. Third, there is **equality** in the body (vv 21-26). The ones we call ministers are no more important in the church or essential to it than the so-called 'laity' or congregation.

6. A grasp of this would transform the Church, both those we call ministers and those we call laity. For ministers it would mean that their primary qualification in leadership was the willingness to serve God by being servants of God's people. Since all are rightly to be considered as ministers and laity, if 'ministers' regard themselves as either superior in the Church or more important to its being than the 'laity', then they are guilty of thinking of themselves more highly than they ought (Rom 12.3), indeed of regarding themselves almost on a par with Jesus Christ, since the whole church is **His** body. For 'laity' it would mean that it is impossible to regard the church as something which can go on without them. Since all are members of the body and ministers of Christ, all have a responsibility fully and equally to that of their 'minister' for the Church; they are as full-time in the church as any of its leaders, since the **whole** Church is one body of Christ.

7. The Church desperately needs to appropriate this truth. It is the expression of the traditional emphasis on the priesthood of all believers. Many churches which adhere to the Reformation principles of Scripture alone and faith alone have failed to develop fully the notion of the priesthood of all believers. Historically, the reasons for this are both complex and controverted.

Sociological rather than theological factors have obviously played a part. During the Middle Ages social patterns of hierarchy, power, and administrative practice were easily transferred to the church. Later, the need for strong leadership in post-Reformation Protestant churches, and the absence of the existence of democratic education such as has come about since then, meant that some aspects of ecclesiology remained dormant. We know how long it took the Church to apply Biblical teaching to injustices in society and social institutions. It is now time to apply such teaching to the Church's understanding of its nature and ministry. However we analyse the picture historically, one of the primary tasks of church leaders is to take steps to break down the minister-layperson distinction, releasing people for various forms of ministry within the church so that the entire membership of the Body of Christ functions as such. The Spirit belongs to the Body, and where the Body is not properly aware of itself the work of the Spirit is impeded. It is by the model of service, the true ministry, which the leaders of the churches will most effectively help in this change.

8. At least two significant questions arise in this connection whose treatment takes us too far afield but which needs to be seriously addressed. The first is the question of **the Biblical basis for ordination**. What precisely is that basis? Are we told that it should be for life, rather than it being a matter of being set aside temporarily to fulfil certain responsibilities? To what functions should people be ordained, and how do we decide? These questions, of course, have been debated for a long time but we have often failed to subject our beliefs and practices to a proper theological investigation or placed them on proper theological grounds. Like everyone else, ordained ministers are susceptible to the temptations of power and unjustified professional high esteem, and so we need to scrutinise these matters carefully. The other is the question posed by the existence of Pentecostalism and Neo-pentecostal charismatic theologies and churches about **the permanence of certain gifts** (often called the 'charismatic gifts') in the Church, or their restoration to the Church in our times. In Presbyterian history the question of 'gifts ministry' has frequently been treated in restricted terms, applying to the ordained ministry. Modern charismatic renewal has emphasized the gifts given to the whole Church. What we have said in this report so far in relation to ministry does not come down for or against the claim that certain 'extraordinary' gifts have ceased in or been restored to the Church.

9. The New Testament contains three lists of *gifts* – Rom 12.6-8; 1Cor 12.28-31; and Eph 4.11-13. These lists exhibit great variety and include various administrative, pastoral, evangelistic and teaching ministries. Two significant things about them should be brought to light in our present context. The first is that there is no evidence that a single leader is meant to be gifted in these four areas. A leader might, of course, be so, and one would rightly expect of those in leadership pastoral, evangelistic and teaching zeal with a modicum of administrative competence. Even so, flawed concepts of ministry are connected with flawed ideas of how God distributes gifts. One result is that members of a congregation frequently excel in certain gifts and these are largely wasted and unused because the expectation is that the 'minister' has them all. The second is that in our theological training, we do not distinguish between teaching,

evangelistic, pastoral and administrative gifts in any serious way, in that we train individuals as if they should have them all.

10. It is certainly possible that if we attend seriously to these matters, we shall arrive at ideas of ministry and of leadership radically different from those which currently abound. This could mean a painful rethinking of customary cherished traditions. But refusal even to engage in rethinking – whatever conclusions we come to – is a sign that we have come to think of the Church in primarily institutional terms (and probably of ministry as a career), rather than in terms of the Church as fellowship, and ministries as the mutual service of the whole body. As the task of this committee was to consider theological foundations of ministry, we are conscious both of the constraints and responsibilities contained in our remit. A huge responsibility follows from our theology of Church and ministry. If the theological foundations laid out in this report are correct and we do nothing significant to shape the life of the Church in their light, we bear direct responsibility before God and our fellow humans for our failure. If they are correct and we pledge ourselves to significant adjustment, we can become instruments of the renewal of the Church in Ireland in the twenty-first century. Unless we have interpreted the Biblical data wrongly, it becomes mandatory for the Church to adjust and to consider the practical implications immediately at congregational, presbyterian, collegiate and every other relevant level.

11. We must now be willing to give a Biblically based consideration to the following questions:

- Whether or not the word ‘minister’, as normally understood, should be retained.
- Whether we should review our criteria for regarding someone as qualified for and called to ministry in the PCI, even on the traditional model of ministry. It seems that one important qualification would be the capacity and willingness of an individual to give priority to releasing members of the congregation into their various ministries.
- Whether or not we should re-examine our theology and practice of ordination.

Some Biblical References

Mt 28.18-20	Rom 15.25	Heb 6.10
Mk 10.45	1Cor 16.15	1Pet 4.10
Jn 13.14-16	2Cor 8.4	1 Pet 5.1-5.
Acts 6.1-7	Phil 2.17	

Bibliography

- Anderson, Ray S ed *Theological Foundations for Ministry* Edin Clark 1979
- Barrett, CK *Church, Ministry and Sacraments in the New Testament* GR Eerdmans 1985
- Bittlinger, Arnold *Gifts and Ministries* London Hodder and Stoughton 1974
- Westminster Confession of Faith* 27

- Croft, Steven *Ministry in Three Dimensions. Ordination and leadership in the local church* London DLT 1999
- Green, Michael *Freed to Serve. Training and equipping for ministry* 3rd ed London HS 1996
- Harper, Michael *Let my People Grow. Ministry and leadership in the church* London H&S 1988
- Kruse, Colin *New Testament Foundations for Ministry* London MM&S1983
- Messer, Donald E *Contemporary Images of Christian Ministry* Nashville Abingdon1989
- Schillebeeckx, Edward *The Church with a Human Face. A new and expanded theology of ministry* London SCM1985
- Tidball, Derek J *Builders and Fools. Leadership the Bible way* Leicester IVP1999
- Torrance, TF *Royal Priesthood. A theology of ordained ministry* 2nd ed Edin Clark 1993
- Yoder, John Howard *The Fullness of Christ. Paul's vision of universal ministry* Elgin Brethren 1987

J C McCULLOUGH, Convener

APPENDIX

1. The General Assembly in June 1999 accepted the Report of the Doctrine Committee on the question of Divorce and Remarriage. In answer to a question in the Assembly the convener of the Doctrine Committee undertook to publish as an appendix to its next Report to the Assembly its exegetical work on Biblical texts dealing with the question of divorce and remarriage.

Introduction

2. Before looking at divorce we looked at the Biblical doctrine of marriage.

3. We find the fundamental teaching on this topic in Genesis 2:18-24, where we are told that marriage was established because “the Lord God said ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’”. (v.18) Marriage was established because ‘the man’ was alone, to solve the problem of his “aloneness”. Companionship is the essence of marriage.

4. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh”. (v. 24) The phrase “one flesh” does not exclusively or even primarily refer to sexual union though it undoubtedly includes it. So, the ideal of marriage is that the relationship is so intimate that the two are identified as one person. This is most clearly set out in Ephesians 5: 28-29, where the married couple are so closely united that whatever a man does for his wife, whether of good or evil, he does for himself, for (quoting Gen. 2:24) the two have become one.

5. It is clear that the divine intention was that this should be an exclusive relationship (a man ... will be united to his wife and they will become one flesh”.

(Gen. 2:24)) and that in their becoming one it should be permanent. There can be no dispute that God intended marriage to be a life-long union with partnership as its fundamental principle.

6. There are of course other aspects to marriage in the purposes of God as well as the union of husband and wife: it was to provide for children's welfare and the family was to be the basis of society; its formation preceded any other institution and its importance for the welfare of society cannot be over emphasised.

7. However, the reality is that marriage is not regarded today as the lifelong union. The Memorial states that "marriage breakdown is reaching alarming proportions". It is tempting to rephrase this sentence and say "has reached".

Divorce in the Old Testament

8. We do not know when divorce began. When it is first mentioned in the Bible, it is something which is already happening (cf. Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 3:8 and Malachi 2:16 where it is assumed that divorce is taking place). Nor is it clear that the practice of marriage in Old Testament times was the same as had become the norm by the New Testament era.

9. In the Old Testament regulations for divorce are set out. The most complete of these are found in Deuteronomy 24: 1-4, where a certificate of divorce was to be given and the wife was sent away (the woman did not have the right to divorce her husband). The woman thus divorced had the right to remarry, but if this second marriage was dissolved, her first husband was not normally allowed to remarry her (cf also Jeremiah 3:1).

10. Other regulations surrounding divorce included:

- A priest was not allowed to marry a divorced woman (or a widow) (Leviticus 21:7, 14; Ezekiel 44:22)
- A priest's daughter who has been divorced may eat her father's food (Lev. 22: 13)
- A vow taken by a divorced woman stands (Numbers 30: 9)

11. The regulations for divorce ensured that it was taken seriously and discouraged hasty, ill-considered actions.

12. In summary, therefore, the situation in the Old Testament was that, on the one hand, the exclusive and lifelong nature of marriage was emphasised, (Gen 2:4) and on the other hand regulations were drawn up to control divorce which was already taking place, in particular to protect the women.

New Testament

13. In New Testament times the same tension is found. On the one hand the lifelong nature of marriage is stressed, and there is evidence that some groups (eg some of the Sectaries of Qumran) so stressed the life long nature of marriage that they excluded the possibility of divorce. On the other hand, divorce was generally permitted and was probably fairly common. A further complication in New Testament times was the fact that there seemed to be a quite strong difference of opinion as to when divorce should be allowed. This centred round the definition of 'some indecency' in Deuteronomy 24: 1. The

school of Shammai stated that the “something indecent” was sexual impurity and that only adultery was intended. The school of Hillel on the other hand gave the phrase a very wide interpretation; it argued that “anything displeasing” could include cooking a poor dish!

14. There are five passages in the New Testament where divorce is expressly discussed. They occur in three different contexts. Two occur in sections which deal with the Law (Matthew 5:31 and Luke 16:18); two more occur in sections which deal with controversies between Jesus and his opponents (Matthew 19:3-9 and Mark 10: 2-12) and one occurs in a section where Paul is dealing with pastoral matters (1 Corinthians 7: 10-16).

Passages dealing with the Law

Matthew 5: 31

15. In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is stressing the finality of the Law. In vv. 17-20 he says:

Think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

16. He then goes on to give a series of ‘antitheses’ where he contrasts what “You have heard that it was said to the men of old” with what “**I say to you**”. They are listed below:

	“You have heard that it was said to the men of old”	“But I say to you”
1.	You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.	every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be liable to the hell of fire.
2.	You shall not commit adultery	every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
3 (v.31)	Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.	every one who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.
4.	You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.	Do not swear at all,
5.	An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.	Do not resist one who is evil.
6.	You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy	Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

17. His conclusion then is “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect”.

18. Scholars are puzzled as to precisely what criteria Jesus is using to redefine the Law. In passages 1 and 2 he seems to be interiorizing and sharpening the Old Testament command, saying that it is not just the act but the inner motivation that counts. In passages 4,5 and 6 he seems to be directly contradicting the Old Testament Law as it was understood and practised in his day. In passage 3, he seems to be partly contradicting the Law but still allowing divorce in certain circumstances. What is clear, however, is that his redefinition has the result of making the Law more demanding. Hence the righteousness of the followers of Jesus must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

19. On the question of divorce, Jesus refers to the custom of a man giving his wife a bill of divorce and sending her away and forbids that practice, ‘except on the ground of unchastity’. What did he mean by the words *logos porneias* translated in the RSV as ‘unchastity’?

20. There are several theories as to what precisely is meant here. One theory which we can put aside without much discussion is the view that the phrase ‘except for *logou porneias* is a mere aside. “Whoever divorces his wife, *porneia* is irrelevant, and marries another, commits adultery”. In this view the phrase is simply a passing rejection of the Shammaite claim that divorce is justified for *porneia*. Such an interpretation goes against the plain meaning of the text.

21. A second view is that *porneia* refers only to an incestuous union. The assumption is that the ‘exceptive clause’ is added by Matthew because in his community there were those who, having come from a Gentile background, were already married incestuously according to the regulations of Lev. 18: 6-18, which prohibited marriage within certain degrees of kinship. In those cases Matthew is allowing divorce because the marriage broke Jewish Law in the first place and, therefore, never really happened.

22. A third view restricts *porneia* to infidelity during the betrothal period.

23. The most likely explanation, however, is that the word is used in its normal sense of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse. It can refer to prostitution, unchastity, fornication, unnatural relations etc.

24. Jesus is therefore referring to the first century custom whereby a husband can divorce his wife (not the other way round) because he has ‘found some uncleanness in her’. In the light of the forementioned debate between the Schools of Shammai and Hillel, Jesus is, therefore, advocating a stricter interpretation of the Mosaic permission than that given by Shammai, and his reason is that a man’s divorcing his wife makes here an adulteress. Presumably this was because, having been cast out of her married home, a woman would be compelled to remarry to survive.

25. This passage, therefore, fits well into the general argument of Jesus in Matthew that the standards of God’s Kingdom are very high, that a Christian’s righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. All these passages in Matthew 5: 21ff, however, are theological statements; they do not deal directly with the further pastoral problem: how does the church deal with sinful humans who fall short of those ideals? eg Christians who do commit

adultery by looking at a woman lustfully or who fail on occasions to love their enemies, or Christians whose marriages break up.

Luke 16:18

26. This is a very brief statement and coming after a statement about the permanence of the Law (Luke 16: 16-17) it is probably meant to illustrate that “it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one dot of the Law to become void”. The emphasis in the passage is on the question of marriage after divorce and there is a difference of opinion among scholars as to precisely what is meant. Some argue that Jesus is saying that a man may divorce his wife (in this passage there is no mention of a wife’s divorcing her husband) but then may not remarry; equally a man may not marry a woman who has been divorced (presumably because she is deemed to be still married to her first husband). This would contradict Jewish Law which permitted divorced men and women to remarry. The second view is that Jesus is prohibiting both divorce and remarriage. The exceptive clause of Matthew 19 (except for unchastity) is not found here. In this passage, therefore, the Christian ideal of marriage is re-stated, but Jesus does not go on to deal pastorally with the situations where Christians, in their sinful state, living ‘between the times’ do not live up to that ideal.

Passages which deal with a controversy between Jesus and his opponents

Matthew 19: 3-9 (especially v.9)

27. This is a controversy dialogue between Jesus and the Pharisees. Such dialogues are very common in all four Gospels and they usually involve a trick question put to Jesus by the Pharisees to trap him. In this case the trick question is: “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” There is some discussion as to precisely what is behind this question. Some scholars think that the Pharisees are engaging Jesus in the debate between the Schools of Hillel and Shammai, mentioned above, as to precisely the grounds on which one could divorce one’s wife (as we have said, in the first century in Palestine there was no question of a wife divorcing her husband). On the other hand, it is more likely that they had heard that Jesus took a more rigorist view of divorce than that commonly practised and wanted to demonstrate that, by so doing, he was breaking the Jewish Law contained in Deuteronomy 24 which permitted divorce under certain circumstances.

28. In either case, Jesus replies by appealing to the passage in Genesis which concerns marriage, reminding them: “Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”

29. This may have been what the Pharisees wanted Jesus to say. They immediately counter, quoting Deuteronomy 24:1, but misquoting it by saying that this is what Moses *commanded*. Jesus counters this, not by contradicting what Deuteronomy says, but pointing out that it is a pastoral concession, not a

command. He then goes on repeat Deuteronomy 24:1 as understood by the school of Shammai.

30 The disciples react by saying that it would be better not to marry than to have such a rigorist view of divorce. Jesus replies that the high standards of the Kingdom are for those to whom they have been given.

31. In this section, therefore, we find that Jesus re-states the Christian ideal of marriage: it is for life. As in Matthew 5 and Luke 16, however, Jesus does not go on to deal pastorally with Christians who do not live up to this ideal.

Mark 10: 2-12

32. The setting of the passage on divorce is again a controversy with the Pharisees. They ask Jesus, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”. This, like the question in Matthew 19, is a question set in first century culture where the debate is whether a man can divorce his wife, not vice versa. As in the case of Matthew 19 it is likely that the Pharisees asked Jesus this question because they knew that he took a line on divorce which was not common in the culture of the time and which, in their view, contradicted Old Testament teaching. Jesus did not reply directly but, as he often did, countered with another question. The important word in his question is: ‘command’. The Pharisees are not able to say that Moses ‘commanded’ divorce, rather that he ‘allowed’ it; hence the point is made that Moses did not command but only permitted divorce “because of their hardness of hearts”. Jesus is, therefore, not contradicting Moses but simply explaining the pastoral concession. He then goes on to appeal behind the Mosaic *permission* to the original intention as disclosed in the Creation story. He trumps Scripture with Scripture quoting Genesis 1: 27 and 2:24 and showing that sexual union of a man and a woman in marriage creates an indissoluble bond. His conclusion is the famous verse 9: ‘What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.’

33. Up to this point the debate is held in public and in terms which reflect first century Middle East Jewish culture. He is dealing with the issue of men divorcing their wives. He does not say that Moses was wrong in permitting divorce; the Law of Moses, as given in Deuteronomy 24 is left in place; it is acknowledged but categorized as a concession to human sin rather than a command.

34. In the second half of the passage, however, Jesus speaks in private to his disciples and there he redefines adultery. In the culture of his day, adultery was a property offence, the stealing of a husband’s ‘property’, his wife from him. So adultery was committed against the husband, either by his wife who had left him or by another man who had taken his wife. In Jesus’ teaching to his disciples, two things are new:

- the man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery *against her*
- there is mention of a woman divorcing her husband, something unheard of in the Jewish world. When she does, however, she is in exactly the same position as a husband who divorces his wife!

35. In other words, the responsibilities and duties within marriage are mutual. Both husbands and wives have mutual claims on each other.

36 Jesus is, therefore, now talking of marriage as a manifestation of our Christian calling; it is, in fact an aspect of Christian discipleship along with dying to self, loving one's enemies, forgiving those who have wronged us, etc. Break-up of marriage must, therefore, like lying, hating, selfishness, always be seen as falling short of God's way for his children. Divorce is thus a violation of God's intent and while Jesus never rescinded the permission given by Moses 'because of your hardness of heart' divorce must be always seen as evidence of the fact that we are falling short of God's plan for our lives. But again, as in the previous passages, Jesus does not go on in this passage to say how the church should deal with those who have fallen short in any aspect of Christian discipleship.

Passage dealing with a pastoral situation

1 Corinthians 7: 10-16

37. 1 Corinthians 7: 10-16 is, unlike the passages discussed earlier, a reflection on a pastoral situation. The whole book deals with pastoral questions put to Paul from various sources and one of them concerns Christian marriage. There are three issues:

- (i) Should married Christians abstain from sexual relations?
- (ii) Should the unmarried actively seek to get married and should widows seek out new husbands? The general advice seems to be that people should remain in whatever marital state they are in unless there are good reasons why they should change.
- (iii) Should Christians married to non-Christians remain married, or should they divorce?

38. In a society where people were being evangelized it is easy to see how problem (iii) could arise. A woman could become a Christian and her husband refuse to do so. Should the Christian partner then divorce his/her spouse? If they do, what about the teaching of the Lord which we have been considering? If they do not, what about the command in 2 Corinthians 6:14 'Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?' or what about Paul's argument about sexual union in 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20?

39. Paul begins by reiterating the high standard of marriage taught by Jesus (vv. 8-9) and then goes on to apply that to the particular situation in hand ('To the rest I say' cp. his earlier 'to the married I give charge'), acknowledging that he does not have a direct command from the Lord to cover this situation. His conclusion is that, if at all possible, the marriage should remain intact. But if the unbelieving partner does wish to separate, then divorce can be initiated. The believer is not to seek actively to end the relationship, but if it happens, Paul seems to permit divorce because "God has called us to peace". Scholars are divided as to the meaning of this last phrase. It may be that Paul is saying that participation in God's peace, ie, Salvation, is more important than holding on to a futile marriage which runs the risk of diverting a believer from his/her faith. It may, on the other hand, mean that it is better to live in peace than to continue in a relationship which, because of the opposing views of the participants, can only bring unhappiness and strife.

40. The further question arises: ... would Paul then have permitted the believer who had divorced to remarry? He does not give an answer to that question, but presumably he would have given the same advice to a divorced person as he does to a widow and the unmarried: remain in your present state, unless there is good reason to change. "What matters most to him is freedom to serve the Lord with 'unhindered devotion' and to experience the eschatological peace of the people of God".

Conclusion

(Already received by the General Assembly in 1999)

41. *First, there is an educational aspect which would include teaching on Biblical aspects of marriage. This should form part of an informed and planned pulpit ministry, expounding relevant scripture passages and applying their teaching to life. It should also be included in Bible Class programmes. Consideration should be given to the provision of classes in preparation for marriage. Some presbyteries and ministers are already engaged in this vital work. The use of books and other material, such as the "Getting Married" leaflet pack offer ready assistance. Other personnel, such as a doctor, social worker, bank official etc., can offer invaluable help.*

42. *Secondly, we believe that the Church should be continually working to provide an environment where people will find encouragement to seek help with their marital difficulties. We see this as the pastoral function of the Church, but we refer the matter of how this should be discharged in detail to the Marriage and Family Committee. We acknowledge that the pressures of time and lack of access to all the relevant information mean that church leaders cannot always shoulder all these burdens.*

43. *The third area to be considered is the difficult matter of maintaining Christian standards in the Church in the midst of an increasingly hostile world. Overlapping to a degree with pastoral responsibilities is the question of discipline. The Church cannot allow the world to determine its standards and practices, and yet the motivation must always be love and the hope of restoration. We must always strive to uphold the highest ideals of Christian marriage in the Church and in the community.*

FORCES COMMITTEE

1. The aims and objectives of the Forces Committee may be summed up as follows:

- (i) to provide a point of contact for members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland serving with the Armed Forces and
- (ii) keeping the work of our chaplains in the mind of our church.

In every meaningful sense of the word our chaplains are called to be missionaries in an environment that is profoundly secular in its orientation.

2. Our church now has six serving chaplains in the Regular Forces. Change and a flexible response continue to be the hallmarks of our serving personnel. Operations as diverse as Kosovo and East Timor stretch the

capabilities of our armed forces. Yet the signs are that in the midst of such pressures they continue to provide an effective and professional service. Chaplains from our church share in the stresses and strains involved in ministering to Forces personnel and it is important that in these difficult times we be seen as a church to be standing with them and encouraging them in their respective ministries. With the implementation of the Spiritual Needs Study, commissioned by the Army, it is likely that increasing numbers of chaplains will need to be recruited for service over the coming years.

3. The Rev Terry Maze continues to serve as our church's only chaplain in the Royal Navy. In May of this year he will take over as Principal Chaplain (Church of Scotland and Free Churches) Navy in Portsmouth. This is the first time that a minister of our church has been selected for such a position. He writes: "This is the senior CSFC position and carries with it membership of the Naval Chaplaincy Service Board of Management. I will have the care of all the CSFC chaplains, as well as the additional responsibility of Director Training and Programs, which includes oversight of the training of Naval Chaplains and the training which we, as Chaplains, give to the men and women in the Navy and Marines. A challenge to which, with a little trepidation, I look forward".

4. This year marks the retirement of the Rev Dr Victor Dobbin, MBE, QHC, as Chaplain General to the Army. During his years in the Royal Army Chaplains Department, Dr Dobbin has served in a variety of posts with great distinction and to many of us there was no great surprise in his being appointed as Chaplain General in 1995. In the five years in which he has held the office of Chaplain General, he has provided a fine example of Christian leadership at the highest level. Among his achievements was his oversight of the introduction of Individual Training Directive 11 (ITD11). The purpose of this directive is to provide a moral and spiritual framework for both officers and soldiers as they reflect on their work and daily lives. These courses are geared specifically to be presented by chaplains and all ranks are expected to attend them as part of their annual training programme. The effect of the introduction of ITD11 has been to heighten the profile of our Army chaplains as they operate within their respective units, while the quality of the material has served to give additional credibility to their ministries and commended the faith to outsiders. The Rev Norman McDowell continues to serve with a Royal Signals Unit near Brawdy in Pembrokeshire. It is a ministry he is enjoying immensely. However, change is in the offing for him also as in the summer he will be posted to the 1st Battalion the Black Watch in Fallingbostal prior to a tour of duty in Kosovo. The Rev Philip Patterson continues to serve with 26 Regiment Royal Artillery in Germany, his first posting in the Army, and has recently returned from operational duties in Kosovo.

5. The Rev David Edgar continues to serve at RAF Halton but will shortly be moving to a new posting in Cyprus, a very different context to the one he has ministered in over these past number of years. In May this year, the Rev Jonathan Wylie was commissioned as a Chaplain to the RAF. He is presently doing his induction course prior to going on his first posting. We wish him well as he begins this new phase in his ministry.

6. The impact of recent changes in the Territorial Army, along with the pressures on resources in the Regular Army means that the TA will increasingly

find itself either supplementing the work of regular units by sending out individuals on secondment or operating as fully formed units in their own right. Increasingly TA chaplains are serving in places like Bosnia for periods of up to six months as part of regular operational units. The practical implications of such trends need to be carefully monitored by all the sending churches. Among the points for consideration are the implications for a minister's church pension if, as a TA chaplain, he goes on an operational tour and is killed or seriously injured while doing so. The Committee is monitoring this question and seeking advice to clarify the situation should such a circumstance occur. TA chaplains continue to play a vital role in the work of their units and indications are that their work is highly valued and appreciated. The Rev Isaac Thompson went on annual camp with his unit 4/5 Rangers to the Ukraine as part of an exercise designed, among other things, to build relationships between military personnel in our two countries, while other TA chaplains have also served in a variety of locations either with their units or on attachment in Germany to enable regular chaplains to go on operations or take leave. We commend the work which they do.

7. The work of our part-time Army Cadet Force (ACF) chaplains and Officiating Chaplains to the Forces (OCsF) also deserves recognition and appreciation. Chaplaincy cover for the ACF is currently up to strength in Northern Ireland. However, in recent times information has come to the Committee about possible openings for service among the Sea Cadets. We are monitoring this option for any developments.

8. A number of issues have presented themselves to the Committee over the past twelve months. Much the most controversial has been the recent change of policy covering all three armed services concerning the position of serving personnel of homosexual persuasion. The government announced in January 2000 that sexual orientation would no longer be grounds for dismissal from the service and that there was no place for any discrimination on these grounds. While this issue raises legitimate moral and spiritual concerns among the churches which provide chaplains for our armed services it is important that we keep this question in perspective. The guidelines provided by the Naval Chaplaincy Service surely had it right when they stated that "our view is that heterosexual relationships leading to fornication and adultery pose a far more widespread challenge to traditional Christian moral teaching in the Services than do homosexual relationships".

9. The Forces Committee seeks to encourage all our chaplains in their work and it also commends those organisations which frequently supplement their work and provide additional support during hard and difficult times. The work of the Sandes Homes, the Officers Christian Union, the Soldiers and Airmens Scripture Readers Association, the Naval, Military and Air Force Bible Society all deserve our prayerful and practical support.

10. Each year the Royal British Legion, the Royal Air Force "Wings Appeal" and the Royal Irish/UDR Benevolent Fund seek our support. We bring these worthy causes before the General Assembly once again in our resolutions. Our congregations have in the past supported these funds with great generosity.

CHAPLAINS COMMITTEE

1. The Chaplains Committee has met on four occasions since last Assembly and continues to co-ordinate, monitor, and support the work of our Hospital and Prison Chaplains.

2. Within the Health Service a number of our Chaplains have retired during the last year, some after many years of devoted Hospital Chaplaincy work. We sincerely thank all of them for jobs well done, their wise counsel, and caring influence. We warmly welcome those who have been appointed to fill the vacancies.

3. The new mechanism used to appoint Chaplains to vacancies has worked well during the year.

4. The delivery of health care has changed significantly during the last few years, with a rapidly increasing number of patients treated and discharged after a short stay. This workload coupled with congregational responsibilities places considerable stress on Chaplains and the recent appointment of a full-time Presbyterian Chaplain at the City Hospital is indicative of a trend which is favoured by Trust Management at the larger hospitals.

The intention now at RVH is to follow the example of the City and discussions are already under way.

We again acknowledge the devoted and resolute ministry of part-time Hospital Chaplains and those Deaconesses who work alongside them. Despite the difficulties and frustrations of working in the new environment they continue to provide an essential service to members of our church, visitors and hospital staff.

5. Our full and part-time Chaplains working in the Prison system continue to provide a vital service to those living and working in HMP's Maghaberry, Maze, Magilligan, and Hydebank YOC.

6. The Committee contends that in the modern world the work of hospices has won the admiration and respect of the community. It acknowledges that from time to time Ministers are appointed to Hospices and to enable Ministers in such appointments to be called by the General Board, the Chaplains Committee would seek the support of the Assembly in including Hospices along with Hospitals in Par 272(5)(b) of the Code. An overture is appended.

7. The Committee continues to monitor the changes brought about by the early release of prisoners, through regular contact with NIO. We warmly commend our Chaplains for their consistency of approach and devotion to the task during periods of unrest. They have also had to grapple with the staff uncertainty brought about by this government policy.

8. The Chaplains Committee is most grateful to those staff involved at Prisons, Hospitals, DHHS, and NIO, who willingly facilitate the work of our Chaplains.

9. The constant prayers of the Church are vital as our men and women seek, through faith, to counsel staff, patients, prisoners and families in a role which is satisfying but sometimes discouraging.

JOHN SCOTT, Convener

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. The Moderator's Advisory Committee met four times during the year.
2. In response to requests assessors were appointed under Par 63 of the Code to assist three Presbyteries in dealing with problems arising.
3. The Moderator-Designate consulted the Committee about matters concerning his year of office.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON, Convener

PEACE AND PEACEMAKING COMMITTEE

1. The Peace and Peacemaking Committee gives thanks to God that, despite some clearly unacceptable murders and other violent attacks, the paramilitary cease-fires have largely held during the past year. Those working on the ground to see that this is the case are to be commended for their efforts and supported by others in pursuing steps which will lead to a further reduction of violence in our society. The Committee believes this to be a particular challenge to the churches. In the Peace Vocation the General Assembly have stated that "we must be initiators of programmes of action which will contribute to peace in our community".

2. The Committee is very conscious of the encouragement felt by many when an inclusive Executive began to exercise responsibility for local affairs as part of a devolved government and the subsequent disappointment experienced with the suspension of the Executive in February. As a Church we have consistently urged politicians to continue meeting and talking in order to agree future political arrangements and find ways forward on contentious issues. The Committee believes that what is expected in this regard of our politicians is something which members of this church should also be prepared to do. The Peace Vocation commits us to "meet and talk with those in our own church with whom we have disagreements, with those from other churches whose beliefs and practices differ from our own, and with those from whom we are politically divided". The Committee commends members of the Assembly, congregations and presbyteries who have actively sought opportunities to engage in dialogue with those holding differing political perspectives and urges others to do so.

3. To assist congregations in pursuing all aspects of the Church's Peace Vocation the Committee produces Peace and Peacemaking News three times per year, as a vehicle for sharing ideas and information on events and resources. More and more Peace Agents are submitting reports on actions taken by their congregations. From Cookstown, Holywood, Bangor, Portstewart, East Belfast, and Lisburn there have been reports about Peace Agents and congregational Peacemaking Committees arranging special inter-church events to mark the Millennium which have included a commitment to pursuing peace. May Street held a joint exhibition with their neighbours St Malachy's and have had several joint programmes and visits. Numerous special times of prayer have been reported, sometimes in single congregations and sometimes with neighbouring

churches, at times of heightened tension. Ards Presbytery held a 'Journey in Understanding' course in conjunction with ECONI which was open to participants from any of the congregations in the Presbytery and attended by over fifty people. North Belfast Presbytery organised an evening focused on understanding the needs of those bereaved and traumatised by 'the Troubles'. Five Presbyterian congregations in south-east Belfast joined 12 other churches along the Ormeau and Saintfield Roads in a musical "Celebration of Diversity" in the Waterfront Hall. Gransha co-operated with St Joseph's, Carryduff, in hosting children from Chernobyl. Gilnahirk and St Colmcille's are sending a joint work group to build homes in Botswana through Habitat for Humanity, while groups from several other congregations have volunteered on Habitat sites in Northern Ireland. The Committee is encouraged by both the variety and the increase in peacemaking initiatives being undertaken by congregations and presbyteries. The Committee asks that those engaged in such initiatives will continue to report on their experiences so that the Committee can share them with others.

4. Two Conferences have been sponsored in the past year with well over one hundred attending each. The first on "Restoring Relationships" highlighted the challenges in restoring relationships between congregations and the local community around them and between unionists and nationalists. A further input focused on the needs of those bereaved through violence. The second conference was titled "Trauma, Healing and Reconciliation". Dr Barry Hart, Sir Kenneth Bloomfield and Mr David Bolton examined the wide-ranging and long-term effects of trauma and some practical responses which churches and others can make. Assistant Chief Constable Tim Lewis connected this to the particular challenges being faced by members of the RUC and their families during a time of significant anticipated change. The Committee believes that much more needs to be done to help ministers and others understand the needs of those experiencing various forms of trauma as a result of thirty years of violent conflict and what resources exist to assist them.

5. In 1998 the General Assembly asked that presbyteries encourage the work of Peace Agents in congregations. Dromore Presbytery have held a number of seminars and reflection days for Peace Agents and others from their congregations. Ards Presbytery arranged an evening for Agents to meet with the Convener of the Assembly's Committee to explore ways in which they might pursue their role locally. East Belfast devoted half of one stated meeting to hearing reports from four Congregational Peace Agents about their activities. As a result, McQuiston devoted a major portion of their annual Session Conference to understanding the Church's Peace Vocation and considering ways they might support their Peace Agent in implementing it. The Committee once again urges Presbyteries to make time on their agenda for both Presbytery and Congregational Peace Agents to report and ideas to be shared. The Committee also urges congregations which have still not appointed a Peace Agent to do so, and those with Peace Agents to consider forming a Peacemaking Committee or Group to work with them.

6. While most of the Committee's time has been spent on matters relating to peacemaking within Ireland, some of the Committee's current and previous members have met with the Trustees to pursue the development of an

ethical investment policy for our church which will reflect concerns raised in the 1999 report on The Arms Trade.

7. The Committee would once again offer thanks to all those at Congregational and Presbytery level who have accepted responsibility for peace-building and so “reassert the Church’s own proper calling to seek peace and the things that make for peace in our own day” (Peace Vocation).

D R BAKER, Convener

RECOGNISED MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

1. In March the Committee reviewed the position of Ministers and Licentiate without Charge.

The Committee’s recommendations are as follows:-

<i>Presbytery</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Ards	Rev C D Mawhinney	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev Mark Spratt	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Armagh	Rev W A Shaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge for a further year.
North Belfast	Rev W M Smyth	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev C R J Brown	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev C I McKnight	To be retained as Minister without Charge for a further year.
	Rev T J Wilson	To be retained as Minister without Charge
Belfast East	Mr. N. Patrick	To be retained as Licentiate.
	Rev R A Crooks	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Dr Eliz Jamison	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Dr Samuel Scott	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Rex Pedlow	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev. W J Harshaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev P A J McBride	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Carrickfergus	Rev D R Byers	To be retained as Minister without Charge.

	Rev J H Wilson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Coleraine	Rev Wm Morrison	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev J D Mark	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Derry/Strabane	Mr Thomas Mulholland	To be retained as Licentiate for one further year.
	Mr Ernest A Smith	To be retained as Licentiate.
	Rev Robert Davey	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Down	Rev R N Stewart	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev D N Gray	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Dromore	Rev R J Mattison	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Dublin & Munster	Rev F W Vincent	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev Ruth Gregg	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Mr K Gibson	To be retained as Licentiate for a further year.
Iveagh	Rev E G McAuley	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Newry	Rev David McKee	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).

2. Any names added to the list more recently will be due for review next year.

3. Returns are not required for licentiates who are serving normal assistantships, merely for any who are "without charge". Currently there are few in that category.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Forces Committee

2. That the General Assembly express their pleasure at the appointment of the Rev Terry Maze as Principal Chaplain (CSFC) Navy and send him greetings as he begins this new dimension in his ministry.

3. That the General Assembly wish the Rev Dr Victor Dobbin well on his retirement from the office of Chaplain General and assure him of their prayers for his future ministry and work.

4. That the General Assembly recommend the customary observance of Battle of Britain Sunday and Remembrance Sunday in our congregations and

that the appropriate offerings taken up on those days be given to the Royal Air Force “Wings Appeal” and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

5. That the General Assembly recommend that congregations continue to support the work of the UDR/Royal Irish Regiment Benevolent Fund by taking up an offering on the last Sunday in April or some other appropriate Sunday.

1999 Remits

6. That legislation be prepared for next Assembly to permit a ruling elder or minister without charge who is appointed as Clerk of Presbytery to be an ex officio member of Presbytery while holding office.

7. That the General Assembly agree that provision should be made for the voluntary retirement of ruling elders from the active duties of their office.

8. That the report on Returns received from Boards and Presbyteries in response to the Assembly’s Remit on Statistics be referred to the Board of Mission in Ireland.

Recognised Ministries Committee

9. That the General Assembly adopt the recommendations of the Recognised Ministries Committee on Ministers and Licentiates without Charge.

Peace and Peacemaking Committee

10. That the General Assembly encourage the work of Peace Agents in Presbyteries and Congregations.

11. That a grant of up to £2,500 be made available from the Incidental Fund to the Peace and Peacemaking Committee.

Assembly Conference

12. That an Assembly Conference be held in the summer of 2003.

13. That the following be appointed as an ad hoc Committee to organise the Assembly Conference:

14. That the ad hoc Committee consider, inter alia, how far the Assembly Conference might be self-financing, and ways and means by which this might be achieved, and report to next Assembly.

College and Training Review Committee

15. That the College and Training Review Committee be thanked and discharged.

General

16. That the General Board, with its associated working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 272 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 114(1)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 114(1)(c) of the Code the words “Home Board” be deleted and that the words “Board of Mission in Ireland” be substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 227, 229(1), (1)(b), 230(1) and (2), and (3)(b), 230(5)(a), 231(1), 232(1) and (2) and (3)(c), 234(1) and (4), 268(4)(b), 274(8)(b)(i), 274(9), 301(1) and (3), 303(3) and (4)(c), 304(3), 305(1), (2), (4), (5) (twice), (6), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), 307(1), (2) and (3) of the Code.

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 227, 229(1), (1)(b), 230(1) and (2), and (3)(b), 230(5)(a), 231(1), 232(1) and (2) and (3)(c), 234(1) and (4), 268(4)(b), 274(8)(b)(i), 274(9), 301(1) and (3), 303(3) and (4)(c), 304(3), 305(1), (2), (4), (5) (twice), (6), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), 307(1), (2) and (3) of the Code the words “Home Board” be deleted and that the words “Board of Mission in Ireland” be substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 214(1), (3), (4), (5), (7), 215(1), (2)(c), (3), (5), (6)(a)(b), 216, 216(7), 217(1)(a)(i), 217(1)(a)(ii) (twice), 217(1)(a)(iii), 217(1)(a)(iv), 217(2)(i), 217(2)(ii)(I), 217(4), 217(6)(a), 217(7)(a), 217(c)(ii), 217(8)(d)(i) (twice), 218(1)(b), 309(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 214(1), (3), (4), (5), (7), 215(1), (2)(c), (3), (5), (6)(a)(b), 216, 216(7), 217(1)(a)(i), 217(1)(a)(ii) (twice), 217(1)(a)(iii), 217(1)(a)(iv), 217(2)(i), 217(2)(ii)(I), 217(4), 217(6)(a), 217(7)(a), 217(c)(ii), 217(8)(d)(i) (twice), 218(1)(b), 309(1) of the Code the words “Board of Studies” be deleted and that the words “Board of Studies and Christian Training” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 285 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 285 of the Code the words “Studies for the Ministry Board” be deleted and that the words “Board of Studies and Christian Training” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 268(4)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 268(4)(c) of the Code the words “Board of Studies for the Ministry” be deleted and that the words “Board of Studies and Christian Training” be substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 279 and 281 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 279 and 281 of the Code the words “one minister, one elder and one woman (after consultation with the Presbyterian Women’s Association) nominated by each Presbytery” be deleted and that the words “three persons, including at least one

woman, nominated by each Presbytery, and seven representative members of the PWA Executive Committee," be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 280 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 280 of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place:

280. Board of Mission in Ireland

(1) This Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the President, one Vice-President and Secretary of the Presbyterian Women's Association, the Irish Mission Superintendent, the Convener and Secretary of the Board of Social Witness, the Conveners of the Education, Studies and Christian Training, Youth and Inter-Church Relations Boards and the Union Commission and the Central Ministry Fund Committee, the Presbyterian Mutual Society Agent, two Young Women's Group representatives, two Youth Board representatives, two deaconess representatives, three persons, including at least one woman, nominated by each Presbytery, together with seven representative members of the PWA Executive Committee, the Convener and Secretaries of the Board, and the Conveners and members of working committees under the supervision of the Board.

- (2) The Board shall, directly or indirectly,
 - (a) supervise the work of the Home Mission, PWA Home Department and Church Extension,
 - (b) call ministers under the Home Mission Development Scheme, elders, deaconesses or lay agents to recognised Church work and allocate to them their sphere of labour, and
 - (c) in association with the Presbytery under whose jurisdiction they are, exercise a general supervision over their life and work in accordance with Mission rules.
- (3) The Board shall, directly or indirectly,
 - (a) take means to secure such financial support from the Church as a whole, as may be requisite from time to time, for the work of Church Extension and other Home Missions entrusted to it by the Assembly,
 - (b) have prepared estimates for the various Home Missions for the appropriate financial year and authorise their submission to the United Appeal Board and/or Finance Committee of the PWA,
 - (c) authorise expenditure of the funds received from congregations and the Presbyterians Women's Association and other monies accruing,
 - (d) make grants to congregations or other Churches and Societies for the encouragement of Church work and missionary purposes in Ireland, and
 - (e) maintain, from funds received, deaconesses and lay agents, defray their expenses and pay their retiring allowances and assist in paying salaries and expenses of ministers in Church Extension and Home Mission charges.
- (4) The Board shall -

- (a) seek to provide for the work of evangelism, including evangelistic missions and literature sponsored by the Church, and with power to make grants to other Churches or Societies for similar work;
 - (b) supervise the work of the Irish Mission in promoting the circulation of the Scriptures, and in evangelism, Christian training and education, including the employment of agents, or other workers;
 - (c) report annually on the state of religion in the Church;
 - (d) provide for the Church's ministry in Divine Healing.
- (5) The Board may call ministers appointed to positions in evangelistic work to be ministers in recognised service to the Church in such full-time appointments, provided that those who become members of Church courts in virtue of such call and appointment report on their work to the Board as may be required, not less than annually.
- (6) The Board shall provide information, arrange conferences and deputations, and seek generally to promote the work entrusted to it by the Assembly.

Anent Par 281(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 281(2) of the Code a new sub-paragraph (h) be added as follows:

- (h) seek to uphold the Christian standards of Marriage and the Family, and provide advice in cases of difficulty involving marriage and divorce, and that the Business Board be empowered to nominate an additional four women to the membership of any working committee dealing with these matters.

Anent Par 285(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 285(2) of the Code a new sub-paragraph (f) be added as follows:

- (f) develop the training of church members for more effective work and witness.

Anent Par 308(5), (6)(c), (8) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 308(5), (6)(c), (8) of the Code the words "Home and Overseas Boards" be deleted and that the words "Board of Mission in Ireland and the Overseas Board" be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 308(6) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 308(6) of the Code the words "Home or Overseas Board" be deleted and that the words "Board of Mission in Ireland or the Overseas Board" be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 305(8) and (10) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 305 (8) and (10) of the Code the words “PWA/Home Board” be deleted and that the words “PWA/Board of Mission in Ireland” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 282 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 282 of the Code be deleted.

Anent Par 302(2)(c) and (4)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 302(2)(c) and (4)(a) of the Code the words “Board of Evangelism and Christian Training” be deleted and that the words “Board of Mission in Ireland” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 285(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 285 of the Code there be inserted a new sub-paragraph (3) as follows:

- (3) shall supervise the assignment of persons as assistants during their College studies, and as licentiates
 - (a) operating through a committee for assignments.
 - (b) acting in consultation with the assistants and ministers directly concerned, and
 - (c) bearing in mind the claims of different areas of Church work.

And that Par 285(3) be re-numbered as Par 285(4).

Anent Par 198(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 198(1) of the Code the words “Home Board” be deleted and that the words “Board of Studies and Christian Training” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 218(2)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 218(2)(a) of the Code the words “Home Board” be deleted and that the words “Board of Studies and Christian Training” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 303(4)(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 303(4)(d) of the Code after the word “Church” there be added the words “in consultation with the Board of Studies and Christian Training”.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 268(4)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 268(4)(c) of the Code the words “Board of Studies” be deleted and that the words “Board of Studies and Christian Training” be substituted in their place;

and that the words “Board of Evangelism and Christian Training” be deleted.

Anent Par 272(5) (b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 272(5)(b) of the Code the words “or in hospitals, or prisons” be deleted, and that the words “or in hospitals, hospices or prisons” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 272(5)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 272 (5)(c) of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place:

(c) to nominate to the appropriate authorities ministers recommended by their Presbyteries as part-time chaplains with the Armed Services or Cadet Forces, prisons, hospitals or public institutions (except educational establishments or as otherwise provided).

and that a new sub-paragraph (6) be added as follows:

(6) Ministers called or nominated under the foregoing sub-paragraph (5) shall report as follows:

- (i) full-time chaplains shall report in writing on their work to the Board, or its appropriate Committee annually, or as may be required;
- (ii) part-time chaplains shall report similarly to their Presbyteries for transmission to the Board or appropriate Committee; and
- (iii) the Board shall report briefly upon all such chaplaincies to the General Assembly annually.

CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

1. By the time the General Assembly meets the Church and Government Committee will have met on ten occasions.

HOPES AND FRUSTRATIONS

2. “The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself would be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains till now.” (Romans 8 vv 19-22. NRSV)

3. What has been called the Peace Process has been the occasion of partially fulfilled expectations and associated disappointments. In so far as

progress has been made with cease-fires, increased employment and a brief experience of responsibility devolved to a local Assembly and Executive there is cause for satisfaction. In so far as the decommissioning issue has not been resolved and the Assembly and the Executive have been suspended there is cause for disillusionment and cynicism.

4. The Church and Government Committee has sought to address the evolving situation from the last General Assembly in a way which affords the political process the respect and independence it deserves while witness is given to God who is both Creator and Redeemer and who has loved all of us far beyond our deserving.

5. We have done this in as careful and constructive a way as possible, recognising that since we live in a flawed world, the absence of perfection is not a reason for giving up. We have not chosen to take stances of condemnation declaring constantly that things are not good enough but have rather tried to encourage people to continue to pursue a mutually acceptable political accommodation. It is more constructive to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is at hand than to proclaim that things are not good enough for the Kingdom of God. The first is positive and hope filled. The latter is negative and encourages despair. Constant expression of condemnation and cynicism seldom get us anywhere.

6. We recognise that political leaders have limited amounts of room in which to move since it is important for them to ensure sufficient unity within their own constituencies which makes their leadership possible. On the other hand if that necessary and short term goal is pursued to the exclusion of the need to be aware of the needs of their political opponents whose partnership is required, the long terms goals of a peaceful society will not be realised.

7. The Church and Government Committee has sought to have its statements informed by faith, hope and love and has described the long term goal to be pursued as the creation of a society:

- *where we would treat each other with grace and generosity*
- *where people from different backgrounds would feel at home*
- *where we would seek to provide each other with a sense of belonging*
- *where no-one need feel like a stranger*
- *where responsibilities and opportunities are shared*
- *where both an Executive would be formed and decommissioning would take place.*

SOME EVENTS AND TRENDS

8. Although things are not as they ought to be, we are gratified that this past year has seen a further reduction in paramilitary violence. The existence of the Assembly and the few weeks of the Executive have led to a reduction in tension and the threat of violence and a significant return to a more normal society. On the other hand there is evidence that the different parts of the community continue a process of voluntary segregation.

9. Negotiations occasioned by the Good Friday Agreement continued and the changes and institutions envisaged in it have been either promised or put in place. Following an impasse about the sequencing of the creation of an Executive and decommissioning, the workings of the Agreement were reviewed

under the chairmanship of Senator Mitchell. The statements following the review gave real cause for hope that the problems had been resolved. This proved not to be the case and, in the absence of a beginning to decommissioning, the Assembly and Executive and the institutions of devolved Government were suspended by the Secretary of State on 11th February, including Northern Ireland participation in the North South Ministerial Council and the British Irish Council. This may change by the time the General Assembly meets.

10. The Parades and Protests issue continues to have the potential to inflame passions. Some local accommodations have proved possible and have raised hopes as well as consolidating reasonableness. In other instances people have protested about the Determinations of the Parades Commission but have complied with them. Unfortunately, some others have engaged in protests designed to prevent the Determination of the Commission being implemented. (see Appendix A)

11. The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland was published in September. The Committee prepared a response "Dilemmas and Decisions" (see Appendix B) which was circulated to congregations, as well as a much longer analysis of the report. Both these documents were submitted to the Government's consultation process and were explained to the Minister of State Mr Adam Ingram MP by representatives of the Committee led by the Moderator.

12. The Secretary of State later announced his intention to implement most of the recommendations of the Patten Commission. The name proposed to replace that of the Royal Ulster Constabulary is the Police Service for Northern Ireland.

13. On 12th April 2000 her Majesty the Queen presented the George Cross to the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The Citation read "*For the past 30 years the Royal Ulster Constabulary has been both the bulwark against, and the main target of, a sustained and brutal terrorist campaign. The Force has suffered heavily in protecting both sides of the community from danger - 302 officers have been killed in the line of duty and thousands more injured, many seriously. Many officers have been ostracised by their own community and others have been forced to leave their homes in the face of threats to them or their families.*

"As Northern Ireland reaches a turning point in its political development this award is made to recognise the collective courage and dedication to duty of all of those who have served in the Royal Ulster Constabulary and who have accepted the danger and stress this has brought to them and their families."

14. "There is certainly a crisis in farming and its feeds through to the whole wellbeing of rural communities" (Philip Mawer, Secretary General to the General Synod, Church of England). As farm incomes continued to drop (79% decrease in the last five years) the effects at a personal level have been devastating, with debts mounting (farm income for 1999/00 is projected to be in the region of minus £700), savings being used up and concerns about future viability. The emotional trauma and financial crisis which local farmers face are gigantic. It is realised by the farming bodies that some future restructuring of the industry is necessary. However, in the interim, help from governments is urgently needed to protect not only the farming industry but also rural

communities and the personnel involved. Governments need to display some future intent to assist in the stabilisation of the industry and so minimise the detrimental effect on rural life. As a Church we must not only be aware of the personal costs involved but must actively address ourselves to the pastoral needs of individual families and hence to the well being of sustainable rural life.

15. People involved in the fishing, textile and shipbuilding industries also face increasing economic uncertainty.

THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

16. The Committee has continued its policy of having dialogue with a variety of people and organisations.

17. The Committee or its representatives met with representatives of
- The NI Housing Executive on their Community Relations' strategy
 - CARE (Christian Action for Research and Education)
 - The Police Federation
 - The Ulster Unionist Party Working Party on Policing
 - The Ulster Farmers' Union
 - The Long March
 - The Criminal Justice Review Consultation

18. At the time of writing this report a meeting has been arranged with representatives of the Northern Ireland Unionist Party. Representatives of the Committee hope to visit Edinburgh and the Scottish Parliament at the invitation of the Church and Nation Committee of the Church of Scotland.

19. The Moderator led a joint group of the Peace and Peacemaking Committee and the Church and Government Committee to the Dail where we met:

- Michael Woods T.D., the Minister for Education and Science
- Brian Cowen T.D., the Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Noel Davern T.D., the Minister of State in the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development.
- John Bruton T.D., the leader of Fine Gael.

20. The Committee organised a briefing day for Moderators and Clerks of Presbyteries, Conveners of Boards and the Peace and Peacemaking and Church and Government Committees. The purpose of the day was to provide an informed briefing for people in leadership positions within the Presbyterian Church on developments in the implementation of the "Good Friday Belfast Agreement", the work of a number of powerful Commissions and the economic considerations which affect the crisis in farming and textiles and consequently the livelihoods of many people.

- The following subjects were covered:
- The present state of political developments
 - The Independent Commission on Police Complaints
 - The Police Ombudsman
 - The Equality Commission
 - The Human Rights Commission
 - The Crisis in Farming and Textiles
 - Northern Ireland and The European Union

The Committee is grateful to those people who gave up their time to assist us. Some of these issues, which are of legitimate interest to the Presbyterian Church, will have far reaching consequences for Northern Ireland and involve complex matters of law as well as of principle. The Church may need to address the issue of where Presbyterians are to be found who will have time to think, study and consult with others so that helpful responses, which are appropriate to a Church this size, can be made to important consultation documents. The Centre for Theology and Public Issues in New College in the University of Edinburgh provides the kind of intellectual and theological resource which is required.

21. The Committee has maintained contact with:
 - (a) The Memorial Fund and the Victims Liaison Unit. We are concerned that the suffering and needs of victims must not be overlooked. While we welcome the financial assistance which the Government has made available, it is important that an additional amount of money should be released by the Government to ensure that the needs of victims are met. This cannot be funded substantially by voluntary contributions.
 - (b) The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission has published its Draft Strategic Plan and we draw the Assembly's attention to the following paragraph. "The relevant categories between which equality of opportunity is to be promoted are between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinions, racial groups, ages, mental status or sexual orientations; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without."
 - (c) The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency agreed to take account of our concerns regarding religious classification in the next census.
 - (d) In consultation with the Board of Social Witness a response was forwarded to a consultation paper concerning proposed changes in the legislation on "parental responsibility for unmarried fathers".
 - (e) A submission was made to the Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords. (See Appendix C)
 - (f) In co-operation with the Overseas Board, the Uniting Church in Australia and Professor James Haire, representations have been made to the British and Irish Governments and to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees concerning the very serious situation obtaining in Indonesia which has seen tens of thousands of Christians fleeing as a result of the violence between Christians and Muslims. Mr Stephen Lynas has done important work in briefing the media on this situation. The Moderator and Mrs. Lockington visited Indonesia in March.
 - (g) A submission was made to the Law Reform Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland on the "Reform of the N Ireland Marriage Law". (See Appendix D)
22. Revs Dr John Dunlop and Brian Kennaway were appointed to the Church Consortium which will recommend people to be appointed to the Civic Forum. As the Assembly has been suspended the consortium has not met.

23. A supplementary report and additional resolutions may appear in the Daily minutes of the General Assembly.

JOHN DUNLOP, GEORGE McCULLAGH, Conveners

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly, believing that since God has loved us far beyond our deserving and has commanded us to demonstrate our faith by loving our neighbours and our enemies:
 - (a) encourage Presbyterians to continue to pray and be diligent in the pursuit of peace in their own localities;
 - (b) thank elected politicians for the work they have done in the interests of the citizens of both parts of Ireland;
 - (c) request both Governments and elected politicians to persevere in the slow and demanding task of seeking an inclusive and just society free of the threat of violence, being aware of the needs of others as well as of their own;
 - (d) in accordance with the overwhelming desire of the people in both parts of this Island (as expressed in simultaneous referenda) to have a violence free society, encourage all paramilitary groups to have finished with terrorism in all its forms for ever.
3. That the General Assembly, aware that 302 police officers have been murdered and thousands have been injured, take this opportunity to record their appreciation of the service and sacrifice of members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and their families and warmly congratulate the Royal Ulster Constabulary on the award of the George Cross which honours the courage and dedication of police officers and their families in Northern Ireland.
4. That the General Assembly encourage people from all religious backgrounds to apply to serve the whole community as police officers.
5. That the General Assembly, conscious of the continuing suffering and loss of victims and their relatives, request the Government to make adequate finance available to meet their needs.
6. That the General Assembly assure the farming community of their continued concern during this time of prolonged crisis and offer their pastoral support and care in the name of Christ and call upon the Government to respond in practical ways with both short-term assistance and a long-term strategy.
7. That a grant of £4,655 be paid to the Church and Government Committee from the Incidental Fund.

APPENDIX A

STATEMENTS ISSUED

STATEMENT 2 JULY, 1999

1. In this present dangerous and uncertain time the Church and Government Committee commends the Moderator's call for all Presbyterians to pray and to attend their normal places of worship on Sunday 4th July 1999.

2. All determinations of the Parades Commission ought to be obeyed and any legally permitted parade ought not to be blocked.

3. In the event of the Parade to Drumcree being prohibited from proceeding down the Garvagh Road, all those who choose to parade to any service which may be held at Drumcree Parish Church on 4th July should follow the determinations of the Parades Commission and should either return by the designated route or go quietly home after the service of worship.

4. In the event of any such parade being permitted to proceed down the Garvagh Road, it ought not to be blocked by members or supporters of the Garvagh Road Residents' Coalition.

5. The Committee draws attention to the known fact that many protests get out of control and thus those who organise protests cannot escape responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

6. In this volatile time all pursuit of rights and exercise of protests ought to have due regard to the peace and well being of the wider community. The Committee commends and encourages all those people who seek to calm tensions and defuse potential conflicts in local communities.

7. Over many years the General Assembly has consistently offered its support to the victims of violence through a multitude of different ways. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is concerned that these victims, whether Protestant or Catholic, should not be forgotten. The Church also condemns all the civil rights abuses which have taken place in Ireland over the past 30 years and upholds the right of peaceful protest against these abuses. The Church and Government Committee, however, questions the wisdom of seeking to highlight such matters at this dangerous and uncertain time by means of the Long March which is planned to terminate in Portadown on Sunday 4th July and will thereby be associated with the disputes concerning Drumcree and the Garvagh Road. This Long March has the potential to inflame sectarian tensions further and to make more difficult an honourable resolution of the many current issues facing the community, including that associated with Drumcree and the Garvagh Road. In the light of the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who set aside his rights that he might save us, we call upon our Presbyterian people, for His glory and the peace of our land, to avoid any involvement with the Long March which would dishonour God's name.

STATEMENT 9 JULY, 1999

1. The Church and Government Committee is gratified that the Portadown District of the Orange Order complied with the Parades Commission's Determinations regarding the Annual Drumcree Parade and dispersed both the parade and the participants. This action corresponded to that recommended by the Church and Government Committee.

2. With regard to the parades on Monday 12th July 1999 the Committee would appeal to all connected with the Orange Order to abide by the determinations of the Parades Commission, even if they have reasonable concerns about those determinations, and be careful not to lose the good will which has been recently gained. Protesters must not block any legally permitted parade.

3. The Committee reiterates the call of the General Assembly that both those who wish to parade and those who may protest should 'treat one another with generosity, understanding and respect'. The Committee would welcome a greater obvious demonstration of all three.

4. The General Board declared in October 1998 that the potential for a peaceful and co-operative future should not be collapsed either over the decommissioning impasse or over any unwillingness to implement the Agreement. The Board called upon elected politicians to work together in implementing the Agreement and further called upon paramilitary groups to fulfil their moral obligations in decommissioning their weapons.

5. In June 1999 the General Assembly encouraged both governments, all political parties and paramilitary groups associated with any of them to implement both the letter and spirit of the 'Good Friday Agreement'.

6. The Committee believes that the recent paper 'The Way Forward' published by the British and Irish Governments, along with the Report of the Decommissioning Body, as well as the recent statements from Sinn Fein with regard to decommissioning, are all significant and represent important steps in the right direction. The Committee hopes they may lead on to the implementation of the Agreement and the possible healing of this society.

7. We welcome the prospect of the formation of the Executive and the decommissioning of weapons. We further welcome the fact that the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning will have the responsibility to oversee the decommissioning process.

STATEMENT 7 SEPTEMBER, 1999

1. In view of the imminent publication of the Report of the Patten Commission on Policing the Committee encourages people to prayerfully read the whole report; to beware of instantaneous comment; to be conscious of the matters within it with which they may agree as well as those matters about which they may have concerns and to reach a balanced judgement about its contents.

2. The General Assembly and the Church and Government Committee have consistently called upon those who wish to parade and those who may wish to protest to seek local accommodations, to obey the determinations of the Parades Commission, to treat one another with generosity, understanding and respect and not to block any legally permitted parades.

3. The Committee commends all whose actions were consistent with these resolutions and deplores the provocative and unhelpful actions of the Lower Ormeau Concerned Community in sitting on the road to block the Apprentice Boys' Parade on the 14th August and in the rioting which followed the parade in Derry. This was especially reprehensible in that it coincided with the first anniversary of the Omagh bomb.

4. As the Review of the Good Friday Agreement has begun the Committee draws attention to the statement issued on 9th July following the failure to establish the Executive:

- (a) The General Board declared in October 1998 that the potential for a peaceful and co-operative future should not be collapsed either over the decommissioning impasse or over any unwillingness to implement the Agreement. The Board called upon elected politicians to work

together in implementing the Agreement and further called upon paramilitary groups to fulfil their moral obligations in decommissioning their weapons.

- (b) In June 1999, the General Assembly encouraged both governments, all political parties and paramilitary groups associated with any of them to implement both the letter and spirit of the 'Good Friday Agreement'.
 - (c) The Committee believes that the recent paper 'The Way Forward' published by the British and Irish Governments, along with the Report of the Decommissioning Body, as well as the recent statements from Sinn Fein with regard to decommissioning, are all significant and represent important steps in the right direction. The Committee hopes they may lead on to the implementation of the Agreement and the possible healing of this society.
 - (d) We welcome the prospect of the formation of the Executive and the decommissioning of weapons. We further welcome the fact that the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning will have the responsibility to oversee the decommissioning process.
5. It is our hope that constructive and confidence building approaches by elected politicians within Northern Ireland and by both Governments who will be involved with Senator Mitchell in the Review Process will assist in the realisation of the formation of the Executive and the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons.
6. Paramilitary groups with anonymous leadership should not control the minds, voices or policies of those who have been given an electoral mandate.
7. The Committee believes that self-appointed groups of people do not have any right to set themselves up as vigilantes to control local communities, to murder individuals, or to determine either physical punishment or banishment from those communities.

STATEMENT 23 NOVEMBER, 1999

Believing that we have a responsibility to do everything possible on our part to live at peace with everybody (Romans 12.18) and having in the past encouraged political leaders to seek a political accommodation with one another so that we might create a society:

- * where we would treat each other with grace and generosity
- * where people from different backgrounds would feel at home
- * where we would seek to provide each other with a sense of belonging
- * where no-one need feel like a stranger
- * where responsibilities and opportunities are shared
- * where both an Executive would be formed and decommissioning would take place

and since the General Assembly in June 1999 encouraged

- * "both governments, all political parties and paramilitary groups associated with any of them to implement both the letter and spirit of the Good Friday Agreement"

the Church and Government Committee welcomes the progress made in the Review of the Good Friday Agreement and the opportunity which now exists to move into the future together.

The Church and Government Committee warmly congratulates the Royal Ulster Constabulary on the award of the George Cross honouring the courage and dedication of police officers and their families in Northern Ireland.

REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD 24 FEBRUARY, 2000

1. The principal political and constitutional issues which have commanded the attention of the Committee since the last meeting of the General Board have been the completion of the Mitchell Review of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, the establishment of the Executive and its subsequent suspension. The Church and Government Committee was pleased to see local people exercising ministerial authority in the Executive and regrets that the political process now appears to be back in a deadlocked position.

2. The Committee recognises that the choices open to politicians have been severely limited by the imperative to ensure, as far as possible, unity within their own constituencies, making their leadership possible. The suspension of the Executive and the Institutions is evidence of the limited choices available.

3. There is no doubt that the changes/accommodations that have to be made when a society begins to emerge from a conflict situation take a heavy emotional toll on everyone. Each group needs to retain its commitments:

For the Unionist community the goal has been the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons as evidence to the end of war and a belief in democratic politics.

For the Republican community the goal has been at least two years of Institutions as evidence that power will be shared and that politics can be trusted.

4. These goals have been considered by each group to be essential in the process of achieving the more long-term vision of peaceful, co-operative politics. These goals have dominated the ways in which both groups have shaped short-term measures. But considerable difficulty arises when one set of needs in the process of moving towards peaceful and co-operative politics takes precedence over the other, increasing suspicion, undermining mutuality and a shared road to peace.

5. Nelson Mandela said that:

“In discussion it never helps to take a morally superior tone to one’s opponents. I never sought to undermine Mr de Klerk, for the practical reason that the weaker he was, the weaker the negotiating process. To make peace with an enemy, one must work with that enemy, and that enemy becomes your partner.”

6. In the current impasse with its associated frustration and increasing suspicions it is important not to lose sight of the goal referred to in the statement of the Church and Government Committee of 23rd November:

“ ... we have a responsibility to do everything possible on our part to live at peace with everybody (Romans 12.18). (We have) in the past encouraged political leaders to seek a political accommodation with one another so that we might create a society:

- *where we would treat each other with grace and generosity*
 - *where people from different backgrounds would feel at home*
 - *where we would seek to provide each other with a sense of belonging*
 - *where no-one need feel like a stranger*
 - *where responsibilities and opportunities are shared*
 - *where both an Executive would be formed and decommissioning would take place.”*
7. Affirming that we are all created in the image of God, the Church and Government Committee believes that the parties to the Good Friday Agreement can find a way forward. This way forward, however, will not be found without much talking and much listening to one another. We therefore call upon all parties to the Good Friday Agreement to agree:
- (a) that the impasse must be dealt with if we are not to see this society fall into cynicism, despair, anarchy and violence again;
 - (b) that we must deal with it together, all parties respecting and trying, as far as possible, to accommodate the needs and goals of other groups as well as their own needs and goals.
8. This we do in the light of the gospel of peace which sets none above the other but places all at the mercy and abundant grace of God.
9. As members of the Church of Jesus Christ we believe that we are called to be builders of peace. We therefore continue to make ourselves available to politicians to listen to them and to share the stories that we hear and the understandings that we glean in the course of our pastoral duties.
10. As Christians we believe that we are called to be people of faith in times of doubt, people of hope in times of despair and people of love in times of bitterness.
11. As people of faith, hope and love we urge our politicians to keep on in the search for a peace which will endure. We pledge ourselves to pray for and with our politicians while ourselves working for peace, understanding, justice and the abundance of grace. We call upon the whole Presbyterian Church in Ireland to make the same commitment to pray and to further the work for peace.
12. The Committee continues to be concerned about the problems within farming and the entire rural community. The Committee noted that there was a meeting on, 23rd February, 2000, of the four British Farming Unions.

APPENDIX B

RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON POLICING FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DILEMMAS AND DECISIONS

A PRESBYTERIAN RESPONSE FROM THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

1. The Patten Commission took up their task in the light of the Good Friday Agreement which, **‘provides the opportunity for a new beginning to**

policing in Northern Ireland with a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole.'

2. In the submission to the Patten Commission the Church and Government Committee said:

The vision we have of Northern Ireland is of a community at peace with itself, with Roman Catholics and Protestants of both the Unionist and Nationalist traditions working together in a political structure and culture which embraces and honours the obvious diversity of its citizens. The composition, culture and style of policing should reflect and be supportive of that vision and should receive and earn the support of both sides of our community.

3. The preamble to the "Good Friday Agreement" looked forward to "the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of human rights for all". It is regrettable that, due to the impasse over decommissioning and the failure to form an Executive, the Report is being considered in an environment of apprehension and uncertainty.

4. The Church and Government Committee recognises the difficulty of the task undertaken by the Commission, given the sensitivities of the Northern Ireland context and thanks the members for consulting widely and for producing a comprehensive report. The challenge to create a police service capable of attracting and sustaining support from the community as a whole, is one faced by us all and not only by the Commission.

5. While good relationships between individuals are important, we need to develop better relationships between different sections of the community. The possibility of living in a peaceful community, where people and communities of difference not only coexist but also co-operate, requires change. It is not only in institutions and organisations that change is necessary, but also in the hearts and minds of all the people of Northern Ireland. The real challenge is when the hearts and minds invited to change are our own.

6. The difficulties for people from the Unionist part of the community of accepting the Report's recommendations are compounded by the experience of suffering and loss known by many because of their associations with the RUC. Caught in the crossfire of a community split in two, the RUC have had to police disorder and bear the brunt of attack. There is a deep and enduring sense of pain and loss for the relatives of those who have been killed and those who have been injured. At the Press Conference Chris Patten said that this Report represented 'pain' for the RUC and all those associated with the organisation. This is mentioned in the Report at 17.7 and elsewhere, but the acceptability of the whole Report would have been enhanced had it been made more explicit. We welcome the recommendation (17.8) that existing memorials in police stations should not be removed.

7. While we are very conscious of the heavy price paid by members of the RUC and their families we cannot avoid the fact, however much we may regret it, that there is a long-standing problem of acceptance and credibility of the RUC among nationalists. This is a problem that has to be overcome.

8. There are, however, very serious challenges within this Report for the Roman Catholic/Nationalist/Republican section of our people, to forsake violent opposition to the police or the semi-detached privileges of criticism and the

safety of non-involvement from many people in that part of the community. They are now invited to take their places in the forefront of the challenges and dangers. None should underestimate the huge challenges to a fundamental change of attitude for everyone from that part of our community with regard to shared policing. We pay tribute to those people from that community who, in the face of danger and either explicit or discreet discouragement, did serve with the RUC.

9. We also remember that some Protestant/Loyalist communities have felt alienated from the RUC and so their experience too has been of a police force ineffective in their locality. We believe that 'ineffectiveness' has been largely due to the circumstances in Northern Ireland whereby 'resolution' of differences has been sought through violence, conflict and division. Given the hostility of people from some Loyalist communities to the RUC and the fact that many police officers have been driven out of loyalist and unionist areas, encouragement needs to be given for attitudes to change and for people from these areas to apply to become police officers.

10. The Report should be prayerfully and carefully considered by everyone in this society, not only from his or her own perspective but from the perspective of others. While not abandoning our own concerns, cognisance needs to be taken of others so that the policing service will be a reflection of this society's commitment to move away from violence and towards co-operation. In evaluating the Report we recommend that it ought not to be judged in terms of trade-offs. There are, inevitably, controversial elements to it, but there are many recommendations in it which will be beneficial to policing for everyone in the future.

11. As the Church and Government Committee, we welcome many of the recommendations, which will enhance policing in a context of peaceful co-operation:

- the human rights approach that recognises the need for a policing 'service' adequate for the needs of the whole community;
- involvement by local communities;
- moves in policing public disorder to examine more effective and less dangerous methods;
- the inclusion of IT training and technology;
- the commitment to the inclusion of Catholics, women and ethnic minorities;
- the concern that training prepares officers widely and well for their duties with emphasis on community awareness, relational and partnership skills as well as law and order considerations;
- the provision for co-operation with other police services from whom much can be learned and with whom much can be shared.

12. The Committee is conscious that in the important emphasis on human rights, balance must always be sought between individual and community rights. One of the greatest problems faced by a democracy threatened by paramilitary violence is how to protect the basic rights of people not to be killed by terrorist organisations, while maintaining due respect for human rights. In that context it is necessary at times to use an appropriate amount of force.

13. The Committee welcomes the intention to recruit large numbers of Catholics into the police but requests that clarification be given as to what is stated in 15.10 that, 'an equal number of Protestants and Catholics should be drawn from the pool of qualified candidates'. It appears to us that this may well contravene Fair Employment principles. Applicants should not be discriminated against because of their faith tradition or religious commitment. Merit should not be lost sight of as the main requirement for employment within the policing service. (15.9)

14. The Full Time Reserve ought not to be phased out until the security situation justifies it. The Part Time Reserve may not be adequate to meet community needs unless the security situation improves. We welcome the compensation and retraining measures recommended in 13.12. It needs to be remembered that some Reservists, who have served for many years, may not yet be aged 50. Officers who have served in the Reserve ought to be available for civilian posts in the new arrangements. The employment of civilians to release police officers for duty in the community is welcome.

15. Accountability and maximum transparency are welcome but are two way streets with challenges to both the police and the community. The proposed Policing Board (6.3-24), with ten Assembly members and nine appointed members, runs the risk of opening policing to political direction. (5.8) On the other hand, since the Policing Board will be appointed under the d'Hondt system (6.11) it will require ownership of policing by political parties. Common ownership will guard against narrow party political direction.

16. While conscious of the value of District Partnership Policing Boards (6.25-38), the Committee express some concern as to the membership of the Boards that are not protected by the d'Hondt system. We welcome the moves to transparency through monthly public meetings but ask that there be clarification given regarding secure information. The District Commander ought not to be required to reveal information that might constitute a security risk to the District Partnership Policing Boards. The time may come when police officers' uniforms should display name badges, but that time is not yet. Great care needs to be exercised in raising local money to purchase private sector services. There is widespread suspicion that some 'legitimate' security businesses are fronts for paramilitary groups.

17. In the Committee's submission to the Patten Commission we recommended the substitution of the previous oath by that used in Scotland "I do solemnly and truly declare and affirm that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of constable". The proposed oath at 4.7 may be long but will challenge any police officer to be sensitive to people who identify with that part of our community from which the officer does not himself or herself come.

18. We know that symbols are very sensitive to both sections of the community. Those who support and those who oppose present practice all come with particular historical perspectives. The Committee affirms that the symbols used by the police should facilitate effective policing and a service that is open to different sections of the community.

19. In considering acceptable symbols serious thought needs to be given to whether or not a symbol which recognises and represents diversity is more appropriate in a community, and a policing service, in which a variety of

identities exist. The Committee is concerned that, in creating something new, particular and diverse identities may be suppressed. At this time when Irish identity is everywhere confidently resurgent, peace will not come if the accommodation of that particular identity means the elimination of British Unionist identity. Parity of esteem does not eliminate diversity.

20. In our submission we suggested that the present badge, incorporating crown, harp and shamrock, comprehensively covers various traditions within the Northern Ireland community. We did not press for any change in the name but supported the addition of the sub-title 'Northern Ireland Police Service.' We are aware that the title Royal Ulster Constabulary has strong symbolic value for many but may restrict some in joining the police. With regard to flags we also suggested that the practice in Scotland be followed here. In Scotland the flag of the constabulary is consistently flown but the Union flag is very rarely flown.

21. The proposals on symbols are some of the most sensitive and the pain may be acceptable provided those who have remained aloof or hostile to the police now become involved. If they fail to do that there will be pain without gain. Delay or equivocation in supporting any new arrangements will be dangerous.

22. The Committee believes that this community stands at a crossroads regarding policing. It is a choice that will require generosity and courage and will evidence not only the DESIRE for peace, but the WILL to make peace. While we may look to the ashes of the past and wonder if there is still life in them, this particular challenge is to build a future in which the community has a policing service in which and with which all can feel at home.

APPENDIX C

SUBMISSION FROM THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE REFORM OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

25 JUNE, 1999

1. The Consultation Paper is a stimulating document, which sets out the issues in a very useful way. While we have not attempted to answer the more than seventy questions which the Royal Commission asks, we submit the following for consideration.

THE FUNCTION OF AN UPPER HOUSE

2. Given that the Government has decided to retain an Upper House, it should be a forum for more dispassionate, rational and less partisan debate than occurs in the House of Commons.

3. The Upper House fulfils the important function of providing a further check on the executive as well as on what may at times be the transient enthusiasms of a government. These may not always be moderated by the

elected members of the House of Commons who are mostly dependent on political parties for their survival or promotion as MPs.

4. The principle function of the Upper House is to scrutinize legislation, propose amendments and, if thought necessary, delay legislation as well as being able to initiate legislation. Since the Upper House is not a part of the Executive, final authority will lie with the House of Commons.

COMPOSITION

5. It is important that capable people are recruited who are able to provide this service. The Upper House needs a body of well-informed and independent people. While in the past such independence was based on the possession of land and wealth, in the modern world such independence is more likely to be found in the universities, commerce, industry, the media and the professions. We recognise that people who occupy these positions are themselves privileged.

6. Since the Upper House has less power than the House of Commons, ambitious people who wish to make a career out of politics will more likely seek election to the House of Commons. The danger in having an Upper House with a substantially elected component is that people, who cannot get elected to the Commons, will gravitate to the Upper House and become servants of the parties in the Commons.

7. It is unlikely that a substantial number of independent people will be successful in being elected to an Upper House, since it is almost impossible to get elected without the help of a party machine. Since most elected members connected with political parties will be required to take a party whip, they should form a minority in the Upper House.

8. Other members should be selected by a nominating commission. Would it be possible for the nominating commission to nominate a number of people for a region, who would then be voted upon?

9. Since the Upper House, as well as the House of Commons, needs to be representative of the whole of the United Kingdom, and as political power is devolved to the regions, there should be substantial regional representation on the nominating commission.

10. The Upper House should include people with specialist expertise and breadth of experience.

The United Kingdom is now a complex multi-cultural society composed of many socio-economic, cultural, religious and racial communities. Some reflection of this diversity should be evident in a reformed Upper House in order to increase the sense of belonging of these diverse groups and to ensure that their perspectives and concerns are addressed. As well as people with knowledge of the regions of the UK, the Upper House will need people with experience of the European Union.

11. There should be some representation from religious bodies including the Christian churches. If a smaller number of Bishops of the Church of England are to have a place in the Upper House, provision needs to be made for other religious communities. These need not be people who are ordained. Religious communities could suggest suitable people to the nominating commission.

Those nominated should not be serving in a representative capacity of the religious community from which they originated.

12. We ought not to overlook the importance of experience, which may come with age. People who have previously served in the Cabinet, in senior positions in the Civil Service or the Diplomatic Service can bring first-hand experience which is difficult to find elsewhere.

13. Persons nominated to the Upper House should not hold office for life. The maximum term of service should be 15 years.

14. In order for people to give the necessary time to this form of service, salary and expenses should be paid.

THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

15. There is merit in retaining some hereditary peers for a transitional period. If the government is intent on retaining 92 of the present House of Lords, their heirs should not replace them. As these 92 hereditary peers either become inactive with age or die, the Upper House should be allowed to move slowly but inexorably to the new dispensation. We consider that political power based on family lineage and inherited privilege and not on merit ought to come to an end.

16. A reformed Upper House should be called a Senate and should consist of a limited number of elected representatives along with a substantial number of persons nominated by a nominating commission.

17. Elections to the Senate should not normally coincide with elections to the House of Commons, which elections are usually called at what is deemed to be the most advantageous time for the Government. Elections to the Upper House should coincide with elections to the European Parliament.

18. The Upper House will require a degree of prestige in order for it to fulfil its function.

THE LAW LORDS AND A SUPREME COURT

20. The service provided at present by Law Lords in scrutinizing legislation should be retained.

21. As well as this there should be a Supreme Court of senior judges, whose term of office/date of retirement should be fixed.

APPENDIX D

SUBMISSION TO THE LAW REFORM ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND ON THE "REFORM OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND MARRIAGE LAW"

1. In January 1998 the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland referred the topic of marriage law in Northern Ireland to the Law Reform Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland. The Government's view is that the Northern Ireland law relating to marriage is in need of review and reform. The Law Reform Advisory Committee's Executive Summary of the main points is as follows:

- *The existing law relating to the preliminaries to marriage and the procedural requirements in respect of marriage ceremonies and venues is complex, anomalous and possibly discriminatory.*
- *The current law requires modernisation and simplification.*
- *In formulating a new system the grounding principles should so far as possible be:*
 - *the continued validity of religious as well as civil marriages;*
 - *equality of treatment of all religions;*
 - *minimal interference with existing freedoms of individual religions;*
 - *equal treatment between those wishing to have a civil or religious marriage;*
 - *certainty, simplicity, transparency and ease of application;*
 - *cost effectiveness.*
- *The Scottish model of law reform appears to provide the best method for reform of the law in this jurisdiction subject to certain modifications to take account of local requirements.*
- *The current law relating to age requirements and relationship rules appears to be working satisfactorily.*
- *The current rules relating to religious and civil marriage venues are unnecessarily complex and unsatisfactory. The Committee's provisional view is that religious marriage venue requirements should be abolished and that the law relating to civil marriage venues should be relaxed to follow current English law.*
- *The current rules relating to notice of intended marriage and preliminary notification requirements are too complex and should in the Committee's provisional view be replaced by a unified and simplified system of preliminary notification and authorisation, adopting the Scottish system of a marriage schedule subject to some modification.*
- *The current law in respect of persons authorised to conduct religious marriages should in the Committee's provisional view be replaced by a statutory scheme defining authorised celebrants. Statutory requirements in respect of religious and civil marriage ceremonies should be clarified following the Scottish model.*
- *The current rules relating to the registration of marriages is unnecessarily complicated and diffuse and the Committee provisionally considers that a simplified system of registration of marriages along Scottish lines should replace the existing procedures.*
- *The law relating to the consequences of procedural irregularity should be clearly stated. The provisional view of the Committee is that a marriage should only be annulled if both parties are aware of the procedural irregularities and that the irregularities invalidate the marriage.*
- *The current law relating to criminal offences in the Marriage Acts is, in the provisional view of the Committee, in need of major simplification.*

(Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office).

2. An initial response was made to the Law Reform Advisory Committee in the following terms.

3. "The Presbyterian Church welcomes the opportunity to comment at an early stage on this issue, which we regard as being of considerable importance.

4. We accept that Marriage Law in Northern Ireland is now dated, complicated and anomalous, that the time for a measure of reform has come, and that some useful ideas may be gleaned from practice and procedure elsewhere. We believe, however, that Northern Ireland is a region of the United Kingdom with its own distinctive culture and ethos, which should be reflected in any new marriage legislation. A simple "transplant" of another system (eg from Scotland) may not prove entirely satisfactory. A few of our ministers who have served there as well as here say that, while many of the weddings they conducted in Scotland took place in hotels, etc., that practice is less common in Ireland, even among people who are not regular church-goers. In addition the Church of Scotland has a status in law as the National Church which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland does not have. Furthermore the Scottish system of requesting a formal Registrar's authority on each and every occasion for a visiting minister from a sister church to officiate is cumbersome. Current procedure in Ireland in that regard is much simpler.

5. We would not oppose the ending of the requirement that Church (or other) buildings be registered for the conducting of weddings, though we would still prefer that church members be married in church, and would discourage weddings in attention-seeking or bizarre settings (eg on firemen's ladders, underwater, etc.), even if they are purely civil marriages.

6. The Special Licence procedure has proved particularly valuable and helpful, not only in facilitating weddings in certain non-church locations such as hospitals or residential homes (which would no longer require special dispensation under the proposed new system), but also in certain other situations where the letter of the law does not permit the issue of an ordinary licence, yet the minister is satisfied that it is right and proper for the wedding to proceed without eg the normal period of notice or compliance with a particular residence requirement. We would hope that any new system would retain a measure of flexibility in this regard, retaining, if possible, special licences.

7. Subject to these qualifications, and in the hope that any new system would be efficient and would avoid undue bureaucracy, we would not object to a system of preliminary notification to the relevant Registrar, though this would mean some loss of income for licensing ministers.

8. The practice of marriage after banns seems to be a dead letter in our church. While there is an increase in Registry Office weddings, it is still the case that most ministers know their own members and are likely to spot any problems, such as mental incapacity or undue pressure.

9. We are not aware of any demand to raise the minimum age for marriage to 18, but would view marriage at a very early age as a high risk venture. We are similarly unaware of any demand for a change in the law on prohibited degrees of relationship.

10. There is much to be said for uniform practice in the legal provisions for members of all religions denominations, or none, with no special privileges or disabilities.

11. The current residence requirement serves as a protection against unknown Americans and others with no local roots paying flying visits to be married in Ireland for purely sentimental reasons. However, as Northern Ireland is a relatively small area, the requirement of residence within a particular Presbytery area or Registrar's district seems unduly restrictive.

12. With regard to the present system of marriage returns it is difficult to predict whether transferring responsibility for the returns from ministers to the newly-weds would be more or less reliable or efficient than the present system, but it would certainly ease the administrative burden on some very busy ministers. We would, however, wish to keep a Church record of weddings conducted.

13. The statement that "celebrants must be in charge of a congregation" is not quite the position in The Presbyterian Church. "Every ordained minister on the roll of the Presbytery or officially under its care as a minister without charge is legally qualified to celebrate marriage".

14. A subsequent meeting was held between representatives of the Church and Government Committee, the Committee on Marriage and the Family and the office-bearers of the Law Reform Advisory Committee. A further Discussion Paper (No 6) was issued in March and the following response was made.

15. "The Presbyterian Church in Ireland welcomes the opportunity to comment further on the important issue of the proposed reform of Marriage Law in Northern Ireland.

16. While we have no complaints to make about the present provisions for marriages to be solemnised according to Presbyterian Form and Discipline, we nevertheless accept that Marriage Law in Northern Ireland is now dated, complicated and anomalous, and that the time for a measure of reform has come. We support the idea that there should be uniform practice in the legal provisions for members of all religious denominations, or none, with no special privileges or disabilities.

Ministers from Other Churches

17. The question arises of ministers from other Churches being asked to conduct marriages (as distinct from assisting one of our own ministers) in a building licensed only to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. In consultation with the Registrar-General it was agreed in 1967 that ministers from "sister Churches" may be permitted to officiate "according to the form and discipline" of our Church, on the responsibility of the local minister, provided:

- (a) that a certificate of good standing was produced from the Presbytery under whose jurisdiction the minister might be; and
- (b) that in signing the official registers the minister also records the Presbytery and Church to which he/she belongs.
("Sister Churches" for this purpose would be taken to be member Churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, together with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland.)

18. The present Scottish requirement (Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977, Section 12) for the Registrar General to grant a temporary written authorisation on each and every occasion a visiting minister solemnises a marriage is cumbersome so we would prefer to retain our present procedure.

Hours of Marriage

19. The present Ordinary Licence of Marriage is valid between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm. It is not clear whether this restriction would apply under the new system or whether the wedding could be conducted at any time on the appointed day. At present a Special Licence is valid at any convenient time. Fewer would be needed if the restriction on the hours of marriage were removed.

Licensed Church Buildings

20. As indicated in our previous submission, we do not oppose the ending of the requirements that Church (or other) buildings be registered for the conducting of weddings. That would substantially reduce the need for Special Licences.

Prescribed Religious Bodies

21. We believe that at least the four main Churches (the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Methodist Church in Ireland) should be expressly named in the proposed primary legislation as religious bodies whose ministers are automatically entitled to solemnise marriages. We would have no objection to other smaller Churches being named as well.

22. It would be helpful if the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, being the largest Protestant denomination in Northern Ireland, were clearly distinguished in the legislation from the various smaller or newer bodies who may wish to call themselves "Presbyterian". We are not altogether happy to have our Church subsumed in the general designation of "the Presbyterian Churches".

23. If a minister of the Crown is to have power to approve religious bodies for the celebration of marriages, and presumably like power to refuse approval, or to withdraw approval already given, it is essential that any such action be subject to Judicial Review, or other appeal to the courts, as a safeguard against such powers being exercised arbitrarily or unreasonably.

Abridgement of Time

24. We do not consider that the Registrar General should "ONLY be permitted to abridge time in the case of a religious marriage IF THE CHURCH AUTHORITIES support the application to abridge time". Clearly the Registrar General should be able to exercise his discretion in other circumstances. However, we are not yet convinced that the abolition of the Special Licence facility is justified. It has proved its value over the years, not least in the special circumstances of Northern Ireland, where weddings have sometimes been relocated or rescheduled at short notice on security grounds. We realise that some denominations have this facility and others do not, but we have no wish to have special privileges for ourselves. We would have no objection to a similar

facility being made available to other denominations, other faiths or those of no faith.

Residence Qualification

25. As Northern Ireland is a relatively small area, the requirement of residence within a particular Presbytery area or Registrar's district seems unduly restrictive, so we support the removal of this residence qualification. That would further reduce the need for Special Licence procedure.

Outstanding Points

- (i) No guidance is offered on transjurisdictional marriages where one party resides in the Irish Republic. A brief note would be helpful.
- (ii) If, as proposed, the residence qualification is abolished, does that mean that visitors from any part of the world could arrive in Northern Ireland and apply forthwith for the issue of a marriage schedule?
- (iii) This change means that the two parts of the island of Ireland will be operating very different systems. Will there be any consultation with the Irish Republic to harmonize procedures in the two jurisdictions?
- (iv) Would any help be available to assist with the re-training of ministers in the new procedures? The Inland Revenue are currently providing helpful seminars on the termination of the current Covenant Scheme and the introduction of the new Gift Aid Scheme. Something similar for the new marriage procedures would be appreciated.

We would appreciate a further meeting with the Law Reform Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland to discuss these matters in greater detail.”

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The Judicial Commission met during the year as required.

Appeal of C and S Scott

2. The Commission convened on 1 July, 1999 to hear the Appeal of Mr Clarke Scott and Mrs Shirley Scott against a decision of the Ards Presbytery.

3. The following appeared for the Ards Presbytery: Very Rev Dr Rodney Sterritt, Rev Dr D J Watts (Clerk), Rev John Murdock.

The Appellants did not appear.

4. The Clerk submitted letters received from the Appellants and other items of correspondence, which were considered.

5. After an adjournment it was agreed that the Appeal be held to be abandoned in accordance with the provisions of Par 167 of The Code.

Appeal of Mr M Dunwoody

6. Later on 1 July the Commission proceeded to consider the Appeal of Mr Meredith Dunwoody against a decision of the Minterburn Commission of the Armagh Presbytery.

7. The Appellant appeared, accompanied by his wife.

Very Rev Dr W M Craig and Rev Dr Joseph Thompson appeared on behalf of the Minterburn Commission of the Armagh Presbytery, Respondents.

8. The Appellant submitted an opening statement and answered questions. The Respondents replied and answered questions.

9. The Judicial Commission adopted the following Finding.

10. "Having considered the Appellant's grounds of appeal, and having heard and read the submissions of the Appellant and of the representatives of the Respondents, the Judicial Commission finds there was no breach of relevant provisions of The Code concerning the election of the Congregational Committee of Minterburn Presbyterian Church in April 1998. It therefore dismisses the Appeal and confirms the validity of the election.

11. However, the Commission recommends that in future elections of the Congregational Committee, if the Kirk Session decides not to count the votes itself, it should refer the matter to the Moderator or Clerk of Presbytery for advice. The Judicial Commission also recommends that undue delay should be avoided between the time of casting the votes and the announcement of those who have been elected.

12. The Judicial Commission accepts that Mr Dunwoody has made a valuable contribution to Minterburn in the past, and trusts that he will continue to do so in the future."

OVERTURES

13. In 1996 a new sub-paragraph (5) was inserted in Par 19 of the Code and the existing sub-paragraph (5) was re-numbered as sub-paragraph (6). The

reference in Par 19 (4) to “the following sub-paragraph” therefore needs to be amended to “sub-paragraph (6)” An appropriate overture is submitted.

14. A new procedure for Appeals from Presbytery was approved by the Assembly in 1999 (see Par 163 and Par 165 (5)), but at that time no proposal was made for any change in procedure for unadjudicated matters “referred” to a superior court under Par 21 (1) of the Code. An overture anent Par 172 of the Code is now submitted to bring the procedure for Referrals into line with that for Appeals.

15. In Par 185 of the Code, which deals with the various methods of electing a congregational committee, Sub-paragraph (4) has been causing difficulty for two reasons.

- (i) the procedure for inviting written objections to persons selected is more appropriate to the election of elders than the election of committee members.
- (ii) The layout of the paragraphs is misleading, as the second, third and fourth paragraphs, dealing with a subsequent meeting of the congregation to confirm the election, etc are sometimes misconstrued as applying to all the methods of electing the committee, whereas in fact they apply only to this rarely used fourth method.

An amending overture is therefore submitted.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

16. Special arrangements for ministers proposed by the Union Commission under Par 226(b) of the Code were examined and found to be in order.

RESIGNATION

17. Rev J B McCormick tendered his resignation from the Commission. The Synod of Derry and Omagh has nominated Rev Dr Joseph Fell as his successor.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT (INFORMATION) ACT

18. As reported to the 1999 Assembly (Mins p66) a matter arose last year in the Irish Republic under the Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994, Section 7.

19. The Church’s appeal against the decision of the Rights Commissioner, which was reported verbally to the Assembly, was heard on 30 November. The legal issues raised proved to be complex, and at time of writing the outcome is still awaited. If a decision is announced before the forthcoming General Assembly meets, details will be given in a supplementary report in Daily Minutes or in a verbal report in the private session.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That Rev. Dr. Joseph Fell be appointed to the Judicial Commission in place of Rev J B McCormick (resigned).

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 9 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 9 of the Code the words “all men” be deleted and that the words “all people” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 30(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 30(1) of the Code the word “men” be deleted, and that the words “all people” be substituted in its place.

Anent Par 132(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 132(4) of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place:

- “(4)(a) An offence alleged to have been committed more than five years previously shall not be made a ground of discipline unless:
- (i) the offender thereafter withdrew from the discipline of the Church; or
 - (ii) the offence is alleged to have been revived by the offender’s later conduct which requires investigation; or
 - (iii) the offence is of a very grave nature.
- (b) A court shall not re-open investigation of an offence that had previously been investigated by it except in the case of discovery of new evidence that is considered by the court to be of importance for the possible exculpation of the offender.”

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 19(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 19 (4) of the Code the words “the following sub-paragraph” be deleted and that the words “sub-paragraph (6)” be inserted in their place.

Anent Par 172 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 172 of the Code a new sub-paragraph (3) be added as follows:

“Every matter referred to a superior court by a Presbytery or Synod for directions or determination or advice shall go directly to the Judicial Commission, which is empowered to proceed forthwith to hear and determine the matter. However should any party directly concerned, within 14 days of the referral, request, in writing, that the matter be referred to the General Assembly, the Judicial Commission shall, without adjudicating thereon, immediately transmit the reference to the General Assembly with a report and recommendation on whether the matter shall be heard and decided upon directly by the Assembly or referred to a commission”.

Anent Par 185(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 185(4) of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place.

(4) On two successive Sundays the congregation shall be informed that an election of qualified persons for the Congregational Committee is to take place and voting members are invited to propose, in writing, for the consideration of the Kirk Session any qualified member or members. The Kirk Session having considered the proposals received, and having obtained the consent of those selected shall read the list of those selected to the congregation on two successive Sundays. On a subsequent day fixed by the Kirk Session there shall be held an official meeting of the congregation to confirm the appointment of the new members of the Congregational Committee. The names of those selected shall be presented individually to the meeting. A poll of the voters shall be taken and if two-thirds who vote be in favour he shall be declared elected.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

SPECIAL COMMISSION

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The Appeal of Rev R Alan Knox against the decision of the Newry Presbytery on 18th May 1999, by which he was refused approval as a divorced Minister to remain in office should he re-marry, came before the Special Commission of the General Assembly on 6th January 2000.

2. The following appeared before the Commission:

The Rev R Alan Knox (Appellant) accompanied by Mrs Isobel Elliott whom the Appellant introduced as his fiancée;

The Revs S A Finlay, J A Noble, R F S Poots and Dr D J Watts (Respondents on behalf of the Presbytery). The Revs R F S Poots and Dr D J Watts had been appointed by the Moderator's Advisory Committee under the provisions of Par 63 of The Code to sit with the Presbytery. The Rev Dr Stephen Williamson, Convener of the Committee on Divine Healing, also attended at the request of the Appellant.

3. After prayer, the decision appealed against and the reasons of appeal were read, and the other relevant documents specified in Par 169 The Code were presented.

The Appellant made his submissions and answered questions from the Commission.

At the request of the Appellant, the Rev Dr Williamson addressed the Commission on the subject of stress in the Ministry, and answered questions from the Commission.

At the request of the Appellant, Mrs Elliott addressed the Commission in support of the Appellant and the Appeal.

The Rev S A Finlay and other representatives of Presbytery responded and answered questions from the Commission.

The Appellant made a closing submission.

4. After discussions on 7th and 31st January 2000, a detailed Finding was agreed and adopted, and was recorded in full in the minutes of the Special Commission.

5. Having regard to all the circumstances the Commission decided it would be appropriate to report to the Assembly in summary form.

6. The reasons for this Appeal were given as follows:

"1. The decision was reached without the proper procedures being complied with or adhered to.

"2. The full facts, background, and circumstances of my case were not made known at the meetings of the Kirk Sessions and Committees nor considered by the Presbytery properly or at all.

"3. The decision is unfair having regard to the circumstances of my marriage, my former wife's attitude of support, and my 34 years of dedicated and unblemished service to the Church.

R A Knox"

7. Having considered all the evidence and submissions in this Appeal, and having reviewed the procedures followed by the Presbytery, the information made available to the Committee of Presbytery, the circumstances of Appellant's second marriage, etc the Special Commission, while recognising Appellant's dedicated service to the Church, did not find the reasons of Appeal to be well founded or substantiated.

8. The Commission therefore reached the following conclusions.

"Having regard to all the evidence and to the submissions before this Commission, the Commission is satisfied that: Presbytery properly and correctly followed proper procedures; the facts etc of the Appellant's case were known and considered; the decision was not unfair; the cause of Christ was more likely to be hindered than advanced if approval was to be granted to permit the Appellant's continuance in office following re-marriage, even with the Appellant's expectation of his usefulness and happiness consequent upon the assistance and support of his proposed third wife.

9. "Whereas a third marriage of a divorced Minister does not of itself justify denial of approval to continue in office thereafter, having had regard to all the evidence and the submissions, the Special Commission finds that Presbytery properly decided and found that approval be not given to the Appellant to remain in office as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should he remarry, because his continuance in office in all the circumstances is unacceptable to the local congregations and to the wider church and would be likely to hinder the cause of Christ. Consequently the Appeal is dismissed.

10. "The Special Commission noted the Appellant's comments on the effects of stress in the Ministry, and "burn out". The Commission draws the attention of both the Appellant and the Respondents to the practical suggestions contained in Reports to Assembly 1997 page 191 Par 65.

11. "The Special Commission commends the Appellant, the Respondents and all involved with them in this difficult situation, to the grace of God with prayer that they may know the guidance and peace of God in the days to come."

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Special Commission be thanked and discharged.

UNION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev W J ORR

Secretary: Rev S A MATTHEWS

INTRODUCTION

1. The period covered by this Report is from March 1999 to February 2000. Vacant Congregations come to consult with the Union Commission about the terms of their Leave to Call a new Minister. The Commission seeks to listen carefully to the concerns of the local representatives. It then makes its decisions, taking into account those concerns and the overall human and financial resources of the Church. The Commission consciously tries to see its work in the context of the Mission of the Church. In the period under review 33 Congregations were given Leave to Call. (In 5 cases the fraction was suspended, in 2 further cases the fraction is to be reviewed after three full years of ministry). 2 further Congregations were given Leave to Call under the reviewable tenure legislation. 1 Congregation had its Leave to Call renewed. 3 Congregations were given Leave to Call under the Home Mission Development Scheme. 11 Congregations were given Leave to Call Associate Ministers.

2. The Commission records its gratitude to the Rev Robert Bell who retires as Convener of the Personnel Planning Committee after seven years service. It was under Mr Bell's convenership that a new system to augment inadequate expenses was developed, absorbing much of the work of the former City Area Committee and assisting the phasing out of Union Grants. Those approaching him for advice have always found him patient and in command of the figures involved. Mr Bell has also played a key role in the wider responsibilities of his Committee in advising the Commission, for example, on developments in lay-assistantships. He is to be thanked most warmly for the service he has rendered to the Commission so willingly and so well.

It will also be noted that the Commission appointed the Rev S A Matthews as Secretary. He brings administrative skills and considerable experience of Assembly work at Board level.

LEAVE TO CALL MINISTERS

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses	Fraction
Legacurry	£25,000	£5,250	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %, review at the end of three full years of ministry.
Carrowdore & Ballyfrenis	£13,750	£5,500	37.5%
2 nd Randalstown (1999 & 2000)	£17,500	£5,000	Suspended, review after three full years of ministry.
	(2001)	£18,000	
	(2002)	£18,600	

West Church,			
Ballymena	£27,750	£6,000	25%
Lisbellaw	£4,600		37.5%
Lisnaskea	£2,300		37.5%
Maguiresbridge	£2,350		37.5%
Newtownbutler	£1,600		37.5%
			Ministerial Expenses and Shared Expenses in the following proportions; Lisbellaw 40%; Maguiresbridge 22.5%; Lisnaskea 22.5% and Newtownbutler 15%.
Glengormley	£25,000	£5,000	Stipend to be reviewed annually with a view to setting a Fraction after three full years of ministry.
Scrabo	£11,500	£5,250	33⅓%
Ballyarnett	£10,000	£2,750	37.5%
Knowhead	IR£6,250		37.5%
			+ 20% of income from Manse Fund
			IR£2,200 + 20% of income from Manse Fund
2 nd Ballybay	IR£7,000	IR£2,800	37.5%
Rockcorry	IR£4,050	IR£1,100	37.5%
Lislooney	£7,750	£2,400	37.5%
			Shared Expenses – 50%
Knappagh	£7,750	£2,000	37.5%
			Shared Expenses – 50%
Regent Street			
N ^o 1	£26,500	£5,750	30%
1 st Comber	£26,000	£5,650	Suspended until after three full years of ministry: Stipend subject to annual review.
Granshaw	£20,000	£5,300	35%
Portstewart	£24,000	£5,000	Available following the third year of ministry, and in the interim stipend as follows:
	(2001)	£24,700	
	(2002)	£25,500	
	(2003)	£26,250	
Leave to call was granted on the understanding that the congregation will move to the F.W.O. scheme as set out in the Code Par 235 from the 1 st January 2000.			
Woodlands,			
Carrickfergus	£20,000	£5,250	33⅓%, to be reviewed after three full years of ministry.

First Ballymena	£26,500	£5,750	25%
Conlig	£16,000	£5,000	Suspended until after three years of ministry; Stipend reviewed early in 2001, then annually until fraction reapplies.
Castlerock	£16,000	£4,800	37.5%
The representatives of the Congregation indicated a willingness to consider a linkage with a smaller congregation at some time in the future.			
Ballynure	£21,000	£5,500	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ %
Glascar	£7,250	£2,600	37.5%
	$\frac{2}{3}$ of the rent from the manse farm being paid to the Minister. Shared Expenses 50%.		
Donaghmore	£6,200	£2,600	37.5%
	Shared Expenses 50%		
Greenwell Street, Newtownards (2000)	£27,500	£6,000	No fraction to be set, and the situation to be reviewed in 2003 when the figures for 2002 become available.
	(2001)	£28,000	
	(2002)	£28,500	
Ardstraw	£15,250	£4,125	37.5%
Douglas	£4,500	£1,375	37.5%
	Telephone: Ardstraw – 75%; Douglas – 25%		
	Other shared Expenses: Ardstraw $\frac{2}{3}$ Douglas $\frac{1}{3}$		
Ballyronney	£13,500	£4,000	37.5%
	Shared Expenses: Ballyronney – 75%		
Drumlee	£5,700	£1,750	37.5%
	Shared Expenses: Drumlee 25%		
Cremore	£3,400	£1,300	37.5%
Fourtowns	£4,500	£1,400	37.5%
Poyntzpass	£4,900	£1,500	37.5%

Renewal of Leave to Call

First Dromore: Leave to Call was renewed from 30th September, 1999.
Stipend £20,000, Expenses £5,500, Fraction 30%.

Leave to Call Under Home Mission Development Scheme

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses	Fraction
Lisbellaw	£4,600	3,500	37.5%
Lisnaskea	£2,300	-	37.5%
Maguiresbridge	2,250	-	37.5%
Newtownbutler	£1,600	-	37.5%

Expenses offers form an overall amount of £3,500 from the 4 congregations with the final proportions to be determined locally.

Athy	IR£1,450	IR£800	37.5%
Naas	IR£2,300	IR£1,000	37.5%

Leave to Call was granted on the understanding that the Home Mission will conduct a full review after five years of ministry.

Howth & Malahide	IR£8,000	IR£6,000	Suspended until after three full years of ministry.
------------------	----------	----------	---

Associate Minister

Leave to call an Associate Minister was given to the following congregations in accordance with the General Assembly's Form of Call and the following terms:

Gilnahirk: £15,600 Salary; £3,000 Expenses; £1,500 Housing Allowance. Fraction of 32% to be suspended for three years provided Stipend paid for 1999 is not less than £24,000, for 2000 not less than £24,750. Annual review of Stipend until a fraction is re-established.

Stormont: £15,600 Salary; £3,000 Expenses; £1,500 Housing Allowance. An Associate Minister will not be employed at the same time as both a Licensed Assistant and Lay Assistant.

Congregation	Salary	Expenses	Housing Allowance
Newtownbreda	£15,600	£3,000	£1,500
Gilnahirk	£15,600	£3,000	£1,500
Stormont	£15,600	£3,000	£1,500
Whiteabbey	£15,600	£3,500	£1,500
First Portadown	£16,000	£3,000	£1,500
Ballyclare	£17,000	£4,250	£1,500
First Larne	£16,080	£3,000	£1,500
Terrace Row (C'raine)	£16,100	£3,500	£1,500
McQuiston Memorial	£16,080	£3,000	£1,500

Extension of Associate Ministry

Bangor West: The Associate Ministry was extended by two years.

REVIEWABLE TENURE

Fortwilliam Park: Leave to Call was granted under Par 274(5)(c) on the following terms:

- (a) Salary, £17,430 (Congregation to contribute £14,250 Stipend); Expenses £5,000.
- (b) The appointment to be reviewed and/or terminated:
 - (i) Five years from the date of installation OR
 - (ii) In such circumstances as the Union Commission and Presbytery plan an alternative pattern of distribution of ministry for the congregation or local congregations.

Oldpark: Leave to Call was granted under Par 274(5)(c) on the following terms:

- (a) Stipend, £16,500; Expenses £5,000; Fraction 30%.
- (b) The appointment to be reviewed and/or terminated:
 - (i) Five years from the date of installation OR
 - (ii) In such circumstances as the Union Commission and Presbytery plan an alternative pattern of distribution of ministry for the congregation or local congregations.

STATED SUPPLY

4. The following arrangements were approved for Stated Supplies:

Belville: Rev W J Harshaw resigned from 30 September, 1999.

First Dromore: The arrangement terminated on 30 September, 1999.

Second Dromara: The arrangement has been extended by twelve months from 1 October, 1999 and the terms revised to remuneration £6,000 per annum; Expenses £2,200 per annum.

Nelson Memorial: The Rev B R Hughes resigned from 3 October, 1999.

Tassagh: The Commission agreed to continue the Stated Supply arrangement in Tassagh for a further twelve months from 1st April, 1999, with remuneration of £7,700 including expenses.

Middletown: The Commission agreed to continue the Stated Supply arrangement in Middletown on the following terms: £1,500 per annum or 37.5% of Specified Sources whichever is the greater. Expenses £800.

Tyrone's Ditches: The following arrangements were made for the Minister of Bessbrook to act as Stated Supply in Tyrone's Ditches from 1st March, 2000. Stipend £2,500, Expenses £800, Fraction 37.5%.

It was also agreed that the Presbytery be asked to assist Tyrone's Ditches in regularizing its finances with reference to the designation of Specified Sources and that the settlement be reviewed after three years.

RESTRICTED LIST

5. The requests of four ministers to be placed on the Restricted List were granted.

The Commission agreed to apply the following rules:

A. The name of a minister shall be removed from the list of eligible ministers (Code Par 193 (1) (e)) after two years, unless the minister concerned applies for and is granted an extension by the Union Commission.

- B. When the Union Commission is not meeting on a monthly basis:
- (a) The Convener may grant an extension of up to two months, in consultation with the Clerk of Assembly.
 - (b) The Allocation Committee may place an new applicant on the Restricted List.

REVIEWS

6. The Commission has reviewed the following congregations and adjustments were been made as follows:

Ballyclare: Stipend (1999) £26,780; Expenses £6,000.

Connor: Fraction reduced from 40% to 37.5% provided that Stipend for 1999 is not less than £29,000 and for 2000 not less than £29,750, and that expenses are kept under review.

Dun Laoghaire: Fraction reduced from 40% to 37.5% provided that stipend for 1999 is not less than £15,500.

Ballyholme: Fraction suspended until review in 2001. Stipend as follows: (1999) £24,400, (2000) £25,000.

1st Ballymoney: Stipend £22,000.

Trinity (Bangor): Fraction suspended for three years, stepped arrangement for Stipend for that period.

Kells: Fraction suspended for a period of three years beginning January 1st 1999. Stipend as follows: (1999) £22,900, (2000) £23,300 and (2001) £23,800. The situation is to be reviewed in 2001.

Kilbride: Stipend £24,500; Expenses £5,400; no Fraction.

Cuningham Memorial: Fraction 25%, provided the Stipend does not fall below the 1999 level.

Newtownstewart and Gortin: No further review.

Wellington Street (Ballymena): Fraction suspended until the end of 2002. Stipend follows: (2000) £28,900; (2001) £29,500; (2002) £30,200.

REVIEW UNDER 12 MONTHS VACANT RULE

Ballyholme Associate: Salary £15,600; Expenses £3,500

Fortwilliam Park: Salary £17,430, congregation to contribute £14,250 Stipend

Abbey (Dublin): Stipend IR£7,500

Dungannon: Stipend £28,000

Raloo: Stipend £16,350; Expenses £5,400; Fraction £37.5%.

TERMS OF UNION

7. The following congregations were united under the terms set out below:

Cremore; Fourtowns and Poyntzpass

- (a) That the congregations of Cremore, Fourtowns and Poyntzpass be united from 1st March, 2000.
- (b) Each congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and finances.

- (c) Each congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the superior courts of the Church.
- (d) In the choice of a minister the three congregations shall act as one congregation and the three Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.
- (e) The stated services shall be 10.15 am each Sunday at Poyntzpass; 11.30 am each Sunday at Cremore; 11.30 am each Sunday at Fourtowns, or at such other times as the three Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine.
- (f) A weekly pulpit supply, holiday supplies, telephone rental and business calls, rent, rates, taxes and maintenance of Cremore Manse to be borne in the proportions: 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % Cremore; 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % Fourtowns; 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % Poyntzpass.
- (g) The minister shall reside in Cremore Manse.
- (h) The directions of the Union Commission shall be observed in connection with Fourtowns Manse.

Glengormley and Dunlop Memorial

- (a) That the congregation of Dunlop Memorial be amalgamated with the congregation of Glengormley from 1st September, 1999, or other suitable date under the name "Glengormley".
- (b) That the two Kirk Sessions become one Kirk Session and the two Congregational Committees become one Committee until new Committee elections are held.
- (c) That all existing or future assets, including property or lands not disposed of, become the property of the amalgamated congregation.
- (d) That any expenses accruing through failure to dispose of the Dunlop Memorial property, or through having to make the buildings secure and insured, be the responsibility of the amalgamated congregation.
- (e) That the Dunlop Memorial Manse Fund continue to be administered in accordance with the Union Commission Guidelines.
- (f) That the Stipend of the new congregation be £25,000, with initial Ministerial Expenses of £5,000.
- (g) That Stipend be reviewed annually with a view to setting a Fraction after three full years of ministry.

SICK SUPPLY FUND

For 2000 the number of Sundays paid locally is reduced from four to two, and the levy is reduced to £20 per charge.

GOODWILL PAYMENT TO RETIRING MINISTER

The Commission agreed a payment of £7,000 to a minister as a goodwill gesture in view of his willingness to assist the work of the Union Commission by retiring earlier than he had originally planned.

ELIGIBILITY

On the recommendation of a Presbytery a Minister was deemed eligible to apply for a vacant congregation.

MANSES

8. Various permissions granted by the Commission are given on the understanding that other permissions required by the law of the Church must be sought and that relevant guidelines are applied.

Permission was granted to the following congregations to sell their manses: Cregagh, Greenwell Street (Newtownards), West Church (Ballymena), Carrowdore, Cloughy and Portavogie.

Moy and Benburb: Permission was given for the purchase of a new manse. It was agreed to change the present proportions of 50% / 50% to $\frac{2}{3}$ (Moy) and $\frac{1}{3}$ (Benburb) for both the purchase of the new property and maintenance.

Badoney: Discussions continue with the Congregation about the amount of money raised from the sale of Badoney Old Manse which could be exempted from guidelines which reflect the fact that a manse is held in trust for the benefit of the Minister.

Sinclair Seamen's, Macrory Memorial and Newington: Representatives of the Commission have had lengthy consultations with the Congregations about the manse and the Associate's house. It is hoped that the various general principles which have emerged from the discussions will be helpful in addressing the issues involved.

Permission was given retrospectively to a Minister to reside in his own house.

A Minister who is eligible to retire, his Congregation having sought permission to sell the Manse, was given permission to live in his own house.

A Minister who would reach the age of 65 on the relevant date was given permission to live in his own house in the last months of his ministry to allow the Congregation to undertake work on the manse.

A Minister was given permission to live outwith the manse during renovations.

AMALGAMATION

9. With the agreement of Presbytery, and following congregational meetings, it is recommended that the congregation of Glasleck be amalgamated with the congregation of First Bailieborough (Corglass). An appropriate resolution is appended.

ASSOCIATE MINISTRY

10. The Commission has been giving the Associate Ministry further consideration over the past year. The scheme, as it emerged from the Home Board, presupposed a licentiate in a congregation who, on eligibility, might choose to accept a call as an Associate within the same congregation rather than to seek a call to his or her 'own' charge. However, it did not preclude the possibility of other ministers being called to Associateships, shaped perhaps with the need of a congregation and the gifts of an individual in mind.

From the outset, any appointment for an Associate was to be time limited – (Code Par 193(3)). This is not just a matter of funding, but is to underline the primary responsibility and place of the 'main' minister. It provides for a vacancy in the 'main' pastorate, and a new minister who might not welcome the scheme

or an individual personality as Associate. In fairness to all parties, there is also a need to indicate clearly when an Associateship will end.

Recognising different needs and approaches within the scheme, it is suggested that an Associate be called to a three year appointment with very favourable assessments – as at present. However, where circumstances merited it, this appointment might be renewed for a further three years, but with higher assessment. As an alternative, at the end of the first three years, a congregation and Associate might be permitted to extend the appointment by a further twelve months at the initial rate of assessment to allow longer consideration of whether or not to go eventually for another three year appointment. Only in very exceptional circumstances would the Commission extend an appointment beyond a total of seven years.

It must be noted that if, in future years, should there be a shortage in the supply of ministers to congregations, it may then be necessary for the Commission to restrict the number of Associateships, or the duration of appointment, in the interest of the wider Church.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

11. Since April, 1999 the Union Commission, after consultation with the Judicial Commission, has set up four special arrangements, to assist ministers who voluntarily resigned their Charges under Par 226(b) of the Code. An Associate Minister who had not received a Call before resigning from the associateship was given similar assistance.

**ASSESSMENTS ON FULLY CONSTITUTED CHURCH EXTENSION
CHARGES — 2000**

Under Par. 234 (3)(a) of the Code

	<i>Fully Constituted</i>	<i>Families (†)</i>	<i>Assess 2000 £</i>	<i>Spec. Sources £</i>	<i>Income £</i>
Ballee	1986	240 (181)	271	46,255	137,809
Tullycarnet	1990	223 (155)	232	29,689	49,302
Downshire	1993	217 (186)	279	38,383	61,597
Lisnabreen	1993	250 (150)	225	36,991	64,805
Scrabo	1994	270 (162)	243	31,339	52,597
Burnside	1995	172 (144)	216	44,798	103,221

† Families contributing at least £5.00 per annum

ASSESSMENTS ON CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES — 2000

<i>Church</i>	<i>Spec.</i>						
	<i>Building</i>	<i>Srs.</i>	<i>Stip.</i>	<i>C.M.F.</i>	<i>Ch. Ext</i>	<i>H.M.</i>	<i>Total</i>
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
New Mossley*	3,267	14,531	3,633	1,744	1,163	727	7,265
Ballysally*	9,171	20,841	5,210	2,501	1,667	1,042	10,420
Strathfoyle	33	3,451	1,035	518	345	207	2,105
Taughmonagh	—	17,593	5,278	2,639	1,759	1,056	10,732
Movilla	27,477	32,125	9,638	4,819	3,212	1,927	19,596

* Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES — 2000

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £12,060 from 1st January, 2000 plus House Allowance p.a. (single - £702; married - £1,002). If applicable House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

FIRST YEAR — from 1st January, 2000

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i>	<i>Congregations Contribution</i>	<i>C.M.F.</i>
Gardenmore	†C. Burcombe	06.6.99	29,832 (30%)	9,301	3,461
Rosemary	*R.I. Carton	27.6.99	25,074 (30%)	8,023	5,039
Glendermott	*S.J. Castles	13.6.99	23,724 (25%)	6,432	6,630
Fisherwick	†W.H.G. Crawley	02.6.99	26,532 (30%)	8,311	4,451
First Antrim	*M.N. Davidson	06.6.99	25,968 (30%)	8,291	4,771
Bloomfield	*M. Gibson	13.6.99	25,500 (s/a)	4,076	8,986
Trinity, Bangor	*K.W.J. Hanna	20.6.99	24,522 (30%)	7,858	5,204
West Kirk, Belfast	*J.R.I. Harbinson	04.6.99	18,492 (s/a)	—	13,062
Seaview	*K. Henderson	20.6.99	18,453 (s/a)	—	13,062
Stormont	*S. Henning	13.6.99	32,499 (30%)	10,251	2,811
Carryduff	*A. Kerr	10.9.99	25,407 (30%)	8,123	4,939
Ebrington	†S.J. Lockington	04.6.99	24,501 (30%)	7,701	5,061
Belmont	*P.G. McDowell	27.6.99	23,790 (30%)	7,638	5,424
Railway Street, Lisburn	†Cheryl A. Reid	20.6.99	24,402 (30%)	7,672	5,090
Ballygomartin	*D. Reid	18.6.99	12,960 (s/a)	—	13,062 H.M.

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance
s/a special arrangement

LICENTIATES — 2000

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £12,060 from 1st January, 2000 plus House Allowance p.a. (single - £702; married - £1,002). If applicable House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

SECOND YEAR — from 1st January, 2000

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i>	<i>Congregations Contribution</i>	<i>C.M.F.</i>
Craigy Hill, Larne	*G.D. Allen	07.06.98	23,400 (30%)	7,521	5,541
Ballysillan	*C.J. Gamble	07.06.98	18,780 (s/a)	501	12,561
Dundonald	*R.J. Stevenson	21.06.98	28,344 (30%)	9,004	4,058
Harmony Hill, Lambeg	†R.D. McDowell	19.06.98	26,664 (30%)	8,350	4,412
Scarva Street	†B. Colvin	14.06.98	28,320 (25%)	7,431	5,331
Kilbride	†E.S. McDowell	19.06.98	24,501 (30%)	7,701	5,061
Elmwood	*T.D. Hagan	07.06.98	24,957 (30%)	7,988	5,074
Hillsborough	†J.M. Wylie	14.06.98	29,427 (30%)	9,179	3,583
Ballygowan	*G.J. Kennedy	21.06.98	26,661 (30%)	8,499	4,563
Wellington Street	*W.J.A. Moody	28.06.98	28,899 (30%)	9,171	3,891
1st Portadown	†D.B. Murphy	12.06.98	28,620 (30%)	8,937	3,825
Richview	*M.M. Stewart	28.06.98	17,859 (30%)	5,859	7,203

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance
s/a special arrangement

LICENTIATES — 2000

Licentiatees are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £12,060 from 1st January, 2000 plus House Allowance p.a. (single - £702; married - £1,002). If applicable House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

THIRD YEAR — from 1st January, 2000

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i>	<i>Congregations Contribution</i>	<i>C.M.F.</i>
McQuiston Memorial	†Miss A.E. Tolland	29.06.97	22,500 (30%)	7,101	5,661
Abbey, Monkstown	*A.A. McCullough	13.06.97	19,542 (30%)	6,364	6,698
1st Coleraine	*J.P. Moxen	15.06.97	25,893 (30%)	8,269	4,793

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance
s/a special arrangement

ORDAINED ASSISTANTS
FOURTH YEAR — from 1st January, 2000

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Ord.</i>	<i>% Min.</i>	<i>Salary</i> £	<i>House Allow.</i> £	<i>Total</i> £	<i>Cong.</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Cooke Centenary West Church, Bangor	Marlene Taylor T. J. Laverty	11.1.85 29.1.95	100 100	16,080 16,080	1,002 1,002	17,082 17,082	9,152 12,401	7,930 4,681
Kells, Eskylane	J. A. Gordon	02.4.95	100	16,080	702	16,782	13,294	3,488

ASSOCIATE MINISTERS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Salary</i>		<i>House Allowance Paid</i> £	<i>Assessment Recovery</i> £
		<i>Paid</i> £	<i>Recovery</i> £		
S.E. Hughes	First Bangor	17,499	12,876.20	0.00	1,214.27
R.A. Liddle	West Church	16,080	11,200.00	1,500.00	355.77
to 23/02/2000					
J.G. Millar	Hamilton Road	16,080	12,809.60	1,524.00	355.77
S.J. Hanna	Ballyholme	16,080	10,452.00	1,500.00	355.77
A.M. Bates	First Ballymena	17,640	12,160.00	1,500.00	1,299.57
to 13/01/2000					
P.D. Thompson	Whiteabbey	16,080	10,452.00	1,500.00	355.77
D.S. McIlwrath	Carnmoney	18,687	15,316.20	3,000.00	1,933.01
D. Montgomery	Knock	17,001	13,533.40	0.00	912.98
H.E. Lewis	Bloomfield	16,380	10,452.00	1,500.00	537.27
J. Peacock	Newtownbreda	16,080	10,452.00	1,500.00	355.77
C. Glover	Stormont	16,080	13,000.00	0.00	355.77
R. Montgomery	1st Carrickfergus	18,192	16,432.40	1,500.00	1,633.53
A.J.M. Smith	Ballywillan	21,000	15,724.40	3,600.00	3,332.37
W.M. Brown	Second Comber	16,080	11,660.00	1,500.00	355.77
to 29/03/2000					

Where a Housing Allowance is paid C.M.F. contributes £750 per annum

PERSONNEL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Extra Parochial Work

1. Seven Ministers have received permission for extra parochial work, up to six hours per week, following reports submitted by their Presbyteries. Presbytery Clerks are asked to submit these reports to the Personnel and Planning Committee by 31st October, each year.

Locomotory Expenses

2. The year 2000 recommendations for locomotory allowances were set in the usual way, with the help of additional information obtained from the 1999 Ministers' Locomotory Questionnaire. This year, for the first time, allowance has been made for the small percentage of standing costs attributable to private motoring. Based on an average ministerial mileage of 13000 miles in a car of 1400cc the following locomotory recommendations were made:

N Ireland £4,600 (1999: £4,600); ROI IR£5,000 (1999: £4,800)

It is essential to recognise that these are average figures and vital that Congregational Committees pay careful attention to the particular circumstances and motoring expenses of their minister.

Inadequate Expenses Grant Scheme:

3. Applications for grants towards inadequate expenses were approved for 26 Ministers. The total grants paid were approximately £46,500, compared to approx £39,500 in the previous year.

The Committee is very grateful to all Ministers, Congregational Treasurers and Presbytery Clerks/Finance Conveners who pay careful attention to the completion and necessary authorisations on the application form. It draws attention to the fact that grant applications cannot be dealt with unless these sections of the form are fully completed.

4. The recommended limits for year 2000 claims under this scheme are as follows:

N Ireland: £4,900 (1999 £4,800); Republic of Ireland: IR£5,500 (1999 IR£5,400)

City Area Grants

5. No eligible claims were received from Ministers still entitled to make claims under this discontinued grant scheme. Relevant ministers were, however, encouraged to consider applications under the Inadequate Expenses Grant scheme.

Supply Fees

6. The Committee continued to review the matter of Supply Fees (Par 238), and in the light of the 1999 General Assembly resolution recommends the following changes:-

That rather than having two 'scales' for calculating the Supply Fee, as in Par 238(3) and (4), there should be one scale only, with relevant adjustment where only a single service in one congregation is involved. The Union

Commission would have power to adjust the monetary details of this formula, and the actual Supply Fee figure would be reported to the General Assembly annually.

It is therefore proposed that Par 238(3) and (4) should be amended to read as follows: *The rate for the Supply Fee shall be £2 for each £500 or part thereof of the basic minimum ministerial income, or as may be determined from time to time by the Union Commission. Where only a single service is supplied in one congregation, the fee shall be at the rate of two-thirds the full fee.*

Under these proposals, the supply fee for the year 2000 would be £66, with £44 for a single service supply.

Appropriate amending legislation is therefore being brought forward.

Payment of Vacancy Conveners

7. As indicated in previous reports to the General Assembly, the Committee has been considering recommending a scheme for the payment of Vacancy Conveners. Information was sought from a variety of Presbyteries, and while it was recognised that the circumstances and demands vary greatly from vacancy to vacancy, the Committee offers the following scheme for the consideration and guidance of Presbyteries:

< 100 Families – Full Supply Fee per week

100<200 Families – Full Supply Fee +5%

200<300 Families – Full Supply Fee +10%

300+ Families – Full Supply Fee +15%

The amount over and above the supply fee would only be payable where the vacant charge did not have the help of an Assistant, etc.

Additional Pastoral Personnel

8. The Committee considered and approved applications/renewals re the appointment of additional pastoral personnel from four congregations, and was pleased to give general guidance to congregations beginning to consider such appointments. It would continue to commend the 1997 General Assembly Guidelines for such appointments.

Par 235

9. Consideration of the issues raised under this paragraph re the appointment of additional pastoral personnel, was deferred pending final decisions about the system for the payment of Ministers.

R J A BELL, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the congregation of Glasleck be amalgamated with the congregation of First Bailieborough (Corglass) from the 1st July, 2000, or other suitable date, on terms to be agreed with the Union Commission.
3. That the CMF be authorised to pay grants towards expenses incurred by ministers in congregations, up to a limit of £4,900 for ministers residing in N

Ireland, and IR£5,500 for ministers residing in the Republic of Ireland, within the terms of resolution 3, page 70 General Assembly Minutes 1988.

4. That the proposals re the Supply Fee (Personnel/Planning Committee Report Par 6) be approved.

5. That the scheme for the payment of Vacancy Conveners (Personnel/Planning Committee Report Par 7) be recommended to all Presbyteries.

6. That the resignation of the Rev Robert J A Bell as Convener of the Personnel/Planning Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev Colin D McClure be appointed in his place.

7. That the Union Commission, with its associated working committee, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 128 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURE ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 128(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 128 (1) of the Code the words “the Strategy for Mission Committee” be deleted.

W J ORR

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 238(3) and (4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 238 (3) and (4) of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in their place:

(3) The rate for the Supply Fee shall be £2 for each £500 or part thereof of the basic minimum ministerial income, or as may be determined from time to time by the Union Commission. Where only a single service is supplied in one congregation, the fee shall be at the rate of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the full fee, and that sub-paragraph (5) be renumbered as (4).

W J ORR

REPORTS OF SYNODS AND PRESBYTERIES

SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN

The **SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN** report that the Rev William John Patterson, BSc, PhD, BD, is their Moderator, and that their next stated meeting is appointed to be held at First Lisburn on Tuesday 13th March, 2001 at 11.00 am.

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev S R Jones, BD, DipSocSt, MTh, MA, DPhil, is their Moderator, that the Rev W J McK Wallace, BA, Senior Minister of First Bangor, died on 17th March, 1999; that the Very Rev Rodney Sterritt, BA, DD, Minister of Greenwell Street, Newtownards, retired on 2nd January, 2000; that the Rev T J Stothers, BSc, BD, MTh, Minister of Scrabo resigned on 27th May, 1999, having accepted a Call to Greenisland and was furnished with credentials to the Carrickfergus Presbytery; the Rev James Lamont, BD, MTh, Minister of Regent Street, Newtownards, resigned on 16th June, 1999, having accepted a Call to Carrigart and Dunfanaghy and was furnished with credentials to the Donegal Presbytery; the Rev H S W Cubitt, BA, BD, Minister of Carrowdore and Ballyfrenis, resigned on 16th June, 1999, having accepted a Call to Second and Third Rathfriland and was furnished with credentials to the Iveagh Presbytery; the Rev W P Addley, BA, BD, MTh, DMin, PhD, Minister of Conlig, resigned on 8th September, 1999 and was installed to the Chair of Practical Theology at Union College on 9th September, 1999; the Rev R A Liddle, BEd, BTh, Associate Minister at Bangor West, resigned on 23rd February, 2000, having accepted a Call to Legacurry and was furnished with credentials to the Dromore Presbytery; that the Rev C J C McMullen, MA, MLitt, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore was installed in West Church, Bangor, on 16th April, 1999; the Rev S J Hanna, BSc, BD, having presented credentials from the Belfast South Presbytery was inducted as Associate Minister at Ballyholme on 1st September, 1999; the Rev James Campbell, BSc, BD, having presented credentials from the Carrickfergus Presbytery was installed in First Newtownards on 16th September, 1999; the Rev A M Bates, BA, having presented credentials from the Ballymena Presbytery was installed in Scrabo on 14th January, 2000; the Rev W J A Sleith, BSc, BD, having presented credentials from the North Belfast Presbytery was installed in Regent Street, Newtownards on 24th February, 2000; that the Rev R J Stevenson, BA, BTh, having presented credentials from the East Belfast Presbytery was ordained and installed in Carrowdore and Ballyfrenis on 21st January, 2000; that they licensed Mr Simon Henning as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 13th

Died

Retired

Resigned

Installed

Ordained

Licensed

June, 1999; that on 7th September, 1999, they issued credentials to the following Licentiates under their care: Mr C J Gamble to the Presbytery of North Belfast, Mr S Henning to the Presbytery of East Belfast, Mr J Wylie to the Presbytery of Dromore; that they have under their care the Revs D M Spratt, ALCM, BEd, DipTh, and C D Mawhinney, BD, as Ministers without Charge; Messrs. M M Stewart and K W J Hanna as Licentiates; Messrs M Casement, C Ebbinghaus, C A Grant and C W P Kennedy as Students for the Ministry; that they have visited the Congregations of Shore Street, Donaghadee; Glastry; Ballygrainey; and that Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

Under care

Students
Visited

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev L W H Hilditch, BEd, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev M G McClelland resigned as Minister of Knappagh and Lislooney and Stated Supply of Middletown on 26th May, 1999, having received a Call from the Congregation of Magheragall, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr R I Abraham, BA, BD, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was issued with credentials on 10th March, 1999 to the Presbytery of Omagh on receipt of a Call from the Congregations of Cavanaleck and Aughtentaine; that Mr J G Jones, BA, BD, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery was issued with credentials on 7th May, 1999 to the Presbytery of Donegal on receipt of a Call from the Congregations of Ballylennon and St Johnston; that they have under their care the Rev W A Shaw, BD, a Minister without Charge; and that during the year they visited the Congregations of Middletown, Tartaraghan and Druminnis; and that Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

Resigned

Under care
Visited

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev N A L Cameron, LLB, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev R G Johnston retired from First Saintfield on 29th February, 2000; that the Rev D N Gray was removed from his Charge of First Comber on 11th April, 1999 by the Judicial Commission; that the Rev D J Kane, BSc, BD, resigned as Minister of First Killyleagh on 24th February, 2000 having received a Call from the Congregation of West Church, Ballymena and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that Mr Mervyn Gibson, BD, was Licensed on 13th June, 1999; that they have under their care as a Licentiate the Mr G J Kennedy, LLB, BD; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charges the Revs R N Stewart, BA, BD and Rev D N Gray, BA, BD; that during the year they visited the Congregations of Second Comber and Second Saintfield; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Retired

Resigned

Licensed

Under care

Visited

The **DROMORE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev R S Tosh, BSc, BD, PhD, is their Moderator; that the Rev C J C McMullen, MA, MLitt, BD, Minister of Legacurry, having received a Call from the Congregation of West Church, Bangor, demitted his charge on 15th April, 1999, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of

Resigned

Installed

Ards; that Rev M G McClelland, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh, was installed to the pastoral oversight of the Congregation of Magheragall on 27th May, 1999; that the Rev J Honeyford, BA, BD, DMMA, CertEd, was installed to the pastoral oversight of the Congregation of St Columba's on 1st September, 1999; that the Rev R A Liddle, BEd, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards, was installed to the pastoral oversight of the Congregation of Legacurry on 24th February, 2000; that Mr S J Castles, BSc, was Licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 13th June, 1999; that they have under their care as Minister without Charge the Rev R J Mattison, BD; that they have under their care as Licentiates Miss C A Reid, LLB, BD, PGDM, Mr T D Hagan, BA, BTh, Mr R D McDowell, BSc, BD, and Mr J M Wylie, BSc, BD, MTh; that they have under their care as students for the Ministry Mr Michael McClenaghan, Mr Niall Samuel Robert Lockhart and Mr William Joseph Moody Parker; that during the year they visited the Congregation of Cargyreevy; and that Financial Statements are being published separately.

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev J Holmes, BA, is their Moderator; that the Rev Robert Hugh Morrison, BA, Senior Minister of First Rathfriland died on 24th May, 1999; that on 31st December, 1999 the Rev A Clarke, BA, BD, retired from the duties of the active Ministry in Glascar and Donaghmore; that the Rev N Ward, BA, resigned as Minister of Ballyronee and Drumlee on 20th January, 2000 having received a Call from the Congregation of Banagher; that the Rev A Cole, BEd, BTh, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards was ordained and installed as Minister of Anaghlonge and Garvagh on 14th April, 1999; that the Rev H S W Cubitt, BA, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards was installed as Minister in Second and Third Rathfriland on 17th June, 1999; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge (Retired) the Rev E G McAuley, BA, BD, MSc, and as a Licentiate Mr Brian Colvin, BA, BD; that during the year they visited the Congregations of Gilford and Donacloney; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev F J Gibson, BSc, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev D C Scott, BA, minister of Cremore and Tyrone's Ditches, retired on 30th November, 1999; that the Rev J K A McIntyre, MSc, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine, was ordained and installed as minister of Bessbrook on 24th September, 1999; that the Rev E P Gamble, BA, was installed as Minister of Clarkesbridge and First Newtownhamilton, Garmany's Grove and McKelvey's Grove on 3rd September, 1999; that they Licensed as Probationers for the Christian Ministry Mr K W J Hanna, BA, and Mr K Henderson, BA, on 20th June, 1999; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Rev A K Duddy and the Rev D McKee (Retired); W J A Moody as a Licentiate; and Mr

D S Henry as a student for the Ministry; that during the year they visited the Congregations of Ryans and Brookvale, and Kilkeel; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Student
Visited

SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE

The **SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE** report that the Rev G L McAdoo, BA, BD, MTh, is their Moderator and that the next stated meeting is to be held in St James' Presbyterian Church, Ballymoney, on 13th March, 2001 at 10.00 am.

The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev W F Dickey, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev W J D Henry, BD, PhD, resigned his charge as Minister of West Church on 31st March, 1999 and was received as a Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery until 30th September, 1999 after which his status ceased; that the Rev R S Hetherington, BA, BD, resigned his Charge as Minister of First Ballymena on 9th September, 1999, having received and accepted a Call from Glengormley and Dunlop Memorial and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev A M Bates, BA, resigned his appointment as Associate Minister of First Ballymena on 13th January, 2000, having received and accepted a Call from Scrabo and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that the Rev D J Kane, BSc, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down, was installed as Minister of West Church on 25th February, 2000; that Mr M Dunn, BSc, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane, was ordained to the Office of the Christian Ministry and installed as Minister of Carnlough-Cushendall and Newtowncrommelin on 3rd September, 1999; that Mr R D Gregg, BSc, BD, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine on 26th May, 1999, on receipt of a Call to the Congregation of Burnside; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry: Mr L H Eagleson, Mr S D Finlay, Mr C K McDowell and Mr S Richmond; that the Congregations of Wellington Street, Trinity, Ahoghill and Clough were visited; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Resigned

Installed

Ordained

Students

Visited

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev S P Moore, BSc, BD, PGCE, is their Moderator; that the Rev W J Rainey, BA, Senior Minister of Ballynure, died on 2nd February, 2000; that the Rev J H Wilson, BA, MAR, resigned from Woodlands on 31st March, 1999 and was received as a Minister without Charge; Rev J Campbell, BSc, BD, resigned from Ballynure on 15th September, having received and accepted a Call to the Congregation of First Newtownards; Rev J Lambe, BA, BTh, DipBStud, resigned as Associate Minister in Ballyclare on 2nd November, having received and accepted a Call to

Died

Resigned

Installed Mountpottinger; that the Rev R J Montgomery, BA, BD, MA, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast, was inducted as Associate Minister in First Carrickfergus on 30th April, 1999; Rev T J Stothers, BSc, BD, MTh, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards, was installed as Minister of Greenisland on 28th May, 1999; that Mr J C Simms, BA, BD, a Licentiate of the Carrickfergus Presbytery, was ordained and installed as Assistant to the Moderator of the General Assembly in Gardenmore, Larne, on 28th April, 1999; Mr P W Patterson, BMus, BD, having received a Call from the General Board to serve as a Chaplain to H M Forces, was ordained and inducted in Greenisland on 8th September, 1999; that Mr S J Lockington, BA, BD, was Licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry in Gardenmore on 4th June, 1999 and transferred to the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane; Mr Colin Burcombe, BSc, was Licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry in Ballyclare on 6th June, 1999, Mr Ian Carton, BA, BD, was Licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry in Downshire on 27th June, 1999 and transferred to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge Revs D R Byers and J H Wilson; that they visited the Congregations of First Larne and Craigy Hill during the year and that the Financial Statements of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **COLERAINE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev J George Johnston is their Moderator; that the Rev J Williamson died on 5th March, 1999; that on 7th May, 1999 the Rev R J Wilson retired from the duties of the active Ministry; that on 30th June, 1999 the Rev Dr B Kingsmore retired from the duties of the active Ministry; that on 8th September, 1999 the Rev F Russell retired from the duties of the active Ministry; that on 29th February, 2000 the Rev W J Waring retired from the active duties of the Ministry; that on 30th April, 1999 the Rev R S McMullan was installed as Minister of New Row, Coleraine, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that on 1st June, 1999 the Mr R D Gregg was ordained to the office of the ministry and installed to the oversight of Burnside Congregation, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena; that on 7th September, 1999 credentials were issued to Mr Keith McIntyre, a Licentiate under the care of the Presbytery, upon his Call to Bessbrook Congregation; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Rev W J Morrison and the Rev J D Mark, as Licentiates Mr G D Allen, Mr J Moxen and Mr T Mulholland, and as students for the Ministry Mr D J McClelland and Mr P B Wilson; that the Presbytery has visited Crossgar Congregation and that the Financial Statements of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev J A Thompson, BA, BD, MSc, is their Moderator; that Mr G Aitchison, BEng, BD, Licentiate under the care of Presbytery was furnished with credentials on receiving a Call to Dromore and Drumquin; that they have under

their care as students for the Ministry Mr D Steele and Mr G Chestnutt; that during the year they visited the Congregations of Ballyweaney and First Kilraughts; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Students
Visited

The **TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev P T Dalzell, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev F J Kelly, BA, BD, MTh, DipEd, Minister of Second Randalstown, retired on 30th April, 1999; that the Rev R L Brown, BSc, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane, was installed as Minister of Second Randalstown on 17th December, 1999; that Miss A E Tolland, BSc, PGCE, BD, MTh, Licentiate, having received and accepted a Call of First Larne to be their Associate Minister, was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus on 7th March, 2000; that they have under their care as Licentiates, Messrs M N Davidson, BA, BD, and E S McDowell, BSc, BD; that they have under their care as Students for the Christian Ministry Mrs L J Duncan (formerly Robinson), BA, Messrs D A Simpson, BTh, A V Stewart, MA; that during the year they visited the Congregations of Hyde Park and Second Donegore; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Retired
Installed

Under care
Students
Visited

SYNOD OF BELFAST

The **SYNOD OF BELFAST** report that the Rev W P H Erskine, MA, BD, is their Moderator and that the next stated meeting of Synod will be held at Townsend Street Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, 13th March, 2001 at 10.00 am.

The **NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Thomas Norman Hamilton, BA, BD, is their Moderator; that the Very Rev William Fleming, BA, DD, Senior Minister of Abbots Cross, died on 17th December, 1999; that the Rev David Henry Stewart Armstrong, BA, DipEd, BD, the Retired Director of Scripture Union NI, died on 19th February, 2000; that the Rev Thomas James Wilson, Associate Minister in Rosemary, demitted his Charge on 31st July, 1999 on the completion of his three year term; that the Rev Robert Noel Agnew, Minister of the Congregation of Oldpark, demitted his Charge on 16th September, 1999 on receipt of a Call to Bellaghy and Knockloughrim and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that the Rev William James Allen Sleith, BSc, BD, Minister of Whitehouse, demitted his Charge on 23rd February, 2000 on receipt of a Call from Regent Street, Newtownards and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that the Rev Ronald Samuel Hetherington, was installed in Glengormley on 10th September, 1999 credentials having been received from the Presbytery of Ballymena; that the Rev Philip David Thompson, was ordained to the office of the Christian Ministry

Died

Resigned

Installed
Ordained

and inducted as Associate Minister in Whiteabbey on 5th December, 1999 credentials having been received from the Presbytery of South Belfast; that the Rev Lesley Elizabeth Carroll, was installed as Minister of Fortwilliam Park on 27th February, 2000; that Dr William Hugh Galloway Crawley was Licensed as a Probationer for the Ministry in Alexandra on 2nd June, 1999 and was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that the Rev Peter Fitzgerald Jemphrey, a Minister without Charge, was issued with credentials to the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs C R J Brown, BA (Retired), C I McKnight, BA, W M Smyth, BA, BD, MP, and T J Wilson, BSc, DipSW, BD; that they have under their care as Licentiates Messrs. I Carton, C J Gamble, K Henderson, A McCullough, D Murphy, N Patrick and D W Reid; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry Messrs W J Hayes and M Jones; that they have visited the Congregations of Eglinton, Ballygomartin and Ballyhenry; and that the Congregational Financial Reports are being printed separately.

The **BELFAST SOUTH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Dr I Hart, BA, BD, MTh, is their Moderator; that Rev Dr A H Graham, BA, DD, retired on 30th September, 1999; that Rev E P Gamble, Ordained Assistant in West Kirk was issued with credentials on receipt of a Call from Clarkesbridge, Garmany's Grove, McKelvey's Grove in the Newry Presbytery; that the Rev S J Hanna, Minister under the care of the Presbytery was issued with credentials on receipt of a Call to Ballyholme in Ards Presbytery as Associate Minister; that the Rev B R Hughes was Inducted as Chaplain to Belfast City Hospital Trust on 11th November, 1999; that Mr J R I Harbinson student under the care of the Presbytery was Licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 4th June in Windsor; that Miss C A Reid student under the care of the Presbytery was Licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 20th June in Lowe Memorial and was issued with credentials to the Dromore Presbytery; that Mr E P McDowell student under the care of the Presbytery was Licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry in Fitzroy on 27th June, 1999 and was issued with credentials to the East Belfast Presbytery; that they visited the Congregations of West Kirk and Ulsterville during the year; that the Financial Statements are being presented separately.

The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Graham Connor, BSc, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev Henry Gray, Minister of Granshaw, died on 22nd May, 1999; that the Rev W J H McKee, BA, PhD, demitted his charge as Minister of Westbourne on 8th September, 1999 on receipt of a Call to the Congregations of Cumber and Upper Cumber, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Foyle; that the Rev H Boyce, BA, demitted his charge as Minister of Strand on 31st January, 2000; that the Rev Johnston R Lambe, BA, BTh, DipBStud, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was Installed as Minister of Mountpottinger

Church on 3rd November, 1999; that the Rev H Boyce, BA, was installed as Director of Evangelism under the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training of the General Assembly on 1st February, 2000; that Mr John A Peacock, BA, BTh, presented Credentials as a Licentiate of the Presbytery of Iveagh, and was Ordained to the Christian Ministry and Inducted as Associate Minister in St John's, Newtownbreda Congregation on 20th June, 1999; that Mr Michael N Davidson, BA, BD, was Licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 6th June, 1999; that Mr Andrew N Kerr, MB, BCh, BAO, FRCSI, BD, was Licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 10th September, 1999; that Rev P A J McBride, BSc, BD, presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Belfast South and was received as a Minister without Charge; that they have under their Care as Ministers without Charge the Revs R A Crooks, MA, W J Harshaw, E Jamison, BA, MEd, MTh, PhD, L R Pedlow, MA, S Scott, BD, PhD, ThD, P A J McBride, BSc, BD; that the Congregation of Tullycarnett was visited during the year; and that Financial Reports for the Congregations are being printed separately.

Ordained

Licensed

Under care

Visited

SYNOD OF DERRY AND OMAGH

The **SYNOD OF DERRY AND OMAGH** report that the Rev Hugh Ross, BA, BD, is their Moderator; that their next Stated Meeting is appointed to be held in Carland Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, 14th March, 2001 at 2.30 pm.

The **DERRY AND STRABANE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Dr Andrew Robert Kane, BSc, BD, is their Moderator, that the Rev Dr John Lappin, BA, MTh, Minister of Malin and Carndonagh retired from the active Ministry on 31st January, 2000; that the Rev Robin Leslie Brown, BSc, BD, Minister of Ardstraw and Douglas having received a Call from the Congregation of Second Randalstown, demitted his Charge on 16th December, 1999 and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that Mr Robert William Gaston, BA, BD, a Licentiate under the care of the North Belfast Presbytery, having presented credentials was ordained to the Office of the Christian Ministry and installed as Minister of Second Castlederg and Alt Congregations on 5th March, 1999; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge the Rev Robert Thomas Davey, BA, BD; that they have under their care as Licentiates Mr E A Smith, BA, and Mr Stephen John Lockington, BA, BD, having presented credentials from the Carrickfergus Presbytery; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry Mr Robert Alexander Campbell, BA and Mr Paul Ernest Linkens, BA; that the Congregations of Waterside, Moville and Greenbank were visited during the year and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Retired

Resigned

Ordained

Installed

Under care

Students

Visited

Installed The **FOYLE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev D J Paul, BEng, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr William John Henning McKee, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast, was installed as Minister of the Congregations of Cumber and Upper Cumber on 10th September, 1999; that the Rev Noel Ward, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh, was installed as Minister of the Congregation of Banagher on 21st January, 2000; that Mr Samuel James Castles presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore on becoming Licentiate Assistant in Glendermott; that Mr A J A Rosborough, MA, BD, a Licentiate under their care, was issued with credentials on 1st February, 2000 upon his Call to Ballyarnett and Knowhead Congregations; that Rev K Campbell, Minister without Charge, resigned on 3rd March, 2000; that the Financial Statements are being printed separately.

Retired The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev J J Currie, BD, minister of Aughnacloy and Ballymagrane, is their Moderator; that the Rev D P Kirkwood, BA, Minister of Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler, retired on 31st March, 1999; that Mr Robert Ian Abraham, BA, BD, was ordained on 15th April, 1999 and installed as Minister of Cavanaleck and Aughtentaine; that the Rev James Robert Burnett, BA, MPhil, was installed on 2nd June, 1999 as Minister of Seskinore and Edenderry; that Mr Gareth Aitcheson, BEng, BD, was ordained on 25th September, 1999 and installed as Minister of Dromore and Drumquin; that Mr David William Reid was Licensed on 16th June, 1999 as a Probationer for the Ministry and transferred to the care of the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Congregations of Clogher and Drumlegagh were visited during the year; and that Financial Statements are being printed together in booklet form.

Died The **TYRONE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev J I Thompson, BSc, BD, MTh, is their Moderator; that the Rev George Heron, BA, Senior Minister of Castlecaulfield, died on 27th August, 1999; that the Rev John Brown, Retired Lecturer, died on 9th November, 1999; that the Rev R Noel Agnew was installed as Minister of the Congregations of Bellaghy and Knockloughrim on 17th September, 1999, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry Mr Adrian T S McAlister, BSc, MSc; Mr Colin W A Martin, BSc and Mr Knox Jones; that during the year they visited the Congregations of Maghera, and Tobermore and Draperstown; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being published separately.

SYNOD OF DUBLIN

The **SYNOD OF DUBLIN** report that the Rev James Brogan, MA, is their Moderator; and that the next stated meeting is appointed to

be held in Ramelton, Co Donegal, on Monday, 12th March, at 7 pm, or at other suitable place and date.

The **DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev William Alexander McCully, BSc, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev James Lamont, BA, MTh, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards, was installed into the Home Mission and inducted as Minister of Dunfanaghy and Carrigart Congregations, on 12th June, 1999; that Mr James Geoffrey Jones, BA, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh, was ordained and installed to the pastoral oversight of the Congregations of Ballylennon and St Johnston on 22nd May, 1999; that the Congregations of Newtowncunningham and Kilmacrennan were visited during the year; and that the Financial Statements of the Congregations are being published in a Year Book.

Installed

Ordained

Visited

The **DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Katherine Meyer, BA, MDiv, is their Moderator; that on 30th April, 1999 the Rev Robert Sydney McMullan resigned as Director of Scripture Union Republic of Ireland and was provided with credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine; that on 20th May, 1999 the Rev John Mann was installed in the Home Mission and inducted to the Charge of Ballina, Killala and Ballymote; that on 30th June, 1999 there retired Rev Dr William O'Neill and Rev Dr R W J MacDermott; that on 30th June, 1999 the Rev Ruth Gregg resigned from the Charge of Naas and Athy; that the Presbytery has under its care as Ministers without Charge Rev F W Vincent and Rev Ruth Gregg and as a Licentiate, Mr Kenneth Gibson; that on 1st February, 2000 credentials were transmitted to the Presbytery of Iveagh in respect of Mr Brian Colvin; that during the year the following Congregations were visited, Sligo with Boyle and Clontarf; that the Financial Statements of all Congregations are being published in a limited edition of a Year Book.

Resigned

Installed

Retired

Resigned

Under care

Visited

The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev B C G Black BSSc, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev Charles George McKnight, MA, Senior Minister of Ballyalbany and Glennan, died on 15th January, 2000; that the Rev John Henry Hanson, BSc, BD, Minister of Second Ballybay and Rockcorry, resigned and was installed to the Overseas Board on 5th June, 1999; that they have no students for the Ministry under their care; that during the year the Congregations of Bellasis, Cavan, Drumkeeran and Killeshandra were visited; that the Financial Reports are being printed in booklet form.

Died

Resigned

Installed

Visited

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

BUSINESS BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. As part of the Millennium celebrations daily worship on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday this year will commence at 12 noon and will last one hour.
2. Three requests were received for the “Alternative” presentation of reports, and these are indicated in the Order of Business in the yellow pages of this book.
3. In the “Alternative” format each Board is given 35 minutes for a “Presentation” including not only the proposing and seconding of the Report, but the introduction of guests, the showing of videos, etc as may be desired. Outside speakers require the permission of the Business Board. Assembly questions for clarification then follow, and finally the resolutions. The speeches of the proposer and seconder, and any comments from committee conveners should all be included in the allotted period of time, and these officebearers should not speak again (except on a point of clarification or to close the debate on a resolution) otherwise the report is liable to overrun and cause business to lapse.
4. Even where the “Alternative” format is not being followed speakers submitting reports are encouraged to make full use of the modern technology now available, eg by projecting pictures or paragraph headings on to the screens, but such arrangements should be made with the Information Officer, Mr. Stephen Lynas, in good time.
5. Questions, which should be written out and placed in the box provided in good time, will normally be limited to two per person and ten minutes in all, unless the Moderator judge that a particular subject merits an extension of these limits.
6. Amendments should be written out and submitted to the Clerk’s desk before they are spoken to.
7. To assist the orderly transaction of business the following recommendations are made:-
 - (i) All questions dealing with one topic should be dealt with before moving on to another topic.
 - (ii) Speeches under resolution 1, “That the Report be received”, should be made only where there is no later resolution dealing with the subject.
 - (iii) In the special case of the Church and Government Committee the report will be taken as a separate item, with its own question time, etc. To compensate for this the report of the Recognised Ministries Committee is being re-integrated into the main General Board report on the understanding that, if a debate should arise about a particular name, the relevant resolution could be adjourned to the private session.
8. If business lapses conveners will have the choice of standing by for the first available slot (which all interested in that report should note), or having the item rescheduled for Friday afternoon. The abbreviated timings for an

accumulation of lapsed business are now printed in the “Guide to Assembly Procedure” in yellow pages.

9. If business runs late on Friday afternoon the Assembly may adjourn to the Minor Hall or May Street Church.

10. The front row of seats in the Assembly Hall will be reserved for those wishing to speak, who are requested, to come forward to these reserved seats in good time and give their names.

11. Copies of the Annual Accounts are available to members of Assembly upon request to the Financial Secretary’s Office.

Board Membership

12. The Business Board is appointed in accordance with the provisions of Par 275 of the Code to take office on the 15 March preceding the Assembly. The Board for the year 2000-2001, together with the associated Arrangements Committee, is as follows:-

- (a) The Moderator, and Clerk of Assembly, the Moderator-Designate, the former Clerks, preceding three Moderators, all Assembly Conveners and Secretaries of Commissions and Boards, Financial Secretary, Youth and Information Officers.
- (b) Rev. W.A. Kennedy; W. Graham — Rev. Dr. J. Thompson; W.H. Scott — Rev. J. Harper; S.B. Cunningham — Rev. S.W.W. Neilly; R. Gibson — Rev. J. Holmes; S. Porter — Rev. Dr. M.A. Barry; W. Flack.
- (c) Rev. J.J. Andrews; W.G. McDowell — Rev. J.W. McAuley; J. Wallace— Rev. T.J. McCormick; P. McGonigle — Rev. J.T. Magowan; H. Taggart— Rev. D. Bannerman; S.A. McCrea.
- (d) Rev. T.C. Morrison; A.W. Marshall — Rev. Ruth Patterson; M. Kelly — Rev. W.J.R. Robinson; Miss V.J. Wilson.
- (e) Rev. M. Bolton; A. Craig — Rev. T.V. Mawhinney; W. Taylor — Rev. B.A. Hunt; J. Cochrane — Rev. T.J. Conway; R. Kyle.
- (f) Rev. W.A. McCully; Mrs. M. Smyth — Rev. J. Carson; Gordon Henderson — Rev. D.T. Moore; J. Jenkins.

A. ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE (5) Rev. R. Vallely, Convener

- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Moderator-Designate, Deputy Clerk, Information Officer, Hospitality Secretaries, T.H. Cochrane; Rev. R. Vallely.
- (x) Revs. J.R. Lambe, P.T. Dalzell; G.Y. Crooks, N. Millar.
- (y) Revs. T.C. Morrison, J. Holmes, T.J. McCormick, T. Conway; Miss V.J. Wilson, A.W. Marshall, W.G. McDowell, M. Kelly.

Other Churches

13. Delegates to the governing bodies of other Churches were appointed as follows:

Church of Ireland General Synod 2000: Very Rev. Dr John Dixon; Mr Eric Bownes.

Methodist Conference 2000: Very Rev Dr John Lockington, Rev R D Maxwell; Oswald McAuley, Mrs Joyce McMullan.

Presbyterian Church of Wales: Rev R F S Poots.

Eglise Reformee de France: Rev Princ J C McCullough.

Uniting Church of Australia: Rev Dr Trevor Morrow.

The URC Assembly 1999

Very Rev Dr S J Dixon reports:

1. The 1999 Assembly of the United Reformed Church was held in Southport from the 5th-9th July.

2. The ecumenical outlook of the URC is seen in the assembly permitting delegates from other partner churches to participate and vote in its business. The Rev Gabrielle Ellis-Farquhar, the representative of the Inter-Church Relations Board of PCI, was our voting delegate this year.

3. On the opening night the outgoing Moderator, Mrs Wilma Frew, spoke on living stones that were moulded together to build God's Church. The Rev Peter Macintosh was inducted as the new Moderator and addressed the Assembly with wit and wisdom on the theme 'Get Real', applying it pertinently to the issues that would come before the Assembly.

4. Some thirty-five visitors from other churches and bodies were welcomed by the Moderator and I was privileged to respond on behalf of the representatives from within the United Kingdom.

5. The debate on human sexuality was given a lot of time and was conducted with seriousness and vigorous discussion. The entire report was sent down to local churches, district councils and synods to discuss. They are to express their view on the statement that 'The URC affirms and welcomes people of homosexual orientation within the life of the church and society but does not believe that there is a sufficiently clear mind within the church at this time to affirm the acceptability of homosexual practice'.

6. The General Secretary introduced a very significant report entitled 'Growing Up – A Mission Programme for the URC'. While facing squarely the reality of declining membership it underlined five marks of mission that must be brought to the forefront of every congregation and council. The debate was characterised by realism and vision and urged the URC to be in the business of God-honouring evangelism.

7. Development on another front was confirmed as the Assembly voted to approve the proposals of union with the Congregational Union of Scotland. A unifying Assembly will be held in Glasgow on Saturday 1 April, 2000.

8. The Assembly agonised over how best to address the need to rationalise the training of ministers and the Mission Council brought a resolution that 'The URC should cease to use one of the present Colleges for initial ministerial training'. From the debate most assumed, if passed, this resolution would mean that Mansfield College Oxford would cease to be so used. After a thorough debate the resolution was narrowly defeated.

9. The Assembly recognised the lead given by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in the continuing development of the peace process and called on all

congregations within URC to pray for continuing efforts to establish peace and stability in Northern Ireland.

10. The opening and closing acts of public worship were very meaningful. Three ministers gave testimony on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. The Gospel was read in one of the four languages other than English in which the URC regularly worships, Mandarin; Twi; Urdu and Welsh. The multi-cultural context in which URC witnesses was illustrated very well.

Unifying Assembly – URC

Rev Robert Vallely reports:

1. On Saturday, 1st April, 2000 a large Congregation assembled in the Barony Hall in Glasgow to approve and witness the inauguration of The United Reformed Church. This Unifying Assembly brought together the United Reformed Church in England and Wales with the Congregational Union of Scotland to form the United Reformed Church (URC). This Church now comprises 150,000 adults and 100,000 children and young people in more than 1,750 Congregations spread throughout England, Scotland and Wales served by some 1,100 Ministers paid and unpaid, both men and women. The URC has its roots in Presbyterianism and Congregationalism.

2. At the Unifying Assembly the URC resolved to continue its Membership of the various ecumenical bodies throughout the World. The various guests representing these bodies and associated Churches were received warmly on the platform by the Moderator of the URC and by the Unifying Assembly. Greetings and congratulations were conveyed on behalf of the guests by two Church representatives and by a Minister in the Scottish Assembly. The Rev John Authur was appointed to serve for five years as Moderator of the Synod of Scotland and the Rev Kenneth McArthur Forbes to serve as Synod Clerk for seven years.

3. The Moderator of the URC General Assembly the Rev Peter McIntosh signed the new Assembly Bible, conducted Worship and administered the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

4. This historic occasion was held on a fine day in Glasgow under the theme “Better Together”.

Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

Rev Dr R N Gordon reports:

1. Like a thousand other reported events, at which there was excitement and a great sense of the moving of the Holy Spirit, a mere report cannot convey the joy and anticipation that was experienced by all who attended.

2. At the invitation of the General Board I travelled from Malawi in Central Africa to bring the greetings of the General Assembly on the occasion of the Union of two Presbyterian Churches.

3. In 1994 South Africa thrilled the world when Nelson Mandela orchestrated a political miracle and bloodlessly led the Republic of South Africa out of apartheid into freedom. On the 25 September, 1999 the previously white

majority Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and the previously black Reformed Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa voted themselves out of existence to form the new Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa on Sunday 26 September.

4. In fact the PCSA had been the settler and soldier Church of Scotland overseas, and the RPCSA had been the Bantu Presbyterian Church, the child of the Scottish Foreign Missions of the 19th and 20th centuries.

5. The UPCSA will now have about 400 ministers and approaching 200,000 members. White South Africans will now be a 20% minority, whereas in the previous PCSA they were in a two to one majority.

6. I attended both General Assemblies on the Saturday. They were being held simultaneously in the same building, and on the Sunday we moved to an enormous township Community Hall for the union celebrations. These were big, noisy, colourful, African, and enormously heartening for visitor and African alike, and yet for the quieter tradition of the white South Africans such excitement will have sounded less than joyful, if not a little threatening.

7. However both parties in the Union need each other, and both have a contribution to make to the Union.

8. Overseas visitors included the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and his wife The Moderator of the URC and his wife, the President Elect of the Uniting Church of Australia (Dr. James Haire). There were representatives from New Zealand, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Botswana, Malawi, Kenya, Zambia, as well as representatives of many councils of Churches including WARC, Council for World Mission, WCC, and the South African Council of Churches. They would ask their brothers and sisters throughout the world to pray for them in what will be an exciting but also a testing time.

9. I appreciated the opportunity to attend and to bring greetings and the assurance of our prayers.

The Welsh Assembly

Rev W T J Richardson reports:

1. It was a thrilling experience for my wife, Sally and me to attend the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales held at St. David's College, Lampeter from the 12th-15th July, 1999. The weather was beautiful, the location idyllic, the cuisine outstanding, and, due largely to the fact that the Assembly was residential and had about 200 delegates attending, the fellowship was relaxed, friendly and jovial.

2. The outgoing Moderator, Rev W I Cynwil Williams, enthusiastically welcomed all the corresponding delegates. He paid warm tribute to the links between the various churches, not least the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. I was given an opportunity to address the Assembly and brought greetings on behalf of our Moderator, Dr John W Lockington. In reciprocating the remarks of the Moderator I mentioned how enriched our Church has been through the various ministers who have served with P.C.I. The incoming Moderator, Rev Glyn T Jones, and his wife are looking forward to attending our Assembly next year.

3. Most of the Assembly business was conducted in Welsh, but non Welsh speakers had the services of an excellent interpreter. One of my lasting

memories of the Assembly was the singing! Seldom before have I heard such robust, harmonised praise to God. One could not fail to be uplifted in spirit.

4. On the Tuesday morning many moving expressions of appreciation were directed to the Rev Dawydd H. Owen, the retiring General Secretary. He had held this office for several years and with great skill had directed the church through many critical debates. His grasp of Church law, knowledge of Church History and congregational life, coupled with a warm evangelical zeal had made him ideally suited for the post. It was an Assembly filled with gratitude for a job well done, and with regret that the time of his retirement had come, that wished this good and faithful servant of the Church a long and happy retirement. His successor is Rev D Gareth Edwards.

5. Sadly, numerically the Welsh church is not on the up and up. This is particularly true of the large industrial areas of South Wales. One of their problems is the large number of church buildings. It seems that in better times, doubtless during the various revivals, church buildings were placed at virtually every corner. Now with a dwindling membership they are left with the upkeep of these, in many cases, massive edifices, which is an enormous strain on their financial resources.

6. One encouraging thing about the Welsh Assembly was the vision and calibre of the young people. The Youth Assembly had been held the week before and a representative number had stayed on and took part in the various debates. It was heartwarming to the debates of the Assembly.

7. We found the entire experience stimulating and encouraging. It was a privilege to witness another Church's ways of doing things and, which they doubtless have something to learn from us, we certainly have a lot to learn from them, not least in the way theological differences are charitably expressed.

ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Thanks

1. The Arrangements Committee appreciates the support and help of the staff in the General Secretary's Office, the Reception and other personnel within Church House including the Buildings Manager, Mr Harry Orr, and his staff. We also appreciate those who voluntarily assist in stewarding, administering communion and other roles which are carried through in a willing and helpful way.

Marking the Millennium

2. A vision for the New Millennium will be the underlying theme for the mid-day worship sessions from Wednesday to Friday. The worship will commence at 12.00 noon. Rev Dr Leighton Ford will be the main speaker at mid-day worship.

Assembly Rally

3. Dr Leighton Ford, the international evangelist who was one of the main participants in the Lusanne Conference and Covenant, will bring a worldwide vision to our Rally on Wednesday, 7th June at 7.45 pm.

Catering

4. In 1999 the Committee dispensed with the provision of coffee/tea and lunch break tickets. Their absence did not seem to hinder the catering facility. This practice will continue at this Assembly. Lunches are served daily in the Minor Hall while coffee/tea breaks operate at the Concourse and in the Minor Hall.

World Development Fund

5. This Fund benefits during Assembly Week when the Friends of Church House provide a light lunch in the Minor Hall on Tuesday and Strawberries and cream available throughout the week at the Roof Garden area.

Time-Keeper

6. Mr H W Templeton has resigned as the Assembly's Time-Keeper and we thank him for his faithful service over the years.

Transport

7. A complimentary limousine for the use of the Moderator during Assembly Week has been provided by Wilton's of Crumlin Road and for the outgoing Moderator on Monday evening by McConnell's of Ballyclare.

Mobile Phones

8. Members are requested to keep mobile telephones, pagers etc. turned off while in the Assembly Hall during debates and other sessions as the ringing tone is disruptive.

Voting Cards

9. These should be obtained as soon as possible from the desk at the Carrickfergus Window where they are available on Monday evening/Tuesday morning after which Members should contact the Financial Secretary's Office.

10. Admission to the Private Session is only for those who have and show their own voting card. In all votes the Moderator may call for voting cards to be shown and only those displaying their own voting card are eligible to vote.

Expenses

11. All Members may claim a daily allowance but travel expenses cover the cost of only one return journey in the week. Claims should be made on the appropriate form obtainable from the Reception at the Wellington Street entrance.

Moderator

12. We congratulate the Rev Dr Trevor Morrow on his nomination as Moderator-Designate. The Committee has arranged accommodation in Belfast for Dr Morrow to facilitate him during his Moderatorial year. The cost of rental and expenses will be claimed from the Incidental Fund.

Prayer

13. We encourage Members of the Assembly and of our Congregations to prayerfully remember the Moderator, the Officers and Conveners of the Assembly as they prepare for and conduct the Assembly business. A Prayer Meeting will be held on Friday, 2 June, at 3.00 pm, in the Chapel of Church House.

ROY VALLELY, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommended Order of Business be adopted.
3. That the professional amplification controller and the visual display operator be admitted to the private session.
4. That a grant of £9,500 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Committee.
5. That a grant of £3,500 to cover the cost of the Moderator's accommodation be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Committee.
5. That the Business Board, with its associated working committee, for the ensuing year beginning 15 March, 2001, be appointed in accordance with Par 275 of the Code.

NOTICE OF MOTION

That in view of his service to the Church, especially as an Opening Night Steward and as time-keeper at business Sessions of the General Assembly, Mr Herbert W Templeton be made a member of Assembly under Par 97(i) and Par 107(a) of the Code.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Convener: Rev IVOR SMITH
Secretary: Mr STEPHEN LYNAS

1. During what has proved to be another busy year for the committees of our Board two items have featured high on our agenda - a suitable hymn book for use by our denomination in the 21st century, and how we can develop the increasing use of email and the Internet for our internal and external communications. Both are very important and discussions are ongoing.

2. After a few years of change our staff situation has been very settled this year and, under the leadership of Stephen Lynas, the team continues to publicise widely the work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Board notes with appreciation the work of the Communications Department and commends to the Church's prayers and support the staff, the Information Officer and the Editor of the Presbyterian Herald.

3. The sustained success of Familybooks and the excellent standard of service provided by the bookshop is noted. The Board congratulates the Directors and staff on their achievements.

Minister in Recognised Service

Rev Dr Robert Tosh reports:

1. I remain as Chief Producer, Religious Programmes for BBC Northern Ireland, overseeing some 438 hours of annual output on BBC Radio Ulster and some 15 hours on Network Radio.

2. This output covers a wide range of programme type - music of various kinds, from the traditional hymn to attempts to express the Gospel in contemporary musical idiom; worship; reflection, and the Sunday Sequence programme which continues to explore that interface where religion, ethics and society meet.

3. We marked the millennium in a number of ways: an invitation to listeners to send in their thoughts which brought a good response and a number were broadcast; the four Advent Morning Services on BBC Radio Ulster which were conducted by the leaders of the four main Churches; the Northern Ireland Millennium Service on 2nd January 2000 which was televised live from the Waterfront Hall.

4. Significant, too, was an edition of Songs of Praise recorded in Fisherwick Church and which reflected some of the hopes of the people of Northern Ireland as the year 2000 approached. We will be broadcasting during March and April 2000 'On this Rock' a series co-produced with RTÉ, which examines some aspects of the history of Christianity in Ireland.

5. I continue to be very aware of how Religious Broadcasting is dependent on a large number of contributors - those who prepare and deliver scripts, take part in discussions or stand and sing the same hymn a number of

times at Songs of Praise. Without such willing co-operation it would be impossible to continue the work of Religious Broadcasting.

6. My period as Convener in charge of the vacancy at Magheragall came to an end in May 1999, but I have, at the time of writing, just taken up duties as Moderator of the Presbytery of Dromore.

COMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Information

1. The posts of Mrs Anne McCully (Departmental Secretary) and Mr Martin McNeely (Information Assistant) have been made permanent. At present there are four full-time and one part-time staff who deal with the growing workload of the department. Increased development of the Internet facility may require an additional member of staff. The faithful service of the PROP ladies in packing Points for Prayer booklets and update leaflets is greatly appreciated.

2. Stephen Lynas has continued to handle wisely the range of media coverage for our Church over the past year.

Publications

3. The Presbyterian Briefing, a bi-annual United Appeal information mini newspaper, replaces the former bookmark format.

Herald

4. The Editor, Rev Arthur Clarke, and his team have featured a wide variety of articles over the year. Sales of the Herald remain consistent. Having explored other avenues, it was felt that the best means of circulation continues to be the local congregations and Familybooks.

Video Unit

5. The Unit is under review in the light of changing external circumstances.

W J CARLISLE, Convener

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1. Our new Hon. Treasurer, Mr Derek Alexander, and our new Assistant Secretary, Mr Alan McMillan, have both settled in very well and have already made valuable contributions to the work of the Society.

2. The Society has a wide range of interesting publications on a variety of historical subjects, particularly relating to Irish Presbyterianism. Further publications are presently in preparation. It has been our aim to reflect, through these publications and through the programme of meetings and other events, something of the rich diversity of Presbyterian life.

3. We invite all who are interested to visit the Society's room in Church House (Room 220), which is on the second floor and is open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 10.00am-12.30pm and Wednesday 10.00am-12.30pm and 1.00pm-3.30pm. Our Assistant Secretary will be pleased to assist callers in whatever way he can.

4. We thank all those who have supported the Society during the past year. The Incidental Fund remains a vital source of income. Therefore we express our gratitude to the General Assembly for its generosity.

W J H McKEE, Convener

FAMILYBOOKS LTD

1. Familybooks had another successful year's trading in 1999, despite the difficult and very competitive retail market. We are particularly grateful for the support given to the business by Presbyterian ministers and churches and would encourage others to make use of the services we offer. The board of Familybooks would also wish to express its thanks to the manageress and staff.

2. At the end of 1999, Mr R J C Boyd retired as chairman, following an illness. We are grateful for the support he has given to the shop in recent years. The current success of the business owes much to his leadership.

D W THOMPSON, Chairman

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE

1. The Church Architecture Committee met on six occasions since its last report and in addition visited six congregations to encourage and give advice.

2. The Rev J T Williamson retired as convener after the last Assembly and Rev L W H Hilditch was appointed in his place. The Committee place on record its appreciation to Mr Williamson for his sterling work over the past eight years.

3. The Committee dealt with an increased number of submissions in the past year. These varied from new buildings to the renovation of older buildings due to the changing needs of congregations. Most submissions were granted approval but others were referred back to congregational committees for further examination and amendments.

4. The Committee seeks to encourage Church Committees to use the expertise of the Church Architecture Committee in good time; if possible, even before plans have been sent to local planning authorities so that independent advice and a second opinion can be given and/or amendments made before monetary expenses are incurred.

5. This year the Committee was pleased to help a number of congregations who sought advice concerning future projects and was able to

provide expert on-site advice to all those who sought it. We would encourage all congregations to make use of the Committee in this way.

6. The Committee would draw the attention of each congregation to new legislation that enforces right of access to any public building for disabled people. This will mean that many churches and church halls will have to provide, by law, adequate access to their buildings for wheelchair users and people with other disabilities (eg impaired vision). The Committee requests that all improvements suggested by church committees be sent to them for approval and that thought be given to the provision of disabled toilet facilities in all our churches and church halls.

7. During the year the Committee considered the question of 'Church Yard Niches'. A number of companies are seeking to buy or rent ground for the burial or strewing of ashes and have approached a number of congregations to secure ground. The Committee decided that such provision was a matter for each congregation but was uncomfortable with the idea of church graveyards being linked to a particular 'burial' company. The Committee queried the necessity for such niches in our present context and felt that there was already adequate provision for the burial or strewing of ashes in our situation.

8. The Rev J T Williamson, who has represented the church in the continuing work of the Ulster Historic Churches Trust throughout the past year, tendered his resignation in February. The present convener was appointed to represent the Church and Mr Williamson was thanked for his service to our denomination.

9. The Committee acknowledges the help given by Miss Rosemary Jack as a voluntary adviser in stained glass window design and gratefully thanks others who, in a voluntary capacity, have assisted the work of this Committee over the past year.

LAWRENCE HILDITCH, Convener

MEDIA COMMITTEE

1. The committee has sought to fulfil the remit of the Assembly in a number of ways.

2. Religious advisers for TV and radio have kept us informed of the impact of rapid change in broadcast media.

3. The convener attended a symposium on religious broadcasting, "Faith in the Future", in BBC Conference Centre, London. It was reported that 53% of the population identified with traditional religious groups in the UK. 4% of the population are atheist. The remaining 43% percent do not fit into any of the traditional patterns, but do express interest in spirituality. 25% have tried some aspect of new-age religion.

4. The convener reported that he understands from the presentations and dialogue that traditional religious broadcasting will continue though at a reduced level and with some changes to scheduling. Programming for the 43% of the population who have "vague faith" will increase.

5. A number of the speakers at the conference indicated that the traditional religious groups used “language” and made assumptions that are not understood by people today. We are not communicating effectively.

6. We still enjoy a level and quality of religious Broadcasting on BBC Northern Ireland far above the rest of the UK. We need to continue to engage in meaningful ways if we are not to find ourselves in the situation that faces the churches in the rest of the UK.

7. The Davis report into funding of the BBC was considered. There was concern that the increases in the licence fee will produce two classes of media users. It was considered that it might be more appropriate to make representations when the BBC charter comes up for renewal.

8. A delegation including representatives of the Media Committee met with Mr Pat Loughrey, Controller BBC Northern Ireland, and members of the editorial and production team. A wide range of media issues and concerns was discussed. It is hoped that we will meet with BBC NI annually to discuss areas of mutual interest.

9. A seminar morning was arranged with local news reporters on the subject, “How are we communicating?” This was open to representatives of Presbyteries, and other Boards and Committees.

10. Recent studies have shown that 22% of the Irish population now use the Internet regularly. Usage has grown by $\frac{1}{3}$ in the last year, continuing growth is anticipated. More than 50% of our ministers are now using email. The Church maintains a significant presence on the Internet, attracting 1600 “hits” (pages visited) per day. Mobile Internet access will increase significantly over the next few years, offering further opportunities to communicate with our membership and beyond.

11. Local coverage in the media of Presbyterian events and productions involving Presbyterians during the last year has been good. The Information Office continues to circulate over 150 stories per year on Church related issues.

12. Media Watch articles continue in the Herald examining a range of media issues including Internet, Digital Broadcasting, Film and Theatre Reviews.

R HILL, Convener

PUBLIC WORSHIP COMMITTEE

1. Of necessity much of the business of the Public Worship Committee centred around the proposed new hymnal for our church.

2. At last year’s Assembly the Committee was asked to “explore the suitability of the Praise Hymnal as a core book for our church.” This hymnal has still to come to hand. However we are assured that it will be published in late spring and when it is, plans have been made to examine its suitability or otherwise and to make a recommendation to the forthcoming meeting of the General Assembly.

3. In the meantime the four sub-committees set up to deal with existing materials; contemporary materials; children’s materials; psalms and liturgical materials, have continued their work in sifting through recommendations of

inclusions or exclusions which had come from congregations through Presbyteries. In total it has emerged that to date we are dealing with approximately 620 items of praise for the proposed core book. These lists are set out below. At this stage they should *not* be seen as definitive. When we come to apportioning items of praise in subject matter there may have to be some minor adjustments in what is included or excluded.

4. At a recent meeting of the Committee we had in attendance Mr Nigel Lynn, Oxford University Press. His contribution to the meeting was invaluable. Kingsway Publications were also asked to be in attendance at this meeting but unfortunately were unable to send a representative. They maintain a close interest in the ongoing discussion and it is hoped at a future meeting that their representative will be present. Hodder & Stoughton was also asked to become involved but to date have shown no interest.

5. If it turns out that the Praise Hymnal proves unsuitable as a core hymn book for our church and is not adopted as such by the General Assembly, we will, in the foreseeable future be without a recommended hymnal due to the fact that it is the declared intent of Oxford University Press no longer to print the Revised Church Hymnal and that the Church Hymnal Three is unlikely to be produced for any more than three years. This being so, it is the strong recommendation of the Public Worship Committee that we proceed towards the publication of a new core hymnal for our church.

6. Consultation has continued with Mr Hodge of the Church Hymnary Trust who is happy to continue with the status quo position until we are clearer as to our position on the proposed new hymnal. If it becomes the position of the General Assembly to proceed in this production, valuable finance will be forthcoming from the Church Hymnary Trust which should go a long way in funding the launch of the new hymnal.

7. As part of the millennium celebrations, the Public Worship Committee was asked to prepare Advent materials for use by ministers leading up to millennium Sunday. These were issued to all ministers in October 1999 and proved to be a great success. Several comments of appreciation, both within and beyond our denomination were received. The sub-committee which produced these Advent materials was asked to explore alternative forms of Communion services for inclusion in the experimental folder. This work is continuing and it is hoped that the task will soon be complete.

8. A sub-committee within the Public Worship Committee was set up to investigate a provision of a Resource Centre for worship materials. It is the strong opinion of this sub-committee that this Resource Centre should be staffed. The Convener has been in touch with the General Secretary, Dr Hutchinson, Convener of the Panel of Overview of Funding, who is to obtain the opinion of this Panel before proceeding towards consultations with the Board of Studies.

W T J RICHARDSON, Convener

Existing Material*Approach to God – The House of God*

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
 Christ is made the sure foundation
 Jesus, where'er thy people meet
 Jesus stand among us
 We come unto our father's God
 We love the place, O God

Approach to God – The Majesty of God

All creatures of our God and King
 Immortal, invisible
 Let us with a gladsome mind
 Lord of all being
 O worship the King
 The Lord is King
 Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore him
 Songs of praise the angels sang
 Stand up, and bless the Lord
 Worship the Lord in the beauty

Approach to God – Morning

Awake my soul
 New every morning

Approach to God – Evening

At even when the sun was set
 Hushed was the evening hymn

Approach to God – Confession & Supplication

Dear Lord and Father of mankind
 Father of heaven, whose love profound
 Jesus, lover of my soul
 Just as I am without one plea
 Lord Jesus, think on me
 My faith looks up to thee
 Rock of Ages
 O for a heart to praise
 Be thou my vision
 God of grace and God of glory
 Guide me O thou great Jehovah
 Lead us heavenly Father
 Defend me Lord from hour to hour
 Lord of all hopefulness
 Loving shepherd of thy sheep
 O Jesus, strong and pure
 Thou hidden love of God
 Approach to God – Invocation

Breathe on me, breath of God
Come, Holy Spirit, come
Spirit Divine, attend our prayers
O Thou who camest
Jesus, good above all other

Approach to God – Illumination

Blest are the pure in heart
Come down O Love Divine
Come gracious Spirit
Lord of beauty, thine the splendour
Thou art the way
Come Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire

Approach to God – Holy Scripture

Book of books
Look upon us, blessed Lord
Lord thy word abideth
Tell me the old, old story
Break forth, O living light of God
Heavenly Father, may thy blessing
Break Thou the bread of life
To Thee, O God we render thanks

The Word of God – Creation & Providence

O Lord of every shining constellation
God is love: his mercy brightens
O Lord of heaven and earth and sea
A gladsome hymn of praise
When all thy mercies

The Word of God – The Promise of the Messiah

O come, O come, Emmanuel
Hills of the north, rejoice

The Word of God – Christ's incarnation

Hark! The herald angels sing
It came upon the midnight clear
O little town of Bethlehem
The first Nowell
Angel voices, richly blending
Still the night
In the bleak midwinter
See in yonder manger low
Child in the manger
On Christmas night
Angels from the realms of glory
Good Christian men, rejoice

God rest you merry gentlemen
 Infant holy, infant lowly
 Unto us is born a son
 Christian awake!
 O come, all ye faithful
 Once in royal David's city
 Love came down at Christmas
 Of the Father's love begotten
 Bethlehem of noblest cities
 As with gladness
 While humble shepherds

The Word of God – Christ's life and ministry

Jesus! Name of wondrous love
 On Jordan's bank
 Forty days and forty nights
 Jesus calls us
 I heard the voice of Jesus say
 It fell upon a summer day
 What grace, O Lord and beauty
 There's a wideness in God's mercy
 Son of the Lord Most High
 O sing a song of Bethlehem
 Who is he in yonder stall
 O love how deep
 My song is love unknown
 Thou didst't leave thy throne

The Word of God – Christ's Passion and Cross

All glory, laud and honour
 Ride on, ride on in majesty
 Praise to the holiest in the height
 There is a green hill far away
 Alone thou goest forth
 O come and mourn with me
 Throned upon the awesome tree
 O dearest Lord, thy sacred head
 O sacred head, sore wounded
 When I survey the wondrous cross
 We sing the praise of him who died
 In the cross of Christ I glory
 Lift high the cross

The Word of God – Christ's Resurrection & Exaltation

Jesus Christ is risen today
 The strife is o'er
 The day of resurrection
 Good Christian men rejoice

This joyful Eastertide
Christ the Lord is risen today
Easter glory fills the sky
Thine be the glory
Our Lord Christ hath risen
The head that once was crowned
Look ye saints, the sight is glorious

The Word of God – Christ's reign & priesthood

Rejoice the Lord is King
Crown him with many crowns
At the name of Jesus
Christ is the world's redeemer
Join all the glorious names
Immortal Love, for ever full

The Word of God – Christ's coming with power

Christ is coming
Lo! He comes with clouds descending
Hail to the Lord's Anointed
Mine eyes have seen the glory
Come thou long-expected Jesus
Thy kingdom come O God
Thy kingdom come! On bended knee

The Word of God – Pentecost/Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, ever living
Our blest Redeemer
For thy gift of God the Spirit
O Breath of Life

Response to the Word of God – Adoration & Thanksgiving

Holy, holy, holy
Bright the vision (Round the Lord)
Glory be to God the Father
God reveals his presence
My God, how wonderful
Eternal light, eternal light
The God of Abraham praise
Praise the Lord, his glories show
Praise my soul the King of heaven
Let all the world
From all that dwell below the skies
Ye holy angels bright
King of glory, king of peace
For the might of thine arm
Sing to the Lord a joyful song
For the beauty of the earth

Now thank we all our God
 God and Father
 When morning gilds the skies
 O for a thousand tongues
 Ye servants of God
 To the name of our salvation
 To God be the glory
 Fairest Lord Jesus
 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
 Jesus the very thought of thee
 O Jesus, King most wonderful
 My God, I love thee not because
 Man of sorrows
 I will sing the wondrous story
 All hail the power of Jesus' name
 Come let us join our cheerful songs

Response – Affirmation

Firmly I believe
 I bind unto myself today
 All my hope on God is founded
 And can it be
 My hope is built on nothing less
 Will your anchor
 Jesus shall reign
 The church's one foundation
 Glorious things of thee are spoken
 City of God
 Through the night of doubt
 Thy hand O God has guided
 In Christ there is no east or west
 Though troubles assail

Response – Dedication & Discipleship

Lord of creation, to thee be all praise
 My God, accept my heart
 Take up thy cross
 Jesus, Master, whose I am
 May the mind of Christ, my Saviour
 O Jesus I have promised
 Lord in the fullness of my might
 O Master, let me walk with thee
 Love Divine, all loves excelling
 Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost
 O Lord and Master of us all
 Life up your hearts
 Soldiers of Christ! Arise
 Fight the good fight

Who would true valour
Make me a captive, Lord
Lord and Master who has called us

Response – Stewardship & Service

Almighty Father of all things
God who has given
Angel voices, ever singing
We give thee but thine own
Fill thou our life
O brother man
Take my life
Forth in thy name, O Lord

Response – Witness & Encouragement

Speak forth thy word, O Father
Lord who in thy perfect wisdom
Christ is the King
We have heard a joyful sound
For my sake and the gospel's, go
Rise up O Men of God
Who is on the Lord's side?
Onward Christian soldiers
Stand up, stand up for Jesus
Yield not to temptation
Courage brother, do not stumble
Lord speak to me

Response – Intercession for the church's mission

Thou whose almighty word
O Spirit of the living God
Eternal God, whose power upholds

Response – Intercession for the world

O God of love, O King of peace
Christ is the world's true light
O God of our divided world
Father eternal, ruler of creation
Almighty Father, who dost give
God of the pastures
Father, who on man dost shower

Response – Intercession for the nation

Lord, while for all mankind
Judge eternal
God save our gracious Queen
O happy home
From thee all skill and science

Response – Intercession for travellers & absent

Eternal Father, strong to save

Response – The Church Triumphant

For all the saints

There is a land

Jerusalem, the golden

The sacraments – Baptism

Our children, Lord

A little child

Blessed Jesus

O Father, in thy Father heart

O God, thy life-creating love

The Sacraments – Communion

I am not worth, holy Lord

Jesus, thou joy

Here, O my Lord

Let all mortal flesh keep silence

And now O Father

Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour

According to thy gracious word

Forth in the peace of Christ we go

Alleluia, sing to Jesus

Other Ordinances – Confirmation

Ye that know the Lord is gracious

Other Ordinances – Marriage

O Father all creating

O God whose loving hand has led

O perfect love

Other Ordinances – Funerals

Jesus lives, thy terrors now

Other Ordinances – Dedication of Church Buildings

This stone to thee in faith we lay

All things are thine; no gift have we

Times and Seasons

O God our help in ages past

Great God we sing that mighty hand

March on my soul

Heavenly Father, thou has brought us

We plough the fields and scatter

The summer days are come again

Come, ye thankful people, come
 Fountain of mercy, God of love
 Lord of the harvest, once again
 God whose farm is all creation

Close of Service

Almighty God thy word is cast
 Lord dismiss us
 Praise ye the Lord, ye servants

Close of Service – Evening

All praise to thee my God this night
 Holy Father, cheer our way
 The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended
 Sun of my soul
 Saviour again, to thy dear name
 Now the day is over

Personal Faith & Devotion

O for a closer walk with God
 O for a faith that will not shrink
 Approach, my soul, the mercy seat
 Be still my soul
 Hark my soul, it is the Lord
 O Love, that wilt not let me go
 Lord, it belongs not to my care
 My times are in thy hand
 In heavenly love abiding
 Lead kindly light
 I hear thy welcome voice
 Beneath the cross of Jesus
 I am trusting thee
 I need thee every hour
 Nearer, my God to thee
 The sands of time are sinking
 Abide with me
 Come my soul, thy suit prepare
 Jesus, my Lord, my God, my all
 Like a river glorious
 Loved with everlasting love
 Today thy mercy calls us
 What a friend we have in Jesus

Contemporary Material

All heaven declares
 All I once held dear
 All the ends of the earth
 Amazing grace

An army of ordinary people
Ancient of days
As the deer pants
As water to the thirsty
At this time of giving
At your feet we fall

Baby Jesus in the manger
Beauty for brokenness
Because he lives
Before the world began
Be still, for the presence of the Lord
Blessed Jesus, come to me
Born in the night
Broken for me, broken for you
Brother, sister, let me serve you

Christ be beside me
Christ is alive, let Christians sing
Christ is surely coming
Christ our king in glory reigning
Come and hear the joyful singing
Come and see
Come and sing the Christmas story
Come, sing praises to the Lord above

Day is done, but Love unfailing
Days of Elijah

Father God, we worship
Father hear the prayer we offer
Father me
Father, we adore you, we are your children
Filled with compassion
Focus my eyes on you, O Lord
For the fruits of his creation
For the healing of the nations
For the joys
Freedom and life are ours
From heaven you came

God has spoken - by his prophets
God has spoken to his people
God in his love for us
God is here as we his people
God is love
God is our strength and refuge
Good news to you we bring

Glory in the highest to the God of heaven
Go forth and tell
Great is the darkness
Great is thy faithfulness

Heavenly hosts in ceaseless worship
He gave his life in selfless love
He is the Lord
He lives in us
Here I am wholly available
Here is love
Holy Spirit, we welcome you
Hosanna
How can I be free from sin
How can we sing with joy to God
How deep the Father's love for us
How good and how pleasant it is

I come with joy my Lord to meet
In heavenly armour
In the tomb so cold
I, the Lord of sea and sky
I will speak out

Jesus, all for Jesus
Jesus is king and we will extol him
Jesus is Lord
Jesus is the name we honour
Jesus, King of kings
Jesus, Prince and Saviour
Jesus put this song into our hearts
Jesus the Lord said
Jesus the name high over all
Joy to the world

Kneels at the feet of his friends

Let us praise God together
Let us spread the pollen of peace
Light a candle in the darkness
Like a mighty river flowing
Lion of Judah
Lord come and heal your church
Lord, for the years
Lord, I come to you
Lord, I offer my life
Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us
Lord of the church

Lord thy church on earth is seeking
Lord, you were rich beyond all splendour

Make me a channel of your peace
Make way, make way
May the fragrance of Jesus
Meekness and majesty
Merciful God and Father
Mighty God
Morning has broken
My heart is full
My heart will sing to you
My Lord, what love is this

Name of all majesty
No-one but you, Lord
Now let us from this table rise

O God beyond all praising
O God of faith, help me believe
O Lord our God
O Lord, the clouds are gathering
O Master Christ draw near
On a night when the world
One shall tell another
Out of our failure to create
Overwhelmed by love

Praise the Lord in the rhythm of your music
Powerful in making us wise
Purify my heart

Restore, O Lord

Salvation belongs to our God
See him lying on a bed of straw
Shine, Jesus, shine
Shout for joy
Sing of the Lord's goodness
Sing praise to God on mountain tops
Sing to God new songs of worship
Speak, Lord, in the stillness
Spirit of God, unseen as the wind
Spirit of holiness
Such love

Tell all the world of Jesus
Tell out my soul

Thanks to God whose word was spoken
 The kingdom of God is justice and joy
 The Spirit came as promised
 There is a Redeemer
 There's a quiet understanding
 There's a spirit in the air
 The trumpets sound
 Though I feel afraid
 Thuma mina
 To be in your presence
 To him we come

Wake up, O sleeper
 We are marching in the light of God
 We believe in God almighty
 We cannot measure how you heal
 We come as guests invited
 We gather here his friends to meet
 When I needed a neighbour
 When the music fades
 Who can sound the depths of sorrow
 Will you come and follow me

You bless my life

Children's Material

A little child may know
 A man once came from Galilee
 All that I have
 All things bright and beautiful
 At harvest time
 Away in a manger

But God meant it for good

Can you be sure
 Children of Jerusalem
 Christ be my leader
 Christmas meant more to me
 Come and join the celebration
 Come children join to sing

Did you ever talk to God above
 Do no sinful action

For round the world
 Father I place into your hands
 Father lead me day by day

God has made me
God is always near me
God is so good
God of heaven hear our singing
God who made the earth

Hands to work and feet to run
Have you heard the raindrops
He gave me eyes that I might see
He made the water wet
He's got the whole world in His hands
Holy Spirit hear us
Hosanna, hosanna
Hosanna Lord hosanna
How strong and sure my Father's love

I am so glad that our Father in heaven
I can talk to God
I have seen the golden sunshine
I love to hear the story
I think when I read that sweet story
I want to walk with Jesus Christ
If I come to Jesus
If I were a butterfly
I'm special
It is a thing most wonderful
It takes an almighty hand

Jesus bids us shine
Jesus friend of little children
Jesus' hands were kind hands
Jesus high in glory
Jesus is risen from the grave
Jesus loves me, this I know
Jesus tender shepherd hear me
Jesus went to worship
Just as I am, your child to be

Look and learn
Looking upward every day
Lord I would own thy tender care

My God is so big

O God of faith
O what can little hands do
One more step along the world I go

Peace is flowing like a river
Peter James and John in a fishing boat
Praise Him, praise Him, all you little children

Saviour teach me day by day
See Him lying on a bed of straw
Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Talk to God and share with Him
Tell me the stories of Jesus
Thank you Jesus
The Bible tells of God's great plan
The church is wherever God's people are praising
The journey of life
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy
The wise man built his house upon the rock
The wise may bring their learning
There are hundreds of sparrows
There's a song for all the children
Think of a world without any flowers

We are singing to you Lord
We thank thee Lord for all thy gifts
What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus
When Jesus saw the fishermen
Who put the colours in the rainbow

You're my light and my salvation

Psalmody and Liturgical Material

Blessed is the man
The Lord my shepherd
The King of Love my shepherd is
This earth belongs to God
God is my strong salvation
I worship you, O Lord
How glad are those
Through all the changing scenes
At all times I will bless the Lord
Lord, will you turn from your anger
I waited patiently for God
God is our strength
The mighty God the Lord
God, be merciful to me
Listen to my prayer
O God, you are my God
The earth is yours, O Lord
Praise our God with shouts of joy

Mercy, blessing, favour, grace
 God is king be warned
 How lovely is your dwelling place
 How lovely, how lovely
 Timeless love
 God everlasting, at your word
 Safe in the shadow of the Lord
 Come sing praises to the Lord
 Let us sing to the God
 Sing to God new songs
 All the ends of the earth
 O bless the Lord
 With all my heart
 O praise, you servants
 Open the gates
 I lift my eyes
 I rejoiced to hear them say
 All those who trust in the Lord
 When Zion's fortunes
 Unless the Lord has built
 Up from the depths
 How good a thing it is
 Praise the Lord
 There is no moment of my life
 Lord you have searched
 To God our great salvation
 Praise the Lord of our salvation
 Fill your hearts with joy
 How good it is to sing
 Praise the Lord of heaven
 Bring to the Lord
 Sing praise to the Lord

Paraphrases

O God of Bethel
 The people who in darkness walked
 Hark the glad sound
 Before the heaven and earth
 Where high the heavenly temple stands
 How bright these glorious spirits shine

Liturgical

Aaronic Blessing
 Amen
 Creeds
 Doxology Praise God from whom all blessings flow
 Lord's Prayer (Prose)

Lord's Prayer Father God in Heaven
Magnificat Tell out my soul

A more detailed list giving sources and tunes, where applicable, can be obtained from the Information Office.

MEMORIAL RECORD

Rev George Victor Heron, BA, senior minister of Castlecaulfield and Eglish, died on 27th August 1999 in the 89th year of his age and the 61st of his ministry.

A son of the manse, he grew up in Ballywalter, and retained an affection for the area in which he spent his childhood years. Not only was his father a minister, but an uncle too. With such a background it may not have seemed surprising that he also would give himself to the work of ministry. But whatever the influences of home and church and family tradition, his faith was his own, and his sense of call a personal one. Like most students of his time he prepared for ministry at Magee University College where he studied Arts and Theology. He graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin in 1936 and proceeded to Assembly's College to complete his training there.

An assistantship in Sinclair Seamen's congregation in Belfast followed his licensing by the Presbytery of Ards on 22nd May 1938 and on 18th August 1939 he was ordained as minister of Armoy. During a ministry there of some twenty-four years, he formed a company of the Boys' Brigade and established a youth club. Sadly those years saw the death of his wife, Bessy, after a prolonged illness in 1959.

The congregations of Castlecaulfield and Eglish made out a call to Mr Heron and he was installed there on 22nd May 1963. Soon afterwards he re-married. He was a devoted pastor, made meticulous preparation for worship and kept detailed records, not only of sermons preached, but of stories told. He served the two congregations well and continued a happy association with those to whom he had ministered even after retirement on 28th February 1982.

Bangor was to be his new home and Lisnabreen congregation another sphere of service. Owing to the serious illness of the then minister, he identified closely with the people and gave himself to them as deputy minister for two years, retaining his connection with the congregation thereafter, offering friendship and support and singing in the church choir.

On 18th August 1999 he celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of his ordination, having reached a milestone not given to many to see. It has been said that his life was rich, not only in length of years, but in fullness of living; not only in receiving but in giving; not in being ministered unto, but in ministering.

He leaves a son and a daughter and his second wife, Kay.

Rev Hugh Lawrence Henry, BA, senior minister of High Street, Antrim, died on 18th September 1999 in the 73rd year of his age and the 48th of his ministry.

A native of Ballymoney and brought up there in the congregation of St James's he was educated first at the Model School and then at Dalriada School.

After study at Magee College and Trinity College, Dublin, he graduated in Arts and pursued theological education first at New College, Edinburgh and then at Assembly's College.

Licensing came in 1950 and was carried out by the Presbytery of Route on 25th June. Ordination followed an assistantship in Trinity, Bangor, and his first charge was First Stewartstown, where he was installed on 27th September 1951. He moved to the congregations of Cloughey and Portavogie on 10th December 1953 and ministered there until 1962. A call to Magheramason on 1st February in that year afforded him opportunity to teach Divinity in Foyle College, Londonderry and to become chaplain to the Waterside Hospital, an aspect of ministry to which he was well suited and which was to become a continuing thread in years ahead.

His longest period of service was spent with the people of High Street, Antrim, where he was installed on 3rd February 1971 and where he remained until official retirement on 30th September 1992. During his ministry there the congregation ported from its original home to its present site, and it was the fulfilment of a dream as well as the reward of much hard work when the new buildings were dedicated on 26th October 1974. The challenge and excitement of those days can be read in a history of High Street which he helped to write, but which was not published until after his death.

His work as Hospital Chaplain was taken up again, this time in the Massereene Hospital, and his was the distinction of being the first Presbyterian chaplain in due course to the new Antrim Area Hospital. His interest in the affairs of the Borough found another sphere of service as Mayor's chaplain. When his efforts to put the case for the retention of British Enkalon proved unsuccessful, he helped to establish the Enkalon Foundation which continues to benefit the people of the town. A man of warm heart and broad vision, a helper to many in time of need, and a friend to little children, he was known for the economy of words in which he could convey a clear message. Even after his retirement many in church and community continued to enjoy the fellowship of one to whom life and his own personality had brought a wide circle of friends.

He leaves behind his wife and helper, Margaret, four sons and a daughter.

Rev John Brown, MA, BD, one-time minister of Draperstown and subsequently lecturer at Magee University College and the New University of Ulster, died on 8th November 1999 in the 85th year of his age and the 60th of his ministry.

Born the son of a businessman in Ballymena on 26th September 1915, he was educated at the Model School in his home town and then at Ballymena Academy. After four years at Magee University College he attended Dublin University, graduating in Modern History and Political Science in 1937. He later added the degree of Bachelor of Divinity from Trinity College.

He undertook theological training at Assembly's College, Belfast, was licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 17th May 1939 and ordained in Draperstown in March of the following year. He served the congregation there for seven years and taught in Rainey Endowed School in Magherafelt, but in 1947 opted exclusively for the academic sphere to which he then gave himself for the remainder of his working life. Appointed lecturer in Modern History at

Magee University College in 1947, he moved in 1970 to the department of Irish History at the New University of Ulster, where he remained until retirement in 1982.

An examiner for the Northern Ireland Ministry of Education from 1948 until 1960, he served also as extern examiner in Church History for both Magee Theological College and Assembly's College and at Magee he lectured in catechetics.

Religion and politics were intermingled throughout his life; his love of history and his membership of the Orange Order and the Royal Black Institution led to the publication of "A Glimpse of the Past Round Draperstown", a history of Second Newtownards congregation and an account of Orangeism in the Ballymena district. He gave service to the community in the Home Guard and rose to prominence within the ranks of the Ulster Special Constabulary. He retained an interest in foreign languages and found recreational pursuits in shooting, hill-walking and interior decorating. In later years he lived at Bushmills, Co. Antrim.

He is survived by his wife, Marjorie, and by their children, a son and a daughter.

Very Rev Dr William Fleming, BA, senior minister of Abbot's Cross, died on 17th December 1999 in the 73rd year of his age and the 45th of his ministry.

He was born on 17th August 1927 in Bailieborough, Co. Cavan, and it was from Trinity congregation there and the Royal School in Cavan that he made his way to Belfast to make the necessary preparation for an intended career in pharmacy. While there, however, he felt the call to Christian ministry, and it was to Dublin that he then went to pursue further education, graduating in Arts from Trinity College and forming a link with the congregation of Ormond Quay and Scots. Back in Belfast he attended Assembly's College, was licensed in due course by the Presbytery of Cavan and served an assistantship in the Agnes Street congregation. Called by the people of Trinity, Ahoghill, he was ordained and installed there by the Presbytery of Magherahoghill on 8th December 1955, exercising for a period of some fifteen years, a fruitful ministry, reflected in a book he was to publish later, entitled 'If my people'.

In 1969 a call came to Abbot's Cross in the Presbytery of North Belfast. His particular gifts he deployed in what was an innovative ministry in a very different setting and he extended his pastoral role beyond the bounds of his congregation as chaplain to Whiteabbey Hospital. He became noted for an emphasis on prayer – indeed, in more recent times he prepared a video on 'How to make a praying Church' – and an abiding commitment to evangelical outreach was expressed not only in his ministry in Abbot's Cross but also in his association with a number of evangelical projects and societies outside the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. At the time of church-wide debate on the subject of continuing membership of the World Council of Churches he was fired by strong conviction to emerge as a leading figure in opposition.

The General Assembly appointed him Moderator in 1987. Retiring from the active ministry on 28th February 1993 he went to reside in Bushmills and continued a ministry in writing. He died after a short illness and is survived by

his wife, Elizabeth (Elsie), and by their family, Peter, minister of First Coleraine, Ian, Rhoda and Joyce.

Rev Charles George McKnight, MA, senior minister of Ballyalbany, died on 15th January 2000 in the 89th year of his age and the 55th of his ministry.

He was born into the farming community at Lisbouy, outside Omagh, and was brought up in the congregation of Edenderry. After schooling in Omagh he heard the call to Christian ministry and prepared himself for further education, which he undertook at Magee University College and Trinity College, Dublin, graduating in Arts in 1940. Having entered upon theological studies at Assembly's College, Belfast, he served as Assistant Minister in Great Victoria Street congregation and was licensed by the Presbytery of Omagh on 28th May 1944. On 17th October 1945 he was ordained by the Presbytery of Route as minister of the congregation of Croaghmore. Some three and a half years later he accepted the call of Ballyalbany where he was to spend the rest of his ministry, retiring on 31st December 1977 after more than twenty-eight years, during which time he served continuously and conscientiously as chaplain to St. Davnet's Hospital, Monaghan, conducting a service there every Sunday afternoon. In 1959 he became Stated Supply of Glennan. An interest in young people led to the formation of a tennis club and to his support for the reopening of Monaghan Collegiate School.

Moderator of two different Synods, he served in that capacity in Armagh and Monaghan in 1959 and in Dublin in 1965. Upon retirement to Bangor he undertook work in Hamilton Road congregation for some seven and a half years, which allowed him to continue the pastoral ministry which had characterised his previous years of service and which sprang from a heart of loving concern for others. Modest and unassuming by nature and gracious in his dealings with people, as he walked among them he prayed with them and for them and sought by life and word to commend the Saviour he loved.

He is survived by his wife, Rodie, and their two sons, Rev. Ivan McKnight and Desmond.

Rev William John Rainey, BA, senior minister of Ballynure, died on 2nd February 2000 in the 80th Year of his age and the 51st of his ministry.

A native of Randalstown, his father farmed and the family belonged to Old Congregation. He left Ballymena Academy at the age of fifteen to work at home. Convinced of a call from God, he decided to give his life, not to the farm on which he had been brought up, but in the service of the church. His undergraduate days were spent at Magee College and Trinity College, Dublin, from which he obtained a degree in Arts in 1944. The next three years were divided between New College, Edinburgh and the Presbyterian College, Belfast, although his studies were interrupted when he contracted polio which damaged his hearing and his left leg.

Licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 14th December 1947, he was ordained and installed as minister of Glennan and Middletown on 17th February 1949. Soon afterwards he married his wife Irene, a nurse. Two years later they moved to Ballynure where he was to serve as a good and caring pastor for thirty-five years, preaching the gospel and visiting the sick among his people, a

familiar figure in the district who earned the respect of all. During his ministry there the church property was considerably enhanced, the work being carried out under his personal supervision.

Retirement came on 30th September 1986. A widower since 1982, he moved to live in Scotland to be near his family. In 1989 he was appointed chaplain at the Thistle Foundation's Robin Chapel in Edinburgh, forming an association which provided him with new interest and satisfaction until 1996. The period of ill-health which followed led to his death in hospital.

He leaves two daughters, Jennifer and Rosemary, and their families.

Rev David Henry Stewart Armstrong, BA, Dip.Ed, BD, formerly General Secretary of Scripture Union, Northern Ireland, died on 19th February 2000 in the 73rd year of his age and the 42nd of his ministry.

The early years of his life were spent in Portrush, until the family moved to North Belfast. Converted as a boy through Portrush CSSM, it was while attending the Masonic School in Dublin that he felt called to the ministry. He graduated in Arts from Queen's University, Belfast in 1950 and proceeded to Assembly's College. He added to his academic qualifications a Diploma in Education from Queen's in 1959 and a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Trinity College, Dublin in 1968.

In 1951 he served as Assistant in First Dromore and licensing by the Presbytery of Belfast on 29th May 1953 came during a period of some six years' assistantship in West Church, Ballymena. His work there he combined with a part-time appointment as field worker for Scripture Union until, on 24th September 1958, he was ordained and inducted into full-time service with the organisation to which he was to devote the rest of his ministry. He became General Secretary Northern Ireland in 1970, a post he retained until retirement on 31st August 1992.

With a high regard for the word of God and a special interest in the evangelisation of the young, the work of deputation and administration and the organisation of CSSM house parties left room for church-based outreach also, and he served as Convener of the Committee on Evangelism within the Presbyterian Church from 1975-82. He continued to play a part in the work of the North Belfast Presbytery. In retirement he served as Assistant in High Kirk, Ballymena and subsequently until the time of his death after a short illness, in Woodlands, Carrickfergus. He found interest further afield in the work of Middle Eastern Christian Outreach and recreation in chess, gardening, travel and sport.

He was unmarried and is survived by a sister, May.

REPORT BY THE CHURCH HYMNARY TRUSTEES

TO

The General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church of Wales and the United Free Church of Scotland in respect of the year ending 31st December 1999.

CHURCH HYMNARY THIRD EDITION

1. The sales of the Church Hymnary Third Edition were very similar to last year showing a marginal increase with 11,299 copies being sold, compared with 10,658 copies the previous year. The royalty produced was £4,616.91 compared with £4,038.51 the previous year.

REVISED CHURCH HYMNARY

2. The Revised Church Hymnary is now out of print and no further sales are expected.

SCOTTISH PSALTER 1929

3. In total, 640 copies of the Scottish Psalter bound with the third edition of the Church Hymnary were sold in the year 1999. The 1998 figure was 859 copies.

IRISH PSALTER

4. The sales of the Irish Psalter totalled 1719 copies compared with the 1998 figure of 1504.

STATE OF FUNDS

5. The Trustees are confident that they have sufficient funds to meet the costs of the publication of the Fourth Edition of the Hymnary.

GEORGE W PENROSE, Chairman
JOHN M HODGE, Secretary and Treasurer

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly note the growth in use of e-mail with over half of ministers now on-line, and agree that it can now be considered a recognised means of communication within the Church.
3. That the General Assembly thank Mr Clifford Boyd for the inspiring contribution he made as Chairman of the Board of Familybooks and wish him good health in his retirement.

Communications Administration

4. That the General Assembly express appreciation to those Boards and Agencies of the Church which involve the Communications Department in the design and production of materials and encourage the wider church to use the expertise available within the department to promote corporate identity.

Public Worship

5. That the General Assembly authorise the Public Worship Committee to produce a new Irish Presbyterian Book of Praise.

6. That the lists contained in the report form the basis of the new Book of Praise.

7. That the words of the new Book of Praise also be produced in electronic format.

Historical Society

8. That a grant of £13,700 be paid from the Incidental Fund to the Historical Society.

Church Architecture

9. That a grant of £1,000 be paid from the Incidental Fund to the Church Architecture Committee.

10. That the General Assembly encourage congregations to implement, as soon as is possible, current legislation regarding disabled access to all public buildings.

General

11. That the Board of Communications, together with its associated working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 277 of the Code as follows:

NOMINATION BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The Nomination Board has continued to review its procedures. As indicated last year the Opinion of Senior Counsel was sought and is now printed in Appendix B. Having given some consideration to the issues raised the Board makes the following initial comments.

2. The Board considers some basic principles to be important.
 - (i) Presbyterianism involves a sharing of power and responsibility with a wide circle of members rather than a select few.
 - (ii) The General Assembly should remain in final control of the selection and appointment of senior personnel.
 - (iii) Those appointed to senior positions should be well qualified professionally but should also command the confidence of the Church as worthy role models for those whom they may influence in eg Union College or the Youth Board.
 - (iv) Those making nominations to senior positions should themselves be well qualified both professionally and spiritually to judge the merits of different candidates. In commerce and industry interview panels tend to be comprised of persons with specialist knowledge of the positions being filled. In Nomination Board appointments persons with knowledge of the wider Church need to be included along with the specialists.
 - (v) Quite apart from any risk of a complaint to an outside tribunal, the Church should, in its own interests, use the best possible method of making appointments.
 - (vi) While accepting that in most, if not all, of these senior posts, the question of religious belief is a legitimate consideration, the Church should not leave itself open to the charge of improper discrimination on other grounds, such as gender, marital status (treating a married person less favourably than a single one), race or disability. As far as Assembly appointments are concerned, the Church may be at greater risk in these areas.
 - (vii) Radical changes to the existing procedures should not be introduced without careful thought and due process, though that need not preclude an authorised experiment.

3. There may always be a certain tension between the requirements of the civil law and those of the Church, but some steps could be taken to substantially reduce the risks of a case being successfully taken against the Church.

4. The Opinion of Counsel was based on the job descriptions supplied from Church House records and not on a review of all the duties and responsibilities of the posts concerned. In the past such job descriptions were usually drawn up for internal church use rather than for possible presentation to a tribunal, and may therefore have tended to assume or imply the moral or

spiritual requirements of a post rather than explicitly stating them. As vacancies arise legal advice should be obtained in the compilation of each job description to ensure that these special considerations are fully and fairly stated, indicating that these posts are positions of Christian leadership within the Church. That might strengthen the Church's case in the few posts, such as Adviser in Social Service or Information Officer, where some might argue that the essential nature of the post was not totally or mainly "spiritual". "A knowledge of Presbyterian practice and procedure" might be a more defensible requirement for such posts than a specific religious belief.

5. A more immediate and pressing problem, however, is the sheer number of people involved in the present appointment procedure, which could make it almost impossible to defend a disputed decision, however right the Church might consider its choice to have been. The day has gone when the Church could assume that no disappointed candidate would challenge the Church's decision.

6. For second-tier appointments not involving the Nomination Board (eg Financial Secretary or Director of Evangelism) it is already the practice to use an interviewing panel of about six members, apparently without any difficulty, though the final decision to appoint rests with the relevant Board. It is, however, the practice to submit one name, rather than asking the Board to choose between two candidates, neither of whom it has seen.

7. The members of such an interviewing panel should be carefully chosen and should themselves command the confidence of the Church.

8. The Nomination Board therefore proposes that there should be a controlled experiment in the forthcoming nomination of a new Overseas Board Secretary, using an interviewing panel of ten members appointed by and accountable to the Nomination Board, and (rather like an Assembly Committee) constituted as follows:

- (a) Moderator and Clerk (Convener)
- (x) three specialists from the Overseas Board
- (y) five persons appointed by the Nomination Board from among its members.

9. An external assessor could attend in a non-voting capacity. This interviewing panel could be empowered to submit one name to the Nomination Board for transmission to the General Assembly. The Board would, however, be able to deal with any appeals or complaints about the procedures followed, eg in shortlisting.

10. This experiment is proposed for one year in the first instance and only for the one post mentioned. The nomination of a Clerk-Designate (See Reports 1999 p.6) and any vacancy that might arise unexpectedly would follow the normal procedure.

11. A report on this experiment should be submitted to the Assembly in 2001.

PWA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

12. The Board nominated the following representatives to the Joint Nominating Committee for the appointment of an Executive Secretary for the Presbyterian Women's Association:-

Moderator, Clerk, Very Rev Dr D H Allen, Rev James Clarke, Mrs Kathleen Mawhinney, Mrs Rhona Ferguson.

13. The Joint Nominating Committee also included six representatives of the PWA:-

Mrs. M. Thompson, Mrs. L. Robinson, Mrs. M. Patterson, Mrs. H. Hull, Mrs. M. Russell, Mrs. P. Sleith, together with the following four specialists:-

Overseas Board	Rev R J T McMullan
Home Board	Rev Dr Brian Moore
Board of Finance and Administration	Mr D F Adair
General Board	Rev R F S Poots

The External Assessor was Mrs Ann Allen, Convener of the Church of Scotland's Board of Social Responsibility.

14. After the post had been duly advertised four applications were received, though one was subsequently withdrawn. The other three applicants were invited for interview on 21 February. As a result the Committee resolved to nominate Mrs Margaret Myers for this appointment. Details of her application are printed in Appendix A in a slightly abbreviated form.

APPENDIX A

FORM OF APPLICATION

For PWA Executive Secretary

Full Name Mrs Margaret Elizabeth Myers
Address 4 Rosstulla Avenue,
 Jordanstown, Newtownabbey, BT37 0QH.

I submit this application for the post of PWA Executive Secretary

Signed Margaret Myers
Date 26th January, 2000

Personal and Family Background

Marital Status Married
 Family Details None
 Present Congregation Whiteabbey Presbyterian

Education

Post Primary Education September 1962-June 1964 Newtownards
 Technical College
 September 1959-June 1962 Donaghadee
 Secondary School

Tertiary Level Education June-October 1991 University of Ulster –
 Women in Enterprise Programme Cert.
 1990-1991 Queen's University Belfast, Institute
 of Continuing Education – Diploma in

Management (Joint Award with Institute of Supervisory Management)
1970-1972 Irish Baptist College – Certificate of Missionary Studies

Career

Posts held with dates

1991-Present Director/Owner: Women Mean Business
1982-1991 Co-Ordinator, Women's Study Fellowship, Belfast Bible College
1975-1980 PA to Irish Director, Overseas Missionary Fellowship
Pre-1975 Northern Ireland and Imperial Civil Service

Church responsibilities

Whiteabbey: current PWA President; Belfast Chinese Christian Church: Advisor 1993 – Present. Including occasional speaking by interpretation at Sunday Service. Woodlands Pres. Membership 1979-1996: Children's Church Co-Ordinator and S S Teacher. Belfast Bible College: Council Member: 1987-1999.

Current Study None

Community Interests, Hobbies etc

Level of involvement in non-church organisations

I take an active interest in the development of entrepreneurial skills and I have a particular interest in encouraging and developing young people. Since 1993 I have acted as a mentor to young men and women in the Prince's Trust. This involves being available to listen to and advise young people on business matters particularly during the first year of start-up. I have been a Board member of Mallusk Enterprise Park since 1996 and I am currently Chairman of their Human Resource Committee.

I have been a marriage guidance counsellor and worked in a voluntary capacity for Relate from 1994-1997.

I am also very interested in women's development and was on the Northern Ireland Steering Group – Fair Play, set up by Baroness Denton. In 1997 I established FOCUS, an organisation for women in Northern Ireland at the top of their profession or business. I am a member of Business & Professional Women (BPW) and was chairman of the judging panel for the BPW/Ulster Bank Young Career Woman Award in 1997 and 1998. I am a member of Network Ireland and Training for Women Network.

Interests, hobbies, sports, social activities

Travel: including visits to Singapore and Malaysia in 1996.

Hospitality: particularly to Chinese people studying or working in NI.

Reading, listening to music, playing tennis and dressmaking.

Do you have a valid Driving Licence? Yes

Art there any matters affecting your health to which you wish to draw attention? No

Other Relevant Information

I have experience of PC usage including word processing, spreadsheets, database, e-mail and internet access.

1999	Industry Matters, Training and Development	Certificate on Completion of Media Training Course
1990	Royal Society of Arts	Stage III Advanced Certificate in Public Speaking (Distinction)

Women Mean Business: further information

Women Mean Business is a training and networking organisation with aims which include providing challenging conferences and seminars for women in business and management. I have also carried out consultancy work for LEDU and the University of Ulster in relation to the development of women in business.

Through running my own successful business, I have acquired skills in managing staff, planning and managing events, marketing, book-keeping and accounts, public speaking, giving media interviews and negotiation skills. I have negotiated substantial sponsorship with a government agency and a major bank together with additional sponsorship from the public and private sector, including negotiating with Marks & Spencer (1998 and 1999) for a unique pairing initiative linking businesswomen from Northern Ireland with their counterparts in the Republic or Ireland. My business has also given me the opportunity to work with women in a training capacity.

In my business I have to deal regularly with senior businessmen and government officials including local, national and international conference speakers. The work of Women Mean Business was also recognised in 1999 by the First Lady, Hillary Clinton, during her visit to NI.

Women's Study Fellowship: further information

The Women's Study Fellowship gave me experience in managing and developing a balanced course of study consisting of four main areas – Biblical interpretation, historical studies, Christian doctrine and practical theology. During my leadership I initiated a number of new developments including a Christian Service Course, designed to help women identify and develop their spiritual gifts; a student placement scheme, which involved personal contact with ministers and missionary representatives; a group for ministers' wives and a graduates' association.

I reported directly to the Principal and was responsible for all aspects of the course. The Women's Study Fellowship provided me with many opportunities to come alongside women from various denominational backgrounds to give support, prayer and encouragement.

Referees

- (a) Rev Trevor D Gribben, BSc, DipTh
Whiteabbey Manse
682 Shore Road
Newtownabbey
BT37 0PS

Minister of Whiteabbey Presbyterian Church

- (b) Rev Norman A Brown, BSc, BD
The Manse
21 Old Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1AL

Minister of Wellington Street Presbyterian Church

- (c) Mrs Judith Shaw
Training and Employment Agency
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8FD

Head of Management Development

APPENDIX B**TO ADVISE THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND****APPOINTMENTS TO SENIOR POSITIONS****OPINION**

1. I am asked to advise the Presbyterian Church in Ireland ('the Church') concerning its current procedures for making appointments to some fifteen senior positions within the Church, particularly with reference to Fair Employment and Sex Discrimination legislation. I assume that all of the positions would be regarded as employment in Northern Ireland and that the Church would be regarded as the employer.

2. At the outset it should be noted that, like any other employer, the Church is subject to the requirements of both the Fair Employment and the Sex Discrimination legislation. There are however certain exceptions within that legislation upon which the Church may be able to rely, and which may limit the extent to which the general requirements of the legislation would otherwise apply to the Church. Although there are many similarities between the legislation on fair employment and that on sex discrimination there are also

some quite significant differences. I therefore propose to deal with them separately.

Fair Employment

3. Part III of the Fair Employment Act 1976 (as amended) makes it unlawful, inter alia, to discriminate in various ways on the ground of religious belief or political opinion against a person seeking employment, for example by not short-listing him for interview, or by not appointing him to a post. Section 37(1) provides that Part III shall not apply to, or in relation to any employment or occupation “as a clergyman or minister of a religious denomination”. I assume however that none of the fifteen positions under consideration fall within this category. Of more significance, section 37(3) provides that Part III, *so far as it relates to discrimination on the ground of religious belief*, shall not apply:

“to or in relation to any employment or occupation ... where the essential nature of the job requires it to be done by a person holding ... a particular religious belief;”

It appears to me that this is a condition which is likely to apply to a number of the fifteen positions under consideration. In order to decide whether it does apply to a position a two stage test must be applied. First it is necessary to identify, in respect of each of the positions, what exactly is “*the essential nature of the job*”. Having done that it is then necessary to consider whether, and if so why, that *requires* it to be done by a person holding a particular religious belief. In other words the question is: what is it about the essential nature of the job that leads to the conclusion that it has to be done, *and can only be done*, by a person holding a particular religious belief, (in this case someone who is a Communicant Member of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland)? If the job could be carried out effectively by someone who was not a Communicant Member of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland then it would not be possible to rely on section 37(3). In considering the second stage question it would also be necessary to consider whether it was necessary to limit the particular religious belief to something quite as narrow as communicant membership of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As it stands, this requirement excludes all other Presbyterians who are not Communicant Members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, including non-Irish Presbyterians, as well as members of other Protestant denominations. Can such a limitation always be justified as essential having regard to the essential nature of the job?

4. I have been shown job descriptions for each of these fifteen positions from which it would appear likely that some of them will very probably satisfy the condition laid down in section 37(3). However I do not think that I could give confident advice in relation to any specific position unless and until the Church gives its consideration to the two stage test (outlined above) in relation to that position, identifying what the Church considers to be the essential nature of the job in question and explaining why it considers that this makes it *essential* that only a Communicant Member of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should be permitted to hold that position. It occurs to me that it may well be difficult to stand over such a requirement for some of the fifteen positions, particularly

some of the nine “superintendents, conveners or secretaries”. I would be happy to give specific advice after the Church has given its comments on each of the positions in the light of the test outlined above.

5. If the condition in section 37(3) cannot be satisfied in relation to any one or more of the fifteen positions (which, in the event of any proceedings would be a matter for the Fair Employment Tribunal to decide) then it would follow that Part III of the 1976 Act (so far as it relates to discrimination on the ground of religious belief) would apply to those positions. In that event, if an otherwise well-suited candidate for such a position were to be excluded from consideration (eg at short-listing), or if he were not to be appointed because, in either case, he was not a Communicant Member of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, while a less well-suited candidate who was a Communicant Member was not excluded, then the Church would clearly and undoubtedly be guilty of unlawful discrimination against that person on the ground of religious belief, and would be liable to pay compensation to the individual concerned.

6. It is important to remember that in any event Part III of the 1976 Act, so far as it relates to discrimination *on the ground of political opinion*, would always apply to all of these positions. In other words, even if the condition in section 37(3) can be satisfied in relation to a particular position, that will *only* provide immunity from an allegation of unlawful discrimination on the ground of *religious belief*. It will *not* provide any immunity in respect of an allegation of unlawful discrimination on the ground of *political opinion*. This is probably more of a theoretical problem than an actual one, though I suppose it is possible that a Presbyterian candidate for one of these posts could complain that he had been treated less favourably on the ground of political opinion than another less well qualified Presbyterian candidate.

7. If Part III of the Act applies to a particular position (and it always will apply so far as it relates to discrimination on the ground of *political opinion*) it is important to consider the Church’s selection and appointment procedures for that position to ensure that they do not give rise to any unnecessary risks of committing unlawful discrimination, or to any unnecessary or avoidable difficulties in defending allegations of unlawful discrimination (however ill-founded in fact such allegations might be).

8. I am informed that the positions are advertised solely through Presbyterian channels, namely in publications which circulate principally to a Presbyterian readership. If the condition in section 37(3) cannot be shown to apply to a particular position and the post is consequently advertised as ‘open to all’ so far as religious belief is concerned, but nevertheless it is only advertised in Presbyterian publications, it would be my opinion that the Church would, at the very least, be exposing itself to the risk of being found guilty of committing unlawful discrimination “in the arrangements the employer makes for the purpose of determining who should be offered the employment”: see section 17(a)(i). A suitably qualified non-Presbyterian who did not see the advertisement for a post and who therefore (being unaware of the vacancy) did not apply, could claim, with some justification, that he had been given significantly less opportunity of becoming aware of the vacancy than a Presbyterian – who was much more likely to have read the advertisement or to have had it drawn to his attention – and that he had thereby been less favourably

treated. This very point arose in a recent widely publicised sex discrimination case in England, *Coker and Osamor –v- Lord Chancellor* (1999) IRLR 396, concerning the personal appointment by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, of a Special Adviser. The post was not publicised or advertised with the result that the applicants, who were both women, did not know about it or apply for it. Instead the Lord Chancellor made his selection from amongst people who were personally known to him, and who were predominantly male. It was held that by the arrangements made (including the failure to advertise the post and the requirement or condition that the successful candidate must be personally known to the Lord Chancellor), the applicants were deprived of the opportunity of applying for the position, and that since one of the applicants (Ms Coker) would have had some prospect of her application being considered on its merits she had been unlawfully discriminated against (indirectly) in the arrangements made for determining who should be offered the employment. The employment tribunal held that the applicants were entitled to bring complaints that they were discriminated against in the arrangements made for determining who should be offered the unadvertised post, even though they did not specifically apply for employment. It further held that an application for a specific post was not required in order for there to be a breach of section 6 of the Sex Discrimination Act (which corresponds with section 17 of the Fair Employment Act). The phrase “the arrangements he makes” in section 6(1)(a), which makes it unlawful to discriminate against a woman in the arrangements a person makes for the purpose of determining who should be offered employment, was considered to be very broad in its effect and clearly intended to apply to facts other than a refusal or deliberate omission to offer employment. The legislation was intended to apply to a situation in which an employer avoids receiving applications, such as by not letting people know there is a vacancy. It was held that it would be contrary to the policy of the discrimination legislation to allow an employer to avoid it completely by an absence of recruitment, and its replacement by appointment of friends and relatives. It seems to me that this reasoning could be applied with equal validity if a post is advertised in a ‘partial’ way so that one group (Presbyterians) would have a better opportunity of becoming aware of the post than others (non-Presbyterians).

9. The shortlisting procedure has been described in my instructions and appears to be of a fairly standard kind which would be unlikely to give rise to any problems apart from the fact that there appears to be a fixed numerical limit (6) to the number of candidates who can be shortlisted for a particular post. This is unwise because it could mean that some who satisfy the criteria would be excluded while others who are in the same position would be shortlisted, creating a serious risk of discriminating unlawfully. The criteria should be drawn up in advance and all who satisfy it should be shortlisted, whatever the number. If there are too many to interview a further criterion could be applied, but it would have to be objectively justified by reference to the requirements of the position and not limited by any particular number.

10. The interview procedure also appears to be of a fairly standard kind. However I have two comments to make about it. First, I note that the Nomination Board consists of 42 members. This is an extremely high number of people to have on an interview panel. The normal number would be between 3

and 5, though I have encountered 7 on occasions. Any more than this would be most unusual. While there is nothing unlawful about having 42 members sitting on such a panel it does give rise to some fairly serious potential difficulties in the event of a complaint of unlawful discrimination being made. In my experience it is usually necessary to call *all* the members of an interview panel as witnesses in order to defend a discrimination case of this kind. This is because it is usually necessary to produce evidence to explain *why* a panel preferred one or more of the candidates to the applicant. It is rarely the case that all the panel members form exactly the same views or award the same marks (indeed it would arouse considerable suspicion if that were to happen) and the only practical way to defend the case is to lead evidence to explain how each panel member approached his or her task. In my experience a tribunal case involving 5 panel members is seldom completed in less than a week (5 days). A case involving 42 is inevitably bound to be very lengthy, as well as expensive and difficult to defend. With 42 members there are bound to be more differences for an applicant's counsel to exploit. I would therefore strongly urge the church to reduce the membership of interview panels to 5 at most (plus assessor). The other criticism is that, in some cases, *two* names are recommended to the General Assembly. This is extremely undesirable, though not per se unlawful, again for practical reasons. When two names are put forward the final selection between them has to be made by a vote of the Assembly – in which I am told that commonly 700 or more members will participate. None of these people will have been present at the interviews and will be in a far worse position to make any objective assessment of the relative merits of the two remaining candidates. Such information as they have will be second hand and almost certainly heavily abbreviated. The risk of a decision being made on other than purely objective grounds (ie the best candidate for the job) must be quite high. For example there could be lobbying and popular support for a well-known 'local' Presbyterian candidate who secured more votes, because he was well-known, than a better qualified but unknown non-Presbyterian 'outsider'. Were that to happen it would be unlawful discrimination. This is very much the type of situation which the legislation was designed to outlaw. In my opinion it is an extremely bad procedure to adopt for making job appointments and should be brought to an end as soon as possible. A number of discrimination cases were brought against district councils where appointments were made by the entire council and allegations were made, and sometimes accepted, that successful candidates had been appointed by virtue of party political voting rather than by an objective assessment of their merits: see eg *Baird -v- Cookstown District Council* (1988) NI 88. So far as defending any claim of discrimination is concerned the numbers are such that for all practical purposes it is going to be well-nigh impossible to do this in many cases. If a selection is being made by the Assembly, even between two candidates, it ought to be made on the basis of objective criteria such as qualifications, experience and personal attributes. Such assessments are normally done by scoring during an interview. Clearly it would be practically impossible for 700 people or more to make such an assessment. I therefore strongly recommend the Church to amend its procedures so that only one name is put forward to the Assembly which it can either accept or reject. A reserve nomination would be unobjectionable provided the Assembly could not choose

to appoint the reserve in place of the first candidate, but only if the first candidate was unable or unwilling to take up the post. However if the Candidate or candidates recommended by the interview panel are to be rejected there would need to be a good, clear and explicit reason for rejecting him or them, and the whole procedure should then start all over again. One could still not rule out the risk that a recommended candidate who had been rejected by the Assembly might bring discrimination proceedings in the event of some other candidate being appointed second time around.

11. One other point that ought to be mentioned is this. I note that for some of the positions something more than communicant membership of the Church is required. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk must be ministers or ordained elders. The Theological Professors must be ministers or licentiates. These requirements have nothing to do with holding a particular religious belief per se, but are obviously regarded as essential criteria for the positions in question. As with any other essential criteria for a job, the Church, as employer, would have to be in a position to justify them on an objective basis having regard to the job description.

Sex Discrimination

12. Part III of the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (as amended) makes it unlawful, inter alia, to discriminate in various ways on the ground of gender against a person in relation to employment, for example (as in the case of the Fair Employment legislation) by not short-listing him for interview, or by not appointing him to a post. Article 21 (1) provides that nothing in Part III applies to "employment for purposes of an organised religion where the employment is limited to one sex so as to (a) comply with the doctrines of the religion, or (b) avoid offending the religious sensibilities of a significant number of its followers." Accordingly, if the Church wished to exclude women from eligibility for any of these positions it could only do so on one or other of those grounds, or on the ground that being a man was a 'genuine occupational qualification' for the job within article 10 of the Order (which I would have thought would be most unlikely to apply to any of these positions). If the Church does not wish to exclude women from any of these positions it necessarily follows that the full rigors of article 16 will apply and that it must not therefore discriminate against women, directly or indirectly, in its appointment procedures. This basically means that if anyone involved in the selection procedures (whether as an interview panellist or as a voter at the Assembly) decided not to vote for a candidate who was otherwise objectively a better candidate than the one selected, and did so because that candidate was a woman, he or she would be unlawfully discriminating.

13. The question has been raised as to whether it would be lawful to refuse to appoint a person because he or she was divorced or was co-habiting. Under national sex discrimination legislation it is currently not unlawful to discriminate against a woman, or a man or a married person on the ground of sex or marital status respectively. The position is otherwise in cases where the Equal Treatment Directive (76/207) applies because its scope is much wider. However the Directive only has direct effect in relation to 'emanations of the state' and I would be confident that the Church is not an 'emanation of the state'. Nor do I

think it likely that the European legal principle of interpretation could be applied to require Part III of the Order to be interpreted by the national courts in such a way as to give the Directive indirect effect and make discrimination against divorced persons or co-habitees unlawful. Having said that I would counsel the Church against imposing a veto on divorced persons or co-habitees for any particular position unless there is some sound, objective and justifiable reason for doing so having regard to the requirements of the particular job. If such a requirement is imposed without a good justifiable reason for it, it can, and often is suggested that the requirement has been imposed as a pretext to conceal an act of unlawful discrimination, bearing in mind that reasonable employers do not normally impose requirements without good reason.

14. I am also asked to advise in relation to how far it is permissible for the Church to require candidates to 'demonstrate sympathy with the Church's aims, objectives, standards and values'. Again, and for similar reasons to those given above, if such a requirement is to be imposed it should be capable of being objectively justified having regard to the requirements of the particular job. It does occur to me that it might be quite difficult to make an objective evaluation of such 'sympathy'. How is it to be assessed and measured for comparative purposes? As with all criteria it would also be necessary to decide what weight to give to it in any assessment.

15. Finally, the comments which I have made in paragraphs 7 to 10 under the heading of fair employment above apply with equal validity to sex discrimination.

NICOLAS HANNA QC

Bar Library
Belfast
30 September 1999

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That Mrs Margaret Myers be appointed as Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Women's Association.
3. That the General Assembly take note of the Opinion of Mr Nicholas Hanna QC printed in Appendix B.
4. That, as an experiment, the Nomination Board follow the procedures set out in Par 8 of the Report when dealing with applications for the post of Secretary of the Overseas Board, and report thereon to next Assembly.
5. That the Nomination Board be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 276 of the Code as follows:

INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS BOARD

Convener: Rev R HERRON

1. The Board met on two occasions during the past year. All items of business are included in Committee reports.

Ministers in Recognised Service

Rev David Campbell reports:

1. During the past year I had the privilege of dedicating a new Bible Centre in South Gujarat in India which serves the growing Christian community in that area. The Bible Centre was funded exclusively by the Bible Society in Northern Ireland. A service of thanksgiving was held in the Vyara Church of North India Church followed by the dedication ceremony at the Bible Centre nearby.

2. A highlight of the past year was the launch of our Millennium Project entitled "Luke the Book" which was a joint publication with Scripture Union. "Luke the Book" is an edition of Luke's Gospel in the CEV translation specially prepared for school children between the ages of 8-14. 150,000 copies of "Luke the Book" have been distributed throughout Northern Ireland in a wide spectrum of schools.

Rev Andrew Gibson reports:

1. My work at Belfast Bible College continues to be stimulating and rewarding. Our teaching ranges from basic entry level courses to postgraduate and this provides us with opportunities to explore many issues at a variety of levels. My current thinking in the area of mission is our responsibility to our own community in Ireland and, alongside this, the consequences of a radically Christian approach to the different social conditions in the North and the Republic.

2. Belfast Bible College is extremely grateful for the many mutually beneficial links between BBC, PCI and Churches throughout the world, especially as congregations sponsor overseas students at BBC and in return receive the stimulation and even prophetic witness of a brother or sister whose experience of Jesus Christ has been in a very different and sometimes very difficult situation. I am more than happy to continue to be one strand in the nexus.

Rev Desmond Maxwell reports:

1. Tucked away beside the sewage works in Dunmurry, Belfast Bible College continues to be a virtual 'united nations' attracting students from all over the world. It is fulfilling, exciting, challenging and enjoyable to continue to

be involved in Christian education in such a venue. While carrying a full teaching load on campus I have also plenty of opportunity to minister off campus and since October I have been giving twenty minute lunchtime talks, called SOUNDBITES, in the City YMCA every Wednesday at one o'clock. I continue to minister regularly in the Waringstown Congregation where I have the honour of being an 'associate teacher'.

Rev David McCarthy reports:

1. The aim of the Evangelical Alliance in Northern Ireland is to promote evangelical unity and truth, and represent evangelical concerns to the wider world. My work has been to ensure that we do this effectively.
2. Integral to our work is:
 - (i) Bridge building between the various points of focus within evangelicalism.
 - (ii) Networking, resourcing and challenging evangelicals to engage with the communities within which they find themselves.
 - (iii) Helping ensure that biblical principles are articulated on key issues, which face our society.

Rev Ruth Patterson reports:

1. Restoration Ministries has taken as its theme for the year 'Sharing in the Celebration of the Birth of Jesus'. There have been many opportunities for sharing, both at home and farther afield eg England, Denmark, Norway, USA and throughout Ireland. We have as our special project this year a poster/bookmark campaign 'Celebrating the Millennium the Christian Way', suggesting the little things people can do to make a big difference.
2. I have also launched a book entitled 'A Farther Shore' with a foreword by Jean Vanier, published by Veritas.
3. Restoration Ministries has also hosted monthly gatherings for the Divine Healing Committee with Andrea Wigglesworth (Church of Scotland). These have been well received and very helpful.

ENVIRONMENTAL PANEL

Rev Samuel Millar reports:

1. The panel has met bi-monthly since the last General Assembly and has discussed a number of relevant topics. In view of the considerable public interest and concern over the subject of genetically modified organisms, particularly as they affect food, the Panel arranged for an expert on the subject, Dr Donald Bruce, to give a public lecture in Union College. The Church of Scotland, which employs Dr Bruce, has taken an active interest in this subject. Dr Bruce encouraged us both to consider the benefits flowing from GMOs, and to maintain our concerns about side effects and the possible economic and social disadvantages that could result from large corporations cashing in on new products. The Panel is deeply indebted to the Principal and Faculty of the College for their co-operation in this lecture, which we hope to be the first of a series.

2. The Panel is very aware of, and concerned about, the crises in the farming and fishing industries, and has visited the farm of a seed potato producer near Limavady, the fishing harbour at Kilkeel, and the refurbished government agricultural science laboratories at Newforge Lane. These three visits have helped give much-needed direct briefing on the problems facing the industries, and in the case of the laboratories visit, an insight into the exceptionally fascinating and potentially very worthwhile research being undertaken there.

3. A day was spent looking at the many conflicting and complementary issues affecting Lough Neagh, including lectures from local experts. Also involved were a number of the Presbytery Environmental Agents, whom we see as filling a valuable role in providing the contact points between congregations and Presbyteries. We hope that Presbyteries would make greater use of Agents to raise issues of concern with the Panel, or with relevant local organisations.

4. Mr David Boyd, one of the Panel members, represented the Panel at the conference of the European Christian Environmental Network in Germany, and at meetings of the Going for Green organisation. We are pleased that one PCI congregation, First Ballymoney, is taking part in the pilot Ecocongregation project of Going for Green, which encourages congregations to undertake many practical ways of helping to conserve the environment and to reduce waste.

IRISH CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Irish Council of Churches

1. The Autumn Gathering of ICC took place in McCracken Memorial Church Halls Belfast on 27th September 1999. Mr Eddie McDowell the Development Officer of the Belfast Churches' Urban Development Committee spoke on 'the challenge of being Church in urban society in Ireland today'. He talked about new patterns of living in urban life, the fragmentation of Protestantism and the phenomenon of the 'drive in church', where people travel into a church without having a meaningful witness in the local community. He gave examples of churches reaching out to their local communities in courageous and creative ways and spoke of the need for the development of a theory of risk.

2. The Board of Overseas Affairs welcomed two visitors from Tanzania who spoke about the local impact of world debt. The following resolution was passed at the Board of Overseas Affairs: 'The Board of Overseas Affairs of the ICC is keenly aware of the crisis in certain parts of Indonesia through reports from and contact with sister Christian churches. It appeals to the British Government, the Irish Government, the European Union, the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, the Association of South East Asian Nations, to request the government of Indonesia to take urgent action to restore order and protect threatened communities in the Moluku Islands. If no such action is taken, it requests the matter to be brought to the United Nations Secretary General'.

3. It was reported at the Board of Inter Church Affairs that the first black majority church has opened in Dublin.

4. The Annual Meeting was held on 24th and 25th March 2000. Dr Gary Mason and Rev David Kerr spoke on the subject, 'The challenge facing the Churches in the new millennium'. This was an opportunity to share the vision generated by the 'On the Edge' conference in January 2000 at which Dr Leslie Griffiths and Dr Tony Campolo spoke.

5. Rev Dr Ian Ellis is the new President of ICC and Rev Robert Herron is Vice President.

Inter Church Meeting

6. The Department of Social Issues have prepared a memorandum on a Christian response to migration, refugees and asylum seekers. They have looked at domestic violence, the recent Roman Catholic publication, 'Prosperity with a Purpose: Christian faith and values in a time of rapid economic change', and the needs of victims of the Troubles.

7. The Department on Theological Questions has produced a discussion document entitled, 'Being Church in the new Millennium'.

8. The group that prepares resource material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has also produced material for other events in the Christian calendar during 2000. The booklet is entitled 'Jubilee 2000' and is available from the ICC Office at 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast. On an experimental basis the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity leaflet for 2001 will be drafted together with members of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity literature can be obtained from the Irish Inter Church Meeting. The Evangelical Alliance World Prayer Week leaflet can be obtained from the Evangelical Alliance office in Belfast.

9. The 'One Bread One Body' consultation took place on 30th November 1999. Revs Mary Hunter, David Montgomery, Tony Davidson, and Trevor Morrow represented PCI. Fr Bernard Longley spoke about the background to the document and other churches were given the opportunity to challenge its contents. Some members of the Roman Catholic delegation also expressed concerns about its contents. The PCI participants concluded this was a useful exercise. A further consultation is planned and it will look at the Roman Catholic Lutheran document on Justification by Faith.

10. The next meeting of the IICM will be held on 10th November 2000. The theme is 'Being Church in a New Millennium'. The meeting will include a presentation by some of the Irish Churches involved in the 'Bridges of Hope' Project.

Review of ICC and IICM structures

11. The Episcopal Conference of the Irish Roman Catholic Church has decided not to proceed with proposals to form the Conference of Churches in Ireland, therefore, the existing structures will remain. The Review Group has looked at necessary changes to the IICM. It is proposed that funding of the secretariat should be more equitable. Since Roisin Hannaway, formerly 'Associate' Secretary of IICM, has resigned and Mrs Florence Pyper, Administrative Secretary of ICC, is retiring, it is an opportune time to consider the servicing of both inter-church bodies. The Review Group is suggesting that

the Roman Catholic Church would increase its contribution towards the costs of the IICM. The proposed changes should mean a total reduction in the PCI contribution to Irish inter-church bodies of approximately £5,000.

12. It is also proposed that the smaller churches could have an extra place on the Irish Inter-Church Committee since the number of smaller churches in the ICC has grown in recent years. It is suggested that where appropriate the IICM could make appointments to Churches Together in Britain and Ireland commissions rather than ICC.

13. A letter was received from the Executive Committee of ICC expressing disappointment following the 1999 General Assembly decision to reject the constitution of the proposed Conference of Churches in Ireland. The Committee agreed to respond to the letter as follows; *'As a result of the 1999 decision of the General Assembly the Irish Church Relations Committee does not wish to be misconstrued as being not committed to whole hearted inter-church engagement. The problem for some of those who were against the proposal was with the more specific matter of the constitution of the proposed CCI. The members of the Irish Church Relations Committee feel there is a need to work the present structures of the ICC and IICM with commitment, energy and vision'*. The letter from the ICC Executive Committee was circulated to Board members and at February's meeting of the Board the following resolution was proposed by a Board member and agreed by a majority, 'The Inter-Church Relations Board of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland assures the members of those denominations with whom it is in partnership through the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting of its love for them in the Gospel and its desire to grow closer to them in Christ'.

TONY DAVIDSON, Convener

INTER-CHURCH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met in January, 2000. The members of the Committee are:

Church of Ireland	Methodist	Presbyterian
The Bishop of Limerick (Chairman)	Rev D C Bain Rev T M Kingston	Rev A D Davidson Rev R Herron
Rev I J E Knox	Rev E T I Mawhinney	Mrs E Cobain
Ven G A McCamley	Mrs H O'Neill	Rev R F S Poots OBE
Canon J Mayes		

2. The Rev Dr RWJ MacDermott has retired from the chaplaincy at the Adelaide and Meath Hospital. His successor is the Rev. R. Donaldson Rodgers.

3. The Presbytery and the Lisburn Circuit will be asked to advise about the relevance of the Methodist/Presbyterian Scheme at St. Columba's, Lisburn.

4. Reports were received from a joint Methodist/Presbyterian Scheme and an Alternating Ministry Scheme.

(a) **Knockbreda/St Andrew's, Belfast**

The Church property sits on the edge of a large housing estate and is also bordered by an area of private housing. The congregations face the physical

challenge of property refurbishment or replacement, in a style more appropriate to contemporary needs, and the spiritual challenge of making an evangelistic impact on a community which is largely untouched by the Church.

There is one joint evening service and worship at holiday periods is fully united. Both congregations co-operate in evangelistic training and outreach events such as The Walk of a Thousand Men. Regular evening services for mutual encouragement are held jointly with the local Church of Ireland and Elim Pentecostal Churches. The employment of a youth and community worker has been made possible by European funding.

(b) St Patrick's, Waterford

The members of St. Patrick's worship in old Church buildings on an historic site near the city centre, which is incapable of being redesigned to meet modern requirements and is so restrictive that only a mothers and toddlers group can meet in it, apart from Sunday worship. It is planned to dispose of the property and build a modern church, which would be open to the community, on a ring-road site which the Corporation is expected to make available for purchase. The local residents groups are enthusiastic about the proposed development.

5. A relationship is growing between the Methodist and Church of Ireland Churches at Brownlow, Lurgan. The Inter-Church Relations Committee of the Methodist Church is discussing the possibility of developing even closer relationships.

RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. **Race Relations.** As we noted last year, the need for greater awareness of and action on race relations in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland remains a primary concern of the Committee. While this applies to the public generally and to both governments it also confronts our own church members with uncomfortable questions, such as: while we pride ourselves on our warm Irish or Ulster hospitality, how much personal contact do we actually have with our neighbours of different ethnic backgrounds? How aware are we of the racism that often lurks beneath the surface of our own benevolent demeanour and which indeed comes out in unconscious or unintended ways, such as the language we use? 'Good practice' in race relations at home is surely the essential complement to our church's long-standing commitment to mission abroad! The Committee were pleased to note the positive action taken by the RUC with regard to training their officers in race relations. Are we as pro-active in our congregations?

2. **Education.** No special seminars on race relations were attempted during the past year. However, information and worship material were distributed for Race Relations Sunday (9 January 2000); and in Points for Prayer attention was drawn to a new study guide "What the Bible Says about the Stranger" – Biblical perspectives on Racism, Immigration, Asylum and Cross-Community Issues, obtainable from The Churches' Peace Education Programme

(48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast BT9 6AZ) or the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, 169 Booterstown Avenue, Blackrock, Co.Dublin.

3. **Race Relations Sunday.** Once more the Committee are proposing that Race Relations be the special focus of Church Services on the second Sunday after Christmas (Epiphany), the theme proposed for 2001 being Slavery. Another suitable occasion would be the second Sunday of September, which is increasingly being observed by churches in Great Britain as Racial Justice Sunday.

4. **Refugees and Asylum Seekers.** The issue of asylum seekers and refugees is becoming an increasingly prominent item on the Race Relations Committee's agenda, as also on the agenda of the Irish Council of Churches' Board of Overseas Affairs. However there is a question about the appropriateness of merely Presbyterian and 'protestant - ecumenical' structures handling issues involved essentially in isolation from Roman Catholic structures, inasmuch as the cutting edge of these particular social and political problems is primarily in the Republic, especially Dublin. Accordingly the Committee have received an important report on MIGRATION, REFUGEES and ASYLUM - SEEKERS in Ireland, drawn up by the Irish Inter-Church Meeting, Department of Social Issues, at the request of the Irish Episcopal Conference. This highlights the need for action by the Irish Churches on two fronts:

- within the European context : **Entry, Sharing** (between countries)
- within the Irish context : **Amnesty, Resources, Legal Aid, Work, Families, Deportations, Immigration Policy.**

The Race Relations Committee are studying the implications of this report for our Church. The annual number of asylum-seeker applications to the Government of the Republic keeps rising – 6,507 to 30 November 1999. We note that the Rev Katherine Meyer represents the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster on the Churches' Network of the Refugee Project in Dublin.

4. **The Equality Agenda.** The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (see Reports 1999p.137) now handles race relations as one segment of the 'equality agenda'. The Rev Allen Sleith represented the Committee at the major Into the Light conference organised by the Commission. In his report he notes that whereas the issue of identity, in Ireland and particularly in Northern Ireland, has focused on relations between Catholics and Protestants the fact that there are other minority ethnic communities here has been almost totally overlooked. The conference posed the question, How can ethnic diversity be accommodated, respected and valued? Enduring problems listed include inadequate access to educational and employment opportunities; difficulties in making social security claims; language barriers which make, for instance, the provision of adequate health care a concern; and various forms of cultural and/or religious insensitivities. Summarising the positive challenge of better race relations, he quotes one speaker, Haroon Saad, Head of Equalities, Birmingham City Council presenting the vision of a better society which "seeks to harness the strength, vitality and real added value that the presence of members of minority ethnic communities bring to Northern Ireland". Mr Sleith concludes: "If and when it is true to its calling, the Church can, by its own practices and prayers,

be a kind of pioneer for how all people are meant to live together”. This presents the race relations issue in a positive light.

5. **Role.** The Committee, at the request of the Conveners of the Inter Church Relations and Overseas Boards, have been reviewing our remit. Should we embrace the wider ‘equality’ agenda inasmuch as it is not already covered by other Boards and Committees (specifically gender, sexual orientation and human rights issues inasmuch as these are referred to the ICR convener)? Or should we continue to confine ourselves to the race issue but also monitor and respond to situations of racial conflict in lands with which our Overseas Board is involved? Our historic involvement with South Africa may suggest we follow the latter line. We have recently cooperated with the Sudan Support Groups in promoting awareness of ethnic conflict and slavery in the Sudan. The drift of our thinking is to continue to concentrate on race, at home and abroad, but from the specific angle of racial justice, and including justice issues for asylum seekers and refugees within both jurisdictions on this island. We will welcome comment.

6. **Churches’ Commission on Racial Justice** The Committee were pleased to welcome a delegation consisting of the Rev Arlington Trotman (Secretary) and Cecilia Boccorh (Scottish Churches’ Agency for Racial Justice) together with Ms Fee Ching Leong, a member of our own Committee and representative of the Irish Churches on the London-based CRRJ. They explained the role of the CRRJ: promoting Racial Justice Sunday; monitoring British Government legislation on Race Relations; criminal justice (eg The Stephen Lawrence case and its aftermath); policing issues; human rights (from both a European and British perspective); economic concerns; training (funding) for individuals and organisations; funding local initiatives through the Ecumenical Racial Justice Fund (eg Saturday schools; campaigning; and theological reflection on racial justice). Specific issues recently dealt with include the culture of policing (Stephen Lawrence), deaths in police custody, detainees without papers being kept in prison, deportations and the growing ‘Fortress Europe’ mentality, travellers’ and gypsies’ rights, black women’s health etc, a theological education project in Birmingham, and the publication of Church and Race. It is of interest that the CRRJ has been consulted by the RUC for assistance in developing their own awareness and good practice in respect of race relations.

7. **Support.** Warm appreciation has been expressed for our financial support of the Churches’ Council for Racial Justice, the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre, Bryson House, Belfast and especially the Diakonia Council of Churches in South Africa. The Committee brings a resolution once more to support these causes and to add the special Millennium Appeal of the Irish Refugee Council, who provide a free legal service to refugees in Ireland.

GORDON GRAY, Convener

WORLD CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. During the past year the Committee has continued to be actively involved in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Conference

of European Churches (CEC), and the Leuenberg Church Fellowship (LCF). The Committee has been continuing to strengthen bi-lateral relationships with the Church of Scotland (C of S) and the United Reformed Church (URC) as well as other Churches in the Middle East.

United Reformed Church

2. Rev Gabrielle Ellis-Farquhar attended the URC Assembly held at Southport in July as a voting delegate. She also attended two meetings of the Ecumenical Committee of the URC at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanick in September 1999 and the Methodist International Centre in London in January 2000. One significant event during the year was the union of the Congregational Church of Scotland with URC, which took effect on 1 April 2000.

Consultation of UK Reformed Churches

3. Further plans have been made for the consultation of UK Reformed Churches to be held from 27-29 March 2001 at the URC Windermere Centre. The churches involved are the Church of Scotland, United Reformed Church, the Presbyterian Church of Wales and PCI. The purpose of the consultation is to explore the theme of Identity and Partnership with the Reformed Churches. Each church's delegation would be six people with expertise and responsibility within their own structures for those areas included in the agenda.

Leuenberg Church Fellowship

4. The Sub-Committee set up to make arrangements for the Leuenberg Church Fellowship Assembly to be held in Belfast from 19-25 June 2001 and the Leuenberg Executive Committee to be held in Belfast from 15-18 June 2000 has been continuing its work. Arrangements for both events are progressing well. Mr Stanley McDowell has agreed to act as the Administrator for the Assembly. The Sub-Committee consists of representatives from PCI, the Methodist Church and the Lutheran Church. The theme of the Assembly will centre around the area of Reconciled Diversity - the Commitment of the Protestant Churches in Europe.

5. Professor Cecil McCullough attended the Leuenberg Executive Committee, which met in Bratislava, Slovakia from 3-5 December. He reported that the Reformed Hungarian speaking Church in Slovakia and the Lutheran Church in Slovakia are growing in numbers and vitality.

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

6. The Rev Christen Anderrson, President of the European Area Committee, and Mr Michael Harden visited Ireland in November 1999. They met representatives from various political parties to get a better understanding of the peace process and how the Churches can contribute to it.

7. There was further follow up to the Assembly in Debrecen, Hungary. Relevant documents and reports were passed on to various committees and boards of the General Assembly for further consideration. These included the issues of globalisation and Reformed Identity.

Conference of European Churches

8. Mr John Luke, Director of the Nightlight Ministry, attended a consultation on Trafficking in Women held at Driebergen in the Netherlands in December.

9. A sub-committee has been working on a document entitled The Charta Ecumenica for Europe, which deals with the co-operation of churches in Europe. This is part of a process leading to a declaration by member churches of CEC of their commitment to reconciliation towards one another, to common witness and service and to peace and justice for Europe.

General

10. The Committee Convener established contacts with the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Syria and Lebanon. He visited several individual churches in this denomination during a tour of the Middle East. During the year the Convener also met with representatives of some of the Reformed churches in Bahrain and Kuwait.

11. The Committee has been examining literature received from Clergy Exchange International, a newly formed US-based organisation facilitating short term clergy and other church related exchanges with an educational dimension. The scheme has been well thought through in practical terms, has become effective in several parts of the world through major churches and the Committee will continue to seek to develop links with what appears to be a valuable organisation.

DAVID CAMPBELL, Convener

WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. This is the second year of the current campaign 'Let my people go...free from hunger, free to be healthy, free to learn'. Projects in Nicaragua, India, Tanzania and Uganda were chosen to illustrate basic health care programmes. The 'Let my people go...' campaign is based on the Exodus story of Moses leading God's people out of slavery in Egypt. More than 1.3 billion people still live in virtual slavery trapped by poverty and injustice. Many diseases, measles, whooping cough, polio, diphtheria and TB, killers among the poor could be prevented, but many poor governments lack even the resources to provide safe clean water and basic sanitation. At the 1999 Assembly, Dr Roger Purce challenged the church to raise £1 million for world development in the millennial year. In response a few congregations have greatly increased their giving yet donations (to March) only amount to £386,780 so it would appear that the appeal will fall far short of the target.

2. The 'Let my people go...' watchword also reflects the aim of the Jubilee 2000 Coalition to have the unpayable debts of 52 developing countries cancelled. The Committee has endeavoured to keep this issue before the church and would urge collective prayer before and during the G8 Summit in Japan on 23 July 2000.

3. The Committee made grants to the Overseas Board totalling £11,000 for relief work in Halmahera and the Moluccan Islands, Indonesia.

4. Rev. Mark Gray has been nominated to serve on the Irish Committee of Christian Aid.

HAZEL McCALL, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Irish Church Relations

2. That the following appointments be made:

To the Irish Council of Churches - Revs C J Aitcheson, W T Bingham, S J Campbell, Mr N Chambers, Mrs P Crossley; Revs A D Davidson, G A J Ellis-Farquhar; Miss D Gilmour; Revs Dr R J G Gray, R Herron, Dr S Hutchinson; Mrs M Irwin; Revs J G Johnston, D B Knox, C D McClure, D Nesbitt; Mr J A Patterson; Mr I Scott; Mrs E Sheppard; Mr D Whitcroft.

To the Irish Inter-Church Meeting - Revs Dr W P Addley, H Boyce; Mr N J Chambers, Revs A D Davidson, Dr J Dunlop, R Herron, Dr S Hutchinson; Mrs M Irwin; Rev Dr T W J Morrow.

To the Irish Inter-Church Committee - Revs A D Davidson, Dr T W J Morrow.

Race Relations

3. That the General Assembly encourage local congregations to extend friendship towards members of ethnic minority communities living in their areas, to be alert to threats or instances of racial intimidation, and to report these to the Race Relations Committee.

4. That Sunday 7th or Sunday 14th January 2001 be recognised as Race Relations Sunday.

World Church Relations

5. That Rev D J Campbell be appointed to serve for the next three years as the PCI representative on the Ecumenical Committee of the URC and as a voting delegate at the URC General Assembly.

World Development

6. That the General Assembly welcome the debt relief announced so far and support the Jubilee 2000 Coalition in its call for the total and immediate cancellation of the remaining unpayable debts of the world's poorest countries.

7. That the General Assembly call for a day of prayer on the final day of the G8 Summit on Sunday 23rd July 2000.

Grants

8. That the following grants be made from the Incidental Fund:

INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS BOARD

161

Irish Council of Churches	£25,600
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	£4,000
Conference of European Churches	£3,253
Leuening Consultation	£500
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	£9,500
Race Relations Grants:	
(i) Multi-Cultural Resource Centre, Bryson House, Belfast	£750
(ii) Diakonia Council of Churches, Durban, South Africa	£1,500
(iii) Churches Council for Racial Justice (Refugees and Asylum Seekers UK)	£375
(iv) Millennium Appeal of the Irish Refugee Council	£375
General Work of the Board	£5,000

9. That the Inter-Church Relations Board, with its associated working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 278 of the Code as follows:

OVERSEAS BOARD

Convener: Rev S J CAMPBELL

Secretary: Rev R J T McMULLAN

THE NEW MILLENNIUM AND THE MISSION OF JESUS CHRIST

1. When the Lord Jesus Christ was commissioning his disciples for world mission, he indicated to them that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to him, that they were to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising and teaching them, and that he would be with them always to the very end of the age (Matthew 28: 18-20). It is this statement that reminds us that the task of communicating the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ, is one that comes to each new generation of Christians. It is also a commission that remains with us throughout our earthly lives and we are encouraged to move forward with Christ into His world, proclaiming the message of salvation to all men and women.

2. Over the past year and into this new millennium year the Board continues to encourage our Church in the task of mission, to pray, to give and to go if God calls. We have been greatly blessed as a mission family by the growing response from our members, and our missionaries have experienced God at work in the lives of those whom they serve. Though there are many disappointments, yet we have seen God blessing in each situation where our missionaries serve with their national colleagues.

3. The General Assembly in 1999 welcomed the revised policy statement and recommendations and encouraged the Board to implement these in the new millennium. The Steering Committee discussed the recommendations, remitted some to the three Area Committees and the Education Committee. The responses to the recommendations were received by the Board and are contained in Appendix A.

4. As we move into God's world in Mission in the new Millennium, we encounter a resurgence of the world's major religions. Hinduism and Islam particularly have adopted western missionary methods and are busy propagating their faiths all over the world with considerable success. This presents a great challenge to our missionaries and to Christians in our partner churches in Africa, Asia and Europe.

5. In India a militant form of Hinduism has appeared which has resulted in the persecution of Christians in Gujarat and other parts of India. In Indonesia, Pakistan and Sudan there are determined efforts by militant Muslims to convert or coerce Christians to Islam, and this has resulted in much suffering by the Christian Churches and peoples in these countries. As well as praying for and encouraging our fellow Christians, our Church has made representations to the British and Irish Governments, the European Union, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance on these important matters with some success.

6. We continue to be thrilled at the number and quality of those inquiring about long and short term missionary service. We have to maintain that delicate balance between responding to requests from our partner churches and united missions and enabling those called by God to particular types of missionary work to fulfil their calling. In today's world there are many more opportunities for short term service of two or three years, but there is still a need for men and women called by God to serve overseas until the door closes.

7. We are also relating to a new generation of Christian young people who will be missionaries in the next decade, and we are seeking to equip ourselves to prepare this new generation of missionaries for the task of world mission. The Board appointed a small group to review how we provide pastoral care and support for missionaries while overseas and on home leave, recognising that today's missionaries are coping with great cultural diversity and rapid change in the situations where they serve Jesus Christ.

8. In 1991 the Board approved a package for the remuneration of missionaries. A review group was appointed during the past year and this resulted in a report that in general terms serving missionaries are satisfied with the remuneration package introduced in 1991 and updated in subsequent years.

9. For the past decade the Presbyterian Women's Association (PWA) have been supporting in prayer all of our missionary personnel and financially supporting some nineteen of our women missionaries. During the past year the PWA agreed to give an annual grant to the Overseas Board commencing in the year 2000 which would contribute to the support of all of the missionaries of our Church and the grants made to our partner churches. We greatly appreciate the participation of the PWA in the total work of the Board and we are looking for others ways in which we can work together to promote overseas mission.

EUROPE

10. The gospel came to these islands in the early years of our Christian era, and it was from Ireland that Christian missionaries went to re-evangelise mainland Europe after the fall and destruction of the Roman Empire. In the sixteenth century there came from mainland Europe the benefits and blessings of the Reformation through Calvin and Knox, and in the early 1600's Presbyterianism arrived in Ulster with the settlers from Scotland. In the succeeding centuries we looked towards the new world and our forefathers went to the Americas and Australasia to build new nations and plant the Church of Jesus Christ.

11. In recent years we have begun to look towards mainland Europe and to establish relationships with Reformed and Presbyterian Churches in Hungary & Romania, the Czech & Slovak Republics and in France and Spain. These partner relationships have continued to grow and mature over the past year through the exchange of personnel, through team visits and through a growing number of congregational twinning arrangements.

12. During the year we maintained our relationships with the Synod of the **Reformed Church in Hungary** and are hoping to establish a partnership with the Tiszaninnen District where Rev Dr Istvan Meszaros is Bishop and Dr Daniel Szabo is a lay deputy. Youth and all age teams went last summer to the

Dorcas camp in Debrecen to look after children from Chernobyl, and to Oradea to teach English and share the gospel with children in the Micsa area.

13. Bishop Kalman Csiha of the Transylvanian District of the **Reformed Church in Romania** visited PCI in March and informed us of the plans to build and establish a second diaconal centre in Tirgu Mures, the first being in Cluj. These diaconal centres contain conference and training facilities for Church workers and for deacons and deaconesses who may be nurses or evangelists or social workers. They also provide a boarding school for those who wish to become deacons and deaconesses, a base for the medical and health care work of the Church District and for work among the victims of substance abuse.

14. We expect Bishop Laszlo Tokes of the Kiralyhagomellek District of the Reformed Church to visit PCI in early June and we trust that this visit will cement the relationship which already exists between our Churches. During the year Rev Alan Martin represented PCI and gave an address at an international conference on church and ethnic issues hosted by Bishop Tokes. Nigel Craig continues to serve in Oradea teaching English and relating to the students in the Reformed University in the city and helping to facilitate the work among street children and orphans.

15. We were thrilled that the **Church of the Brethren's** Evangelical Theological Seminary (ETS) in Prague was officially opened in October last year with Rev Ian McKee representing PCI on that occasion. We continue to support the seminary in the development of its library facilities and as it provides theological and pastoral training for students from several churches in Central Europe. The 1998/99 Sunday School & Youth Project provided £25,000 for the development of the children's hospice under the Klicek Foundation. We maintain our relationship with Rev Stanislav Stebel in Ostrava where Susan Clarke is part of the ministry team, being manager of the café outreach based in the church complex. The relationship between High Kirk, Ballymena and the congregation of Levice in Slovakia has been continued over the past year and both congregations continue to be enriched through this living partnership in the gospel.

16. We have maintained our relationship with the **Église Réformée de France** (ERF) during the past year and have shared information about our respective situations. The ERF has interpreted the Northern Ireland situation and the more recent developments to its constituency and the wider community in France. Rev Rodney Cameron has recently been confirmed in his ministry in Privas and Flaviac and Rev Gordon Campbell has made an important contribution to the teaching of New Testament in the Free Faculty of Reformed Theology in Aix-en-Provence. Principal McCullough will represent our church at the National Synod of the ERF to be held from 1 to 4 June.

17. Last September the **Spanish Evangelical Church** sent a delegation of five persons to visit PCI in order to explore and identify ways in which we could co-operate in the mission of Jesus Christ. These would include theological training at UTC and sharing of resources and materials in the teaching of young people and children from our Christian Education and Youth departments and the Christian Training Centre. Rev Mark Henderson was commissioned last September to work with the English speaking congregation in Torre del Mar for a minimum of one year.

18. Stephen & Deborah Pacht continued their work among Jews in Paris with some support from our Church. There has been some opposition to the work and witness of 'Jews for Jesus' and the offices have been vandalised on three occasions during the past year. The summer outreach campaign brought them into contact with over two hundred people who are keen to know more about Jesus Christ, and these inquiries have been followed up over the winter months.

19. We maintain contact with the **Jerusalem Church in Hamburg** which continues with its particular emphasis of ministry to Jews. It would appear that the Lutheran Church will not be able to continue funding the Jerusalem Church in its current independent form and there may have to be a merger with another congregation in the future. The Jerusalem hospital is facing financial difficulties and there have been further cutbacks. A merger with other hospitals has been suggested, but no decision has thus far been taken.

AFRICA

20. African peoples south of the Sahara have suffered much over the past year. Civil Wars have raged in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Sudan; economic hardship has come to several nations and it is the poor who suffer as a result; natural disasters have struck several countries, the latest being the floods in Mozambique which have caused much loss of life and displacement of thousands of people from their traditional homes and livelihoods; the AIDS epidemic is creating thousands of widows and orphans and is destroying the community life that African people once enjoyed; and religious groups have become more aggressive in the spread of their particular message.

21. There have been discernible major trends in Africa south of the Sahara in the past year. The people of South Sudan struggle for the right of self-determination and to be freed from the domination of the Arab North; the people of Malawi have achieved democracy, but are disappointed that there is no improvement in their living standards, job opportunities or in the availability of education for their children. Societies are going through traumatic change brought on by the breakdown in the moral and social fabric of their people and the devastating effect of AIDS. Those who are economically prosperous are becoming wealthier while the majority of the people who live in rural areas are descending into a grinding poverty which threatens their self-esteem as people who are created in the image of God.

22. We have continued to support our partner in mission, the **Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)** as they minister to the people of **Kenya** in the name of Jesus Christ. For the past decade Kenya has been host to people from Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia who have been displaced by war and famine and this has placed tremendous strains on the resources and hospitality of Kenyans. The Church has responded with love and compassion as they have welcomed their brothers and sisters in Christ who have suffered so much.

23. We continue to share in the evangelism and outreach work of the PCEA to the rural communities through our personnel and in supplying very much needed resources to enable development to take place. The PCEA

continue to train ministers and evangelists to serve the people and we are privileged to share in this ministry through our personnel working in the Presbyterian College and the Theological Education by Extension programme. The Teachers' College at Rubate has produced over 600 trained teachers who are involved in providing life skills and good basic education with a Christian ethos for the children of the nation and we are very glad to share in this important ministry.

24. The PCEA continues to minister to the people through its health care provision at the hospitals in Chogoria, Kikuyu and Tumutumu. The provision of health care facilities is placing increasing demands on available personnel and financial resources and the PCEA has discussed with its partners the future direction of its medical work. A consultation will be held by the PCEA with its partners to consider the future needs for theological education and training for ministry later this year.

25. Kenya has proved a good training ground for students for the ministry of PCI and during the year Stephen & Janice Richmond and David & Maggie Steele returned home to continue their studies after spending one and two years respectively working in the PCEA. Karen Williams is continuing to lecture in Daystar University and is working to complete her Masters degree before returning to commence her studies at Union Theological College.

26. **Malawi** is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa and with its rising population is experiencing a shortage of suitable land for food production. A series of semi-drought conditions in the past few years has meant that most of the people have not been able to provide for their families or buy the food that is available in the market place. The **Church of Central Africa Presbyterian** (CCAP) is seeking to minister to the total needs of its community, spiritual, moral and physical.

27. Our partner Synods and the Anglican Church provide health care through their six hospitals and primary health care work and opportunities for education through their many Primary Schools and the ten Secondary Schools. Our missionary personnel - teachers, chaplains, doctors and nurses - contribute much to these ministries of the Church and fulfil their calling to bear witness to Jesus Christ in difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances.

28. Zomba Theological College trains men and women for the ministry of the CCAP, the Anglican Church and the Churches of Christ and through the Wives' School prepares the family to share in the pastoral ministry. Several of our personnel serve in Zomba Theological College and make an important contribution in theological education and in-service training. Theological Education by Extension in Malawi (TEEM) provides Biblical and practical courses for Elders and church members to prepare them for preaching and teaching the word of God.

29. The four Synods of the CCAP in Malawi and Zambia are engaging in evangelism and many people have come to faith in Jesus Christ. Rev Daniel Gunya has recently been appointed General Secretary of the Blantyre Synod which is drawing up a plan for the development of the work of the Synod for the next five years. The Synod of Zambia continues its ministry in the Lundazi, Lusaka and Copperbelt Presbyteries to a widely scattered constituency and the work is co-ordinated by the General Secretary, Rev David Chiboboka.

30. The Student Christian Organisation in Malawi (SCOM) and Scripture Union make a significant contribution to the life and ministry of the Church in Malawi as they reach out to children and young people in schools, colleges, the university and in the workplace. Many young people are brought to a living faith in Jesus Christ through the witness of their contemporaries and both organisations seek to teach young people life skills that are in accordance with the Word of God.

31. The cry of the people of the **Sudan** is for 'peace' to be established, so that the civil war which has gone on for over forty years can be brought to an end. Two to three million southerners are still displaced in the North and many thousands are found in Northern Uganda, in Kakuma Camp in Northern Kenya and in the Gambela province of Ethiopia. **The Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS)** continues to grow among the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Anuak and Murlei peoples and ministers and evangelists care for their people in their scattered communities throughout Sudan and in Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia at great sacrifice to themselves and their families.

32. The Government of Sudan is seeking to control every aspect of life – education, employment for displaced persons and ownership of property to name but a few. Christians living in the North in camps are discriminated against and yet their spirit is not broken. The forces of Islam seek to convert the people of South Sudan with little success thus far. The Church of Jesus Christ, despite the persecution and the disruption to the life of their communities, stands firm in its faith in its Lord and Master.

33. The peoples of South Sudan constantly pray for peace and the right of self-determination. They also seek to provide education for the rising generation of potential leaders in Church and community and the partner churches of the PCOS which support this programme of leadership training which very often takes place in other parts of Africa or in Europe. Revs John Gatluok (Moderator) and Shawish Nyawelo (General Secretary) of the PCOS have the difficult task of restoring and maintaining the unity of the Presbyterian Church in the two geographically distinct parts of the Church.

34. Our relationship with the **Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Togo (EPCT)** has been enriched through the recent visit to PCI by Rev Matthew Ahoga, its General Secretary. We are being encouraged to relate to a Presbytery in the South of Togo and to become involved in evangelism, education and medical work. The Board will be discussing in the coming year how we develop our partnership in mission with the ECPT. We continue to support bursars at St Paul's United Theological College in Kenya and in the Faculty of Theology in Montpellier, France.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

35. **Brazil** is the largest country in Latin America with a population of some 160 million people of diverse cultural background and we have partnerships with the **Independent Presbyterian Church (IPI)** and the older **Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB)**. Both churches have vibrant national missions and Lynn & Heather Cochrane have been working with a team of IPI missionaries in the state of Paraiba in the North East for almost a year and have made some progress in planting a church in the town of Cruzeta. Mabel Colson

returned in January to the Caiua Mission after taking her Masters degree and engaging in deputation during 1999, and she expects to become Director of the Bible Institute this coming June.

36. A youth exchange visit with the IPI is planned for July 2000 and July/August 2001 with the PCI team going to Brazil this summer. Professor Bill Addley is to be in Brazil in July to give a series of lectures at the Fort Aleza Seminary of the IPI. We expect to receive visits from the representatives of both churches during the coming year and we have asked the IPI to identify a Minister who could work in a congregation or presbytery of our church for up to one year.

37. Rev Dr Maitland Evans returned to **Jamaica** last October after his study leave in England and has resumed his duties as General Secretary of the **United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands**. The Church is facing an acute shortage of Ministers and we hope to be able to offer a minister to serve in the United Church before the end of the year. The United Church, though numerically small, has a very important role in the life of the nation and has placed a strong emphasis on the value and work of the peoples in the Caribbean and shown great concern for the poor and marginalised in society. In many parts of the church there has been a renewal in the worship and witness of the people and a growing realisation of their calling to serve Jesus Christ in their local communities.

38. The United Church shows great concern for children, young people and the elderly and for the maintenance of family life which is a stabilising factor in society. Our personnel are privileged to share in this ministry through the Children's and Senior Citizens' homes. Volunteers and two teams from PCI have shared in this ministry and have returned home having achieved much, but also having learned much through serving Jamaican children.

39. The Institute for Theological and Leadership Development (ITLD) established in 1993, provides training for those preparing for the ministry of the United Church, and for lay people through the four councils (Presbyteries) of the United Church. We have been privileged to have two of our mission partners working as Associate Regional Directors in Cornwall and North Middlesex Councils during the past year.

MIDDLE EAST

40. At the time of writing the Middle East Peace Process has seen revival under the new Israeli Government, but progress has been intermittent. Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians are about to resume and there is hope that talks between Israel and Syria may also be resumed. In the event of talks with Syria not being resumed the Israeli government envisages a unilateral withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon by July. A recent opinion poll suggests that a majority in Israel would be in favour of some sort of land for peace agreement.

41. In **Israel** a Bill introduced in the last Knesset proposed penalties for anyone found guilty of 'preaching with the intention of causing another person to change his religion'. This bill ran out of parliamentary time and recent attempts to introduce similar legislation do not seem to have had much support.

42. The work at Stella Carmel has continued throughout the past year with the centre hosting international and local groups and the Messianic congregation continues to meet in the recently build worship centre. Colin & Marjorie Dickson and Fiona Sartawi (nee Smyth) returned on mid-term break after serving in Stella Carmel and the local community for two years. Avril Gracey left last December to take up the post of housekeeper at the Centre, initially for one year.

43. Rev Riah Abu El-Assal, Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, spoke of the millennium celebrations in Bethlehem, of the desire for a closer fellowship within the Christian community in Jerusalem and for a Church Council of the Holy Land. It was noted that the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) is seen to focus mainly on Egypt and Lebanon, and that the United Christian Council of Israel (UCCI) does not include the main churches.

44. We continue our partnership with the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in **Lebanon** whose Principal, Dr Mary Mikhael, expects to visit our church in May this year. A scholarship has been granted to a Sudanese student at NEST for a period of three years and the Board has made a grant to the Middle East Reformed Fellowship for its Arabic language broadcasts for a two year period.

ASIA

45. The religious and cultural diversity of the peoples of the continent of Asia present a major challenge to Christianity and the Christian Churches, and Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and traditional religions are dominant in most countries. In several countries Christians are being oppressed, the most recent examples coming from India and the Moluccan Islands in Eastern Indonesia. Yet there are many opportunities for the spread of the Gospel and we are privileged to share in this work through our serving personnel and through our partner churches in seven Asian countries. Indigenous churches and missionary societies work to proclaim the Gospel and establish churches among different people groups as well as in the denominational and united churches.

46. **India** is the largest democracy in the world with a population of some nine hundred million people. The democratic nature of India's peoples is becoming harder to maintain with the rising demand for the country to become a Hindustan and with the increased oppression of the Christian minority. India continues to grapple with the phenomenon of globalisation and the Christian Churches are concerned that this will have devastating effects on the rural peoples of India where most Christians are found.

47. We appreciate our growing partnership with the **Church of North India** (CNI) and especially with the dioceses of Gujarat and Agra, where Elizabeth Matthews has been serving for the past two years. The death of Bishop Morris Andrews of Agra in a road accident last year greatly affected the whole church. Rev S R Cutting, previously Diocesan Secretary, was installed as Bishop in January and the work in the diocese continues in spite of the loss of such a young and devoted Christian Minister.

48. Bishop Vinod Malaviya visited PCI in February and renewed many friendships. In Gujarat the church has experienced a forward thrust in the last few years in the areas of evangelism and church planting, training of Pastors and

lay people and in work among young people. Persecution of Christians in Gujarat is on the increase and is often concealed, for example well qualified young people find it difficult to obtain jobs and the diocese has opened up a training centre in computing for young people so that they may be helped to obtain jobs.

49. The Gujarat Auxiliary of the Bible Society of India has established a distribution and training centre in South Gujarat where many people from the Bhil (hill) peoples are becoming Christians. The Rural Service Centre, Ankleshwar, under the leadership of Idrack and Rachel Din, continues its ministry among the rural people and is a great encouragement to the Church. The Tract and Book Society publishes Bible reading notes and books in Gujarati and English and its ministry is valued by all who are able to read. The Gujarat Missionary movement supports eighteen persons working among the Bhil people in the north and east of the state.

50. Continued disputes over the ownership and use of properties registered under the Irish Presbyterian Mission Trust are a cause of great concern in the Church of North India. These disputes have gone on for over twenty five years and it is hoped to take steps to try to resolve these matters later this year.

51. PCI has been involved in education in India for many years, and Linda Jackson and Rev Brian Wilson have contributed much to the life of Woodstock School with Brian also ministering in some local CNI parishes. James & Willi Barton returned to India after furlough working as education consultants with a group of sixty secondary schools throughout North India and having a base in Goa where they share in the life, witness and service of the local church.

52. Christopher & Nivedita Macwan continue the work in the Asian community in **Wembley** through home visits and meetings for Bible study and prayer. Christopher visits in two hospitals and this brings him into contact with the wider Gujarati community. The Macwans receive support from the Wembley Park URC and the parish of St James', Alperton and the members of the Support Group. Christian witness in the Asian community continues to grow and a valuable contribution to the work among young people and children is made by the annual two week visit by a PCI Youth team whose members visit homes and help with Holiday Bible Clubs in the area.

53. The people of **China** today live in a spiritual vacuum since the 'something-to-believe-in' provided by ultra-leftist collectivist Maoist communist thought has disappeared and nothing has really taken its place. The 'spiritual vacuum', coupled with ever increasing access to information from the outside world has led several hundred millions of Chinese to turn to religion for the comfort and direction once provided by political ideology. China's constitution guarantees its citizens the right of religious freedom and many laws passed in recent years have helped uphold this right. It would appear that the Chinese Government and the 'party' see 'religion' in its popular form challenging its own authority, and so in recent months they have dealt ruthlessly with religious groups which, in their view, are getting out of hand.

54. Contacts have been maintained between the Churches in Britain and Ireland and the **Chinese Christian Church**. A delegation from the British and

Irish Churches visited Hong Kong (now part of China) from 4 to 11 March and a second delegation is due to visit China from 13 to 28 April. Eight Chinese Government officials visited Britain from 10 to 17 March as part of a longer visit to Europe.

55. Reports indicate that the church continues to grow and mature in its faith. In some areas it is relatively free, in others it suffers repression from local officials. The Amity Teachers' Programme, which commenced in 1986, continues to flourish. Stephen Graham will complete four years in Shangrao in July and return home and David Conkey will continue for a third year in Tai'an Teachers College.

56. The past year has been very traumatic for the Christians in the Moluccan islands of **Indonesia** and in East Timor. The situation in East Timor is gradually returning to some sense of normality, after Indonesia relinquished its claim to the territory last year, and the process of rebuilding and reconstruction is now gaining momentum, but will take many years to complete. Many of those who were driven out of East Timor have still to return and engage in the process of rehabilitation and re-building.

57. In mid 1999 violence flared up in Ambon and several other islands in the South Moluccas with Christians being killed or injured by Muslim militias from other islands. In Halmahera and other islands in the North Moluccas there were one or two incidents in the latter part of 1999 and, although Christians and Muslims wanted to maintain the peace that had existed in their communities for many years, in early December the Muslim militias attacked and burned the churches and institutions in Ternate and the ten thousand Christians fled across the sea to Manado in North East Sulawesi. The last two months have seen the Muslim militias take control of most of Southern Halmahera and Morotai and the Christians have held the Northern peninsula of Halmahera. Those whose villages have been burned have fled to the forests or to Manado and the western tip of Irian Jaya. As this report is being written a determined effort is being made to expel all Christians from Halmahera and the neighbouring islands.

58. For the last ten weeks we have spared no effort to persuade the Indonesian Government to act to restore law and order in Halmahera and Morotai with little success so far. We have called our Church to pray for the people of the Moluccan Islands and we have helped with the relief efforts that are taking place in Manado, where sixty thousand people are being cared for in refugee camps. The Minahasa Church is paying and supporting nearly thirty Ministers who escaped from Halmahera and releasing them to work in the refugee camps. We do not know what the future holds for the Christians in the Moluccan Islands, but we do know that the God whom we worship and serve is sovereign in the affairs of nations and peoples.

59. Elsewhere in Indonesia the Church grows numerically and in faith in a gracious and loving God. We continue to share with our partner Churches in Sumba and Timor, and Mervyn McCullagh is now in his second year teaching English in the College of Economics in Sumba. At time of writing the Moderator and Mrs Lockington, accompanied by Nigel Eves, are on a three week visit to Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand. They will visit the Christian Churches in Sumba and Timor and then travel to Kalimantan to attend the General Assembly of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI), where they will have

opportunities to meet with delegates from some of the sixty-five member churches of the PGI.

60. The past year in **Nepal** has been one of growth in the churches, and Christian fellowships have been established in every part of Nepal. There is need for unity among the churches and fellowships. The United Mission to Nepal (UMN) is seeking to facilitate the establishment of local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) to assist in the development of communities in rural parts of Nepal. Our personnel serving in the United Mission to Nepal are involved in local churches in a way that respects the need to develop Nepali leadership. They are also involved in medical and educational work, in a hydro-electricity scheme and in the administration of UMN, and are able to bear witness to their faith in Jesus Christ through their daily work and relationships.

61. The Board of UMN meets in early May and, in addition to receiving reports from each project, the Board will be discussing, among other matters, if and how UMN can partner Nepali Churches in the future, taking into account the terms of the UMN's General Agreement with the Government of Nepal. The General Agreement comes up for renewal this year and already negotiations are taking place in respect of a new five year agreement for the UMN. Michael Askwith resigned last December as Executive Director of UMN after only one year in post and Norma Kehrberg has been appointed for the year 2000 to give time for a new Executive Director to be identified.

62. We have kept closely in touch with the **Presbyterian Church in Pakistan** over the past year and have continued to support the training of Pastors in the rural areas. Last year the then Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, proposed that the supreme law of Pakistan be based on the Koran, but before this could be passed through parliament there was a military coup and the proposal was taken no further. This coup happened when the Government was in the process of denationalising the former Church Schools and ten were to be handed back to the Presbyterian Church to be managed by its Education Board. Five schools continue to make amazing progress, teachers are given additional training to enhance their skills, clear standards are being followed, the school premises are gradually being upgraded and students are learning in a loving Christian environment. Gujranwala Theological Seminary expects twenty two BTh and M Div students to graduate at Easter and the Church hopes to find suitable placements for all in congregations or in other ministries.

63. Our partner in mission is the **Church of Christ in Thailand** and we have supported the ministry of the Church's Bible correspondence course known as the Lamp of Thailand, whose Director is Mrs Supaporn Insaeng. The Lamp continues to expand its Bible correspondence courses and its follow up work in schools, prisons and in the rural areas. The Moderator and Mrs Lockington accompanied by Nigel Eves are due to visit the Church and the Theological College, Payap University, the McCormick hospital and the McKean leprosy rehabilitation centre in Chiangmai. Rev Peter & Heather Lyle also visited Thailand during the year and were very impressed with the ministry of the Lamp.

64. The **Presbyterian Church in Myanmar** (PCM) - formerly Burma - continues to proclaim the Gospel to the people in the North and progress is being made in every area of the Church's life and witness. We continue to support

training in Tahan Theological College and we share with the Churches in New Zealand in supporting Rev Soe Min and his wife Puli studying in the International School of Theology in the Philippines.

MISSION EDUCATION

65. We acknowledge the need to identify effective and relevant ways of implementing the recommendations on mission education, as set out in last year's report. Accordingly, we have begun to assess what steps may need to be taken, particularly in relating to the 20 to 35 age group, and in fostering in PCI members and congregations a greater sense of ownership of their responsibilities in world mission.

66. Our main millennium celebrations will be at our overseas rally to be held on Tuesday 10 October and at our residential conference to be held on 15 & 16 October with the theme "Into the new Millennium".

67. In recent years there has been a revolution in communications technology, particularly in the use of e-mail and the Internet. We are very aware that increasing numbers of people, particularly the young, are 'surfing the net' daily, as they look for information on a host of topics. If we are to communicate with these people we must go and meet them where they are. Consequently, over the next year we will be assessing how we can develop and enhance the information presented through the Overseas Board's section of the PCI web site.

68. A one-day seminar for Presbytery mission agents was held in Cookstown last May, at which 14 Presbyteries were represented. The programme included: 'The Role of the Mission Agent', 'Promoting Mission Interest', 'Presbytery Mission Tours', 'Deputation', 'Mission Education Resources' and an update on 'PCI's Involvement Overseas'. It was generally felt that this was a worthwhile exercise, which needs to be repeated at least bi-annually.

69. Presbytery mission agents have an important role in conveying overseas news and information to each Presbytery meeting and in meeting with congregational mission agents to encourage them as they promote overseas mission in their congregations. We would encourage Presbyteries to consider which of their nominees to the Overseas Board, either minister or elder, is best fitted to fulfil the role of Presbytery mission agent.

70. Presbytery Mission Tours were held in Templepatrick, Omagh and Down in the second half of 1999 and in Derry & Strabane, Ballymena, Coleraine and Foyle early in 2000. Further tours are due in Newry, Dromore, Dublin & Munster and North Belfast in the autumn of this year and in Carrickfergus, Monaghan, Route, Armagh, East Belfast, Iveagh and Tyrone during 2001. A new computerised deputation diary system, which was introduced in January 2000, is proving to be an invaluable aid to staff in both the Overseas and PWA offices. Deputation bookings are now being handled quickly and efficiently by both offices as everyone has immediate access to the latest booking information. We are indebted to the PWA Office for taking on the task of following up all requests for Overseas Deputation speakers and for confirming arrangements with both speakers and venues.

71. The past year has seen a marked increase in the persecution of Christians in a number of different areas of the world and with it has come the

plea to pray for situations of great need. Prayer requests for many other practical needs have also continued to reach us. In this context, it has been encouraging to see our weekly Prayerline service go from strength to strength and playing an important role in:

- keeping PCI members up to date with the latest overseas news;
- encouraging more people to pray regularly;
- enabling prayer to be more specific and we believe, under the sovereign hand of almighty God, also more effective.

A year ago Prayerline was being sent to around 200 e-mail addresses each week. Now the total is over 460 of which more than 200 belong to PCI ministers. Prayerline continues to be available as a recorded telephone message on 028 9032 6009, with an average of 60 calls being made each week.

72. Responsibility for producing the Points for Prayer handbook and the supplementary Prayer Update leaflets lies with the Communications department. After consultation with the department, it was decided to reduce the number of issues of the Prayer Update leaflet this year from five to three, covering the periods April to June, July to September, and October to December. The increased use and immediacy of Prayerline, difficulties in obtaining written material and increasing production costs have all contributed to this decision. However, before any decisions are made concerning Prayer Updates for 2001 we will be seeking church-wide feedback on the changes introduced this year.

73. In March this year, a questionnaire was circulated to all ministers to ascertain the uptake and extent of use of the 1999 edition of World News, as well as to obtain comments on its content and coverage. Feedback received through this questionnaire will assist us in planning the content, focus and print numbers for this year's edition, which is due to be available for distribution to congregations through Presbyteries at the end of August.

74. Sixty five congregations have purchased full sets of our Europe File videos (produced in 1998 and priced at £15), and we would encourage others to purchase this useful resource for their congregations. We expect to produce a further series of videos later this year for use in 2001.

PERSONNEL, VISITS AND VISITORS

75. During the year the following missionaries passed to higher service: Mrs Nan Hunter (nee Platt), India 1937-70, Mrs Maeve Hezlett, India 1934-64 and Mrs Nora Cromie, India 1938-70.

76. We give thanks to God and record our appreciation for the faithful witness and service of Sharon Creighton in the Tutorial Group in Tansen, Nepal 1996-98.

77. Our missionaries' reports for 1999 indicate that, while they face many frustrations in the situations where they live, work and witness, they have been faithful to their calling to work for the extension and up-building of the Church of Jesus Christ and that they are committed to the spread of the Gospel in word and deed together with their national co-workers. Our missionary personnel are experiencing a growing opposition to the proclamation of the Gospel and the growth of Christ's Church coming from fundamentalist groups of Hindus and Muslims. They are also experiencing a rise in violence in the

situations where they serve, and steps have been taken to provide them with adequate security.

78. In the past year the following visits were made to attend consultations called by our partner churches and the United Mission to Nepal, and to meet with our missionaries to encourage them and listen to their pastoral concerns as they serve in their mainly rural situations: Rev Terry McMullan to Kenya to visit the PCEA and our personnel and to attend the Sudan consultations, to Malawi with Rev Robin Quinn to meet with the Synods of the CCAP and with our personnel, and to Canada to attend a consultation with the Church of North India and Church of South India; Rev Alan Martin to Romania to attend a Reformed Church consultation on ethnic minorities and to visit our personnel; Rev John Kirkpatrick to the Czech Republic; Nigel Eves to Indonesia with the Moderator and Mrs Lockington to visit our partner churches in Sumba and Timor and our personnel, and to attend as delegates the General Assembly of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia and to visit our partner churches in Singapore and Thailand; and Nigel Eves to Nepal to attend the UMN Board meeting and visit our personnel in their different locations.

79. During the year twelve missionaries were appointed to serve short or long term overseas in the Czech Republic (1), in Spain (1), in Nepal (2), and in Malawi (8) (see Appendix). We thank God for these new missionaries and would encourage our people to pray for and support them as they and their children settle into their new locations. In addition three Volunteers in Mission are serving for up to one year in Hungary (1), Malawi (1), and Nepal (1).

80. The Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World (CSCNWW) in New College, Edinburgh, has experienced much growth over the past ten years. Dr Jack Thompson is a Senior Lecturer in the Centre and supervises international students equipping them for church leadership overseas. He and his wife Phyllis have a keen interest in overseas students and in the Church in Africa, especially Malawi, where they served for thirteen years. Dr Thompson is currently Senior Mission Scholar in Residence at the Overseas Ministries Study Centre, Connecticut (USA) working with students from the world Church preparing for mission service in many parts of the world with Phyllis helping pastorally with the students. We congratulate Dr Thompson on his recent appointment, effective from 1 October 2000, as Lecturer in World Christianity in the University of Edinburgh.

81. Last summer fifteen young adults served as volunteers in India, Jamaica, Kenya and Malawi and several medical students spent up to two months on overseas elective placements in the institutions of our partner churches. An all-age group exchange visit took place between the Church of the Brethren in the Czech Republic and a group of congregations in PCI; an all-age team went to Romania to teach English in camps and holiday Bible clubs; and Youth Board teams went to the Dorcas Camp in Debrecen in Hungary to work with disabled children from Chernobyl; to the Czech Republic to visit the children's hospice of the Klicek Foundation and other work of the Church of the Brethren; and to Wembley to work with the Macwans in holiday Bible clubs in two of the local churches. We received an all-age group from the Alpes Rhone region of France, led by Pascal Geoffroy and Rodney and Denise Cameron, which was facilitated by the Youth Board. We rejoice with these young adults

in their experiences last summer and thank them for the deputation meetings they have undertaken throughout our Church during the past year.

82. During the year we were happy to receive the following visitors from our partner churches:

Rev Josua Kodu Bili and Rev Octavianus Anduwatju from the Christian Church in Sumba;

Rev Prof James Haire, President-Designate of the Uniting Church of Australia, visited PCI to consult with the Overseas Board regarding Indonesia and to receive a DD from the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland;

Rev Patrick and Mrs Lilian Rukenya: Mr Rukenya is the Secretary General of the PCEA in Kenya who was making his first visit to PCI to attend the General Assembly;

M. Hope Nenonene from the Eglise Evangelique Presbyterienne du Togo, a PhD student in Montpellier, France;

Rev Dr Lawrence & Mrs Anastacia Mbagara: Dr Mbagara is the full-time Secretary to PCEA's Training & Personnel Committee;

Pastors and lay person from the Spanish Evangelical Church for discussions with PCI regarding Mission and Evangelism;

Rev A N Aesh, Ketua/Moderator of the Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera, to PCI to consult with the Board and visit our Church;

Rev Maurice Munthali, Chaplain of Ekwendeni CCAP Hospital, Malawi;

Rt Rev V M Malaviya, Bishop of Gujarat, India;

Pasteur Matthew Ahoga, Secretary-General of Synod of the Eglise Evangelique Presbyterienne du Togo;

Rt Rev Kalman Csiha, Bishop of the Transylvanian District of the Reformed Church in Romania;

Rev John Gatluok Chol (Moderator) and Rev Shawish Nyawelo Kir (General Secretary) of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan.

We provided scholarships for the following bursars from our partner churches:

Rev Julius and Mrs Anita Khristy, from Gujarat Diocese, for one year's study at Union Theological College and pastoral and counselling experience;

Rev Stefan Paluchnik, from the Church of the Brethren, Czech Republic, for study and pastoral experience;

Sangster Nkhandwe, Co-ordinator of Development Department, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi, for a one year Masters Degree in Rural Social Development in the University of Reading;

Rev George & Mrs Susan Vidits, from Hodos village in Romania, to Union Theological College/Newcastle for study and relating to members in Newcastle Presbyterian Church, the partner of Hodos Reformed Church.

THE HOME BASE

83. The Overseas Office, situated on the second floor of Church House, is the administrative centre of the overseas mission and we record our sincere thanks to our devoted staff for their hard work during the past year and for the way in which they have dealt with inquiries and welcomed the public seeking information about the work of PCI overseas. Our new computers are up and

running well, but with occasional problems, and this has increased the efficiency of our office.

84. After spending 12 years serving in Malawi (1969 to 1981), Rev Jim Campbell became a member of the Southern (now Africa, Caribbean & Latin America) Committee in 1983. A year later he became its Chairman and he brought to the work of the Committee his wide knowledge of the Church in Africa, and of the situations in which our missionaries serve. Mr Campbell travelled on behalf of the Board to Kenya and Malawi in 1988 for a visit which brought considerable encouragement to our partner Churches and to our mission personnel. Appointed in 1993 as Convener of the Board, Mr Campbell has given himself unstintingly to the overseas work of our Church, in attendance at Committee, Board and staff meetings, in interviewing applicants for overseas service and in travelling to attend consultations with our partner Churches in Africa and Asia. We appreciate all that Mr Campbell has contributed to the work of the Overseas Mission of our Church over the past 31 years as missionary and Convener, and wish to thank the congregation of Cooke Centenary, Belfast for releasing him from his preaching and pastoral responsibilities to represent our Church overseas.

85. Very Rev Dr John Dixon has for 15 years given himself fully to every aspect of the work of the Board and especially its partner Church relations in Asia and has met with those who were inquiring about missionary service with our Church. Dr Dixon's keen interest in overseas mission came through the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) and he has been a member of the Irish Council of OMF since 1982 and its Chairman since 1986. In 1988 he and his wife Claire visited missionaries in several countries in South East and East Asia on behalf of the Fellowship. Dr Dixon has represented the Board on the China Forum, has visited India and Nepal on our behalf and, during his year as Moderator of the General Assembly, he and his wife made official visits to our partner Churches and personnel in Brazil and Jamaica, where he attended the Synod of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. We give thanks to God for Dr Dixon's valuable contribution to the work of the Board over the past 15 years, and to the congregation of First Antrim for allowing the Board to use him for the work of the Overseas Mission of our Church.

86. Rev Principal John Cecil McCullough served as a missionary of our Church in Lebanon from 1975 to 1984, where he served as Professor of New Testament and for some years as Academic Dean in the Near East School of Theology (NEST) where he was known as John. His experience overseas was enhanced by the four years he spent as Professor of New Testament in Knox College of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand, returning to Ireland and to Union Theological College in 1988. Principal McCullough maintained his interest in Middle East Christianity and in the European Churches in the intervening years and he brought his wealth of experience and his concern for mission and evangelism to his convenership of the Europe and Middle East Committee. We appreciate greatly the valuable contribution Principal McCullough has made to the work of the Board and his visits to the Middle East and to Europe of behalf of our Church during these past seven years. We wish him well in his work as Principal of Union Theological College in the coming days.

87. The Presbyterian Women's Association contributes to the work of the Overseas Board and its seven working committees through its Executive Secretary, Central President and Overseas Vice-President and Treasurer and, from June 2000, through seven members of its Executive Committee. They bring to the work of the Board their vision and enthusiasm for mission in the new Millennium and also entuse others to share in this very important work.

88. The Board ended the year with a deficit in its current account of about £39,000 which was due to unexpected expenditure in maintaining our missionaries overseas and to some increases in administration costs and overseas grants, and we have asked the United Appeal Board to cover this deficit out of its income in the year 2000. As reported last year, with over seventy long and short-term missionaries serving overseas, we will only be able to send new missionaries overseas as serving missionaries return home after completing their term of service.

89. We are encouraged at the support received by the Overseas Mission from individuals and congregations of the General Assembly in the following ways:

- the quality of the people who offer for missionary service;
- the dedicated support of our missionaries and their colleagues in our partner churches in prayer and finance;
- the willingness of individuals to support the Overseas Mission through the United Appeal and in extra-mile giving.

During 1999 over £400,000 was donated by individuals, groups, organisations and congregations for special projects and to support the development ministries and health care of our partner churches and missions.

90. The pastoral care and safety of our missionaries and their families is of great concern to the Board. During the past year we have been reviewing how the best pastoral care can be provided for all of our personnel who serve under the direction of our partner churches and united missions, often in remote rural areas. Doctors and nurses working in partner church hospitals continue to be exposed to viral diseases in the course of their daily work, and we are continually up-dating our 'Advice and Guidelines regarding the provision of best medical care for those who experience accidental occupational exposure to virus infections especially to HIV'.

91. The Board gives thanks for all of its members and others who give their time and expertise to the work of the Overseas Mission by travelling to attend consultations and visit missionaries in our partner churches and by their attendance at one or more of our seven committees, by interviewing those inquiring about missionary service and by speaking on behalf of the Overseas Mission in congregations and organisations. We also thank the Kirk Sessions of several congregations for releasing their Ministers to travel overseas on behalf of the Board.

92 We congratulate and say thanks to the children and young people who contributed over £80,000 to the Making a Difference in Europe project which is being used to help build and equip a children's hospice in the Czech Republic, provide for work among street children in Romania and to enable Scripture Gift Mission to produce scriptures for street children world-wide; to the Young Women's Groups whose members contributed £10,000 to provide medical

supplies and AIDS education for the five CCAP hospitals in Malawi; to the Presbyterian Women's Association whose Birthday Thank Offering Fund provided £29,130 for student and staff accommodation at Zomba Theological College in Malawi; and to the Junior Boys' Brigade of our Church who contributed £17,000 to supply a generator for Tansen hospital in Nepal.

93. Through our membership of Global Connections and our attendance as Observers at the Forums of the Churches Commission On Mission we have received much information about new developments in world mission and have shared fellowship with those called to fulfil the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. An ad-hoc group continues to study and keep abreast of developments and trends in missiology and to research mission issues.

94 We conclude this report by giving thanks to God our Father, to Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord and to the Holy Spirit who sustains, strengthens and guides us, as we seek to fulfil our calling to go and make disciples of all nations. To God be the Glory.

APPENDIX A

Responses received by the Board to the recommendations contained in the Revised Policy and Recommendations received by the General Assembly in 1999

Recommendation 1

- that we need to find a new word or phrase to describe the person who is still called 'a missionary' and is sometimes called 'a mission partner' or 'a co-worker';

Agreed that it would be difficult to dispense with the use of the term 'missionary', but we should consider the use of the terms 'missionary' and 'mission partner' in the following way:

ie those whom we send are called 'missionaries' and those who are sent become 'mission partners' in the partner churches in which they serve.

Recommendation 2

- that we need to relate to the new generation of Christians, the present 'teens and twenties' age group, and communicate in ways that they will easily understand;

We are consulting with the Youth Board as to how we can better relate to and communicate with the present teens and twenties age group in respect of overseas mission.

Recommendation 3

- that we need to strengthen the links with our partner Churches in the receiving and sending of personnel, in the sharing of resources on a Church to Church basis and in decision-making;

This recommendation was remitted to the three area committees and a summary of their discussions is set out below:

Receiving and sending of personnel: PCI is strong on the sending of personnel, but has not been able to receive many people from our partner churches apart from all age and youth teams. We must work at this in the coming days, but we must also recognise that our partner churches are not able to release their best personnel to meet our needs. In recent years the Presbyterian Church USA and the Church of Scotland have been inviting two or three ministers or church workers to visit and speak to congregations for a period of 5-6 weeks. Occasionally they will invite a minister and spouse to visit. This appears to be quite successful and avoids the need for partner church personnel to be away for one or two years.

Sharing of Resources on a Church to Church basis: PCI is strong on making grants to our partner churches and institutions, but we have to find ways of enabling our partner churches to share their resources with us. It is important that in our Consultations with our overseas partner churches the questions is asked, 'What can you share with PCI?' It is important that our partner churches are enabled to identify the resources that they can share with us since we are all part of the one body of Christ.

Sharing in decision making: The reality is that PCI interviews and decides who should become a candidate for missionary service, which partner church they should be offered to, and how they should be trained. We have to find ways of enabling our partner churches to share in this decision making process in respect of personnel. One way may be to ask that they provide a personnel specification and job description for the person they wish to invite to work within their church. We should also use any opportunity for leaders from our partner churches to meet those who are offering to work in their church. Occasionally in the past we have sent a candidate to the particular country so that the partner church can meet them and come to their own decisions and the candidate can understand more of the work they may be called to do.

This works the other way as well. When we invite a minister to come to PCI, do we want to make the choice or are we content to leave it to the partner church to identify a suitable person? PCI has tended to proceed in the latter way, but this presupposes that persons from the partner church are familiar with our church and the cultural, religious and political context in which we live in Ireland.

The same principles apply to financial decision making. At the moment we invite our partner churches to make known their priority needs, but we take decisions on these grant applications. We must continue to find ways to enable our partner churches to share fully in the financial decision making process, and we must remind ourselves that it is God's money we share and not our own.

From the above responses it is clear that this recommendation is one that we must be constantly working at in the coming years, so that the partnerships we have established are working for the good of all of the churches with whom we are partners in the Gospel.

Recommendation 4

- that we need to enable congregations and Presbyteries of PCI to establish partnerships with congregations in our partner churches which will result in the sharing of resources and visits by personnel;

It was agreed to determine if the Presbytery Mission Agent could have a role in enabling congregations and Presbyteries to establish partnerships with congregations in our partner churches, which would result in the sharing of resources and visits by personnel. Up to this time most of these partnerships have been facilitated by the Overseas Board.

Recommendations 5 & 6

- that we need to foster a greater sense of ownership of our overseas mission by individuals, congregations, organisations and Presbyteries and to provide to all who are supporting the overseas mission general and specific information and prayer topics on a regular basis;

- that we need to further develop a heart for God's world and God's work in the whole wide world and adopt a much more wide-ranging approach to the complex question of resourcing people to support and pray for world mission.

These two recommendations were remitted to the Education Committee and a summary of the discussion is set out below:

The Committee will assess what further steps need to be taken particularly in regard to the following:

- Relating to the 'new generation', i.e. those in the 20 to 35 age group.
- Fostering in PCI members a greater sense of 'ownership' of their responsibilities in world mission, both as individuals and as congregations.
- Keeping on eye on the 'what' and 'how' of communication and in seeking to use any technological advances which may benefit the cause of mission education, as well as providing appropriate education resources for those who support overseas mission, whether they be individuals or groups.

APPENDIX B

In the report most of the names of missionaries and volunteers-in-mission have not been mentioned but their names and spheres of service are listed below and are to be taken together with this report.

BRAZIL

Mabel Colson	1990	Caiuá Indian Mission, Dourados
Lynn & Heather Cochrane	1996	Independent Presbyterian Church National Mission in Paraiba State

INDIA

James & Willi Barton	1966	Education Consultants, Goa
Linda Jackson	1996	Woodstock School
Norman & Joan Duncan	1994	Layman's Evangelical Fellowship and CNI
Brian Wilson	1996	Woodstock School and CNI
Elizabeth Matthews	1998	St John's College, Agra and CNI

ISRAEL

Avril Gracey 1999 Stella Carmel Centre

JAMAICA

James & Pat Cameron 1990 Directors, Children's Homes
 Leonora Wasson 1994 Associate Regional Director, Cornwall Council
 Christine McMahon 1998 Director of United Church Senior Citizens' Home

KENYA

Stephen & Angelina Cowan 1985/9 Outreach & Development Work, PCEA Tuum
 Deborah Ford 1996 Teaching at Presbyterian College, Kikuyu
 Naomi Martin 1991 PCEA Teachers' College, Rubate
 Derek & Linda Roulston 1998 Development work: Honi Farm, PCEA
 Paul & Anne Bailie 1998 Presbyterian College, TEE and teaching at Daystar University and Alliance Boys' High School
 Andrew & Clerah Clenaghan 1999 Development work, PCEA at Zombe in Kitui District

MALAWI

Freda Algie 1969 Principal, Wives' School, Zomba Theological College
 Richard & Brenda Kerr 1991 Synod Health Co-ordinator and Education Department, Mzuzu
 Margaret Young 1995 Midwife, Ekwendeni Hospital
 Diane Cusick 1995 Wives' School, Zomba Theological College
 Dick & Moreen Gordon 1996 Zomba Theological College & St Luke's Hospital
 Colin Dick 1996 Medical Officer at Ekwendeni Hospital
 Neil & Sara Kennedy 1997 Medical Officer & Teaching, Embangweni
 Clare McIntyre 1997 Karonga Girls' Secondary School
 Shirley Rutherford 1997 Naming'azi Farm Training Centre
 Stephen & Ruth McCracken 1999 Chaplaincy in Synod Schools and teaching at Ekwendeni Girls' Secondary School
 *Maurice & Sheila McNicholl 1999 Projects Office, Blantyre Synod
 *John & Rosemary Hanson 1999 Chaplain, Blantyre Synod

NEPAL

Linda McKee	1985	Assistant to Executive Director, UMN
Joy Gowdy	1992	Tutorial teacher, Butwal
Pauline Orr	1993	Nurse/Tutor, Tansen Nurse Campus
Amanda Christie	1995	Kathmandu
David & Sandra Rodgers	1995	Director, Amp Pipal Hospital
Helen Johnston	1996	Acting Personnel Director, UMN
Peter Lockwood	1996	Khimti Hydro Power Project
Richard & Denise Ross	1996	Gandaki Boarding School
*Adam & Lorraine Coupe	1999	Communications and Patan Hospital

ROMANIA

Ilona Veres	1993	On study leave
Nigel Craig	1998	Teaching English & Church Work

FRANCE

Gordon & Sandra Campbell	1989	Reader in New Testament in Free Faculty of Reformed Theology in Aix-en-Provence
Rodney & Denise Cameron	1998	Eglise Réformée de France: Parish of Privas and Flaviac

GREAT BRITAIN

Jack & Phyllis Thompson	1970	New College, University of Edinburgh
Christopher & Nivedita Macwan	1989	Working among Asians in Wembley

Short term missionaries serving for a minimum of two years, are supported in overseas locations. Their names and spheres of service are as follows -

CHINA

Stephen Graham	1996	Teaching English, Shangrao Teachers' College
David Conkey	1998	Teaching English, Tai'an Teachers' College

INDONESIA

Mervyn McCullagh	1998	Teaching English & writing English courses in Christian Church in Sumba
------------------	------	---

NEPAL

Valerie Moore	1998	Kathmandu International Study Centre
William Rose	1998	Medical Officer, Tansen Hospital

MALAWI

Donald & Patricia McNutt	1998	Teaching at Livingstonia Secondary School
--------------------------	------	---

*Donald & Una Brownlie	1999	Livingstonia Hospital
*Jill Gibson	2000	Teaching at Robert Laws Secondary School, Embangweni
*Richard Gracey	2000	Teaching at Ekwendeni Girls' Secondary School

CZECH REPUBLIC

*Susan Clarke	1999	Managing Outreach Café, Ostrava
---------------	------	---------------------------------

SPAIN

*Mark Henderson	1999	Spanish Evangelical Church, congregation in Torre del Mar
-----------------	------	---

*Appointed 1999/2000

Volunteers-in-Mission are sent into overseas locations for up to one year and their names and spheres of service are as follows:

NEPAL

Margaret Neill	1998/2000	Kathmandu International Study Centre
----------------	-----------	--------------------------------------

HUNGARY

Claire Maguire	1998	Teaching English in Miskolc
----------------	------	-----------------------------

MALAWI

Jeff Richardson	1999	Scripture Union, Malawi
-----------------	------	-------------------------

Candidates for Ministry on overseas placement:

KENYA

Karen Williams	1999	Daystar University and PCEA
----------------	------	-----------------------------

ON HOME LEAVE

Diana Winfield, formerly working in United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands

Fiona Sartawi (with her husband Shafei), formerly working in Stella Carmel Centre, Israel

Colin & Marjorie Dickson, formerly working in Stella Carmel Centre, Israel

APPENDIX C

PARTNER CHURCH & MISSIONS

We work together with partner Churches and United Missions and we list below those in leadership with their respective positions:

BRAZIL

Rt Rev Leontino dos Santos	President, Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil (IPI)
Rev Eber Ferreira Silveira Lima	Executive Secretary, Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil (IPI)
Rt Rev Guilhermino Cunha	President, Presbyterian Church in Brazil (IPB)
Rev Wilson de Souza Lopes	Executive Secretary, Presbyterian Church in Brazil (IPB)

CHINA

Bishop K H Ting	Hon. President, China Christian Council
Dr Wenzao Han	President, China Christian Council
Rev Su Deci	General Secretary, China Christian Council

CZECH REPUBLIC

Rev Pavel Cerny	President, Church of the Brethren
Mr Karel Fojtik	General Secretary, Church of the Brethren
Rev Pavel Smetana	President, Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren

FRANCE

Pasteur Michel Bertrand	President, Eglise Réformée de France (ERF)
Pasteur Marc Richalot	General Secretary (ERF)
Pasteur Yo Ludwig	Secretary: International Relations & Mission (ERF)

HUNGARY & ROMANIA

Bishop Gusztav Bolcskei	Presiding Bishop, Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary
Bishop Kalman Csiha	Transylvanian District of Reformed Church, Romania
Bishop Laszlo Tokes	Kiralyhagomellek District of Reformed Church, Romania

INDIA

Most Rev Vinod A R Peter	Moderator of the CNI Synod
Dr V S Lall	General Secretary of the CNI Synod
Rt Rev Vinod M Malaviya	Bishop of the Gujarat Diocese CNI
Rt Rev S R Cutting	Bishop of the Agra Diocese CNI

INDONESIA

Rev Dr Thobias Messakh	Moderator, Evangelical Christian Church in Timor
Rev A N Aesh	Moderator, Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera

Rev S S Duan	General Secretary, Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera
Rev Yosua Kodu Bili	General Secretary, Christian Church in Sumba

JAMAICA

Rt Rev Dr Gordon Evans	Moderator, United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands
Rev Dr Maitland Evans	General Secretary, United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands

KENYA

Rt Rev Dr Jesse Kamau	Moderator, Presbyterian Church of East Africa
Rev Patrick Rukenya	Secretary General, Presbyterian Church of East Africa

MALAWI*Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP)*

Rev K R M Nyirenda	Moderator, Synod of Livingstonia
Rev Dr O P Mazunda	General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia
Rev T N Maseya	Moderator, Synod of Blantyre
Rev D Gunya	General Secretary, Synod of Blantyre
Rev E N Kamunga	Moderator, Synod of Nkhoma
Rev A A Sasu	General Secretary, Synod of Nkhoma
Rt Rev C L Chimkoka	Moderator, CCAP General Synod
Rev J J Mphatso	Senior Clerk, CCAP General Synod

MYANMAR (BURMA)

Rev Dr Lalenzaua	Administrative Secretary, Presbyterian Church in Myanmar
------------------	--

NEPAL

Ms Norma Kehrberg	Executive Director, United Mission to Nepal
Pastor Robert Khartak	Senior Pastor of the Church in Nepal

PAKISTAN

Rev Dr Arthur James	Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
Rev Dr Maqsood Kamil	Executive Secretary, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
Rev Amos Maud	General Secretary, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

SPAIN

Rev Enrique Capo	President, Permanent Commission, Spanish Evangelical Church
------------------	---

Rev Alfredo Abad Secretary, Permanent Commission, Spanish Evangelical Church

SUDAN

Rev John Gatluok Chol Moderator, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan
 Rev Shawish Nyawelo Kir General Secretary, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan
 Rev Peter Rit Machar Associate Moderator, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan/Akobo
 Rev Peter Gai Lual Marrow Executive Secretary, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan/Akobo

THAILAND

Rev Dr Sint Kimhachandra General Secretary, Church of Christ in Thailand
 Mrs Supaporn Insaeng Director, Lamp of Thailand (a ministry of the Church of Christ in Thailand)

TOGO

Pasteur Fatsema Amiou Moderator, Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Togo
 Pasteur Mathieu Ahogo General Secretary, Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Togo

ZAMBIA

Rev David Chiboboka General Secretary, Synod of Zambia of the CCAP

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the faithful and dedicated witness and service of our missionary personnel and their families in many different and challenging cultural situations, and encourage the whole Church to pray for and support them and their national colleagues as they proclaim the Gospel in a rapidly changing world.
3. That the General Assembly welcome the participation of the Presbyterian Women's Association in the total work of the Overseas Board and encourage further co-operation in the coming days.
4. That the General Assembly welcome the growing fellowship with partner Churches in Europe, with the prayer that these relationships will develop and mature as the Gospel is proclaimed to the people of our own continent.
5. That the General Assembly give thanks for the life, witness and service of our partner Churches in Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Togo and Zambia, encourage them to take up the challenge of presenting the Gospel to Moslems and those who adhere to traditional religions, and support them as they seek to

cope with the AIDS epidemic, which is destroying family life and creating thousands of orphans.

6. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the growth of the Church in Sudan despite the devastating effect of the forty years of civil war, ethnic conflict, drought, floods and famine, and pray that the Presbyterian Church will experience a growing unity among its people from different ethnic backgrounds in the coming years.

7. That the General Assembly pray for God's blessing upon the life and witness of our partner Churches in Brazil and Jamaica as they minister to their peoples in urban and rural areas and to the marginalised in their societies.

8. That the General Assembly give thanks for the living faith of Arab and Jewish believers in the Middle East, support their continued witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and their desire for unity among Christians, and pray that a just and settled peace will soon be established in the region.

9. That the General Assembly praise God for the courageous witness to the Gospel by our partner Churches in Asia in the midst of growing religious intolerance and persecution, and pray that God will richly bless their efforts to establish and build up the Church of Jesus Christ.

10. That the General Assembly request the Overseas Board to continue its work of educating the Church for mission in today's world, with a relevant and focused emphasis upon the younger generation, and to seek new and challenging ways of encouraging our church family to share in the mission of Christ.

11. That the resignation of Rev S J Campbell as Convener of the Overseas Board be accepted, that he be thanked for his valuable contribution to the work of the Board for the past seventeen years and that Very Rev Dr John Dixon be appointed in his place.

12. That the resignation of Very Rev Dr John Dixon as Convener of the Asia Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his valuable contribution to the work of the Board for the past fifteen years and that Dr Max Watson be appointed in his place.

13. That the resignation of Rev Principal Cecil McCullough as Convener of the Europe and Middle East Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his valuable contribution to the work of the Board and that Mrs Maureen Patterson be appointed in his place.

14. That the Overseas Board, with its associated working committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 279 of the Code as follows:

HOME BOARD

Convener: Rev Dr J B MOORE

Secretary: Rev R F S POOTS, OBE

1. The new millennium finds Ireland in transition. In the Republic 'the human tide of emigrants has been lured home by an unprecedented economic boom', life is vibrant and young and traditional beliefs are giving way to a post-Catholic pluralism. The North on the other hand remains politically polarised and pocked by sporadic violence, its dissenting heritage often a veneer and its future uncertain.

2. The Home Board serves in both parts of Ireland. The location and ethos may be different but the task and challenge are the same. Its mission is

- to support established congregations, many small and scattered in the South and West, who worship God in Jesus Christ and urge them through the Spirit to be 'salt' and 'light' in their communities;
- to pinpoint strategic centres where new or experimental ministries may be pioneered comparable to Lucan and Kilkenny, Carlow, Clonmel, Mullingar, Moville and Belfast's Golden Mile;
- to reach out to people whoever and wherever they are, seeking opportunities to gain a point of contact with them, being as sensitive in our approach as possible, and always, whether we are witnessing to them of Christ or serving them in his name, showing love and compassion;
- to appoint students and licentiates to congregations as assistants and to support the work of Deaconesses and encourage them in their ministries.

3. The future will be one of change as the new Board of Mission in Ireland takes over from the Home Board and the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training.

Pray for us!

4. We pay tribute to the Board's office-bearers, to the Rev Rob Craig whose contribution as Home Mission Convener is invaluable, to the Rev Derek Poots, the Secretary and Deputy Clerk, whose unremitting labours and wise counsel are deeply appreciated, to Mrs Rosemary Thompson a most able and responsible Treasurer, to the Rev George Moffett and Mr Hubert Taggart, Conveners of Church Extension, for their untiring efforts, to the Very Rev Dr Samuel Hutchinson who convenes the Assignment Committee, to Mr J W Russell, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the hugely successful Mutual Society, and its Secretary, Mr Colin Ferguson.

5. One grievous loss we sustained during the past year was the death of Miss Elizabeth Brian, the Board's Co-Secretary. Miss Brian's service was brief but significant. We miss her terribly and commend her family and friends to the comfort of God.

6. We are grateful to Mrs Marbeth Russell for filling the vacancy most acceptably until the new Secretary is in post.

Retirement

7. The Home Mission wishes to acknowledge and express appreciation for the work of the Rev David Caskie, who has retired as Convener of the Home Mission Committee of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery. Mr Caskie was deeply committed to the work of the Home Mission and brought to the task a wealth of experience, balanced advice, a willingness to assist in any situation as well as gracious friendliness.

We welcome Mrs Cherry Poynton as his successor.

Retiring Convener

8. Mr Hubert Taggart, OBE, has been an efficient and effective co-convener of the Church Extension Committee. He brought to the task a lifetime of experience in the construction industry which enabled him to assess the condition of buildings and to give expert advice on what was required to remedy faults, make improvements or provide extensions.

9. Mr Taggart's personal enthusiasm, positive outlook, balanced judgement and desire to assist Church Extension Charges with buildings which were suitable for the presentation of the gospel into local areas as well as his concern to ensure that manses were comfortable and well maintained won him the respect of the Committee and of those who worship and serve in Church Extension.

10. In company with the Rev George Moffett, the most significant development, during his convenership, was the design and construction of the new church building at Movilla, Newtownards. The smooth administration of the contract can, to a large extent, be attributed to his interest, knowledge and skills.

ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE

1. Interviews for fifth year students were held on 20 December, 1999.
2. Thirteen requests for assistants were received but only four students were available for assignment, all of whom were placed. Numbers of students next year are likely to be a little higher.
3. Following the re-arrangement of Boards due to take place at this Assembly assignment becomes the responsibility of a committee of the re-named Board of Studies and Christian Training. It is therefore proposed that the present Assembly Committee, which has always reported through the Home Board, be discharged with the rest of that Board.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON, Convener

HOME MISSION COMMITTEE

PWA HOME DEPARTMENT

Mrs M Russell reports:

1. In 1999/2000 PWA has continued to work in association with the Home Mission Committee to "provide for the recruitment, training, organisation

and support of deaconesses and a woman worker in various areas of the Church's life and interest". There are 25 deaconesses and 1 woman worker serving within PCI.

Personnel

2. Recommendations from the PWA/Home Board Personnel Committee enabled various appointments and decisions to be made.

3. The Home Board pays tribute to two Deaconesses, Miss Elizabeth Boyd and Mrs Frances Martin, who retired at the end of 1999. Miss Boyd was Deaconess in St Columba's, Lisburn, and Mrs Martin was part-time Hospitals Chaplain in Dublin. Miss Frances Wright has been given leave to retire from Joymount congregation on the 30th April 2000.

4. Miss Carole Cathcart, St Enoch's and Hope House, resumed full-time duties from September 1999.

5. Miss Carole McRoberts moved from East Belfast Friendship House to Tullycarnet congregation in September 1999.

6. Mrs Sharon Heron returned to part-time work in Strand Presbyterian Church in February 2000 after the birth of baby Hannah.

7. Miss Anne Burrows (Belvoir Park Hospital) and Miss Sarah Swindle (Musgrave Park Hospital) will continue to work part-time from 1st February 2000 until further notice.

8. Mrs Jenny Robinson returned to Deaconess work after a prolonged break and commenced work as Deaconess in Kilcooley congregation on 1st January 2000.

9. Miss Evelyn Whyte attended the European Diakonia Conference in Sweden from 19th-24th June 1999. The theme of the conference was "People's Needs, People's Search – Our Response".

10. Mrs. Jackie O'Neill resigned from Christ Church Dundonald on 30th April, 2000 and took up a new appointment as deaconess in Joymount, Carrickfergus, on 1st May, 2000.

10. PWA has recruited two candidates for deaconess training in 2000/2001. Mrs Sadie McCullough and Miss Roberta Irvine commence a two year training course at Union Theological College in September 2000. Miss Sheila Sutter will undertake in-service training after commencing work as a probationary Deaconess in First Antrim on 1st May 2000.

Deaconess Training Fund

11. The Home Board is grateful that the Millennium Fund will give a much needed boost to the new Deaconess Training Fund.

12. The PWA Executive Committee reluctantly agreed after consultation to close East Belfast Friendship House at the end of August 1999. The Ballymac Friendship Trust was formed, recently acquired a property and hopes to obtain grants to operate a centre similar to the Vine in North Belfast. PWA and the Home Board express their thanks to Deaconess Miss Carol McRoberts, Mrs Lana McCandless and all the volunteers who have given such devoted service to EBFH over the years and would take this opportunity to wish The Ballymac Friendship Trust every success for the future.

13. A sub-committee under the Convenership of Rev Denis Bannerman continues to examine the Role of the Deaconess.

PRESBYTERIAN MUTUAL SOCIETY LIMITED

Mr J W Russell reports:

1. The Directors are pleased to report that the Society has continued to grow, with new investment reaching almost six million pounds during this financial year bringing the total assets to thirteen million pounds.

2. Interest rates have remained low during most of the year and consequently a dividend of 5% has been declared on all shareholdings for the financial year ended 31st March, 2000. This result still compares very favourably with rates of interest offered elsewhere over the last twelve months and the total dividend amounted to £530,000, which was distributed to 2,200 shareholders.

3. The Society continues to be very conscious of the deep crisis facing many farmers at this time and is attempting to alleviate the situation for individual borrowers by offering greater flexibility on loan repayment terms.

4. Congregations are also supported by the Society, which has provided loans totalling over three million pounds for the construction and refurbishment of church property during the last few years. A significant number of these are small congregations who find it difficult to meet the costs involved in the repair and maintenance of their buildings and the Directors are pleased to be able to assist not only them but also play a part in the expansion and development of thriving congregations who request financial backing for a range of projects.

HOME MISSION GENERAL

1. The Home Mission has continued to be a servant supporting the work of Ministers, their families and their congregations as they seek to extend the Kingdom of Christ in all four corners of Ireland, as part of which it has introduced an urban support scheme to enable congregations, set in the context of high population, low specified sources income and spiritual indifference to engage in time-limited, specific outreach projects.

Strategic Studies

2. Two recent studies have underlined the urgent need to seek ways of presenting the gospel through relevant and imaginative means with a priority on additional personnel rather than property in order to reach out to communities lost to the Church.

3. The Home Mission contributed IR£5,000 towards the cost of a study of the greater Dublin area, undertaken by the Rev Keith McCrory, which showed a decline of 16.6% in the number of contributing families in the last 20 years which was also a period of population growth. The study also showed that, generally speaking, Presbyterian congregations had been established to provide for Presbyterians from elsewhere and only in recent years has our Church begun to impact significantly on the community with growth of 252% and 218% in the Home Mission Charges of Lucan and Greystones.

4. A similar study in North Belfast revealed that 50% of those who claim to belong to a major denomination are not on the books of a Church and 75% of those on the books do not attend Church. The Home Mission has now made a £5,000 grant to enable a more definitive study of the North Belfast area.

Responsive Action

5. Close co-operation between the Home Mission and the Dublin and Munster Presbytery has been maintained and Presbytery has been asked to guide the Mission towards locations for further development, possibly by means of an agreed 10 year plan.

6. The Home Mission's response to perceived needs in Northern Ireland has been the making of two grants each worth £25,000 over three years, under the Urban Support Scheme. The first was paid to Ballysillan to enable outreach among younger unchurched parents whose children participate in church activities, and the second to West Kirk for work among young addicts who have fallen victim to the social ills of the area. The Home Mission has budgeted for the making of three grants a year.

Forward Thinking

7. The Rev Derek Poots made an autumn visit to Scotland to see how our sister Church is addressing new models of mission. These involve radical renovation, and sometimes the abandonment, of Church properties, and the appointment of a minister who, in some cases, has had to 'plant' a new congregation.

The Home Board has given approval for two one-day conferences at which visitors from Scotland will lead our thinking.

8. The Home Mission has also undertaken to bear the cost of a person coming from Scotland in a consultative capacity to assist the East Belfast Presbytery and the Kirk Session of Westbourne to assess the opportunities on the Newtownards Road and to consider the future style of ministry in that locality.

Traditional Roles

9. The Home Mission continues effective ministry in its more traditional roles. A year ago Ballina, Killala, and Ballymote were filled by the Induction of the Rev John Mann, as was Carrigart and Dunfanaghy to which Rev James Lamont accepted a Call, but vacancies occurred in Naas and Athy by the resignation of the Rev Ruth Gregg, and in Kells, Corboy and Mullingar when the Rev Chris Aitcheson resigned. Vacancies also occurred at Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler, at Carndonagh and Malin and at Howth and Malahide following the retirements of the Rev David Kirkwood, Rev Dr John Lappin and the Rev Dr William O'Neill. None of these vacancies has been filled, though the Rev Dr Gary Millar, Associate Minister in Hamilton Road, Bangor, has accepted a Call to Howth and Malahide. We thank God in acknowledgement of those who have served within the Home Mission family.

10. The Home Mission constantly lives in a tension between the desirable and the attainable. Further future development may be restricted by lack of finance, but far more serious is the scarcity of ministers who wish to explore the

service of God within the Home Mission. We ask for prayer, that contemporary opportunities for the advancement of the Kingdom may not be lost due to the lack of suitable applicants.

Ballinasloe

11. At certain times a Church is compelled to move backwards in order to advance and the Board has decided to place the near-derelict Church building at Ballinasloe on the market. The small Bible study group has shown no signs of growth and a proposed scheme, funded by Galway County Council Library Committee, to provide a joint worship and library facility in the old building came to be seen as restrictive to Church development coupled to which was the difficulty of raising funds.

12. In co-operation with the Methodist Church in this Alternating Ministries Charge, a formal approach will be made to the Church of Ireland for the use of a room in which the Bible study will be held and the situation will be monitored over the next few years.

St Patrick's, Waterford

13. On the other hand, development in Waterford is a Mission priority. Negotiations are under way with Waterford Corporation for the purchase of a site outside the city centre which would be an ideal base for a new church building. Local residents groups, who have been addressed by the Rev Stephen Hancock the present minister, are enthusiastically supportive of the concept of a community church. Discussions are also taking place to see how much and for what use the Corporation will permit the Church to sell off part of the old site in order to generate funds without which the cost of a new build may be difficult to meet. A use for the heavily listed present building will also require discussion.

Experimental Ministries

14. The experimental ministries continue to progress. Three year reviews of the ministries at Tullamore and Mountmellick and in Cahir/Fermoy are due this summer. How best to facilitate the ministry of the Rev Stephen Simpson at Mountmellick by way of the property is still under discussion. A major issue affecting the Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney will be whether his ministry would be enhanced if his Manse was to be moved from Clonmel to Fermoy.

Rev Stephen Johnston reports:

15. "*Your Church is modern, not old and holy*". This was one of the memorable comments made during this past year of life and work in Carlow. The comment came from a teenager who along with a significant number of others attended a Millennium Exhibition set up in the church last autumn. This was one of several ongoing opportunities we continue to enjoy in presenting the Good News of Jesus Christ in our community. We continue to be ably helped in the work by Philip and Liz Kelso (Irish Mission) and are grateful for this partnership approach.

16. Attendances at Sunday morning worship have remained steady and continue to encourage. The monthly evening events over the autumn and winter

have also been very encouraging and quite a number of new faces have ventured into the building for the first time. Work amongst children and young people and the opportunities afforded me as part-time chaplain in a local college have all been productive.

17. As a family we continue to be very settled in Carlow. The building up of relationships is such an important part of this ministry and in that respect we sometimes feel as if we are only getting started!

18. We are grateful to the Lord for every encouragement, and while we attempt many things in efforts to win people to Christ, we are also very conscious of the words of Jesus "*without me you can do nothing*". So we covet the prayers of the wider Church.

Rev Dr Samuel Mawhinney reports:

19. This is now the final year of the initial three year development ministry in Clonmel, Cahir and Fermoy, and at present our situation is being actively reviewed. As we look back over the last three years we can clearly see God's helping hand and are encouraged by what has been achieved. We are as a family settled and content in Clonmel and are grateful to God's people for their faithful support.

20. In Fermoy, a derelict church building has been refurbished, heating installed and regular weekly services at 10 o'clock established. God has added to the fellowship both by conversion and the drawing in of other Christians from the area. The Irish Mission partnership (Harry and Ann Moreland) has worked well and their contribution has been invaluable.

21. In Cahir, we have experienced ups and downs. Some people left and some new folks have come. Our last indigenous Presbyterian member, Mr John Bell, passed away and was buried in December 1999. The Irish Mission workers, Peter and Christine Maitland (Clonmel) have been a help and their presence an encouragement. We sense that God is moving after this difficult period, attendances have increased and a number of people have shown a keen interest to study God's word in the local hotel.

22. In Clonmel, despite various bible studies, special events and a Sunday night fellowship we have been unable to establish any viable and sustainable witness to date.

23. It is our hope and prayer that this development ministry should be continued. In view of the developments in Fermoy, a move there is being considered. We are under no illusion that this remains a very challenging ministry but are thankful to God for all that has been achieved and are confident of His help in the future.

Alternating Ministries Committee

24. The Committee received reports on an effective ministry in Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford marked by a spirit of full co-operation between the Churches. Limerick has proved to be a successful amalgamation and the congregation has been enriched by having people from other countries who are employed in local industries. Sad to say, Sandymount has suffered from a reduction in numbers, but care of the residents in the Mount Tabor Nursing

Home and the part-time chaplaincy at Tallaght Hospital provided a full-time job for the successor to the Rev Dr Robin MacDermott who retired at the end of June, 1999.

25. Consideration is being given to extending the Methodist eight year limit on a ministry in light of both the development of mission and new Methodist legislation on flexibility in itinerancy.

Nightlight

26. The seal of divine approval is still on Nightlight, and the Home Mission is grateful for the prayers and the donations from many individuals, congregations and groups throughout the Church.

27. Mr John Luke, the Director, is inundated with requests for deputation speaking and, under his enthusiastic leadership, 26 volunteers are available for ministry on the streets 4 nights a week.

28. The co-operation and support of the Kinghan Church and Great Victoria Street have been a source of strength and the venture of Fisherwick into night ministry proved to be an encouragement.

29. As a result of financial support from Young Women's Groups, the work was assisted by the employment of Mr Paul Jamison, as assistant to the Director, for one year. The Committee is considering the possibility of replacing him.

30. As a token of their further "fellowship in the Gospel" a cheque has been presented to Mrs Rosemary Thompson at the AGM of the Young Women's Groups to assist in refurbishing a room in Tullamore Church.

Deaconesses

31. A Committee, appointed by the Board, has undertaken a major review of the Status of the Deaconess and of deaconess training, which is printed as an appendix to this Report. Appropriate resolutions are also appended.

Deaconess Training

32. Consultation with Union College, now the main provider of deaconess training, has continued and a scheme agreed as follows:

- Year 1**
- candidates to attend UTC for 4 days per week
 - candidates to undertake two '8 week placements' during year.
 - 1 in a congregation; 1 in special work (Hospice, Friendship House)
 - 1 complete course of 4 basic module
 - (Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Christian Thought)
 - attend lectures and tutorials for each basic module
 - module assessment by 2 essays worth 60% plus viva (40%) attended by tutor, DMS, PWA
 - also complete 2 basic practical modules
 - candidates will have choice of a third practical module

- Year 2** - candidates to attend UTC for 3 days per week
- also undertake a probationary placement in a congregation (1 day per week over one year)
 - one day per week is allowed as a 'study day'
 - complete 2 basic module courses
 - (Irish Church History plus one other)
 - attend lectures and tutorials for each basic module
 - module assessment by 2 essays worth 60% plus viva (40%) attended by tutor, DMS, PWA
 - also complete 2 basic practical modules
 - ('PCI Orientation' & 'Essential Ministry Skills')
 - Ministry Project (5-8,000 words) to be studied and written up

DMS = Director of Ministerial Students

PWA = Presbyterian Women's Association

PCI = Presbyterian Church in Ireland

33. It is important to note that the scheme will be sufficiently flexible to meet individual requirements, will continue to evolve as experience dictates and is aimed to provide a sound training for deaconess candidates.

Induction Scheme

34. The Home Board recently approved a scheme to assist ministers and their families to settle into the new ethos and social environment of Home Mission Charges. The initial training course will last for several days and will be followed up, in subsequent years, by shorter opportunities to learn and discuss together.

35. More detailed plans are being considered in consultation with a group of Home Mission Ministers and the Irish Mission.

Conclusion

36. We thank God for every sign of His blessing on the work of Home Mission and ask the Church to continue in prayer and practical support for the Gospel-based ministry at a time of opportunity and visionary progress under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

R L CRAIG, Convener

APPENDIX

THE ROLE OF THE DEACONESS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

1. As the result of representation made by the Deaconess Association (Discussion Paper May 1996) and other reports submitted by Deaconesses who attended diaconate conferences, the Home Board appointed a Sub-Committee to examine the Role of the Deaconess in PCI.

2. The Office of Deaconess in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland dates from 1909 and comes within the remit of the Presbyterian Women's Association Home Department, whose role is defined in the Code as: "developing the work of the former Women's Home Mission, in association with the Home Mission." The PWA shall:

- (a) "provide for the recruitment, training, organisation and support of deaconesses and women workers in various areas of the Church's life and interest;
- (b) undertake such work particularly among women and girls as may be deemed advisable, subject to the approval of the General Assembly." (Code Par 114(2))

3. The last review of the office and role of the deaconess was undertaken in 1976 by an ad hoc committee of the General Assembly in response to a Memorial from the Deaconess Association to examine 'the biblical basis and present purpose of the office of deaconess'. The subsequent report to the Assembly (1977) provided new guidelines which were incorporated into the Code. (Code 1980 pages 169-171)

4. Most of the twenty-five deaconesses and one woman worker serve in congregations, with others in hospital chaplaincy, community or youth projects. The number of deaconesses has remained fairly constant.

THE NATURE OF THE OFFICE

5. The office and role of the Deaconess is set out in the Code (Par 303) as follows:

"(1) A deaconess in the Church is one who has, (under a call from God, pledged herself to the special service of Jesus Christ and his Church; and who has been received, trained and commissioned thereto, in conformity with the doctrine and discipline of the Church.

(2) The work of a deaconess is to exercise a ministry, complementary to the ministry of Word and Sacraments, in the spheres of pastoral counselling, education, social work, mission outreach, etc. She may also have some share in the leadership of worship.

(3) A deaconess may be called to serve in a congregation, in special work under the Home Board, or may be seconded to some institution or area of outreach approved by a Court of the Church."

6. The paragraphs of the Code that follow (304-307) set out the terms and conditions of service. Some questions arise from the benefit of hindsight and experience and also from the perspective of vision for the future:

7. Has the office of deaconess fulfilled the vision and expectations of the Church?

It would be difficult to know, without a deeper study into the Church of 1909, what the vision of the Church with respect to deaconesses was at that time. It can be said, however, that those who have served the Lord as deaconesses through PCI have rendered invaluable service to the Church's work and witness since the inception of the office. That there has been a sustained demand for the services of deaconesses throughout more than 90 years is, in itself, a testimony to the value of the office and of their work.

8. The shortage of assistant ministers has, traditionally, increased the demand for deaconesses from larger congregations, but there is a growing recognition that deaconesses are a valuable resource in their own right, providing, in congregations and other specialised ministries, what assistants could not offer.

9. The Code's definition of the role of the deaconess has served the Church well as the office has evolved over the years, and it is still a work for which certain things are essential:

- (a) the call of God
- (b) training
- (c) commissioning
- (d) a structure of management and discipline

THE NATURE OF THE WORK

10. The duties outlined in the Code are the fundamental building blocks of deaconess service within the Church and the deaconess should be recognised and valued as part of the ministry team in whatever sphere of Christian service she works.

11. While the ministry of Word and Sacrament remains, primarily, the responsibility of the minister, the pastoral responsibilities are shared and deaconesses have, throughout the history of the office, rendered valuable service to the Church in this whole area. Many ministers have testified to the immense contribution that a highly trained and motivated deaconess has made to the work of the congregation as part of the ministry team.

12. It is also noteworthy that, while the role of the minister within a congregation remains fairly standard, the role of a congregational deaconess is less easily defined and there is a wide spectrum of specialisation. This has implications for the training and placement of deaconesses.

13. A further factor to be considered is the wide diversity of posts now held by deaconesses in addition to congregational appointments. Should the Church, in future, prioritise the role and functions of deaconesses and concentrate more on supplying the needs of congregations while maintaining, or even reducing, the level of other appointments or should the Church consider expanding the role of deaconesses into other areas of ministry? In the past, for example, a deaconess was matron of a Residential Home.

TRAINING

14. Due to of the varied nature of deaconess work, training has always been a live issue. (GA Reports: 1976-1978; 1989-1990; 1995-1996).

The 1989 Report of the Home Board stated that the role of deaconess, as defined in the Reports of 1976-1978, should be kept under review, and it went on to address the subject of suitable training as follows: Alternative courses of training should be explored because:

- (a) *It is recognised that otherwise very suitable candidates may not have the necessary background in Biblical Knowledge; and*

- (b) *While the basic training which St. Colm's has to offer is valued, it does not make adequate provision for the Biblical training referred to in (a).*

15. Consequently, in 1990, the Assembly received a report which set out a scheme for deaconess training which addressed the areas that were previously considered inadequate: Biblical and Theological Studies, Practical Training and Probationary Training (Reports 1990 p173-4). The report went on to list a number of 'Recognised Colleges', this arrangement to be for an experimental period of five years.

16. A further review of training took place in 1995/6 together with an in-depth study of terms of service (Reports 1995 p.160-163). A still further review was presented to the Assembly in 1996 (Reports p167-168) which concluded that Belfast Bible College, Glasgow Bible College and Union Theological College should continue to be recognised for the purpose of deaconess training, but that *all elements of training will be monitored and kept under review by the Home Board.*

17. The current study on the role of the deaconess is an appropriate time to re-address the issue of training.

SURVEY

18. In 1999, the Sub-Committee carried out a survey among serving deaconesses, to which twenty-four responded, to ascertain how adequate they considered their training to have been in the light of experience.

Some colleges were praised for their teaching and training in practical skills, but others received less favourable comment.

19. What has been learned from the survey can be summarised as follows:

1. College training. There is need for a solid grounding in the biblical disciplines and study methods. There is also a need for a comprehensive course of practical training dedicated to the fundamental role of a deaconess, especially as appointed to work in a congregation, which should be undertaken by all deaconess candidates so that, even if appointed to some 'special' ministry later on, they receive basic training.

2. Approved college(s). The choice of colleges should be based upon the suitability of the biblical and practical courses on offer and not for other reasons such as the desirability of a period of training outside Ireland.

3. 'On the job' training. This needs an investment of planning, time and finance. A programme of 'on the job' training that marries theory to practice should be developed and co-ordinated to ensure that, before a deaconess is Commissioned and Installed in a congregation (or special work), adequate training has been given and the maximum possible practical experience gained.

4. In-service training. It is desirable that a programme of in-service training be planned, co-ordinated and supervised, in order that courses approved by PWA/Home Board provide the greatest possible benefit to the deaconess in her work. Refresher courses should be provided on an annual basis.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

20. The Committee has struggled to come to terms with a number of difficulties which have resulted in reduced deaconess recruitment:

- (a) Lack of available openings when student deaconesses were ready for placement;
- (b) Lack of trained deaconesses ready for placement or Call when openings did occur, which resulted in a number of congregations appointing pastoral personnel other than deaconesses;
- (c) Lack of financial resources to cover the cost of deaconess training without depriving other areas of PWA work of essential support.

21. The first two factors require further consideration. The third has been partially addressed by PWA setting up a Millennium year project out of which a training fund, similar to the Students Bursary Fund, will be established and which is to be maintained, at least in part, by offerings at services of deaconess commissioning and induction.

22. A number of important issues need to be addressed. What is the Church's vision for the office of deaconess? Should there be an increase in the number of deaconesses recruited and, if so, how can it be done? How can adequate funding be found?

23. There has been a recent increase in the number of requests for deaconesses but no newly qualified deaconesses have been available.

SUITABILITY OF TRAINING

24. It is crucial that training is adequate, cost effective and targeted at the specific areas of ministry in which deaconesses are, or may be involved. While ensuring that all deaconesses undergo basic training for a congregational ministry, deaconesses are increasingly being required to operate in what might be termed 'specialised' ministries, and it is important that their programme of training takes account, so far as is possible, of the other spheres in which they may serve.

25. It may be necessary to hold some element in that training until the likely sphere of service of a particular candidate is clearer, and 'in placement' training may take on increased importance.

26. Should a deaconess be relocated to another type of work, or even similar work in a different environment, an orientation training element should be provided.

27. During the year, various colleges were approached regarding courses of appropriate training. The Sub-Committee concluded, after a study of responses from colleges in Ireland and on the mainland, including Union, that Union College could provide both a comprehensive course of study and the flexibility of training that would be required, while the usefulness of candidates spending some time in training outside of Ireland is retained as a desirable option.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

28. Various training courses have been attended by serving deaconesses. There is need for a structured and supervised programme that will enable

deaconesses to benefit from the best training in the disciplines most closely related to their job specifications. Courses dedicated to particular aspects of deaconess work might usefully be arranged centrally - and all deaconesses should be encouraged to attend.

PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS

29. Deaconess work is subject to most of the stress factors common to other types of ministry. It is recognised that the normal managerial structures and procedures may not always be the most appropriate to address some of the problems that can arise. The Home Board might consider appointing a suitably qualified and experienced counsellor, perhaps paid an honorarium, to provide a referral resource, on a consultancy basis, to the Board.

STATUS OF DEACONESSSES WITHIN PCI

30. Deaconesses in PCI are not, of right, members of any of the Courts of the Church, although they are invited to 'sit and deliberate' in all of them. The Church of Scotland admitted deaconesses as full members of Assembly in 1990 and most other denominations have admitted them to voting rights within church courts. It would be for the Assembly to decide whether, as a Church, it would be advantageous to proceed in this direction.

31. The Church should be proactive in promoting the office of deaconess, both within our church courts and congregations, and to the prayerful consideration of women in our congregations who may be seeking the will of God with regard to 'full-time service'.

32. As we have embarked upon the third millennium, we must maximise the resources available to us to reach the lost with the gospel of Christ. While the message remains constant and unchangeable, the means and methods of delivering it have progressed and developed all through the history of Christianity.

33. The ministry of the deaconess has a vital contribution to make to that God-honouring objective.

CHURCH EXTENSION COMMITTEE

1. The following is a summary of the work of Church Extension during 1999.

Belfast Area

New Mossley

2. There has been an increase of 5 in the number of families. The Youth Fellowship has been restarted.

3. Under the direction of the New Mossley Development Committee priority is being given to developing policies in relation to pastoral care, fellowship outreach, and youth and children's work.

4. Rev Ian McDonald is encouraged. Some people have been converted and others restored to faith.

Taughmonagh

5. There has been an increase in both specified sources and the number of families.

6. Six ministry teams have been formed including evangelism, prayer, worship, youth and visitation. The Rev Bill Moore reports that these are working very well with about half of the membership involved.

7. The Y2K Club meets on Sunday evenings with the emphasis on children and young people, though adults are also involved. The average attendance is 85.

Coleraine*Ballysally*

8. The Youth work is going well and a full time youth worker is now in place.

9. The number of contributing families is not increasing and this causes some concern. There is a lot of population movement in the estate and this has an impact on the congregation.

10. Under Rev John Coulter's enthusiastic leadership the congregation seeks to make contact with, and be involved in the local community.

11. The Working Committee is continuing with the Building Improvement Plan.

Londonderry Area*Strathfoyle*

12. There has been a slight increase of 2 families bring the total to 36.

13. A good working relationship has developed with the local Church of Ireland and Methodist congregations.

14. Presbytery has set up a committee to monitor the work in the area.

Newtownards Area*Movilla*

15. There are 182 contributing families out of a total number of families of 287. Specified Sources for 1999 were £33,1224 and the total income £65,725.

16. A memorial re the constitution of the Charge to full church status will be presented to the General Assembly in June 2000.

17. The story of Movilla has been a great source of encouragement to the wider Church and we pay tribute to the work and commitment of Rev David Porter and to all who have been and are involved in the work of the kingdom there.

Sites

18. The sites that we hold are kept under review by the Committee.

Sunday School Support

19. Sunday School contributions to Church Extension during 1999 were £603.60. We thank teachers and children for their regular support.

Bequests

20. Bequests received during the last financial year amounted to £20,877.

United Appeal Allocation

21. The amount received for 1999 was £275,000.

Visits to Church Extension Charges

22. Representatives from the Committee visited the Charges during the year. The visits were both information and helpful.

Support

23. The prayerful and financial support from many people and various organisations is much appreciated by the Committee.

24. Sincere thanks go to all who serve in Church Extension Charges, Ministers, Interim Sessions and Working Committees. May the Lord guide and encourage you in the work.

G MOFFETT, H TAGGART, Conveners

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Presbyterian Mutual Society Limited

2. That the General Assembly congratulate the Directors of the Presbyterian Mutual Society Limited for the success of the Society and encourage them to continue expressing the care of the Church through the financial support provided for individuals, congregations and others.

Home Mission Committee

3. That the General Assembly authorise the Union Commission to sanction the porting of St Patrick's Church, Waterford, as appropriate, in accordance with Par 106(f) and any other relevant paragraphs of the Code.

4. That the General Assembly appoint the Home Board Convener, the Home Mission Convener, the Home Mission Secretary, Rev Dr R W J MacDermott and Mrs C Poynton to the Alternating Ministries Scheme Committee.

5. That the General Assembly commend the Deaconess Bursary Fund to the whole Church.

6. That the General Assembly remind the Courts and Agencies of the Church that "deaconesses shall be invited to sit and deliberate at meeting of Assembly, Synod, Presbytery and Kirk Session and, as appropriate be invited to sit and deliberate at meetings of the Congregational Committee or Assembly

Boards or Committees relating to their work” in accordance with Par 306(3) of the Code and request them to ensure that appropriate invitations are extended.

Church Extension

7. That the resignation of Mr Hubert Taggart, OBE, as Co-Convenor of the Church Extension Committee, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that Mr Brian Knox be appointed in his place.

General

8. That the Home Board be thanked for its services and discharged.

9. That the Board of Mission in Ireland, with its associated working Committees, for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 280 of the Code as follows:

MEMORIAL TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, to meet at Belfast, on the 5th day of June 2000.

The Memorial of the Interim Kirk Session of Movilla Church Extension Charge, Newtownards, Respectfully showeth:

That the Church Extension Charge at Movilla commenced on 3rd September 1995.

That there are now 182 contributing families with 92 Members on the Communion Roll.

That there is a comprehensive range of Organisations and Activities for every age under the competent leadership of Church Members.

That the Total Income for 1999 was £65,725.

That the Specified Sources income was £32,124 in 1999.

That the congregation has always met its Assessments.

That in 1999 the Congregation gave £3,345 to the United Appeal and £3,581 to other Missionary and Charitable Causes.

That a new Church was built by the Church Extension Committee and the Congregation has paid all its outstanding debt with regard to the New Church.

That there is a strong need to consolidate the work in this developing area and to further establish the Christian Witness and Outreach of the Presbyterian Church.

That it would be very much to the good of the Congregation to have their own Kirk Session: that there are those amongst the membership who are well qualified for the duties and responsibilities of the Eldership: and that the members of the Congregation are eager to take their full and proper share in the life and work of the Church.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Assembly to authorise the Presbytery of Ards to Constitute the charge at Movilla as a Full Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, under that name, on a convenient date after 31st December, 2000 and to place them in the Secession Synod.

And Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Adopted by the Interim Kirk Session on 26th January, 2000.

DAVID PORTER, Moderator
ROBERT JACKSON, Clerk

Licensed by the Ards Presbytery meeting at Bangor on 1st day of February, 2000, and transmitted to the Synod of Armagh and Down with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

G F McKEOWN, Moderator
DONALD J WATTS, Clerk

Transmitted by the Synod of Armagh and Down, meeting at Killinchy Church on 14th day of March, 2000, with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

W J PATTERSON, Moderator
S A MATTHEWS, Clerk

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Acting Executive Secretary: Mrs MARBETH RUSSELL

Theme for the year: "Watch and Pray"

(This report should be read in conjunction with the reports of the Home Board and the Overseas Board)

Miss Elizabeth Brian

1. It is with sadness that we record the death on 23 July, 1999 of Miss Elizabeth Brian, who for four years served as Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Women's Association.

She was a faithful member of Ballywalter congregation, to which she devoted years of work and leadership in the Sunday School, latterly as an Elder and within the local PWA. She was also a valued member of the Ards Presbytery.

After her training at Stranmillis College, Miss Brian taught Home Economics and Mathematics in Orangefield High School, where she was known for her consistent Christian witness. She also had a long-term involvement with CSSM.

During her time in Church House she gained a 'feel' for the job she enjoyed so much and earned a reputation as person who cared for others, as an effective deputation speaker as well as for her competence in addressing the General Assembly. She ably represented our Church during visits to India and Nepal.

We will remember her as someone conscientious in her service, meticulous in her work and inspiring in her enthusiasm. Her colleagues in PWA and Church House, along with those in the service of the Church at home and overseas to whom she proved a gracious counsellor, will sorely miss her warm friendship.

She bore a prolonged, cruel illness with courage that touched and inspired all who knew her.

We identify with her family and close friends in their grief and loss, but we are thankful to God for the fruits of her work within the Church and the example of her personal faith and hope in the Lord Jesus whom she strove to serve.

2. A Memorial Service was held in her home congregation of Ballywalter on Sunday 19th September 1999 when the church was filled to capacity. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with her brother and close family circle.

3. The smooth and efficient running of the office during this year, despite the sadness and disappointment, has been in no small part due to the dedicated work of the staff in the office – Administrative Assistant, Mrs Rita Maguire, Deputation Secretary, Miss Margaret Young and Secretary, Miss Naomi Campbell. The organisation would thank them for their loyalty and dedication.

The Central President, Mrs Margaret Thompson, writes:

4. "The PWA would also pay tribute to Mrs Marbeth Russell, Home Treasurer, who assumed part-time temporary duties as Acting Executive Secretary in the PWA office from 6th September 1999. Mrs Russell's administrative skills, general helpfulness and wisdom have contributed much to the on-going work of the organisation."

5. PWA napkins are being added to the range of promotional materials bearing the PWA logo. These are available in the office as well as the PWA brooches in gold and silver.

East Belfast Friendship House

6. The PWA Executive Committee reluctantly agreed after consultation to close East Belfast Friendship House at the end of August, 1999. The Ballymac Friendship Trust was formed, recently acquired a property and hopes to obtain grants to operate a centre similar to the Vine in North Belfast.

7. PWA again expresses its thanks to Deaconess Miss Carol McRoberts, Mrs Lana McCandless and all the volunteers who have given such devoted service to EBFH over the years. The Association wish the Ballymac Friendship Trust every success in the future.

PWA Executive Committee

8. The Executive Committee which is responsible for progressing the work of the Association met on nine occasions throughout the year.

9. A sub-committee under the convenership of the Central President has been reviewing the PWA Constitution and the PWA Handbook. This task will take account of proposed changes to the structure of Assembly Boards and Committees and will be completed by June 2000. The help and advice of the Clerk of Assembly, Dr Samuel Hutchinson, has been invaluable and much appreciated.

10. Office Bearers 1999/2000

Central President:	Mrs Margaret Thompson
Home Vice-President:	Mrs Lois Robinson
Overseas Vice-President:	Mrs Maureen Patterson
Home Treasurer:	Mrs Marbeth Russell
Overseas Treasurer:	Mrs Gwen Irwin

11. Office Bearers to be installed at the Annual General Meeting on 4th May 2000:

Overseas Vice-President:	Mrs Maureen Patterson
Home Vice-President:	Mrs Hilary Hull

12. New members for Executive Committee 2000/2001

Mrs Margaret Clarke	Ards
Mrs Eileen Greenlee	Armagh
Mrs Rosemary Cowan	East Belfast
Mrs Valerie Stewart	Foyle
Mrs Michelle McClean	Templepatrick

13. Executive members represent PWA on the following bodies:

Young Women's Groups Central Committee	Mrs Annie Erwin
Union Commission	Mrs Annie Erwin
Women's Link	Mrs Annie Erwin and Mrs Cherry Poynton
Sudan Support Group	Mrs Margaret Binnie
Management Committees:-	
Vine Community & Advice Centre	Mrs Helen Murdock
South Belfast Friendship House	Mrs Doreen McMullen

Millennium

14. The PWA Executive Committee were delighted with the response to the devotional guide "**Watch and Pray**". Mrs Alison McCaughan and the Millennium sub-group are to be congratulated on the quality of the material produced.

Events 1999/2000

15. The Annual Prayer Meeting was held on 29th April 1999 in the Common Room, Church House. Prayers were led by Mrs Phyllis Sleith.

16. The Annual Meetings were held on 6th May 1999 in the Assembly Hall, Church House. The guest speaker, Mrs Ann Allen, gave a challenging address on the theme "Watch and Pray".

17. The Convener of the Overseas Board, Rev Jim Campbell, was guest speaker at the Executive Committee meeting held in Malone Church Hall on 2nd September 1999. He led a memorable devotion on the PWA theme "Watch and Pray".

18. The PWA Annual Conference was held on 11th September 1999 in Stormont Church Hall. Both Home and Overseas personnel highlighted issues of service and joined in fellowship with members of General Committee.

19. A Coffee Morning for PROP and retired personnel was hosted by the Executive Committee in the Minor Hall on 3rd June 1999.

Finance

20. PWA continues to receive the generous financial support of its branches. The Executive Committee acknowledges with a deep sense of gratitude this faithfulness on the part of individual members which enables PWA to meet its financial commitments.

21. Branches are asked to keep in mind the 31st December deadline which means all finance should be lodged in the Cash Office by this date. Co-operation in this matter is appreciated.

22. From 1st January 2000 a grant will be given each year to the Overseas Board to provide financial support in part to all missionary personnel. The amount will be determined annually by the PWA Executive Committee.

Millennium Thankoffering

23. The 1999/2000 Millennium Thankoffering to date amounts to £27,175 and will be used to develop Christian Training and witness in urban and rural communities in Brazil, Jamaica, Malawi, Thailand and Nepal and for Deaconess training in Ireland.

24. The 1998/99 Birthday Thankoffering raised a total of £29,130.75 and was used to build student and teacher accommodation at Zomba Theological College, Malawi.

Bequests and Gifts

25. PWA acknowledges with thanks the following bequests:-

Mrs Elizabeth Morrison	£1,000.00
Elizabeth Marno	£500.00
Mrs G M Lennox	£62,485.78
Morrison Trust	£8,453.85
J E Webb	£1,000.00

Home Personnel

26. PWA values the advice and willing support given by Rev Derek Poots, Secretary of the Home Board.

27. PWA office-bearers and office-bearers of the Deaconess Association continue to meet at regular intervals.

28. The Association pays tribute to two Deaconesses, Miss Elizabeth Boyd and Mrs Frances Martin, who retired this year. Miss Boyd was Deaconess in St Columba's, Lisburn and Mrs Martin was part-time Hospitals Chaplain in Dublin. Both were very much appreciated in their different spheres of work and the PWA Executive Committee thanks them warmly for their years of service to the Church and wishes them God's blessing for their years of retirement. Miss Frances Wright has been given leave to retire from Joymount Congregation on 30th April, 2000.

New Deaconess

29. The Association welcomes Mrs Jenny Robinson who returns to deaconess work after a break of approximately 20 years. She commenced work as Deaconess in Kilcooley congregation, Bangor, on 1st January 2000.

Candidates

30. Mrs Sadie McCullough, Miss Roberta Irvine and Miss Sheila Sutter have been accepted as Deaconess candidates. The first two commence a two year training course at Union Theological College and Miss Sutter will undertake in-service training after commencing work as a Probationary Deaconess from 1st May, 2000, in First Antrim. Our thoughts and prayers are with them as new avenues of service open up. It is now our policy that candidates should be trained at Union College.

31. Miss Carol McRoberts moved from East Belfast Friendship House to Tullycarnet congregation in September 1999. The Association wishes her God's blessing as she takes up this new challenge.

32. Miss Carole Cathcart, St Enoch's and Hope House, resumed full-time duties from September, 1999.

33. Mrs Sharon Heron returned to part-time work in Strand Presbyterian Church in February 2000 after the birth of baby Hannah.

34. Miss Anne Burrows (Belvoir Park Hospital) and Miss Sarah Swindle (Musgrave Park Hospital) will continue to work part-time from 1st February 2000 until further notice.

35. Mrs. Jackie O'Neill resigned from Christ Church Dundonald on 30th April, 2000 and took up a new appointment as deaconess in Joymount, Carrickfergus, on 1st May, 2000.

Deaconess Training Fund

36. The Association is grateful that the Millennium Fund will give a much needed boost to the new Deaconess Training Fund.

37. Miss Evelyn Whyte attended the European Diakonia Conference in Sweden from 19th-24th June 1999. The theme of the conference was "People's Needs, People's Search – Our Response".

38. The Deaconess Carol Service was held on Friday 10th December 1999 in the Kinghan Church. Members of Executive joined with other guests for morning coffee and shared in the service.

Overseas Personnel

39. PWA would pay tribute to Rev Terry McMullan for his wise counsel, understanding and generous support in all matters relating to overseas personnel.

40. From 1st January 2000 PWA will support all overseas personnel as well as a proportion of the grants to partner churches and has the responsibility for the upkeep of the PWA flat. Until December 1999 the following missionaries were supported by PWA.

Brazil	Miss Mabel Colson
India	Miss Linda Jackson Mrs Elizabeth Matthews
Israel	Mrs Fiona Sartawi (nee Smyth)
Jamaica	Miss Leonora Wasson Miss Diana Winfield
Kenya	Miss Naomi Martin
Malawi	Miss Freda Algie Miss Diane Cusick Miss Clare McIntyre Miss Margaret Young
Nepal	Miss Amanda Christie Miss Joy Gowdy Miss Helen Johnston Miss Linda McKee Miss Pauline Orr
Romania	Mrs Ilona Veres (nee Walsh)

41. In December 1999 Miss Fiona Smyth celebrated her marriage to Mr Shafei Sartawi.

42. In September 1999 Mrs Margaret Thompson, Central President, and her husband Rev Dr Joseph Thompson visited Malawi where she had worked for two years as a nurse in Ekweneni hospital some 30 years ago. She was very concerned by the need that still exists throughout the country. During her very full programme she visited and encouraged many of our overseas personnel.

Wider World

43. "Wider World" has enjoyed another good year and circulation remains at a steady level. The magazine has included articles about PCI work at home and overseas in addition to devotional and challenging articles relevant to the whole Church. In 1999 each issue of "Wider World" had 40 pages, all of them in full colour.

44. Last year the PWA had a number of projects to celebrate the Millennium. Each member of PWA and YWG throughout Ireland received a free copy of a devotional booklet, "Watch and Pray", and each branch received a resource pack which included programme planning material and details of a Prayer Countdown for the final 100 days of the last Millennium. The "Wider World" account financed both of these, thus ensuring that the millennium material made no additional demands on the PWA General Fund. Any other profits continue to be used to enhance the content and presentation of the magazine and to absorb the escalating costs of production.

45. Sincere thanks are due to all those who have contributed to the magazine and to the long-suffering agents who work very hard to promote "Wider World" within their local congregations.

46. Special thanks are due to Mr Raphael Sutter for his work with the covers of "Wider World" and Mrs Adrienne Campbell (First Newtownards) for her work with the Children's Page and other articles. Thanks also go to the staff in the PWA office who deal with administrative enquiries.

Young Women's Groups

47. The 1999/2000 theme "Watch and Pray" was shared by YWG and PWA. The YWG Annual Rally was held in Terrace Row, Coleraine. The address was given by Miss Sharon Creighton, formerly a PWA missionary in Nepal. Cheques for £10,000 each were handed over to Rev Terry McMullan for the AIDS Prevention and Education Programme in Malawi, and to Rev Derek Poots for Nightlight Ministries.

48. Office Bearers 1999/2000

Chairman:	Mrs Pamela Martin
Secretary:	Mrs Christine Bell
Treasurer:	Mrs Daphne Caldwell
Magazine Editor:	Mrs Katrina McCullough

49. The YWG Home Project is financing part of the refurbishment of the Hall at Tullamore Church in the Irish midlands. Our Overseas Project is a commodity exchange programme in Southern Sudan. The cheques for these projects were handed over at the Annual Rally in First Presbyterian Church, Ballynahinch on 13th April 2000.

50. New Office Bearer installed at the Annual Rally on 13th April 2000:
Secretary Mrs Heather Aiken

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 308 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 308 of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place.

308(1) **Name:** The name of the organisation shall be "The Presbyterian Women's Association of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland", concisely known as the PWA, incorporating the former Presbyterian Women's Union, the former Women's Missionary Association (sometimes called the Zenana Mission), the former Women's Home Mission, and the Young Women's Groups, and hereinafter referred to as the Association.

(2) **Purpose:** The purpose of the Association shall be:

- (a) to unite the women of the Church in the dedication of their lives to Jesus Christ and His service in the home, the workplace, the community and the Church;
- (b) to share in the mission of the Church at home and overseas through thought, prayer, and financial support; and
- (c) to provide a link with the women of other Churches in Ireland and throughout the world.

(3) **Branches:** Where possible a branch shall be formed in each congregation, to encourage fellowship, to interest the women in the purpose of the Association and to work towards its fulfilment. Stated meetings shall be held and membership shall be open to all women who accept the purpose of the Association. Where desirable, a Young Women's Group may also be formed.

(4) **Young Women's Groups:**

- (a) **Name:** The name shall be the Young Women's Groups of the Presbyterian Women's Association.
- (b) **Aim:** The aim of the Young Women's Groups shall be to unite their members in friendship and service within the congregation and community, and to encourage Christian living. Through balanced programme planning, members should be encouraged to take an interest in the wider outreach of the Church.
- (c) **Membership:** Young Women's Groups shall be formed where the need for a group within a congregation exists. Membership of such a group shall be open to all young women.

(5) **Presbyterial Committees:** There shall be in each Presbytery a PWA Committee known as the Presbyterial Committee, consisting of:

- (a) three representatives from each branch or congregation, and one representative from the Young Women's Groups in the Presbytery; and
- (b) members of the Executive Committee in the Presbytery.

(6) **General Committee:** There shall be a General Committee of the Association consisting of:

- (a) the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer of each Presbyterial Committee;
 - (b) two other representatives elected by each Presbyterial Committee from its membership to serve for three years. These representatives shall not be eligible for immediate re-election;
 - (c) the members of the PWA Executive Committee;
 - (d) the office-bearers of the Young Women's Groups Central Committee and four representatives of the Deaconess Association.
- (7) **Executive Committee:** There shall be an Executive Committee of the Association consisting of:
- (a) the Central President, the Home Vice-President, the Overseas Vice-President, the Home Treasurer, the Overseas Treasurer and the PWA Executive Secretary; and
 - (b) one representative nominated by each of the twenty-one Presbyterial Committees, preferably an existing representative on General Committee; and
 - (c) a representative of the Young Women's Groups Central Committee.

The Editor of "Wider World" and the wife of the Moderator shall be invited to sit and deliberate.

In exceptional circumstances the Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt up to three additional members to serve for a maximum period of two years, to be reviewed annually.

(8) **Finance:** The financial year of the Association shall end on 31st December. The report and statement of accounts shall be submitted for approval to the Annual Meeting each year. A report shall be submitted annually to the General Assembly and as may be required to the Board of Mission in Ireland and the Overseas Board.

(9) **Bye-Laws:** The General Committee may make Bye-laws regulating the procedure of the Association and, subject to this Constitution, regulating the constitution and procedure of its Branches, Groups or Committees.

R F S POOTS

BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev J M CATHCART
Secretary: Mr N J CHAMBERS

1. The Board of Social Witness is required by the Code (Par 281), inter alia, to concern itself with all questions affecting the social welfare of the Church and the community, and all questions affecting Church and industry, and may undertake activities to further the Church's witness in these fields.

2. In pursuit of this broad remit the Board has adopted the following objectives for its programme of work:

- To develop social concern throughout the church both for those in congregations and in the wider community;
- To provide support and rehabilitation for vulnerable people;
- To offer informed comment to the church on complex social and ethical issues; and
- To assist congregations in developing their social witness in the community by offering advice and education and by providing information about resources that are available.

3. John Stott reminds us that we should "not just prattle and plan and pray, like the country vicar to whom a homeless woman turned for help, and who promised to pray for her. She later wrote this poem and handed it to a regional officer of *Shelter*.

*I was hungry,
And you formed a humanities group to discuss my hunger.
I was imprisoned,
And you crept off quietly to your chapel and prayed for my release.
I was naked,
And in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.
I was sick,
And you knelt and thanked God for your health.
I was homeless,
And you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.
I was lonely,
And you left me alone to pray for me.
You seem so holy, and so close to God
But I am still very hungry – and lonely – and cold.*

Information

4. During 1999 the Board has sought to improve the level and quality of the information it provides to congregations about social issues and its work. A new publicity leaflet was produced in line with the corporate strategy of the Board of Communications, featuring each area of our work and giving details of contact points for further information. During the year some 8,500 copies were made available to congregations.

5. Committee conveners and senior staff increased the number of deputation engagements undertaken and materials have been prepared to assist deputation speakers. Approximately 60 speaking engagements were undertaken. Apart from invitations to speak at United Appeal services, there has been keen interest among congregations to learn more about services for elderly people and alcohol and drugs in particular. The Board believes that both subjects deserve high priority on its own agenda and in the life of congregations generally.

6. The Social Issues and Resources Committee has produced a number of new materials during the year and it is intended to send copies of these direct to ministers to ensure that their existence is made known as speedily as possible.

Funding

7. Total expenditure for the year was in excess of £3 million. Income was derived from the following sources:

Payments for services	£2,916,000
United Appeal	£ 164,000
Bequests and donations	£ 161,000
Government grants	£ 122,000
Other income	£ 99,000

8. The Board's ability to undertake social witness in its various forms is heavily dependent on United Appeal support and its ability to satisfy statutory agencies that it is competent to provide services at a high standard. During the year the Board's work has come under official scrutiny by various inspectorates and all reports of its work have been positive. Reports on Presbyterian Residential Trust homes, Thompson House, Carlisle House and the Board's offices and its administration are available for examination.

Efficiency

9. The Board has sought to improve efficiency in both its administration and in the use of buildings and other resources. The Presbyterian Residential Trust staff were relocated to refurbished offices in Church House, thereby releasing a valuable property either for alternative use or for sale. The Board was assisted in this by the Department of Health and Social Services which made a capital grant of £10,000. The Church House Assembly Buildings Committee contributed £15,000 toward the cost. This has enabled us to centralise all of our administration and, we believe, offer a more efficient and responsive service to congregations.

10. New and more demanding statutory regulations covering health and safety and other areas of our work have necessitated rigorous examination of all of our practices and the longer-term future of older buildings in particular. This process presents both opportunities and challenges, opportunities to enter new partnerships that will secure our service and witness in the longer term and challenges to make difficult and, at times, unpopular decisions.

Development

11. During the year the Board has seen significant development in a number of areas. These are described in the reports of Conveners that follow, and include the Kinghan Mission, the Presbyterian Residential Trust, Derryvolgie Hall, the use of volunteers and the training of personnel to offer training in child protection. Work began on the building of new flats for use by people who have completed a rehabilitation programme at Carlisle House, but who need an extended period of support. Funding was allocated by the Department of the Environment for the erection of a small complex for learning disabled young people in the Coleraine area. Funding was made available by Making Belfast Work to purchase and refurbish premises in lower north Belfast to accommodate a new social action project. The Department of Health and Social Services made a grant towards the cost of making a video about disability which will be distributed to all congregations in the Presbyterian Church, as well as to other denominations.

Accountability

12. All of these opportunities carry with them challenges and obligations. None of our work can be sustained without the active spiritual and financial support of congregations and the United Appeal Board. Our external funders require services to meet stringent standards. But that is what social witness is all about, serving Christ through partnerships between the church and the community, and being accountable for the resources and the privilege of being able to do so.

Alcohol and Drug Services

13. The Alcohol and Drug Education Committee is active in promoting positive Christian lifestyles through education and discipleship. The Carlisle House Management Committee provides treatment, advice and other support to men and women who have become addicted to alcohol and other drugs. All of this work is now supervised on a day to day basis by Mrs Helen Harrison, Director of Carlisle House.

14. The two committees, having reviewed their respective functions, believe that their work should now be combined under one committee. The benefits of such amalgamation would be improved efficiency and flow of information and a more coherent approach to the development of alcohol and drug education, treatment and support services.

15. Accordingly, it is proposed that the Alcohol and Drug Education Committee be renamed as the Addiction and Education Services Committee and that the new Committee be responsible for all work relating to alcohol and drug education and the treatment of addictions.

Learning Disabled Committee

16. At its meeting on 22 February 2000 the Board of Social Witness constituted the Learning Disabled Committee to develop and oversee services for people who have a learning disability. Rev J Waring, who has been convening an ad hoc group for some years, was appointed Convener.

17. The Board, working in partnership with the Oaklee Housing Association, plans to build a small complex in Coleraine for nine people with a learning disability. Government funding has been allocated for this project and a suitable site is being sought.

Partnership

18. The theme of partnership is constantly with us, partnership within the church, partnership with other funders, and partnership with the communities we endeavour to serve. Increasingly, we need to develop confidence in expressing what we believe in terms that others understand. Increasingly, that means listening carefully to what they are saying about their greatest needs, because partnership is based on good communication.

19. The Board of Social Witness seeks a greater sense of partnership across the agencies of the church. We believe that our Board can be more effective if it thinks and plans strategically along with other Boards and agencies. During 1999, some progress was made in the Republic of Ireland as a result of discussions involving personnel employed by the Irish Mission, the Home Board and the Board of Social Witness. An Irish Mission worker, David Boyd, now chairs our Social Witness Southern Development Committee. We believe that our potential to promote and develop social witness will be determined increasingly by the ability of Boards to work together on a Biblically based consensus that social witness is integral to church mission.

Thanks

20. It is important to record our thanks to those whose professionalism, commitment and support has contributed to the ongoing work of the Board.

- The Management Team: Norman Chambers, Linda Wray, Richard Gamble and Arlene Wilson.
- The Office Staff: Ellen Wilmont, and Jennifer Patton.
- The Residential Trust staff: Patricia Large, Jean Gourley and Rosemary Henderson.
- The Personnel Officer: Mrs Eileen McClenaghan for her guidance on employment matters.
- The Government Departments and Agencies without whose financial backing we could not function.
- Committee and Board members.
- Conveners and managers of projects.

21. It was with regret that we received the resignation of the **Rev Brian Boyd**, Convener of the Alcohol and Drug Education Committee for three years. During that time he did not spare himself in promoting the work of the Committee. His enthusiasm and leadership skills were evident in developing a partnership with Hope UK, launching the volunteer scheme and forging links with Carlisle House Management Committee. We thank him most sincerely for his hard work.

Mr David Boyd, Convener of the Social Witness Southern Development Committee, reports:

1. Until this year the Committee has mainly concerned itself with establishing the Biblical mandate for social witness and the implications of that for any social action project which we might undertake. This work resulted in the production of a Statement of Belief and Practice on Social Witness that has been adopted by the Board of Social Witness. The Statement collates scriptural evidence and clearly outlines the theological basis for social witness activity; it also provides a set of principles to be followed in undertaking a social action project. These include the necessity of ownership of each project by the local church and of partnership with the local community.

2. Having established the ground rules, so to speak, the Committee decided that it was time to progress to a more proactive role. We believe that in a social action initiative, not only is partnership with the local community a necessity, but it is also a necessity between the various agencies of our church. During this year we have held discussions with other PCI personnel with an interest in church planting and this shared thinking and vision created a certain synergy that we would like to see developed into something more concrete. As a result, it has been agreed in principle to research what scope exists for any initiatives that would complement the ongoing work of the Home Board, the Irish Mission and the Youth Board.

3. We would particularly like to see an initiative outside of the Dublin area, as we feel there is a tendency for churches in the rest of the country to assume that the social problems are concentrated in Dublin. Another common assumption is that social action is for people with specialist knowledge and training and that the resources of a large congregation are necessary for setting up a project of this nature. We feel that the establishment of a project, in a smaller town by a local congregation, would go a long way towards dispelling these myths. It would provide a working model and testing ground for the principles that we have established and illustrate the effectiveness, in a church-planting situation, of a practical demonstration of God's love and grace.

4. One of the main problems that we face as a church in the Republic of Ireland is a lack of acceptance by the wider community because we are perceived as having religious beliefs that are unorthodox. This acceptance is only gained when our personal credibility is established through the practice of what we preach because, in the final analysis, orthodoxy is determined, not by the correctness of our beliefs, but by what we do about what we believe.

Minister in Recognised Service – (Called by the Board of Social Witness under Code Par.281.3)

Rev Douglas Baker, The Mediation Network for Northern Ireland, reports:

1. In the course of the past year my work with the Churches' Programme of the Mediation Network has involved actual mediation in a number of community and church disputes, including a few in Presbyterian congregations. More time has been devoted to training with clergy and lay leaders, which seeks to assist in understanding conflict and utilising constructive

ways of handling it. Five "Handling Conflict in the Church" courses have been offered in various parts of Northern Ireland and attended by clergy of all denominations. Over the past two years just over 200 clergy have now completed this one-day course. This same training has taken place with PCI Licentiates and Session and Committee groupings in a couple of congregations. A follow-on course "Growing Through Conflict" has been developed and offered to two groups this spring.

2. Mr Joe Campbell, Assistant Director of Mediation Network and an elder in First Holywood, and I also continue to work with the PCI Conciliation Committee, providing refresher training and, in some cases, supervision to the panel of conciliators. Explorations are underway to develop similar panels for other denominations.

3. As part of our 'Ministry in a Divided Society' Project seminars for clergy and Christian community workers have been offered on 'Restorative Justice,' 'Organisational Culture, Conflict and Change,' and 'Trauma, Healing and Reconciliation.'

4. I continue to serve as Convener of the Peace and Peacemaking Committee and have been acting as a consultant for the Church of Ireland Diocese of Down and Dromore in the development of their community Bridge Building Programme. In addition, I have facilitated a number of training events, evaluations and strategic planning sessions for local inter-church groups and various projects connecting churches with their local community. In partnership with Cecilia Clegg from the Irish School of Ecumenics Moving Beyond Sectarianism programme I am currently leading an eight-day "Skills for Transformation" course designed to equip facilitators for local inter-church groups. The fact that the course was oversubscribed is one indicator of the significant growth occurring in grass-roots initiatives seeking to foster understanding and co-operation between those from different religious and political backgrounds.

THOMPSON HOUSE

1. Thompson House accommodates 16 residents, the average occupancy being 13 residents. This is within the range expected by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. There has been an increase in younger residents, aged below 25 years. This reflects an increase in drugs related offending by young people.

2. There are, however, very few serious incidents in the hostel. The police have attended the hostel only once this year for a serious incident in which a resident returning drunk to the hostel seriously assaulted another resident. Staff were able to contain the incident and prevent serious harm to other residents.

3. A retired technology teacher from Glengormley Presbyterian Church, Mr Brian Marshall, is currently volunteering one day a week to teach residents basic wood work. Three residents are currently using this opportunity.

4. The Management Committee and staff visited a prison when the Governor and his staff provided a one day seminar. This enabled the Committee and staff to address issues together that are relevant to the work

5. We acknowledge the financial and moral support received from the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. We also appreciate the good relationship we have with individual probation officers and staff as we seek to help the men many of whom find it difficult to cope with life.

6. In providing accommodation and the necessities of life for these needy individuals our staff carry out their difficult and stressful duties in a loving, caring and sensitive Christian manner: We trust that not only what they do but how they do it, will have a positive influence for God and good and that the seeds of love and grace will bear fruit for the glory of God.

7. The Management Committee and staff wish to express their thanks and gratitude for the prayerful support they receive from the General Assembly and in particular to those who remember the work of Thompson House on a weekly basis.

J C BUICK, Chairperson

PCI ENTERPRISES

1. The past year has been one of change within PCI Enterprises, both for the organisation and the Management Committee. The predicted closure of the ACE scheme finally occurred in December 1999. Decisions taken over a year earlier to explore new areas of service are being vindicated, as PCI Enterprises seeks to continue to meet needs in a changing funding climate.

2. PCI Enterprises was formed in 1984 to deliver the Government's ACE scheme aimed at reducing unemployment. During the last 15 years, PCI Enterprises saw over 700 individuals access the scheme, thereby gaining invaluable training and work experience. Many churches and projects benefited from the placements offered, with vital community and maintenance work being carried out by ACE employees. It is recognised that the Board's scheme was one of the most successful in Northern Ireland. This was due in no small part to the dedication of staff over the years who, not only implemented the scheme in an efficient and effective manner, but brought Christian care and compassion to the work. The thanks of the wider church is due to all involved in the ACE scheme, to those who had the vision for the church to participate in it and to those who provided placements.

3. The change in Government policy from ACE to New Deal has resulted in PCI Enterprises identifying three new areas of service and prompted an impending move to new premises.

4. Funding was sourced and secured to purchase new premises at 112 York Road, Belfast, and negotiations are ongoing with the Belfast Regeneration Office to fund necessary alterations. PCI Enterprises hopes to move from Annesley Street to their new base by mid-2000.

5. Our well established work with unemployed people will continue from these premises through the provision of a Job Shop, which will seek to resource and equip people for employment. Vacancies will be advertised in the shop and supported job search and courses aimed at overcoming barriers to employment will be offered. Funding has been secured from the Belfast European Partnership Board to staff the shop.

6. PCI Enterprises is exploring ways of supporting and encouraging volunteering within local congregations in the context of preparation for change,

rather than reaction against it. Funding is actively being sought to finance this work.

7. The phrase 'community development' is a much over used term. Yet an understanding of its meanings, of which there are many, is vital to those congregations who are attempting to engage with communities through social witness initiatives. In order to resource congregations involved in 'community development' work, either as deliverers, partners or spectators, PCI Enterprises hopes to create two posts to work directly with congregations. Initial attempts to source funds have been unsuccessful, however, several applications are still pending.

8. The Management Committee would like to pay tribute to all staff involved in PCI Enterprises. Special thanks must go to Mrs Anne Stevenson, the Director who has been pivotal in the efficient managing of the ACE closure and the development of the new spheres of service.

9. As PCI Enterprises embarks on a new chapter in its service, we give thanks to God for his goodness in the past and pray his blessing on the future, as we seek to make the Gospel real to many in a hurting world.

M GIBSON, Chairperson

CARLISLE HOUSE

1. A high demand for services continues, with 89 people having used the treatment programme in 1999. There is a waiting list for residential treatment and a continual growth in the number of people attending non-residential groups. A further 394 relatives of people attending Carlisle House for treatment received education about alcohol and drugs, support and counselling.

2. Information evenings are held every Tuesday with 850 attending during the year.

3. Some ex-residents maintain contact with Carlisle House; 1,031 attended support groups.

4. Dr Anne Watts has begun a project to measure the effectiveness of the treatment programme used at Carlisle House. She has also made a very significant contribution to training and the professional development of staff at both Carlisle House and Thompson House.

5. An agreement has been signed between Carlisle House and Habinteg Housing Association regarding "moving on" accommodation for residents requiring further support after treatment. The purpose-built accommodation will provide 7 one person, self-contained flats, one of which is suitable for a disabled user. The house will be staffed by a support worker, with out-of-hours cover provided from Carlisle House. It is expected to be ready for occupancy during the summer months. This new accommodation will be known as Gray's Court, in memory of the late Rev Henry Gray who served as Minister of Duncairn and St Enoch's Church and as Chairman of the Carlisle House Management Committee.

6. The spiritual needs of residents continue to be met through formal and informal contact with the Chaplain, while weekly prayers bring staff of Carlisle House and Insight together with residents who wish to participate.

7. At Insight, Denyse Paul has been appointed to work with Louise Kane, Alcohol and Drug Development Worker and full time volunteer Rosaleen Quinn. The shop continues to be well used as a resource by the general public and other church, community and statutory agencies.

R LOVE, Chairperson

ALCOHOL AND DRUG EDUCATION

1. The Alcohol and Drug Education Committee gives thanks to God for His continued blessing over the past year. The ADE Volunteer Scheme continues to grow. The six qualified volunteers have been conducting education meetings across the country in a wide variety of venues. The second group of trainees will graduate at the General Assembly and there has been encouraging interest in applications for the new September intake. Louise Kane who is based at the Insight Shop in Upper North Street ably co-ordinates this scheme with the help of Denyse Paul. All enquiries should be addressed to them on 028 9023 1173.

2. A survey of the attitudes of young people, attending Presbyterian Churches, to the use of alcohol and drugs has been undertaken. The findings of the survey should be available at the General Assembly. The Committee thanks Rachel Linkens one of our BSW volunteers for her help with the analysis and collation of the survey findings and in producing a report.

3. Statutory authorities now require all granted aided youth groups to have a Drug Policy. With this in mind the Committee is working on making a sample policy available to all who require it.

4. At the time of writing concern is being expressed about the UK Government's proposed White Paper which will allow round the clock drinking in England and Wales. It is hoped that this irresponsible legislation is stopped in its tracks and that no such proposals are ever made for Northern Ireland.

5. Co-operation with Carlisle House has continued to grow. For example, the staff at Insight are now jointly funded by ADE and Carlisle House and all information on alcohol and drugs is shared. The ADE Committee is grateful to Mrs Helen Harrison for the management support she provides for its staff.

6. It is with regret that I find it necessary to tender my resignation as Convener of the Committee. In doing so I wish to express my personal thanks to the Committee members, BSW and Insight staff and all the ADE Volunteers for their help and support over the past few years.

W B BOYD, Convener

PRESBYTERIAN WAR MEMORIAL HOSTEL

1. Derryvolgie Hall on the Malone Road provides a home for 88 young people, mainly students, and continues to run successfully. Over 90 applications were received for 44 first year places last year.

2. We pay tribute to the work of Rev Steve Stockman and his staff at Derryvolgie Hall. It is a place where staff and students are challenged to live out their faith within the Queen's University campus.

3. Derryvolgie strives to be both biblical and contemporary. The Programme this year has included setting up prayer groups within community. Teaching has included: Unpacking the Cover; what is the Bible and why read it? A special six week course on Monday and Sunday evenings continues to be a mixture of visiting guests and speakers. Two weekends have been included in the programme.

4. As the Derryvolgie site is full the Committee is considering future developments. Discussion is taking place to investigate the possibility of making Derryvolgie more accessible as a conference facility over the summer vacation period.

J H MARTIN, Convener

PRESBYTERIAN RESIDENTIAL TRUST

1. Having celebrated half a century of caring ministry, the Presbyterian Residential Trust enters the 21st century facing three major challenges;

- A continuing demand for the services which we provide from a population which has a growing percentage of elderly people;
- Changing priorities and methods of funding within the Department of Health and Social Services;
- Ageing properties which are rapidly approaching the end of their term of efficient service.

2. The continuing high levels of occupancy in almost all of our homes is indicative that the high standard of care within a Christian ethos is desired and appreciated by residents and their relatives. Registration and Inspection Unit reports continue to commend staff for their diligence and dedication. The Committee recognises the high professional standards of our staff and is pleased to note the progress many have made with NVQ and other training. During the year Mrs Norma Robinson, Head of Sunnyside House, Bangor retired, and Mrs Gillian Ruffli Deputy Head of Corkey House, Belfast resigned. The Committee wishes to record its thanks to both ladies.

3. During the year work commenced on the extension at Tritonville Close, Dublin. Initially we were subjected to much ill-informed media attention and an orchestrated protest from a pressure group. We believe, however, that the new development will prove to be an attractive and efficient location through which the caring witness of our Church will be extended into the whole Sandymount community.

4. The PRT Committee recognises that the majority of our properties are not 'purpose-built' for Residential Care. While appropriate and tasteful modifications have been carried out, there are now increased requirements for registration and higher expectations of potential residents and their families. The Committee has conducted an in-depth review of all of our properties.

5. The PRT Committee recognises that it may not be possible to retain the existing number of homes. Within the next five years at least four of our

homes will require either major refurbishment or replacement. The Committee has agreed that the key factors required before proceeding at any home will be:

- Viability of the home in that location;
- Availability of a suitable site;
- Access to capital funding, either through loans which can be properly serviced or through 'partnership funding' with a Housing Association.

6. The Committee also recognises that responsible stewardship of our resources demands a constant monitoring of occupancy levels, running costs and capital requirements for each Home.

7. The Committee records its appreciation of the work of our Residential Services Manager, Mrs Linda Wray, who with an ever-increasing brief, continues to oversee all the work with indefatigable care and compassion. Mr Richard Gamble has provided high-quality financial and statistical information for the committee. The re-location of the administrative staff from Denegarh House to Church House was accomplished with minimal disruption to the overall work – we extend our thanks to all involved.

T J McCORMICK, Convener

SOCIAL ISSUES AND RESOURCES

1. The Committee continues to provide a Christian perspective on issues that confront our church today. Our major project this year has been the production of a video on the Church and Disability entitled *May I Come In?* The video will be especially helpful for church committees as they consider how they can make their church buildings more accessible to disabled people and how we as individuals can relate in a more positive way to people with various disabilities and handicaps. We would encourage ministers to arrange for a viewing of the video in their church as soon as possible.

2. The Committee has put together a Resource Pack for ministers which includes recent publications and resources of SIRC: booklets on Homosexuality and Childlessness; a booklet specifically to promote understanding and to assist clergy in dealing with Domestic Violence; and the video on Disability. We trust that ministers will find this a worthwhile Resource Pack and a valuable help in their ministry.

3. The Committee has set up a sub-group to explore the issues relating to church involvement in community development. Can churches work as partners with other agencies/individuals in their local community? Has this been done in any of our churches already? What is the theological basis for such involvement? We feel that this is a vital issue that we need to address as churches become increasingly marginalised from society at a local level, especially in urban areas. This will be one of our main projects in the forthcoming year.

N A L CAMERON, Convener

CHILD PROTECTION MONITORING GROUP

1. The Child Protection Monitoring Group met during the year mainly to draw up a Questionnaire which has been sent to all ministers on the implementation and effectiveness of the Child Protection Guidelines. Responses are still coming in.

2. While we are heartened that in general the church has welcomed the Guidelines and sought to conscientiously apply them, there are some congregations which have done little or nothing to raise awareness of Child Protection issues. It is important that the Guidelines are applied consistently throughout the Church and we continue to encourage congregations to this end.

3. The Monitoring Group is also encouraged that the new Visitation procedure currently being piloted contains a section on the implementation of child protection policy. This will be a good help in the ongoing monitoring of the situation at congregational level.

4. A number of people have been trained to give talks on child protection (awareness raising, procedures, good practice etc) to youth leaders, ministers and others. This can be done at congregational or presbytery level. We would encourage congregations to contact the Board office for more details.

N A L CAMERON, Convener

KINGHAN MISSION

1. While the Kinghan "Mission" was established in 1857, it was about ten years ago that God gave us His fresh vision for the Kinghan "Church". He said we were to be a people of prayer, praise, teaching and healing. He also said that we should become a place of reconciliation within the deaf community and a place where leaders could find support and encouragement. It is good to look back and see how that vision is being realised.

2. We are slowly learning to "bring everything to God in prayer" and are still amazed how He hears and answers us. Gradually we are becoming a people who pray and expect His answer. We are learning too that He speaks to deaf people and we can hear Him.

3. Because we are unable to sing we use sign language to praise Him. Sign language is not something we do with our hands only but also with our bodies and especially with our faces. We are finding more freedom to let our faces show the praise that is in our hearts.

4. Teaching has become a bigger part of our work. Although numbers are not big, those who attend are eager to learn and share what God is doing in their lives.

5. God surprises us again and again with his mercy in bringing healing – both physical and inner healing. We are learning too to live with the pain that sometimes when we pray for healing His answer is "no."

6. It has been a deep sadness for us that leaders in the deaf churches cannot seem to persevere in meeting together to pray for and encourage one another.

7. We look forward to a time when we will be able to reach out to others more meaningfully and show them the love of Jesus.

8. Work with young people is particularly difficult. We need to be faithful in loving and accepting them and praying for them.

9. We are also being encouraged to look towards the future. Rev Dr George Grindle is due to retire in 2003 and already the process of looking for his successor has begun. We are praying that the person God has in His mind for this position will be identified soon so that any necessary training may begin.

10. We are thankful to Almighty God for all He is doing and for all He has promised to do. We are grateful too for the faithful prayers and giving of His people so that the work He has begun may continue and eventually be completed in Him. To God be the glory.

J McCLUNE, Convener

OLD AGE FUND, WOMEN'S FUND AND INDIGENT LADIES' FUND

1. The Directors of the above Funds report that, during the last financial year which ended 31 December 1999, 142 beneficiaries (37 in the Old Age Fund, 79 in the Women's Fund and 26 in the Indigent Ladies' Fund) received grants.

2. The total distribution of the Funds in Grants, Donations and Gifts was £69,804 (£17,132 from the Old Age Fund, £39,168 from the Women's Fund and £13,504 from the Indigent Ladies' Fund).

3. During the year 14 grants ceased because of the deaths of beneficiaries and 3 beneficiaries withdrew because of improved financial circumstances. Six new beneficiaries were added to the Roll.

4. A 'Special Gift' of £100 was sent to every beneficiary prior to Christmas.

5. During the year the Directors responded sympathetically to various problems which had been brought to their attention. They gave one-off donations, as needed, to assist in particular cases where immediate financial aid was more appropriate than annual grants. Ministers are asked to bear in mind the possibility of help from these funds in similar cases connected with their own congregations.

6. The Directors assure the Church that all monies that come to the Funds are carefully and wisely spent.

7. The Directors of the Funds deeply appreciate the kindness and thoughtfulness of those who have remembered the work of the Funds either by gift or bequest, and hope that their example may encourage others to support this vital aspect of the Church's outreach.

8. The Directors of the Funds wish to thank the Staff for the sensitive and sympathetic way in which they carried out the efficient administration of the Funds during the year.

W P H ERSKINE, Hon. Sec.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly endorse the work of the Alcohol and Drug Education Committee and urge all churches to consider the findings of the survey of attitudes of young people to the use of alcohol and drugs for their ministry and teaching.
3. That the General Assembly commend the joint working of the ADE and Carlisle House Committees respectively and agree that the two committees be combined to form one new committee to be known as the Addiction and Education Services Committee.
4. That the resignation of Rev W B Boyd as Convener of the Alcohol and Drug Education Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that Rev R Love and _____ be appointed as Co-Conveners of the new Addiction and Education Services Committee.
5. That the General Assembly note the setting up by the Board of Social Witness of a Learning Disabled Committee under the Convenership of Rev J Waring and commend the Board's work in this area.
6. That the General Assembly welcome the Board's attempts to develop greater partnership with the other Boards and the Irish Mission, particularly in the context of the Republic of Ireland.
7. That the General Assembly commend the work of the PCI Enterprises Committee in promoting opportunities for volunteering as a means of assisting congregations and church agencies in the development of their ministries.
8. That the General Assembly commend the initiative to provide supported housing, known as Gray's Court, for men and women who are recovering from addictions.
9. That the General Assembly commend the video "May We Come In" for use by Kirk Sessions, congregational committees and other church committees and organisations.
10. That the General Assembly believe that all churches should consider how people who suffer from disabilities can be assisted in more actively participating in the life of their congregation and how access to buildings and other church resources can be improved.
11. That the customary grant made by the Social Issues and Resources Committee up to a total of £1,500 be met from the Incidental Fund.
12. That congregations continue to implement the Child Protection Guidelines and continue to offer relevant training to leaders and other personnel.
13. That the General Assembly note with concern the continuing problem of domestic violence in our society and commend the booklet "Ending the Pain and Healing the Hurt" to Ministers and Kirk Sessions for their use.
14. That the Board of Social Witness, with its associated working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 281 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Convener: Very Rev Dr D H ALLEN

Secretary: Rev D J TEMPLE

1. The Board of Evangelism and Christian Training has met on four occasions during the year.

2. The Board believes that the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ is as relevant and as urgent in this new Millennium as it ever was. We shall endeavour to meet this challenge.

3. As the Board amalgamates with the Home Board to form the new Board of Mission in Ireland, we will ensure that the task of Evangelism will continue to be at the forefront of our united witness.

4. The re-alignment of Boards will mean that the Marriage and Family Committee and the Christian Training Committee will move to other Boards. We thank all Conveners and Committee members, both past and present for their dedicated service and we wish them continued blessing and effectiveness in the future. We again record our deep appreciation of the help given by Rev David Temple and the Irish Mission staff for all their valued work throughout the year.

5. The Board warmly welcomes the appointment of Rev Harold Boyce to the post of Director of Evangelism. We commend him to the prayerful support and encouragement of the whole Church as he seeks to give a lead in the field of evangelism.

6. As 'LIFE2' continues to make its impact upon congregations, the Board thanks Almighty God for all that has taken place and we trust Him for an ongoing awareness of the need to reach those still outside the kingdom of God.

7. In 1998 the General Assembly instructed the General Board to appoint a Panel on Strategy for Mission under this Board, to keep a mission agenda before the Church. This Panel has met and are sure that this remit is already being clearly undertaken by the Church. The Board request that the Panel be thanked and discharged.

CHRISTIAN TRAINING COMMITTEE

1. During the past year, the Christian Training Committee has been involved in publishing relevant and helpful material to be used by ministers, elders and church members. The take up for some of the Christian Training Committee's publications has been encouraging. The booklet on the Lord's Supper has been particularly well received. The fact that some of our publications are used in the wider church both humbles and encourages us. In March, 1000 copies of Firm Foundations (a study guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith), 500 copies of The Elders Training Manual and 400 copies

of Faith's Foundations (a guide for members on the basic issues of the Christian life) were sent to Malawi.

2. Progress, albeit slow progress, is being made on the re-casting of On Profession of Faith into an introductory booklet to what Presbyterians believe. We are hoping that this booklet will act as a catalyst for new Christians to study the truths of the Bible in a deeper way. Thought is also being given to editing and revising some older publications. We are grateful to all who give their time and expertise to writing, editing and preparing these publications.

3. From this Assembly, the Christian Training Committee will be moving to the new Board of Studies and Christian Training. We will have a wider remit, and we are looking forward to the new challenges that this will bring. We see the new Christian Training Committee as an exciting development in the training and resourcing of church members for ministry. We look forward to working with the Director of Christian Training in the task of preparing all "God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12). We believe that this new development has great potential, and we look to Jesus to bless as we seek to obey His instructions to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

RODGER M CROOKS, Convener

DIVINE HEALING COMMITTEE

1. The increasingly frantic pace at which many people live their lives today inevitably has some impact on them. This shows itself in a whole range of problems mental, emotional, physical and spiritual. It is in this context that there is an increasing interest in the whole area of health and healing. This creates both a challenge and an opportunity for us in the Church. The challenge is to confidently encourage the ministry of divine healing. The opportunity is to bring people to experience those aspects of real healing which are not available from any other agency or alternative therapy ie redemption and forgiveness through the grace of God. In their desperate search for healing, many people can forget that there is a difference between clutching for straws and holding fast to what is good. As a committee we are seeking to help people hold fast to what is good. Part of this has been to produce a simple leaflet to answer some of the frequently asked questions about divine healing.

STEPHEN WILLIAMSON, Convener

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COMMITTEE

1. Our Presbyterian Marriage Care Counselling - PCI service continues to offer counselling to people experiencing difficulties within relationships. We encourage more ministers to use this valuable service and to make it more widely known within their congregations. Anyone can arrange an appointment with one of our trained counsellors by telephoning 028 9032 2284, Monday to

Friday (except holidays) during the hours 9.30 am to 4.30 pm and asking for Marriage Care Counselling. Marriage Care Counselling - PCI is an affiliated organisation of the Association of Christian Counsellors. This affiliation helps us to aim for high standards in training, competence and supervision in Christian counselling. The Board would thank our dedicated team of volunteer counsellors who are seeking to provide a much-needed ministry to those experiencing the pain of hurting and broken relationships. During a recent 16-month period our counsellors provided approximately 377 hours of counselling aimed at supporting and helping people experiencing difficulties with relationships.

2. The service was instituted as a pilot scheme in June 1991. Unfortunately the need for such a service today is even greater. Each year official government statistics show a steady increase in divorce rates and the numbers of children born outside of marriage and a steady decrease in the numbers of adults who are getting married. The government predicts that within ten years only a minority of the adult population will be married.

3. The Board agrees that there is now a need for the church to respond in a more committed way to this disturbing situation. One response would be for the church to recruit (part-time) a suitably qualified person who can develop the Marriage counselling pilot scheme into a fully operational counselling service, and also promote Christian Marriage and Family Values in other ways, as time allows. Such a person would provide counselling on behalf of the Presbyterian Marriage Care Counselling service, co-ordinate the development and running of the Presbyterian Marriage Care Counselling service, assist in providing the necessary in-service training and support for volunteer counsellors and ministers, promote the Presbyterian Marriage Care Counselling service within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, develop, promote and deliver Courses on Marriage Preparation, Marriage Enrichment and Parenting as time allows and act as Secretary/Chairperson to the interviewing panel of the Committee on Marriage and the Family for couples seeking marriage but referred to the panel because one or both have been divorced.

4. A suitable person for this post would need to be in agreement with the distinctive ethos of our Presbyterian Marriage Care Counselling Service, be fully accredited by the Association of Christian Counsellors at Level 2 or beyond and possess good organisational, administrative and communicational skills.

5. The Rev J W McAuley continues to act as Secretary to the pastoral interviews of couples who plan to marry where one or both have been divorced. We thank him for his valuable behind-the-scenes service in this way. 53 couples met the panel in 1999. Ministers are reminded that couples seeking marriage by Special Licence are required to meet the panel first if one or both are divorced.

TREVOR STEELE, Convener

APPENDIX**REPORT ON THE INTER-CHURCH STANDING COMMITTEE ON
MIXED MARRIAGES****1999-2000**

Rev John Brackenridge reports:

The Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages met in Mount Oliver, Dundalk on 12th November 1999. The Rt Rev Michael Mayes Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, Co-Chairman of the Committee, acted as Chairman for the Meeting.

1. Changes to the Committee Membership

It was noted that there are no changes to the Committee membership. The Committee heard apologies from Mons Patrick Devine who was unavoidably absent.

2. Report on the Meeting of the Inter- Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages 1998 -1999

There was a brief discussion of last year's Report and it was noted that the Report had been distributed and approved by each of the Churches.

3. Joint Preparation for Inter- Church Marriage

The Rev John Brackenridge, Fr Brendan Murray and Ken Dunn reported on recent pre-marriage courses held in the Greater Belfast area for couples preparing for Inter-Church marriage. Much of the subject matter and questions dealt with throughout these courses was broadly similar to the issues dealt with at Inter-Church preparation courses held elsewhere. These courses continue to be well received by participants and, as a general rule, take place twice yearly. It was noted that only a small percentage of the total number of Inter-Church couples avail of the courses.

It was felt that every effort should be made by each church to publicise the dates of the courses, in an effort to support and commend them to all engaged Inter-Church couples. It was also noted that the initial concerns couples may have had at the outset of the courses were largely dispelled very rapidly, and feedback received after the courses had finished was both positive and encouraging.

Difficulties in organising courses outside Belfast and Dublin were highlighted. Consequently, couples preparing for Inter-Church marriage wishing to participate in one of these courses must travel to Dublin or Belfast.

4. Recent Trends in Inter-Church Marriage

Recent trends in the celebration of Inter-Church marriage services continue to be, in the main, positive. Nevertheless, it was agreed that we should not underestimate the very real difficulties, which must be faced by some couples. In this regard, it was noted that where there is a good working relationship

between the clergy and the couple involved, this is a source of help and encouragement to the couples and their families.

The Committee continues to express concern over the growing numbers of couples within each of the traditions who choose co-habitation before, or in place of, marriage.

It was acknowledged by the Committee that Inter-Church marriages are occasions for pastoral care and sensitivity and all strategies should be used to help renew couples in their commitment to their own churches.

5. Pastoral Care of Inter-Church Families

During a discussion on the pastoral care of Inter-Church families, it was noted that many couples move to a different parish after their marriage, which makes it difficult to organise visits from clergy and ongoing pastoral care.

A worrying trend may also be emerging as to couples' level of interest in, or commitment to, ongoing pastoral care by the clergy of their respective Churches.

Very often the celebration of the baptism of a child is the only contact between couples and clergy. It was agreed that this celebration is a unique opportunity for further catechesis. In this regard, the work of baptismal teams in preparing couples for the baptism of their children was commended.

6. Inter-Communion

A discussion took place concerning Inter-Communion in the context of Inter-Church couples. 'One Bread One Body', the joint document from the three Catholic Episcopal Conferences of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland concerning the Eucharist in the life of the Church and the establishment of general norms on sacramental sharing, was also discussed.

It was highlighted that the Catholic Church's teaching on Inter-Communion in the context of Inter-church couples is often a source of hurt and pain - indeed to both parties. The importance of Inter-church couples discussing this matter prior to marriage, was emphasised. It was noted that 'One bread One Body' will be discussed at a gathering of the Inter-Church Meeting to be held later in November 2000.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that next year's meeting of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages take place in Mount Oliver, Dundalk on Friday, 17th November 2000 at 2 pm.

IRISH MISSION COMMITTEE

1. As we enter the new millennium, Ireland faces incredible changes:
 - The Republic's economy is referred to as the Tiger Economy; many towns and cities north and south of the border are experiencing redevelopment, new housing, new roads etc and these changes can have major effects on communities;

- There have been tremendous political changes in both countries as well as the introduction of multinational companies and membership of European Community, which affect many local decisions;
 - Speed in communications - many people are familiar with everyday use of computers, e-mails and the internet, yet these developments leave others baffled;
 - Drift from attendance at traditional churches - both catholic and protestant churches have seen many who claim to belong to their communities but no longer feel the need or desire to attend worship regularly; some attend new small local groups which have recently started up in different places and many others go nowhere;
 - Many people are financially well off - able to afford large homes, foreign holidays and two cars; yet others struggle to make ends meet; many face unemployment or lack of job security, breakdown in family life with problems concerning drink, drugs and many other difficulties.
2. In this complex, changing and challenging society in Ireland today, the Irish Mission seeks to reach out to all age levels with the love of Jesus Christ.
3. All our Workers are involved in some children's work and most have several meetings per week in different towns and housing estates. Each week about 500 children attend these meetings but we are very concerned that so many other children throughout Ireland never have the chance to attend a Christian children's meeting. Some meetings are held in homes, some in church halls and some in community premises. In some areas it is difficult to find suitable accommodation where children will be attracted to attend. Child protection regulations mean that more assistance is required for adequate supervision during meetings and transporting the children. Some of our Workers would like to reach out into other areas but would require more support in order to do this. We are grateful for the help received from a number of Home Mission ministers and also PCI youth teams who are able to offer support and encouragement to existing Good News Clubs and also to lead outreach among children in new areas.
4. Many of our Workers are involved in youth activities. In some areas Workers have openings in schools to speak in assemblies, take RE classes or show Christian videos. Some Workers are involved in youth clubs, which are mainly social with an epilogue at the end of the evening. In other areas young people gather for a bible study and a time of singing and fellowship. Each situation is different but young people need support, encouragement and help as they face tremendous peer pressure, much of which is against the Christian faith. Many of our Workers find it difficult to integrate contacts made through work among children and young people into the local Presbyterian congregation. When young people outgrow the age for their particular group and there is no appropriate next group in their locality, we are concerned that they remain in contact with a living Christian fellowship.
5. All our Workers are involved in outreach to adults but this work takes many different forms. Where both partners are working, it can be very difficult to find a suitable time for door to door visitation. Often busy people do not want to spend time on their doorstep talking to a stranger, especially about spiritual

things. Some of our Workers in association with their local congregations have had special opportunities at the start of the millennium for a different form of outreach eg through mailing Christian literature to everyone in the community or through an exhibition to which schools and the whole community was invited. These events have as yet had no obvious response but have helped to increase the community awareness of our Irish Mission work.

6. All of our Workers are involved in regular bible studies in a house or hotel. In some cases during this last year there has been encouragement with spiritual growth among some Christians, some becoming believers and some attending for the first time. Other groups do not seem to be growing. Yet our Workers seek to share the Word of God on every occasion and we look to the work of the Holy Spirit to bring forth a harvest.

7. We have at present 12 Irish Mission Workers, 10 of who are based in the Republic and 2 in Northern Ireland. We are grateful to God that Mr Stephen McGookin has recovered from his very serious illness and is working with Ballyloughlan congregation in Ballymena. We are considering very seriously a request from Donegal Presbytery to have a Worker based in Letterkenny and will have discussions with Dublin and Munster Presbytery about the possibility of an Irish Mission Worker joining a team ministry in the Dublin area.

8. We are very grateful for the faithful work of our Superintendent, Rev David Temple. His work as Editor of the Christian Irishman is very much appreciated by the wide readership of the magazine throughout our church. His leadership of the Mission involves a great deal of travelling, many meetings and a lot of deputation. This is all done very well and in a manner which shows his Christian concern for the advance of the Gospel throughout Ireland. His pastoral support of all our Workers and their families is greatly appreciated. We also pay tribute to the work of our office staff - Nehru Dass, Mandy Higgins, Roberta Irvine, Elaine Shaw and Evelyn Craig.

9. We congratulate Roberta Irvine on her selection for Deaconess training and we wish her well as she leaves the Irish Mission office and commences her training in the autumn.

10. We commend the work of the Irish Mission to the General Assembly and ask members to pray for the work of our Mission, our Workers, Superintendent and office staff that we may be faithful instruments in the Lord's hands for the spread of the Gospel throughout Ireland at this time.

DOUGLAS C COWAN, Convener

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

1. It was intended that while LIFE2 had a "beginning" it would not have an "ending" but would be an on-going, integral part of our Church's life. The Committee has been looking at various ways of keeping evangelism high on the list of priorities for each congregation.

2. Rev Brian Small continues to compile a list of the various methods of evangelism used throughout our Church in LIFE2. This will be made available at a later date and will be a useful reference resource for the future.

3. The Committee welcomes the appointment of Rev Harold Boyce as Director of Evangelism and is already impressed with the vision and enthusiasm he is bringing to this post, along with his long experience as a parish minister. We look forward to the development of the ideas he has already discussed with us and we are certain that he will make a very valuable contribution to the life of our church.

4. The Committee has been made aware of the "Values for change" project, co-ordinated by The Evangelical Alliance to initiate thought and discussion on Biblical values focusing on the year 2002. After an initial enthusiastic response we are continuing to be involved in the thinking and planning for this project.

5. We have again this year made grants of £200 each to:-
 The Scripture Gift Mission
 The Bible Society
 National Bible Society for Ireland

JOHN PARKES, Convener

APPENDIX

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM

The Director of Evangelism, Rev Harold Boyce, reports:-

1. I took up my new post on 1st February, conscious of the great privilege I have been given in helping to lead the church forward in evangelism. While I am available to respond to invitations from ministers, Kirk Sessions and others, a large part of my work will be in preparing materials, such as training courses, for use throughout the Church.

2. My first steps have been in the direction of consulting with Evangelism Agents and others to hear their views of the needs of the Church. It is important that our Church's departments work closely with each other so opportunities for co-operation with eg Union College and the Christian Training Centre are being explored.

3. I also hope to build on the foundations laid by the Prayer Triplets Scheme in connection with LIFE2. The hope is of mobilising even more members to a consistent prayerfulness for the evangelistic ministry of the Church. So that Churches organising special evangelistic events can tap into this prayer ministry I intend to issue a regular news-sheet. Its usefulness will depend on the willingness of ministers to supply information.

4. A pilot event for what I hope will be a regular pattern of ministers' seminars throughout the Church is being prepared. Hopefully the full scheme will be running by the Autumn of 2000.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Marriage and the Family Committee

2. That the General Assembly authorise the Board to recruit and appoint a suitably qualified person to undertake the duties set out in par 3 of the report of the Marriage and the Family Committee.

3. That the resignation of Rev Trevor Steele as Convener of the Marriage and the Family Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that _____ be appointed in his place.

Evangelism Committee

4. That the General Assembly welcome the appointment of Rev Harold Boyce as Director of Evangelism and encourage ministers and Kirk Sessions to continue to make evangelism a priority within the life of each congregation.

5. That the General Assembly encourage congregations to support Bible Sunday on 3 December 2000, and commend the Bible Society and Scripture Union on the “Luke the Book” project in primary schools.

General

6. That the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training be thanked and discharged.

YOUTH BOARD

Rev DANIEL J KANE, Convener
Rev R JAMES HYNDMAN, Co-Convener
Miss ROSALIND STIRLING, Youth Officer

1. To support and facilitate the vital work done among young people at local congregational level continues to be the passionate focus of the Youth Board. The dawning of the new millennium has only served to remind us of the urgent and demanding task we engage in when working with young people. The post-modern young person is also post-Christian in thinking and lifestyle. The values of the Kingdom and lifestyle changes that living under the authority of Christ requires, are for many teenagers the language of another world, a different age. Even for those who profess faith in Christ, the leap is a huge one on a daily basis, as never before has the gulf between Christian and secular been so wide.

2. The Youth Board responded to this considerable challenge in September 1999 through the provision of the 'Equipping Leaders' conference, a significant event for ministers, elders, parents and youth leaders. If ministry events can be assessed as either a success or failure, 'Equipping Leaders' was an enormous success. The feedback continues to come in of the dynamic impact the event had on a wide spectrum of leadership within our denomination. We thank God for the wealth of insight and vision brought to us through this event.

3. 'Equipping Leaders' will be followed up in October 2000 when Gordon MacDonald, our keynote speaker, will return. In partnership with the Christian Training Centre, the Youth Board will host a number of road shows around the country which will focus on leadership development within the local church.

4. The Youth Board wishes to record its gratitude to the vast number of volunteer youth leaders and ever-growing number of full-time youth workers, who make the work among young people in congregations possible. The anti-social hours and sometimes thankless task is a sacrifice that can often be overlooked. We praise God for these servants of the Kingdom.

5. The Youth Board continues to be deeply grateful to all those employed on their behalf who serve the church and the work of the kingdom among young people. To Miss Roz Stirling, the Church's Youth Officer, and the team of able and efficient administrative staff in the Youth Office, Miss Lois McIlrath, Mrs Claire Child and Mrs Ann Creighton, we extend our sincere thanks. This team of people ensure that the ever-growing work of the Youth Board is effectively planned and executed. During the year, the office said goodbye to Miss Mary Tobin, who had been employed under the ACE Scheme. To her we extend our sincere thanks for her valuable contribution.

6. As congregations continue to grapple with the work on the ground, many have benefited directly from the support training and insight offered by the Board's Youth Development Officers. To Mr Graeme Thompson and Rev Keith McCrory we extend our sincere thanks. The Board has accepted with regret, the resignation of Rev Keith McCrory who has served for four years as part-time

Youth Development Officer for Dublin and Munster and part-time Chaplain for Dublin Institute of Technology and Dublin City University. He has been an enormous asset, particularly in his work among leaders. His insights and skills as a trainer have left a very worthwhile legacy. We pray for God's blessing on him and his family in their future ministry. The Board continues to look for a replacement for the YDO post in Donegal/Monaghan.

7. The Board continues to be indebted to Mr Ian Scott and the staff at the Lucan Youth Centre who provide such an excellent residential resource. Ian Scott also continues to develop the work of the 'Preparing Youth for Peace' leadership programme, with the support of an enthusiastic working group. This single identity programme, which will assist leaders and young people to explore what it means to be a Presbyterian, is making consistent progress.

8. Mr Maurice Kennedy continues, through his role as Youth Board Development Officer, to be a considerable asset to our work. His oversight of the Gusymere and Rostrevor centres and his tireless work in searching out sources of financial support for the work of the Youth Board is deeply appreciated.

9. The Nexus Ireland project continues to enjoy capital support from the United States. A particular gift is worthy of mention. In September 2000 it is anticipated that a staff accommodation block will be constructed through the generosity of one particular sponsor. This accommodation will make an enormous contribution to the efficiency of the centre by freeing up chalet accommodation for regular outside use. We are deeply grateful to Mr Don West for his generosity. The Board also wishes to record its gratitude to Mrs Helen Kennedy for her support of the Nexus project through her role as secretary.

10. Youth Link NI is currently in the final stages of the development of a strategic plan for the future of the organisation. The member churches have greatly welcomed this process and are confident that it will bear good fruit.

11. The Youth Board wishes to thank all those who supported the 'Making a Difference' Youth and Sunday School project 1999/2000 which highlighted the work of the Northern Ireland Hospice, Children's Service and Stewart's Hospital and School in Dublin for children with special needs. The project also raised funds for the production of Sunday School materials for use in Brazil, Malawi and Jamaica.

12. The Youth Board continues to be indebted to our Church for the finance received through our United Appeal allocation, which permits our work to continue. We deeply appreciate the effort required by congregations to meet their allocations and record our gratitude. At the March meeting with the United Appeal Sub-Committee, the Clerk of the Assembly raised the matter of funding for the post of Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland. The Youth Board had not requested finance in 2001 for this post. The Clerk agreed to raise the matter with the Panel for the Overview of Funding; he questioned whether this was the time to terminate this post in view of the falling numbers in our denomination, and the considerable evidence of the effectiveness of this field post. The Youth Board are grateful to the Panel for the Overview of Funding for their recommendation that the post of Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland be continued for a further twelve months. The Board continues to seek to use this financial assistance with great prudence.

Miss Roz Stirling writes:

13. The Youth Board records its deep gratitude to the Rev Daniel Kane for his years of enthusiastic and visionary leadership as the Board Convener. His passion that young people hear and receive the message of Jesus Christ and be integrated into the life of the church has led to many new initiatives for the Youth Board during his years of convenership. We thank God for his insight and courageous leadership. Daniel concludes his period of service in this capacity at this year's Assembly. We pray God's blessing on him and his ministry in West Church, Ballymena."

14. The Youth Board also records its sincere gratitude to the Rev George McClelland for his commitment to the work of the Youth Home Mission Committee. Under his direction the Youth Home Mission Committee has flourished in the development of significant mission opportunities for young people. We thank him for his vision and wish him well in his ongoing ministry in Magheragall congregation.

YOUTH HOME MISSION COMMITTEE

SUMMER OUTREACH

1. This area of our work is an 'up' as we see year by year many young people applying to join outreach teams for one, two or even three weeks. We praise God that we are able to assist local congregations who ask for the Youth Board's help in this way. We know that there are many churches who would like to have a team but this is not always possible. The Working Group attend to the remit of this work with careful attention. Training for all our young people is provided before going on to a team. This is a wonderful way for Christian young people to give and learn much about their faith and how to pass it on. Again we would ask congregations to encourage their members (from the age of 16) to consider joining a Summer Outreach team.

YEAR TEAM

2. During the past year we have only had two young people on the Year Team. This has made the Working Group question why we are not receiving more applications for this opportunity of service to Christ and the Church. We urge ministers and youth leaders to encourage their young people between the ages of 18 and 25 to apply for a year that will benefit them in their Christian life and also the work of the church as a whole. The 'up' of this work has been seeing Ashley Crothers and David Freeburn grow in Christ. It has been a continual learning curve for the Working Group having only two on the team. We have given Ashley and David the opportunity to work with our Youth Development Officers in Dublin and Northern Ireland. This proved to be beneficial.

GENERAL

3. The Committee extends its thanks to the Rev John Flaherty (Chairperson) and the Summer Outreach Working Group and to the Rev Peter

Dickinson (Chairperson) and the Year Team Working Group for the oversight of these areas of Youth Board work. The Committee would like to place on record its thanks to Roz Stirling (Youth Officer) for her help, guidance and encouragement in their work. Thanks also go to the Office Staff and Youth Development Officers without whose assistance a lot of the work could not be completed.

4. We pray that God will continue to bless this work in the coming days and months.

M G McCLELLAND, Convener

YOUTH OVERSEAS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee continues to work on how it can increase the benefits to young people and congregations through cross cultural experiences, either by individuals travelling to locations around the world on one of our youth teams or through hosting visiting groups of young people. The Committee strongly believes in the long-term benefits such exposure can foster. Through the excellent work of the chairmen of the different working groups we have been able to extend the limits of our planning by almost one year, currently finalising 2000 and completing initial enquiries and decisions for 2001. This fulfils the goals outlined in the 1999 Report to Assembly. Research is also being carried into the possibility of practical teams travelling out in future years to carry out specific practical tasks; although at present there is nothing further to report.

OUTGOING TEAMS WORKING GROUP

2. During July and August 1999, the Board sent three teams. The first was to the Czech Republic to work alongside the Klicek Foundation, a hospice organisation which was a recipient of a grant from the 1999 Mad Sunday School Project. The team were involved in some of the work around the building of a new hospice in Malovice about 50 kilometres outside Prague. They also shared in the leadership of a camp for children and families touched directly or indirectly by cancer. The team reported on an excellent time. They felt deeply humbled by the work of Jiri and Marketa Kralovcovi. The second team was a return visit to Debrecen in Hungary to work with children brought from the Ukraine to a summer camp organised through Dorcas Aid by Paul Visky, a pastor in the Hungarian Reformed Church. Once again it was an experience which deeply touched the team members who were thrilled at the opportunity of sharing Christ with the children. Some of that team have already been involved in trying to carry out a similar kind of work on a personal basis in the Ukraine in the summer of 2000. The Committee feel that this is the natural and desired outcome of the teams organised by the Board. The third team was the annual visit to Wembley, north London, to work with Christopher Macwan in Wembley Park URC and St James, Alperton assisting in children's holiday clubs run by the congregations. The team was limited in number, regrettably an annual occurrence, and was therefore stretched. This however was good for them as a team and as individuals and enabled much learning to take place. Wembley is an

extremely multi-cultured experience in the extensive ethnic mix of north London and this added dimension made it an experience of which our young people spoke very positively.

3. Plans are well under way for this summer. The Board has made a special millennium effort to send out two long haul teams. One will visit Brazil where they will see the work of Mabel Colson in the Caiua Mission in Mato Grosso do Sul and travel with her to visit Indian villages where the mission has been working, then travelling to Lynn and Heather Cochrane in Cruzeta where they will be involved in different aspects of evangelistic work. The second team will visit Kenya. The co-ordination is through the Rev Paul Bailie who is based in Limuru and plans continue to be formulated for this team.

INCOMING TEAMS WORKING GROUP

4. The visit of a team from Hungary was once again postponed in 1999 due to different problems encountered in Hungary in the setting up of a team. Plans are well under way however for this visit to take place in summer 2000. The Board also hopes to receive a team from Kenya. As with the Outgoing Work Group, tentative plans are also under way for 2001.

MISSION PROMOTION WORKING GROUP

5. The Working Group will be focusing on the publicising of the teams during the incoming year and how to reach the young people the teams are devised for.

PETER C LYLE, Convener

YOUTH CENTRES COMMITTEE

1. The Youth Centres Committee continues to be encouraged by the activities held each year at the centres at Guysmere, Lucan and Rostrevor, and reports that during the past year a large number of young people and leaders have benefited from the facilities.

2. It is the constant aim of the Centres Committee to seek to develop our facilities where young people can be challenged by the claims of the gospel, taught in the Word of God and instructed in how to use the gifts and talents God has given them for the benefit of the Church of Jesus Christ and their fellow citizens throughout the length and breadth of the land and further afield.

3. Our centre at Lucan continues to thrive under the directorship of Mr Ian Scott and his staff, whose commitment to its aims and objectives throughout the past year has enabled its ministry to impact the lives of many within the local community and beyond.

4. This year our centres continue to be used to facilitate various camps in keeping with our objectives as centres of ministry. Rostrevor continues as a weekend centre for youth groups. The Lucan centre and Guysmere centre, with their sports halls, provide adequate facilities for weekend groups and additional opportunities during the week for local groups to use the facilities. The Youth Centres Committee is encouraging the development of the centres in order that

they may be used as bases for local witness to their surrounding communities. To this end young people living in the immediate area heavily subscribe the soccer camps in Guysmere and Lucan. The Guysmere Soccer Camp provides an additional facility for holidaymakers in the Castlerock area. Last year, the soccer camp based at Guysmere was repeated in Ballymoney. Lucan continues to host the annual summer camp and senior camp. The Boys' Camp and the Girls' camp at Guysmere have had a significant input into the lives of many young people down through the years and continue to attract large numbers of young people each year. The Adventure camp at Shannaghmore is being transferred this year to Bushmills Education Centre and we believe it will prove to be a welcome addition to our camps programme.

5. The summer activities for 2000 begin with the new Lucan Senior Summer Camp from 3 – 7 July. This is geared towards 16 – 18 year olds. The Lucan Summer Camp for 12 – 15 year olds will take place 14 – 20 August and the Lucan Soccer Camp from 30 July – 4 August. Guysmere Boys Camp is from 7 – 15 July and the Girls Camp will be at the later date 29 July – 5 August. The Adventure Camp with its new venue will be from 7 – 11 August and finally Castlerock and Ballymoney Soccer Camp (non residential) will be from 14 – 18 August.

6. Mr Maurice Kennedy, our Youth Board Development Officer, continues to focus his attention on developing and expanding the work of our centres at Guysmere and Rostrevor and as a Committee we place on record our appreciation to him and his wife Helen for all the energy expended in respect of the work.

7. It is the Committee's desire to continue to develop high standards of service to young people through our three centres. We thank God for those who over the past year have come to faith and for young Christians who have been challenged into further avenues of service as a result of ministries within the centres.

8. Thanks are extended to individual members at local level who serve on the Guysmere, Rostrevor and Lucan Management Committees and also to the staff of the Youth Office for their willingness to promote the work with graciousness and enthusiasm.

D I J McNIE, Convener

YOUTH TRAINING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. As a Board we seek to enable local churches to develop youth ministry that is effective in reaching, nurturing, challenging and equipping young people to be disciples of Jesus Christ. The key people in this process are the current and emerging leaders. It is the role of this committee to help in the development of these leaders.

TRAINING WORKING GROUP

2. During the year Graeme Thompson has been working with a wide variety of local congregations, helping them to develop strategies and delivering training which is designed for their situations. Alongside his work the Basic Youth Leadership Course continues to be widely used.

3. The new Youth Ministry Certificate being run in partnership with Union Theological College has been a tremendous success, with a total of 45 participants attending the first two courses in Belfast. The course is going to be offered at three locations in the autumn: Belfast, Londonderry and Monaghan.

4. A conference was held in Dublin in January for Youth leaders which received very encouraging feedback. Special thanks are due to Rev Keith McCrory for all his work in that Presbytery.

5. Youth Link along with the other churches have just completed a new strategic plan which takes account of the vast changes which have taken place in the training and community relations needs of the churches over the last 10 years. We look forward to the implementation of this strategy.

RESOURCES WORKING GROUP

6. The BIG news is that the Youth Board now has its own web site (www.pciyouth.org). This provides instant access to the work of the Board 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There will be regular news updates, resource reviews, details of events and a forum for discussions. The opportunities are endless. Thanks must go to Graeme Thompson and his working group for their many hours of preparation and creativity.

7. There is an ever increasing variety and number of resources available to borrow or hire from the Youth Office. Please make use of them.

RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP

8. A matter that needs to be grasped by our leaders is the practical outworking of the Great Commandment and Great Commission in Ireland today. This is a painful process because it involves self-awareness as well as seeking to understand cultures different from our own. It is the task of the Preparing Youth for Peace Project to engage Youth Leaders in this process.

9. Progress is slow because essential building blocks need to be put in place if the project is to have lasting impact. These include: an audit being carried out on our behalf by the Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland (a branch of ECONI) to ascertain attitudes within Presbyterianism towards our neighbours and the training of facilitators so that the project can be earthed in local contexts.

TRAINING TREVOR WORKING GROUP

10. This year's event picks up on insights from last year's Leaders' Conference and a trip to the Youth Specialties Conference in the States.

11. It will take place in November 2000. On Friday 3rd November there will be a Critical Concerns Day designed for a more in-depth look at certain issues, followed on the Saturday by the usual mix of talks and seminars, theory and practical ideas to offer something for everyone. The key speakers are Mike

Yaconelli and Mark Oestreicher from Youth Specialties along with John Middendorf, who made a lasting impression on our delegation at the Youth Specialties Conference.

D STANFIELD, Convener

YOUTH EVENTS COMMITTEE

1. The committee continues to extend a ministry to young people through five major events. Youth Night, at the close of the Annual General Assembly, Starting as a Student, and TGI Christmas continue to meet the needs of our young people. In two new initiatives, the 'MAD' weekend and the Route 66 Bible Conference have superseded the long established Youthreach Festival.

YOUTH NIGHT

2. Two (identical) 'Youth Nights' take place at the close of the Annual General Assembly. Last year's speaker, Alistair Begg, addressed the issue of the so-called 'Millennium Bug'. The next Youth Night will be held on Friday 9 and Saturday 10 June 2000. The guest speaker will be the Rev Rico Tice, Associate Minister in All Soul's, London.

STARTING AS A STUDENT

3. Starting as a Student continues to assist young people in their preparation for entering Higher and Further Education. This one day event, hosted in conjunction with Church of Ireland, Baptist and Methodist Youth Departments and the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist Chaplaincies, along with International Fellowship of Evangelical Students Ireland, provides spiritual and practical guidance, as well as an opportunity to interact with other freshers. Starting as a Student will take place at Union Theological College on Saturday 9 September 2000.

TGI CHRISTMAS

4. TGI Christmas differs in style and format from other youth events. Although much less didactic, the format nonetheless continues to provide an opportunity for young people to consider God incarnate, and celebrate Christmas in a strongly Christian ethos. Last year there was a huge response to the event which featured American band, All Star United. The work of Habitat for Humanity was highlighted, and more than £3000 was given towards this work. The next TGI Christmas will take place at Assembly Buildings on Friday 15 December 2000.

MAD WEEKEND

5. The development of good relationships remains a key factor in successful youth ministry. One aim of the MAD weekend is to release leaders from the responsibility of organising a residential youth programme, thereby creating the time and energy necessary for meaningful interaction in ministry. The Events Committee is greatly encouraged by the large response to this new

venture. This weekend is particularly organised with a view to ministering to the needs of those from 12 - 16 years. It was heartening to see so many Presbyterian Young people again fill the University area in Coleraine as they united in times of worship, teaching, evangelism and leisure. Another MAD weekend will take place at the same venue on 27 -29 October 2000.

ROUTE 66

6. 'Route 66' is the name given to a young adult (17-20 something) Bible Conference providing a high quality teaching programme for those who desire to be more firmly established in the Christian faith.

7. The name, drawn from the American 'Route 66' which runs from the East Coast to the West Coast, reflects the conference aim of helping young people make the journey from cover to cover though the 66 books of the bible. In the driving seat for the first year was the Rev Desi Maxwell from Belfast Bible College.

8. Each element of the Conference Programme draws an analogy from the journey. For example, there is an opportunity for 'Map Reading' to understand how the various parts of the Bible relate to each other. There will be times to sharpen the focus helping to 'negotiate the bends' which are those difficult passages requiring some skill and expertise. Route 66 is about more than filling heads and notebooks. The teaching programme is regularly punctuated by time to respond to God in spirit-filled and spirit-led worship. Quality musicianship and computer generated words and images provide a vehicle for uplifting praise, pleasing to God. To encourage each 'traveller' to personally pursue Christ there are also times of quietude. These so-called 'fuel stops' will be moments to assimilate what God has been saying and provide an opportunity to appropriate the teaching for each individual.

9. Since developing a good sense of community is also important, there will be many times to switch onto 'Cruise Control' enjoying sports, recreation and good wholesome entertainment.

10. In essence, Route 66 seeks to provide a biblically functioning community (Acts 2:46) in which young adults will be facilitated, motivated and equipped towards a fuller understanding of scripture and a deeper love for Christ and His Church.

11. Route 66 will take place DV at Loughrey College, Cookstown from Thursday 24 to Monday 28 August. The keynote speakers will be Rev John Woodside and Rev Dr Gary Millar.

J W P McCONNELL, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Revs R J Hyndman, David Stanfield, Dr William Crawley and Mr Trevor Long be appointed as representatives on the Youth Link NI Council and the Board of Management of the Churches Youth Service Council.
3. That in accordance with the recommendation of the Panel on the Overview of Funding, the Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland be continued in post for a further year.

4. That the following grants be paid from the Incidental Fund:
 - Youth Link NI - £6,500
 - PCI Family Holiday - £6,000
5. That the resignation of the Rev D J Kane as Convener of the Youth Board be accepted and that he be thanked for his services.
6. That the resignation of the Rev M G McClelland as Convener of the Youth Home Mission Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that be appointed in his place.
7. That the Youth Board, with its associated working committees, for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 283 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Convener: Rev JAMES McALLISTER, OBE
Secretary: Rev R F S POOTS, OBE

1. By decision of the General Assembly in 1958 the Rev David H S Armstrong was ordained by the Presbytery of Belfast to work in CSSM and Scripture Union. This he did for 34 years until his retirement, but remained a member of the Education Board until his death this year. Mr Armstrong had a unique gift of communication with children and young people, both in the spoken and the written word, only equalled perhaps by his ability to communicate with those who taught and led the young ones. These skills remained undiminished throughout the whole of his ministries. His reports to this Board were gems of wisdom, insight and imagination.

2. He was a lovely man, full of grace, quiet good humour, and enlightened thoughtfulness, all stemming from his love for and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Church which is His Body.

3. The Church at large, our denomination, and especially this Board will miss his gracious, friendly presence, his perceptive contributions to document and debate and his large-hearted encouragement.

4. We thank God for every remembrance of him.

5. The work of education, in all its aspects, continues still without one of its best practitioners. The issues that we highlighted in State Education last year have mainly stalled due to a suspended Assembly, but will be no less vital when that body resumes.

6. The Report, elsewhere in this Book, on the extent and arrest of falling numbers in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland will undoubtedly have challenges for our Christian Education Committee, while the changing face of university and colleges chaplaincies, especially in the Dublin area, will be a welcome and opportune spur to Christian mission in that significant area of life and learning.

Recognised Ministries

Rev David Bruce, General Director of Scripture Union (Northern Ireland), reports:

1. The work of Scripture Union in Northern Ireland has continued through the past year with many encouragements. Notable among these has been the ready and wide acceptance of “Luke the Book” – the joint millennium project of Scripture Union and the Bible Society. An initial print-run of 120,000 books was pre-ordered by schools across the Province, so a reprint was ordered to cope with the greater than anticipated demand. In the event, over 90% of 8-14 year olds in the country received a free copy of Luke the Book during the distribution period, amounting to over 152,000 children. We have been delighted with this response, and have received letters from schools everywhere, including stories of children finding faith for the first time through reading this gospel.

2. The programme of camps and Missions (CSSM) continues this summer, with the help of a new staff member, Joanne McKinstry, from Elmwood congregation in Lisburn.

3. Plans are under way for a camp expedition to Malawi, in August, for a group of young people from SU in Northern Ireland. They will visit the SU campsite in Kande on the shores of Lake Malawi and make connections with work already started by young Presbyterian volunteers in recent years, including David McCullagh, Joanne Hutton and Jeff Richardson.

Rev Patricia McBride, Chaplain at The Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe, Donegal, reports:

1. My work at the Royal and Prior continues apace. Together with other members of staff, we continue to develop a team approach to pastoral care of the pupils.

2. Daily year-group Assemblies and special Services provide opportunities for worship in the school.

3. I have encouraged committed pupils to take responsibility for running the Christian Union meetings, and these provide informal times of discussion, Bible Study and prayer.

4. Classroom teaching facilitates my getting to know pupils throughout the school and parent-teacher meetings enable me to have contact with parents and guardians, which is important for my work.

5. I very much value the prayers of the Church, and ask for your continued support.

STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The Committee has engaged in another busy year during which a major religious education website was launched, representatives paid a visit to schools in England and met with the Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly, responded through the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) to Department of Education consultation reports, invited the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) to address the Board, received progress reports on the preparation of a new RE Syllabus for Primary Schools in the Republic of Ireland and continued to monitor movements in educational thinking.

St Mary's Primary School, Ballymena

2. During last year's Assembly, the school suffered damage by, yet another, arson attack and the Assembly was assured that the Board would express sincere regret. The Board Convener, the Rev James McAllister, visited the school and delivered a letter. The Chairman of the St Mary's Board of Governors later wrote with appreciation for this gesture.

Faith in Schools Website: www.faithinschools.org

3. The TRC has proved its continued usefulness as a mechanism by which the three member Churches can co-ordinate issues from their Boards and take action as one. Through funding, sourced by the TRC, the Churches and the Belfast Jewish Community supported the launch of a comprehensive Website, designed by Canon Houston McKelvey. The site is divided into twelve areas: Key Stages, Collective Worship, Judaism, The Christian Story Parts One and Two, Religion and Life, Teaching Tolerance, Professional Support, Classroom Activities, Resource Articles, Storytelling and Directories.

Between 17-31 January there were 6,845 successful 'hits' on the site, an average of 456 per day. This increased in the four weeks up to mid-March to over 46,000.

RE Primary Syllabus

4. A Committee, which includes specialists in RE, teachers and ministers as well as representatives of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Ireland Churches, has begun work on a new syllabus for Protestant-managed schools in the Republic. Initial funding has been put together by the Church of Ireland but, if pupils and teachers workbooks as well as other good quality resources are to be developed, major funding, to which the Churches Boards of Education will be asked to contribute, will be required.

The Presbyterian representative on the working group, Mrs Myrtle Thompson writes, "A revamped RE syllabus will enable children passing through our schools to encounter basic biblical teaching in an understandable and attractive format".

English Textbook

5. The Board responded to the concerns of a parent about the inclusion of John Steinbeck's novel, "Of Mice and Men", on the GCSE English syllabus. Letters were written to the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Education and to the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment, pointing out that the language is insensitive and blasphemous and, while appreciating that schools are free to select books from a list of suggested texts, this particular novel could come as a shock to a pupil and as an embarrassment to a teacher.

Sensitive replies were received from both agencies. In response to the suggestion that schools should make provision to ensure that no pupil, who finds such texts offensive, is disadvantaged, the Permanent Secretary, rightly, said that there is no statutory right for a parent to withdraw a child from an English class. He did, however, undertake to acquaint CCEA of the Boards viewpoint and ask for it to be taken into account when the syllabus is being reviewed.

Integration in Harrogate

6. A party, including members of the TRC, visited St John Fisher School (Church of England) and St Aidan's School (Roman Catholic) in Harrogate. These schools co-operate very fully in the teaching of a joint sixth form of 600 students.

The schools set high standards academically and in terms of promoting values. Both are free from graffiti, litter and discipline problems, and learning takes place in an environment of mutual respect which embraces both pupils and staff..

7. Both schools place high importance on pastoral matters. School chaplains are regularly available to offer counsel and to celebrate eucharistic observances. In the Church of England school pupils who are Church members attend and receive Communion and all others are expected to go to the front for a blessing even if they are not communicants, with the exception of pupils belonging to other faiths. The headmaster regularly conducts Assembly, sends out a card to those who are being received into full membership of their particular denomination and, as far as possible, attends the reception service. The group felt we have much to learn from the highly developed pastoral concern we experienced.

Strategic Plan 2000-2006

8. The Committee, through the TRC, made a comprehensive response to the Department of Education's Strategic Plan consultation document.

9. While acknowledging the positive nature of many of the proposals, the Churches objected to the use of the word "customer" in the report, believing that education is not a tradable commodity and that the relationship between teacher and pupil could be devalued by such an approach.

10. The response identified a weakness relating to values and the role of the Churches. The TRC agreed with the statement in the document that life attitudes, especially spiritual and moral values, cannot be provided by schools alone, but that to foster these important values, a stronger partnership with the Churches than that advocated in the document, was essential.

Targeting Social Need

11. Similarly, the TRC regretted that the Churches were not identified in this consultation paper as having a legitimate interest in education and also that moral and spiritual issues were neglected, as were health and environmental issues.

12. The Churches' response reminded government of the desirability of separating social disadvantage from underachievement and of replacing free school meals, as the present indicator identifying areas of need, with a more realistic indicator based on educational achievement so that education funding may be more equitably distributed than is currently the case, and areas of presumed social advantage saved from severe financial impoverishment.

Boards of Governors

13. Unless changes are made to the system, which seems highly unlikely, boards of governors will be reconstituted within the next year or so and primary schools transferor governors will be called to meetings to nominate transferor representatives to serve on the boards of governors of secondary schools.

14. Last time this took place difficulties arose in a few instances due to the low attendance of transferors at the nomination meetings and the churches came in for criticism.

15. The importance of primary school governors attending these meetings could not be over-emphasised.

Integrated Education

16. The 1996 General Assembly supported the principle of Controlled Integrated Education where there is local demand for integrated school provision. Since that time the Church has increasingly come to appreciate the spiritual values which the Council for Integrated Education is committed to fostering as part of the integrated schools ethos and acknowledges the welcome accorded to ministers of religion into integrated schools, not only on the basis of their statutory right of entry, but also as having a significant role in the spiritual and moral formation of children and young people and as having a contribution to make to the overall work and life of the school.

17. Ministers are encouraged to visit and to play a full part in their local integrated schools as they would do in the controlled schools sector.

Curriculum Review

18. A review of the relevance and effectiveness of the Northern Ireland Curriculum has been undertaken by the Council for the Curriculum Examination and Assessment. The Churches are considering how they may undertake a similar review of the RE Core Syllabus.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Primary Schools

Rev J S B Drennan, Director of Primary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:

1. One of the most significant movements in the Republic, within education circles over the last 25 years, has been the development of Educate Together which represents a multi-denominational approach to the control of schools and is a full partner in the education system. Some schools that have very few Presbyterian pupils are under pressure to become part of this movement.

2. We are pleased to know that the Department of Education is awarding additional grants towards the purchase of equipment and materials for infant and for science classes. The amount of the grant will be determined by the infant enrolment on September 30, 1998 or, in the case of the science, by the total enrolment on the same date. The science grant will be available to Schools whose teachers wish to include science in the curriculum for 1999/2000.

3. There is also a grant for clothing and books to help families who find the beginning of a new school year a financial burden.

4. On September 9, the Minister for Education and Science, Michael Martin, TD, launched the revised Primary Curriculum. The process, which resulted in the development of the revised curriculum, involving, as it did,

representatives of all the Partners in Education, is unique to Ireland and has aroused interest in education circles in many countries. Speaking at the launch the Minister said, "Today's launch of the Revised School Curriculum marks the culmination of many years' work by all concerned, dating back to the publication of the Report of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum. While this report commented favourably on the 1971 curriculum and, overall, endorsed its child-centred philosophy and underlying principles, it also made very specific recommendations in relation to its structure and content... The result is a thoroughly updated and forward-looking curriculum, which reflects the most advanced international education thinking on how children learn, and is relevant to their needs as they grow and develop in a rapidly changing world..."

5. This presentation reflects the new confidence felt within this state. As part of the process the Religious Education curriculum is being revised. The three main denominations are working on this together and we are represented by Mrs Myrtle Thompson from Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church in Dublin.

6. The work by Presbyterian parents and teachers goes on and is worthy of our praise and prayer.

Secondary Schools

Mr B Duffy, Director of Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:

Block Grant Scheme administered by the Secondary Education Committee

1. For the school year 1998/9, the Block Grant received from the Department of Education and Science totalled £3,052,596 (1997/98 £2,858,042) and grants allocated came to £2,916,576 (1997/98 £3,130,466). Some 1,703 (1754) day pupils and 1,376 (1,445) boarders were awarded grants. These grants are awarded on the basis of a means test. Day pupils' grants are on a scale from £800-£200 and that for boarders from £2100 to £600. A further £258,501 (£255,033) in capitation grants was forwarded to schools.

Education Act, 1998

2. The Committee on Management (representing the Secondary Education Committee, the Council of Governors, the Irish Schoolheads Association and Compass Parents' Association) has been encouraging schools to prepare for the commencement of the section which will require all schools to have boards of management in place. As yet the Education Act has not been fully implemented but all sections, not already commenced, must be initiated by the end of this year. Initiation does not mean full enactment, and considerable consultation and negotiation may follow initiation. The Act places statutory responsibilities on principals, boards of management and boards of governors or directors who are, in the majority of cases, also the patrons of schools.

Education Welfare Bill

3. This Bill proposes to put in place requirements to ensure the attendance of children at school until the compulsory school-leaving age and to

monitor their attendance. While the purpose of the Bill has been widely welcomed, schools have had grave reservations regarding the provision of supports to implement the requirements of the proposed legislation. The Secondary Education Committee raised these points with senior officials of the Department of Education and Science. Similar reservations have been expressed by other partners in education.

Chaplains

4. A number of schools have either full-time or part-time chaplains paid for by the school's own funds. It is only in the comprehensive and community schools sector that chaplains are paid by the state. The Secondary Education Committee has requested the Minister for Education and Science to allocate posts for chaplains as ex-quota teaching posts.

Junior Certificate Religious Education Exam

5. A number of schools have been included in the pilot group who will prepare classes for this examination. The subject will be introduced in September 2000 with the first candidates being examined in June 2003.

Religious Education in Day Schools

Rev W T J Richardson, Organiser of Religious Education in Day Schools, reports:

1. From what reports I have received, our Ministers continue to be well received by Principals, Staff and Pupils and, generally speaking, there continues to be a good relationship. I immediately think of Belmont congregation and Strandtown Primary School, where four elders have been designated to exercise a pastoral role in conjunction with four of the teachers. This kind of initiative appears to be more and more appreciated by Principals and Staff. Doubtless, this is related to the pressures teachers are under.

2. Carrickfergus Presbytery must be singled out for commendation. The opening comment of the agent, Rev Gabrielle Ellis-Farquhar, was to thank all Parish Ministers for making such comprehensive reports. I very much appreciate those agents who report to me fully and in good time and encourage all to follow the example set by Carrickfergus Presbytery.

3. Almost all reports indicate that RE is well taught and that our teachers deserve great credit for bringing such a professional approach to the subject. Several reports indicate a lack of adequate resources. This appears most strongly felt in the secondary sector. One Presbytery feels particularly concerned that RE in several of its schools is being taught by non-specialist RE teachers. It is even worse if the teacher concerned is unsympathetic to the Christian faith. The feeling is that, in such circumstances, they are doing more harm than good. It should be noted that Boards of Governors now hold responsibility for the choice of material used and taught in schools. It is the duty of Governors to take an interest not only in what is taught but also in who teaches it and how the curriculum is delivered.

4. In an age where those children who go to Sunday School opt out at an earlier and earlier age, it is increasingly important that schools are adequately resourced and encouraged in the important work of Religious Education and that the RE Curriculum is delivered in ways that are interesting and relevant to the children and young people concerned.

5. In this regard ministers should do all in their power to ensure that their statutory right of entry into schools is exercised in a way that will bring encouragement and support to Principals and Teachers and that the young people emerging into the world will have a solid foundation of Biblical truth and vital faith.

R F S POOTS, Convener

CHURCH EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The Sunday School Organiser continued to lead training classes for Sunday School teachers, Bible Class leaders, Holiday Bible Club leaders & Children's Church leaders.

2. Presbytery Sunday School Training classes were held in the Carrickfergus, Ards, and Monaghan Presbyteries.

3. Training in the use of the new Sunday School teacher Training Manual has been given and is currently still available at Presbytery level.

4. The Sunday School Organiser conducted a series of ten lectures on Child Development, during the first semester, in Union Theological College.

5. Other events taken by the Sunday School Organiser during the year, included children's and youth leaders dedication services, services based on the theme of Christian Education and many children's and youth services.

6. The Sunday School department continues to publish, annually, Teachers' Guides and Worksheets with a 'Presbyterian flavour'. The current four lessons (for 1999/2000), which have a Millennium theme, are: i. Fanfare for learning - Sunday School & Bible Class; ii. Fanfare for Caring - the Board of Social Witness; iii. Fanfare for Outreach - the Irish Mission; and iv. Fanfare for Mission - Overseas Board. The new series of four lessons (for 2000/2001) are: i. **The Bible** - in Presbyterian Worship; ii. the **Home Mission** - in the South and West of Ireland; iii. **India** - our Church and Woodstock School; iv. **Presbyterians** - the same only different!

7. The *MAD* Sunday School and Youth Project 1998/1999, Making a Difference in Central Europe, has brought in the magnificent sum of £84,230. Sunday School and Youth Groups who contributed so generously to this project are thanked for their support.

8. The Sunday School & Youth Project for 2000/2001 will focus largely on our Church's work in *Kenya*, together with supporting the *174 Trust* in Belfast and *The Loft*, Ballybay in Monaghan.

9. The Sunday School Organiser led a team to prepare for and run the Fun Day at Cultra on Saturday 13 May 2000 - the *MAD* Project 2000 being the beneficiary.

10. The Committee expresses thanks to the administrators of the Local Bible Fund for enabling it to make the following awards of Bibles during the year:

- 7 teachers with 30 years or more service
- 35 children with 5 years or more unbroken attendance
- 7 children for repeating the Shorter Catechism

11. The Committee expresses thanks to Mrs Donna Thompson, and in her absence on maternity leave, to Mrs Valerie Moore, for the great job they both have done in ensuring the smooth running of the Sunday School Office.

12. The Education Board, in partnership with Union College, provided in-depth training for those who are working with children in the Autumn of 1999. The Sunday School Organiser presented a Foundation Course, over two evenings, followed by a Certificate Course over eight evenings. Certificates were presented by the College Principal at a special ceremony at which the Moderator was the special speaker. This partnership will continue this Autumn, when a further Certificate Course, over ten weeks, will be held at High Kirk, Ballymena.

I T McKEE, Convener

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. In last year's Assembly Report, the proposal that the three main Protestant churches consider working together to strengthen chaplaincy work in the Dublin area was considered. It now seems likely that the Church of Ireland will not be involved initially in any joint scheme. However, the Methodists and our Church are close to proposing a model in which both Churches would join together to provide chaplaincy cover in Trinity, University College, Dublin City University and Dublin Institute of Technology. The scheme assumes that each College would finance the salaries of the chaplains. It is hoped that a comprehensive proposal will be ready for this year's Assembly. In the meantime we are very well served by Rev Keith McCrory and Rev Katherine Meyer, both of whom have been very active in their particular spheres of service. Unfortunately both will be leaving their respective positions within the next few months. The Committee would wish to express its appreciation of their dedicated service to students and wish them God's blessing in their future careers.

2. At Queen's, the Bush and Derryvolgie Hall continue to flourish. Both have had considerable impact on the witness to students and staff. A scheme to extend the provision of accommodation is being considered. Revs Noel Williamson and Steve Stockman continue to lead in advancing Christ's Kingdom on the Queen's and Stranmillis campuses.

3. At the University of Ulster, Rev David Stanfield leads the chaplaincy team that consists of Rev Peter Lyle (Coleraine) and Rev Joe McCormick (Magee). The Springvale Campus has now been approved, and this may mean an extension of chaplaincy input to Ulster.

4. Our parish ministers in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Limerick are also involved in University and other third level chaplaincy work. They are always

pleased to hear of students or staff who come to any of these Institutions. With growing numbers at third level these are important points of witness.

5. We commend to your prayers the work of all those who have pastoral responsibilities in the third level institutions in Ireland.

Queen's University

Rev Noel Williamson reports from Queen's University:

1. The distinction between higher and further education continues to be blurred since the Government's target of admitting up to half of all school leavers to universities has almost been achieved in Northern Ireland (43%) and 'A' levels are no longer a necessary main route to admission in an 'open-access' policy. However, staff do not, by and large, consider numerical expansion to have been matched by resources. We were pleased with the response of some 500 new students enrolling in September in a new voluntary system.

2. Life in Elmwood Avenue continues very busily with many contacts facilitated by our strategic position, and we have enjoyed our mixed programme of Bible and study groups, inter-chaplaincy events and social occasions.

3. The catering has been in the capable hands of a new team led by Maureen Rankin, a member of Abbey congregation. My thanks to them for creating a warm inviting atmosphere.

4. My thanks also to the Convener, Committee, Deputy Clerk and to Mrs Thompson for their continued support and detailed interest.

University of Ulster

Rev David Stanfield reports from the University of Ulster, Jordanstown Campus:

1. The University continues to grow both physically and numerically. It is continually seeking to widen the access to courses through courses offered by other Institutions, validated by the University. A major development will be the Springvale site which has now gained definitive government support.

2. This year, I am the chaplaincy representative on the University Council. This has given me the opportunity to build contacts with senior University staff, including the new Vice Chancellor, Prof Gerry McKenna. I have been able to speak at committees concerning the welfare of students and staff. One of the major issues is that of stress.

3. We continue to enjoy good relations with the University and it is generous in its financial support. However, our relationship with the Christian Union continues to deteriorate. This seems to be as a direct result of the inter-denominational nature of the Chaplaincy at the University of Ulster and appears to be particularly difficult on the Jordanstown Campus. This is a constant source of frustration for both myself and many of the students I encounter.

4. There have been numerous opportunities to speak about the work of Chaplaincy in schools and churches during the year and I am always delighted to accept any opportunity to raise the profile of the ministry. There have been many encouragements during the year with good attendances on residentials and at lunch-time events. We are also sending a cross-community team to Nicaragua

in the summer to build homes with Habitat for Humanity. However, over the last few years there has been a steady decline in the involvement of students in the broader aspects of University life. This is evidenced by the falling numbers participating in clubs and societies (including CU), Students Union events and also at MIXERS (our alcohol-free café) which is currently not widely used and is therefore a drain on resources.

5. I am thankful to all who have given me their continued prayerful support.

Coleraine Campus

Rev Peter Lyle reports from the University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus:

1. This has been the most encouraging year since I started in the Chaplaincy at Coleraine. There have been many encouragements which have made the work a source of personal joy to me and also a real blessing. It is tremendous to see the potential in the lives of the young people with whom I have contact and their desire to use that potential in the Lord's service.

2. The Wednesday lunch-time Bible Study Group, which I run, has blossomed this year showing a growth from an average of 6 last year to an average of 15 this year – a 150% growth!! What has also been encouraging is that young people from a range of denominational and international backgrounds now join in. I continue to encourage all young people to seek faith in Jesus Christ and to apply their faith in practical ways around the campus and among their circle of friends. It has been encouraging to hear of ways in which they have sought to respond to some of the challenges we have found in God's Word. I constantly promote Christian service and have seen a number go on overseas teams, on some of which I have also served.

3. This spiritual approach goes hand in hand with the social approach. A core dimension to this is bringing the students to our home. In doing so, we try to create a home atmosphere – somewhere they can relax, enjoy each other's company and enjoy some home comforts and know they have someone near to where they study who cares for them. Our home has been full on a number of occasions during the year.

4. I continue to represent our Church, when necessary, at official University functions, such as Graduation, when we run a Chaplaincy Thanksgiving Service. We also have various inter-chaplaincy events through the year.

5. During the past year we hosted President Mary McAleese, as guest speaker at our Chaplaincy Lecture. She spoke on the issue of Forgiveness. The Diamond was full to capacity for her visit.

6. My involvement on the Christian Union Advisory Group also continues.

7. The year has had many encouragements and has seen many answers to prayer.

Magee Campus

Rev Joe McCormick reports from the University of Ulster, Magee Campus:

1. In spite of few Presbyterians opting for courses at Magee, contact is made with some, most of whom go home at weekends. The chaplain is available on the Campus fortnightly or when required.
2. There is a good working relationship with Staff and other chaplains. Occasional joint ventures are held, such as Christmas and Easter events and Induction Days.

Dublin

Rev Katherine Meyer reports from Trinity College, Dublin:

1. One of the highlights of 1999 in the Trinity College Chaplaincy was the midnight Advent Eve service, "First Supper", held in the College Chapel on the eve of the first Sunday in Advent, the beginning of the new Christian millennium. This service was planned and prepared by a small team of students, each of whom is active and committed in his or her own tradition. The chaplains provided support and guidance as needed.
2. Close to 150 students were in the Chapel, most of whom (according to their peers) do not take part in any expression of Christian worship on a regular basis. The service was thoughtful and moving. The music technology department provided assistance, and the music chosen ranged from jazz to contemporary folk to sacred choral pieces. The whole experience was an encouraging example of how well contemporary worship can speak the truth when it is creatively and thoughtfully prepared, and of the possibilities for peer evangelism among young adult believers.
3. Other special events in 1999 included a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity presentation on "Sectarianism in the Republic of Ireland", a day trip to Armagh, a series of lunchtime talks during Lent, focussing on Christian responses to issues of social justice (one of our invited speakers was the Governor of Mountjoy Prison), and a weekend on reading and praying with Scripture.
4. I continue to be one of the facilitators of the Student Bereavement Support Group that takes place each spring, to serve on the financial Assistance Committee, and to take part in the planning of Orientation Week for new students. The involvement of the chaplains has been particularly welcomed by the Access Programme, which provides a transitional year for mature students who wish to study at third level.
5. The system in Trinity by which students, when they register, can indicate to which religious tradition or Christian church they belong, has almost completely fallen down, and only a tiny number of students now participate in this voluntary system. The chaplains and others are in discussion with College authorities on this matter but, in the meantime, I am almost entirely dependent on the initiative of Presbyterian students themselves, or on ministers, elders, or others to inform me when a student they know is coming to Trinity. Even when I have a name, an address can be difficult to obtain, as all personal information

is confidential, so when names and addresses can be given to me, with a student's permission, I am enormously grateful.

6. As this is my last year in the Trinity College Chaplaincy, I would like once again to express my appreciation and thanks to members of the University Education Committee for their encouragement and prayers during the last eight years.

University College Dublin

Rev Denis Campbell reports:

1. The growth in the number of Presbyterians at UCD has been maintained. Chaplaincy work continues to be demanding and challenging.

2. Contact with students is made largely through home visitation and through attending student societies.

3. This year I participated in an Alpha Course for students, which was run by all the chaplains.

4. The first ever chaplains' week was launched in February. This was a series of events to provoke thought on religious and moral issues. Among the topics chosen for seminars and workshops were the relationship between Christianity and the visual arts, and the nature of spirituality.

5. This year saw the launch of the annual John Henry Newman lecture on education. The lecture is supported by the chaplains and sponsored jointly by the University and the Allied Irish Bank. The lecturer was Professor John Haldane of St Andrew's University, Scotland and his topic was "Education and the need of understanding".

6. Chaplains of all denominations continue to meet for prayer and planning on Wednesday mornings.

Dublin City University and Dublin Institute of Technology

Rev Keith McCrory reports:

1. My fourth, and final, year in part-time chaplaincy has again been both challenging and enjoyable. Looking back, it seems hard to believe that the time has passed so quickly, yet there is no shortage of memories for me concerning my involvement in the chaplaincy services of these two growing institutions. The property and building development in both DCU and DIT continues at an amazing rate and, with it, the need for pastoral and other forms of student care. DCU now has two new teaching blocks, and its state of the art Student Services building and multi-storey car park are themselves not far from completion. DIT has finalised its acquisition of the 65 acre Grange Gorman site in North Dublin and, over the next 10 years, will be spending something like IR£150 million on its development. Alongside of this plant expansion the increase in student numbers means that all the university services are having to work hard just to keep up.

2. Through the usual mix of student lunches, involvement in student activities, barbecues, staff events and the like, I have been privileged to be part of the pastoral care teams ministering to those in need. It has also been a

privilege to see the ministry of the Christian Union and other chaplaincy-based organisations expand and grow.

3. As I leave in June to take up the role of Moderator's Assistant in Lucan Presbyterian Church, I will do so with a certain sadness but also with some excitement about my own future. I will always be grateful for the support and encouragement given to me at campus level and through the prayers of so many in our wider church family.

R H MITCHELL, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Board of Education with its associated working committees, for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 284 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF STUDIES

Convener: Very Rev Dr A W G BROWN

Secretary: Rev J H ROBINSON

1. The work of the Board of Studies has proceeded steadily throughout the year against the backdrop of the College and Training Review. Now that the work of this Committee is complete we are looking forward with growing confidence to the forthcoming renovation of the Union College building to give us a modern and efficient new centre in which to deliver education for ministry in its widest sense. This will embrace both theological education for students for the ordained ministry, (together with others pursuing studies at degree and post-graduate level), and also incorporating the training of Church members carried out under the Magee Scheme.

2. The work of the Faculty, the Magee Director of Christian Training, and the Director of Ministerial Students will all now be focused physically in the new-style Union College. Not only will this make a lot of practical sense, but it will make possible the highest degree of practical co-operation in the planning and delivery of every aspect of our task.

3. The oversight of this vision will be reflected in the new title to be given to the Board itself - 'The Board of Studies and Christian Training.' Already we have had constructive meetings preparing for the changes, and we are looking forward to having the Committee on Christian Training (as it has been known until now) transferred from the Board of Evangelism to be part of this Board, and to working closely with the Magee Director in his remit.

4. Another change will involve the virtual union of the Union Theological College Management Committee and the Magee Fund Scheme Committee. Both will remain legal entities under the Act of Parliament and High Court Scheme by which they were set up, and may from time to time have to meet in one or other capacity to transact some specific piece of business. They will however now be identical in membership, with a single convener, and will for most practical purposes function as one committee. Again we have been actively preparing for this change, and look forward to operating it after the appointments are formalised at this Assembly. For details of College refurbishment and possible sale of part of the site see Report of the College Training and Review Committee (General Board).

5. The decision of last year's Assembly to finance the scheme for in-service training of ministers has put another major responsibility on the shoulders of this Board. Our new Magee Director, in consultation with his colleagues on the College staff, has been researching suitable courses. Each Presbytery has been asked to oversee the outworking of the scheme amongst its ministers, and also to authenticate their expenses claims. We are hopeful that the first actual courses will begin to take place in the autumn of this year. Inevitably there will be a period of trial and error, but we believe this will prove to be a significant step forward for the Church, and we hope there will be an enthusiastic level of participation from the outset.

6. The Board continues to keep under close review the number of applicants for the ordained ministry of our church. We are pleased to witness an upturn in numbers, with nine students due to commence study and training later this year, and a possible further nine in the 2001-2002 academic year. While we are grateful to see this reversal to the trend of the last few years, we find it hard to envisage numbers returning in the short term to the levels of five or ten years ago. This being so, we continue to urge ministers to invite suitable members to consider the possibility of call to ordained ministry, and it may be that we should reinvestigate soon, rather than in a time of significant shortage, the concept of non-stipendiary or auxiliary ministry.

7. We are delighted that two trainee Deaconesses will commence a two-year course of full-time study and training at Union College, while another completes her studies on a part-time basis in the incoming academic year.

8. This new Deaconess training enterprise is one among many new developments already happening or being planned. The Board welcomes the recent training partnerships between the College and the Education Board and Youth Board, and looks forward to the implementation of further structured programmes, such as those which would meet the needs of other full-time Christian workers.

9. The Rev Charles McMullen retires this year after seven years as Convener of the Magee Fund Scheme Committee. He has carried out his work with ability, and has given wise guidance at a time of major change in our Christian Training programme, and the General Assembly has cause to be thankful to him for all that he has done.

10. The Rev Robert Johnston also retires this year after his seven-year term as Convener of the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates. This is a task that required both wisdom and sensitivity. These qualities were most evident in his many contacts with individuals who were enquiring about the possibility of serving in the ministry of our Church. The General Assembly will rightly recognise the value of all that he has done in this capacity.

COMMITTEE ON STUDIES

1. The Committee met three times during the year.
 2. Through the Director of Ministerial Students it continued to give advice to prospective candidates and to set courses and administer examinations in accordance with the regulations of the General Assembly and the direction of the Board of Studies.

3. In the academic year 1999/2000 there were 26 students under the care of Presbyteries as listed in the appended Schedule.

4. Four students were granted permission to study at Universities/Colleges other than Union: one at Edinburgh, one at Oxford, one at Westminster, Philadelphia and one at Regent, Vancouver.

5. The Committee expresses its thanks for the work of the following external examiners:

OT Language and Biblical Theology - The Rev I J Patterson, BA, MTh.

NT Language - The Rev W P H Erskine, MA, BD.

NT Greek (Qual) - The Rev W P H Erskine, MA, BD.

Systematic Theology - The Rev D Bradley, BA, BD.

Church History - The Rev T N Hamilton, BA, BD.

Homiletics, Public Worship and Pastoral Work - The Rev Dr D C Irwin, MA, BD.

Study in a Missionary Partnership

Rev Dr Ian Hart reports:

6. Students who are studying for the ministry of our church at Union College are encouraged to spend one of the three theological years (or, if they prefer, a “year out”) studying theology in a country where we have a missionary partnership. Such a time can be a very enlightening and stimulating experience. For example, overseas churches are often struggling with very different issues from those we are preoccupied with in Northern Ireland. We sometimes need to be freed from localistic practices, and we may realise that we have been following social conventions rather than the gospel. In recent years students have taken up this opportunity in Kenya (St Paul’s United Theological College, Limuru), in Jamaica (United Theological College, Kingston), and in Singapore (Trinity Theological College).

Pre-Theological Summer School & Phase I Interview

7. The Pre-Theological Summer School and Phase I Interview was held in Union College from Monday 14 to Friday 18 June 1999. The Interviewing Panel comprised: The Revs R S Hetherington, D B Knox, D I J McNie, J S Carson, S P Moore, R L Craig, F A Bradley, J Campbell, R F S Poots OBE; Mrs M Robinson, Miss M McVeigh, Miss J Gwyn, Messrs R Manson, H Plester and D Agnew MBE, together with the Very Rev Dr A R Rodgers (Director), the Rev J H Robinson (Secretary), and Dr D E Eagleson MA, DipVocG and Mrs H Mullan BSc PGCE (Vocational Consultants acting as advisers to the Panel).

Thirteen candidates were in attendance and completed the normal aspects of the interviewing process. Of these, seven are being recommended to this General Assembly, one is being recommended to undertake a two-year Applicants’ Course and five are not being recommended. In response to a request from a nominating Presbytery the recommendation regarding one candidate was reviewed. After careful consideration, the Review Panel reached the same conclusion as the Interviewing Panel, namely, that the candidate be not invited to proceed to the Applicants’ Course.

8. The 2000 Pre-Theological Summer School and Phase I Interview is planned for 19th to 23rd June. The size and personnel of the Interviewing Panel has been approved by the Committee.

J STAFFORD CARSON, Convener

APPENDIX**SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS**

ARDS	J Moore Casement	Union
	Christoph Ebbinghaus	Regent Vancouver
	Cecil A Grant	-
	Chris W P Kennedy	-
BALLYMENA	Lee H Eagleson	Union
	Samuel D Finlay	Union
	Colin K McDowell	Union
	Stephen Richmond	Union
NORTH BELFAST	William J Hayes	-
	Mark Jones	Union
COLERAINE	David J McClelland	-
	Philip B Wilson	-
DERRY & STRABANE	Roy A Campbell	Westminster
	Paul E Linkens	Union
DROMORE	Niall S R Lockhart	Union
	Michael McClenahan	Oxford
	William J M Parker	Union
NEWRY	David S Henry	Union
ROUTE	Glenn A Chestnutt	-
	David J Steele	Union
TEMPLEPATRICK	Louise J Robinson	Edinburgh
	David A Simpson	-
	Angus V Stewart	Union
TYRONE	Knox A Jones	-
	Colin W A Martin	Union
	Adrian T S McAlister	-

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Since last General Assembly the Committee has met four times.
2. As a new convener, I pay tribute to my predecessor, Rev Margaret Johnston, in helping me understand the responsibilities of the Management Committee and giving other helpful advice.
3. During the year we welcomed Rev Prof W P Addley to the Chair of Practical Theology and Dr D Alexander as Magee Director of Christian Training. Both are not only excellent teachers, but also contribute greatly to College life and, along with other staff, have helped in our future planning process. Mrs Sandra McKinney was appointed College Administrator and she is already proving invaluable in developing more streamlined administration and helping with others to promote the college through brochures and web site material.

4. The Department of Church History has been visited this year. Under the leadership of Rev Prof L S Kirkpatrick this department is vibrant. Frequent useful material is given to students; primary and early source material is examined extensively. This department always wants to ground the lessons from the past in ministry in its widest form today.

5. The Faculty minute book has been inspected and review of the professorial salaries has taken place during the year.

6. A large part of the year has been spent waiting on the outcome of the Review Committee. When the final decision was taken in February to refurbish on the existing site, the Review Committee agreed that responsibility for the development and refurbishment should pass to the Management Committee. No doubt most of our work in the next year will be engaging in this very important project.

7. Application is being made by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland to the Privy Council for a Supplemental Amending Charter which would enable the offering of degrees in ministry.

The Principal reports:

8. In the Academic Year 1999-00 there are 66 full time students (13 ministerial), 32 part time students and 7 taking a foundation course. In addition, short-term evening courses in partnership with the Education and Youth Boards were over-subscribed. It is planned to develop this aspect of the College's life and work.

Ministerial students now normally study for a MDiv rather than a BD, allowing greater dovetailing of church and degree requirements.

9. Along with the Methodist and Baptist Theological Colleges and the Belfast Bible College, new arrangements have been made about tuition fees to everyone's satisfaction. A new arrangement was also reached with Edgehill College at the annual meeting of UTC and Edgehill Co-ordinating Committee in relation to the fees of students who attend classes in both colleges.

10. A major re-cataloguing of the Library is planned in the immediate future to bring it into line with many other similar institutions.

11. The Management Committee records its appreciation of the work of the College's academic and administrative staff for their interest in the students and in promoting new courses and financial and administrative efficiency.

GRAHAM CONNOR, Convener

STUDENTS' BURSARY FUND COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met three times during the year .
2. There were 17 students for the Ministry who received benefit from the Bursary Fund during the year. One part-time student had his fees paid.
3. Because of the decline in the number of students our total expenditure for 1999 was £136,856 a decrease of £39,186 over 1998.

4. We are grateful for the Pulpit Supply Association's contribution of £1,454.70.

5. We thank all who contributed to the fund during the year, either by direct giving or through offerings at services of licensing, ordination or installation. We remind vacancy Conveners and Clerks of Presbytery that an attractive leaflet in the form of a bookmark is available to publicise the fund at such services.

6. The Committee is at present undergoing a radical review of how grants are calculated for 1st and 2nd year students.

GEORGE MOORE, Convener

MAGEE FUND SCHEME COMMITTEE

Dr Desi Alexander, Director, reports:

1. As the new Director of Christian Training the past months have been more about learning than teaching as I have sought to come to terms with a quite different type of job in a new environment. To all who have patiently given of their time in offering helpful advice and encouragement, I express a heartfelt thanks. I am particularly grateful to my predecessor, Dr Harold Graham, for all the support he has given me.

2. This year's Assembly marks the end of the Rev Charles McMullen's time as convener of the Magee Fund Scheme Committee. Other members of the Committee are in a much better position to comment on all that he has contributed over the years to its smooth running and the commitment which he has shown to advancing the objectives of the Magee Fund Scheme. During my short time in office, I have found him to be a most supportive convener, one who was always willing to give generously of his time and energy.

3. Various staff changes have occurred at the Christian Training Centre during the past year. Mrs Mary Coles, who had served as secretary for 14 years, left in early December to take up a newly created administrative post with the Church of Ireland, and in March of this year Miss Renée McCracken was appointed as her successor. Mrs Coles served the Centre, and through it our Church, as a very faithful and competent secretary, and for this she is fully deserving of our thanks. Temporary secretarial and administrative duties were very ably provided by Mrs Jean Murray. To all three ladies I am most grateful for the service which they so capably provided during my first nine months in office. I should also wish to record my thanks to the professional support given to the Centre during the appointment process by our Church's personnel officer, Mrs Eileen McClenaghan.

4. An important dimension of the work of the Christian Training Centre is its relationship with presbyteries. This is greatly facilitated by those ministers who undertake the task of being Presbytery Christian Training Agents. It is my hope that together we can forge a strong partnership which will make Christian training more easily accessible to a much larger proportion of our Church members. As one step towards strengthening this link, a new project has been

initiated. Entitled 'Project ARC', its aim is to provide training that will be 'Accessible, Relevant and Challenging'.

5. The Summer School of Theology will take place at Union Theological College from Monday 19th to Thursday 22nd June. The theme for this year is "Leading and Worshipping God's Way". This provides an excellent opportunity to hear two internationally known speakers, Professor Larry Hurtado and Dr Derek Tidball, both of whom are highly appreciated as Bible scholars and authors. Professor Larry Hurtado, a native of the USA, is Professor of New Testament Language, Literature and Theology in the University of Edinburgh. He is the founding Director of the University's Centre for the Study of Christian Origins. Professor Hurtado will present four morning lectures on "The Apostle Paul: The Man and His Mission" and three evening lectures on the "The Origins of Christian Worship". Dr Derek Tidball is principal of London Bible College, and Vice President of the Evangelical Alliance. A former President of the Baptist Union, Dr Tidball is not only a highly respected Christian leader himself, but is also well qualified academically in the subject of Christian leadership. He will give three morning lectures and two afternoon seminars on "Christian Leadership in the 21st Century". The Summer School is open to anyone who has an interest in learning more about these subjects.

6. The year 2000 marks the introduction of the Ministerial Development Programme. This will offer significant opportunities for ministers and other full-time Christian workers 'to reflect on, evaluate and be refreshed in their ministry'. Most of the central administrative responsibility for this scheme is being undertaken by the Christian Training Centre, including the establishment and maintenance of a data-base listing short courses and other activities currently available through the UK and Ireland.

7. A further new development which is likely to be of considerable interest to many Church members is the relocation of the library of the Irish Christian Study Centre into the present location of the Christian Training Centre at 7 Rugby Road, Belfast. Hopefully, this move will considerably improve access to the ICSC's collection of over 120 Christian periodicals from across the world. This collection, which also contains some books, is the only one of its kind in the whole of Ireland and is a very valuable resource for anyone interested in exploring further a wide range of issues.

8. As will be highlighted in other reports, the present relationship between the Christian Training Centre and Union Theological College will undergo major changes during the next few years. While the process of changing structures presents all kinds of challenges, the development of a new institution which will offer an enhanced programme of educational activities and opportunities for all Church members is a very worthy goal.

AD HOC COMMITTEE

The 1999 General Assembly set up a co-ordinating committee for one year to facilitate planning and consultation between the agencies which it is planned to bring together under a new Board of Studies and Christian Training. The committee met during the year and developed mission statements for the

agencies and committees affected by the changes. For information the statements are included in the appendix.

J C McCULLOUGH, Convener

APPENDIX

A. ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

Committee on Resourcing Christians for Ministry (formerly Committee on Christian Training)

1. This Committee shall:
 - promote biblical ministry in which all church members are encouraged to develop their full potential as disciples of Jesus Christ within the context of a local congregation and community.
2. The functions of this Committee will include:
 - educating church members about Christian ministry, especially as regards the unity and interdependence of the church-body and the diversity of gifts and ministries
 - encouraging individual Christians to discover their own gifts and to develop these in the service of others
 - assisting congregations and presbyteries to develop programmes which will enthuse, train and equip Christians for ministry
 - providing resource materials which will help Christians to realise the full potential of their God-given gifts and skills
 - offering advice and support to the Director of Christian Training.

Committee On Ministerial Studies (formerly Committee on Studies)

3. This Committee shall:
 - ensure, on behalf of the Board, that the requirements of the General Assembly are fulfilled in regard to the Church's procedures of assessment and interview, and in regard to the academic studies, ministerial training and personal formation of all ministerial students in all locations.
4. The functions of this Committee will include:
 - approving annually the number and personnel of the Interviewing Panel
 - overseeing the courses of study and training undertaken by ministerial students at UTC and other recognised Colleges
 - assessing the academic qualifications of ministers of other churches wishing to be received into the ordained ministry of PCI.

College and Magee Management Committee

5. This Committee shall:
 - assume the legal functions and responsibilities of the Union Theological College Management Committee and the Magee Fund Scheme Committee, as previously set out in the relevant legislation.

B. COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Ministerial Development Committee

6. This Committee shall:
 - promote an ongoing commitment by ordained ministers and other full-time Christian workers to spiritual growth and the development of gifts for ministry and mission; oversee the Ministerial Development Programme.
7. The functions of this Committee will include:
 - implementing the Ministerial Development Programme
 - assessing through a broad process of consultation how the Church may best support the personal development needs of ordained ministers and other full-time Christian workers
 - making recommendations to appropriate church and other agencies regarding the provision of courses or other activities
 - monitoring actively the quality and relevance of courses and other provisions for personal development
 - co-operating with those involved in the preparation of candidates for the ministry.

Staff Committee

8. This Committee shall:
 - be responsible, under the College and Magee Management Committee, for the day to day running of the enlarged college.
9. The functions of this Committee will include:
 - co-ordinating the activities of the different departments, including the Christian Training Centre, within the enlarged college
 - exercising general responsibility for the implementation of courses
 - providing a suitable environment for collaborative activity, whereby individual members would report to, and consult with the other members of, the Committee
 - interacting with other Church committees, especially those belonging to the Board of Studies.
10. The Committee shall consist of the Director of Christian Training, the Director of Ministerial Students, the Professors of Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Systematic Theology and Practical Theology, under the chairmanship of the Principal. The College Administrator will normally act as executive secretary to this Committee.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Committee structure set out in the Appendix to the report of the ad hoc Committee be approved.
3. That the ad hoc Committee be thanked and discharged.

4. That the General Assembly encourage the Christian Training Centre to develop strategies that will lead to the spiritual growth of all Church members.

5. That the General Assembly accept the resignation of the Rev C J C McMullen as Convener of the Magee Fund Scheme Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev Graham Connor be appointed in his place.

6. That the General Assembly grant permission to the College Management Committee to sell, if it deemed necessary or advisable, part of the Union Theological College site.

7. That the following grants be paid from the Incidental Fund:

June Residential Course and Interview	£890
Pre-Term College Retreat	£850
Applicants' Overnight Course	£250
Licentiate Courses	£750
Meetings for students and spouses	£300
Honoraria for Extern Examiners	£295
Communication Skills for students outside Ireland	£85

TOTAL £3,420

8. That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be 1.75p per £ of stipend.

9. That the General Assembly accept the resignation of the Rev J S Carson as Convener of the Committee on Studies, that he be thanked for his services, and that be appointed in his place.

10. That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Board of Studies, be accepted as students for the Ministry and placed under the care of their Presbyteries:

William George Hamilton	Ballyhenry	North Belfast
David James Irvine	Cavanaleck	Omagh
Paul Jamieson	Stream	Ards
Sidney Joseph Mervyn Lindsay	1 st Portadown	Armagh
Darren Basil McCorrison	1 st Coleraine	Coleraine
Samuel Newell	2 nd Comber	Down

11. That the Board of Studies and Christian Training, together with the appropriate working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 285 of the Code as follows:

COMMITTEE ON THE RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES

1. The Committee held three stated meetings during the year.
2. Six ministers applied to be received as Ministers Without Charge during the year.
3. Three applications were from ministers ordained by Churches which are members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, namely, the Presbyterian Church of Australia (2 applicants), and the Evangelical Free Church in America.
4. The Committee informed the three ministers who were ordained in Churches not members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches of the procedure in accordance with Par 285 (3)(d) of the Code.

Rev Dr James W Cheshire

5. The Committee supported the application of Rev James Wilson Cheshire, BSc, MDiv, DMin, MSocW, a minister of the Evangelical Free Church in the USA, to be received into our Church, but advised him to submit a Memorial to the General Assembly (see Daily Minutes).

ROBERT G JOHNSTON, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly accept the resignation of the Rev R G Johnston as Convener of the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev R B Savage be appointed in his place.

MEMORIAL TRANSMITTED

Memorial of Rev Dr J W Cheshire – see Daily Minutes.

COMMISSION ON TRUSTS

1. Attention is drawn to the Capital Account of the General Investment Fund. The Commission advised the acceptance of the Trust Funds.

A J RANKIN, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Commission on Trusts for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 130 of the Code as follows:-

BOARD OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Convener: Mr FRANKLIN ADAIR

1. The Board met three times during the year.
2. The Finance Department continued to run well under Mr Hilton Henry, Financial Secretary. It was with regret that the Board learned that Mr Henry had decided to retire early. Mr Henry's commitment, leadership and professional skill have made an important contribution to the Church over the past nine years. When his retirement date comes he will be missed, not only for his expertise but also for his quiet and amiable personality which has earned him respect throughout the Church. He was meticulous in all he did. The Board prays that Mr Henry's health will improve and that he will have a very blessed retirement. All the ministers and other individuals who experienced his thoughtful and helpful attitude over the years will understand how great a loss his leaving will be to the Church; the Board is deeply appreciative of all that he has contributed. A supplementary Report about his successor will be submitted to the Assembly in the Daily Minutes.
3. The task of ensuring that the Church's computer systems met the challenges of the date change at the commencement of the year 2000 was successfully carried out; the Board again expresses its appreciation to Mr Jonathan Kelly and his team for all their work in this area.
4. In the area of Personnel the Board is indebted to Mrs Eileen McClenaghan, Personnel Officer, as she has dealt with a very heavy workload and has also continued the essential and exacting task of updating the personnel policies and procedures.
5. The amended Committee structure (three instead of five) is working well.
6. It is very pleasing to report that the debt for the re-development of Church House had been virtually eliminated at the end of 1999 and to confirm, as reported to General Assembly last year, that it is not proposed to have a special assessment in respect of the debt this year.
7. Mr David McCleery comes to the end of his term of office as Convener of the Incidental Fund Committee at the 2000 General Assembly. The Board records its appreciation of his excellent contribution over the years. He was totally dedicated to his role and gave freely of his time, energy and expertise. He brought wisdom, common sense and determination to the task. He will be difficult to replace.
8. Significant issues are arising from the divergence of the values of the Irish Pound and the Pound Sterling and the Board has requested that the Finance and Staffing Committee investigate their implications.

ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee is pleased to report a successful year's trading, with rental income improving from all areas, despite some difficulties with vacant units.

2. The Committee contributed £15,000 towards the installation of Comfort Cooling in the refurbished Social Witness Offices.

3. The Renovation overdraft at the end of 1999 has been reduced from £1,113,000 to £234,277.

4. The Committee is appreciative of the sacrificial efforts of congregations during the last ten years. Their contributions have assisted greatly in reducing the Renovation Debt from £6.7m to the above figure.

5. Income from lettings for the Assembly Hall and ancillary accommodation realised £65,869 (an increase of 8.75% on 1998)

6. The Committee carefully monitors cash flow and will only engage in essential repairs and renewals this year.

7. There is a small amount tied up in possible bad debts. These are being pursued vigorously through the Courts and a reasonably successful outcome is anticipated.

8. The Committee pays tribute to Mr Harry Orr (Building Manager), his assistants and not least the staff at Reception for their hard work throughout the year.

9. The Committee thanks the letting Agents, Lambert Smith Hampton, the Architects, Gordon McKnight Partnership, and the Legal Advisers, Cleaver Fulton and Rankin, for their support and advice during the past twelve months.

R I A ALLELY, Convener

INCIDENTAL FUND COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met on three occasions during the year.

2. The Incidental Fund Account (including General Purposes Fund) confirms a credit balance at the year end 1999 of £62,760.

3. The Committee reviewed applications for funding and recommends that the following grants be paid in 2000.

	£
Arrangements	13,000
Inter-Church Relations	50,853
Social Witness	1,500
Youth Board	6,500
PCI Holiday	6,000
Architecture	2,000
Peace and Peacemaking	2,500
Historical Society	13,700
Church and Government	4,650
Environmental Panel	300

Board of Studies	3,200
Conciliation Panel	3,000
	£107,203

4. The Committee resolved to finance fully the additional costs in 2001/2002 + 2003 in connection with the Clerk-designate appointment.

5. £15,000 has been allocated from the agreed £30,000 towards funding of Millennium projects to date.

6. The Committee are resolved to make a firm ruling that all Agencies must submit a Statement of Account for their previous years expenditure and a budget for the current year when making application to the Incidental Fund.

7. Thanks are recorded to all who have served on the Incidental Fund Committee and also to members of staff at Church House for all their help during the past seven years.

J D McCLEERY, Convener

FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE

1. The growth of the PC use within Church House necessitated the upgrading of the network during the year. This has resulted in improved processing performance. However, this is an area that requires constant monitoring due to the increasing demands of the software being used.

2. The level of activity in respect of personnel matters was very high throughout the year and we are indebted to the dedication and expertise exhibited by our Personnel Officer, Mrs Eileen McClenaghan. Meetings were held with representatives of the various employing agencies to address some of the personnel issues being faced by employers and to discuss some of the plans for further policy development.

3. Yet again, the accuracy and timeliness of some Statistical Returns was less than satisfactory. Basic errors that should have been picked up at Presbytery level were still to be found when the forms were received in Church House.

4. Statistical and financial data for 1999 are summarised in the appended tables, together with comparative figures for the preceding year.

5. The headline statistics over the last 20 years are shown by way of line graphs and the Committee would ask all Boards and Committees to note the trends which are exhibited.

6. A census of the entire church was carried out in January 2000, as agreed by the Assembly in 1999. Response to this exercise was patchy, with some congregations opting out. Analysis of the results is not available at the time of writing this report but will be provided to congregations, Presbyteries and Boards in due course.

7. Thanks to the skill and professional abilities of Mr Michael Fitch, a full draft of the Handbook for Treasurers is now at the proofing stage. The first edition will be circulated in October/November 2000.

D W LAMB, Convener

TABLE ONE

PERSONS AND AGENCIES

	1998	1999	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	192	193	1	
Ministers in Active Duty	423	422		1
Retired Missionaries	4	4		
Missionaries in Active Duty	75	77	2	
Total Ministers and Missionaries	694	696	2	
Licensures	14	14		
Congregations	561	557		4
Total Families	116,220	115,071		1,149
Persons of All Ages	290,193	284,704		5,489
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	97,164	94,715		2,449
Baptisms	2,395	2,221		174
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	1,911	1,929	18	
Communicants	120,465	118,421		2,044
Attended at Least One Communion during year	78,940	77,051		1,889
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	7,264	7,288	24	
Number on Rolls in Sunday Schools and Bible Classes	35,551	34,291		1,260

TABLE TWO
CONGREGATIONAL INCOME

	1998		1999		% Difference	
	£	IR£	£	IR£	N.I.	R. of I.
Specified Sources	19,832,612	1,057,096	20,496,096	1,133,800	3.3%+	7.3%+
Building Fund etc.	10,001,499	987,117	8,921,519	937,757	10.8%-	5.0%-
"For Others"	4,604,576	253,316	4,849,710	274,432	5.3%+	8.3%+
Raised from other sources	3,726,062	529,167	3,931,238	704,451	4.85.5%+	33.1%
Bequests etc.	3,590,087	148,707	4,843,483	204,681	34.9%-	37.6%+
Total Receipts	41,754,835	2,975,403	43,042,046	3,255,120	3.1%+	9.4%+
Total Receipts Less						
Bequests etc.	38,164,748	2,826,696	38,198,563	3,050,439	.1%+	7.9%+
Bequests	877,332	72,232	863,033	67,353	1.6%-	6.8%+

TABLE THREE

CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE

	1998	1999	% Difference	N.I.	R. of I.
	£	£	N.I.	IR£	R. of I.
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	11,041,980	11,389,462	3.1%+	680,005	11.3%+
Payments under Assembly Assessments	4,817,025	4,947,188	2.7%+	292,584	3.6%-
Building, Repairs, etc.	11,165,057	8,960,934	19.7%-	1,089,603	58.1%+
United Appeal Schemes	2,444,791	2,515,171	2.9%+	104,157	.4%+
Supplementary Schemes					
Other Religious and Charitable Objects	2,861,312	3,192,398	11.6%+	228,417	7.7%+
General Expenses	5,633,935	5,854,199	3.9%+	582,128	8.5%+
Total Payments	37,964,100	36,859,352	2.9%-	2,976,894	22.3%+

TABLE FOUR

CONGREGATIONAL BALANCES

	Closing 1998	Opening 1999	Closing 1999	% Difference	N.I.	R. of I.
	£	£	IR£	IR£	R. of I.	R. of I.
Credits	17,359,295	17,563,941	1,614,268	18,872,128	1,728,217	6.87,4%+
Debits	3,645,943	3,693,846	63,517	3,271,101	60,549	11.4%+
Net Credits	13,713,352	13,870,095	1,550,751	15,601,027	1,667,668	12.5%+

APPENDIX

Salary Scales of Executive and Administrative Posts. (The undernoted figures are inclusive of a 3% increase applied as from 1 January, 2000 following the annual review).

EXECUTIVE POSTS**Scale 1 (£16,932 - £20,259)**

Building Manager
Youth Development Officer

Scale 2 (£19,221 - £23,274)

Dean of Residence
Director of Nightlight

Scale 3 (£21,594 - £26,487)

Executive Secretary, PWA
Secretary for Education in Mission
Director of Evangelism
Sunday School Organiser/Christian Education Secretary
Financial Accountant

Scale 4 (£23,880 - £30,024)

Youth Officer
Superintendent of Irish Mission
Residential Services Manager

Scale 5 (£26,487 - £32,445)

Deputy Financial Secretary
Director of Ministerial Students
Convener of Overseas Mission
Director of Social Service
Information Officer
Director of Christian Training

Scale 6 (£28,503 - £34,893)

Deputy General Secretary

Scale 7 (£32,445 - £41,949)

General Secretary
Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS**Scale 1 (£8,580- £10,074)**

Junior Secretary
Telephonist

Scale 2 (£10,074 - £11,769)

Secretary
Telephonist/Receptionist
Information & Technology Assistant
Design Assistant
Information Assistant

Scale 3 (£11,397 - £13,299)

Senior Secretary
Administrative Assistant
Deputy Building Manager

Scale 4 (£13,017 - £15,105)

Personal Secretary
Information and Technology Officer
Administrative Assistant
Personnel Assistant

Scale 5 (£14,313 - £16,638)

Personal Secretary
Computer Controller
Administrative Assistant
Production Manager
Financial Assistant

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That Ernst and Young be appointed as auditors for all the Committees, Boards, Trusts, Commissions and Agencies of the General Assembly for the year 2000.
3. That the assessment for the Incidental Fund for 2000 be 4.5p in the £ of stipend.
4. That the resignation of Mr David McCleery as Convener of the Incidental Fund Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that Mr Michael Fitch be appointed in his place.
5. That the retirement of Mr Hilton Henry from the post of Financial Secretary be noted and that he be thanked for his dedicated work in the whole field of Finance and Administration.

6. That the Board of Finance and Administration, with its associated working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 286 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 137 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 137 of the Code after the words “otherwise requires” there be added the additional words

“audit” and “auditors”, when used in relation to a congregation, mean respectively the independent inspection of the accounts and financial statements, and the persons appointed to carry out such an inspection;

D W LAMB

MOTION ON THE BOOKS

That in view of his service to the Church, especially as honorary Personnel Officer, Mr Charles Robinson, be made a member of Assembly under Par 97(i) and Par 107(a) of the Code.

D W LAMB

UNITED APPEAL BOARD

Convener: Mr M H STEWART

Secretary: VERY REV DR SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

1. The Board wishes to express its thanks to all who supported the United Appeal and particularly to those congregations who were able to contribute more than their target figure. The Board, however, regrets to report that there was a shortfall in the contributions received as against the "Target of Honour" set for 1999 of £67,886. This shortfall, in part, was caused by the fact that some 57 congregations paid over their contributions too late to be included in the accounts for 1999.

2. In spite of the shortfall referred to above the Board was pleased to be able to pay in full the proposed allocation of grants for 1999.

3. During the year the Board consulted with the Communications, Education, Overseas, Social Witness and Youth Boards as well as the Home and Irish Missions, the Presbyterian Residential Trust and the Church Extension Committee.

4. The Board examined the Financial Statements and Budgets of each agency requesting grants and consulted with the Panel on the Overview of Funding. After consideration the Board has proposed a Target for the Year 2001 as set out in Schedules III and IV. In setting the Target for 2001 the Board was mindful of the difficult economic conditions presently affecting the farming and shipbuilding industries, the low rate of inflation, the improvement in cash flow which will arise from earlier payment of grants and the steady decline in the number of contributing families.

5. Commencing in the year 2000 the Board proposes to pay 10% of each agency's grant for that year, quarterly in arrears commencing on 31st March, 2000. This leaves 60% of grants still to be paid in the usual way. This improvement in the cash flow of agencies will be roughly equivalent to an improvement in grants of approximately 3%. The Convener has written to all treasurers asking that congregations consider supporting the United Appeal on a more regular basis, say quarterly or even monthly and paying over such monies on a quarterly basis. This would allow the Board in future years to consider increasing the quarterly grants to 15% or even 20%. Last year 65% of the total Target amounting to £1,587,133 was paid over in January following the year end and a further 5% was received too late to be included in the accounts for the year 1999.

6. The Board has set up a Publications Sub-Committee and, with the assistance of the Communications Committee and Stephen Lynas, has produced its first new style publication entitled "United Appeal Update" and we are pleased to say that we have received very favourable comments. The Board will continue to consider how best it can improve its literature and educate and encourage members to improve their contributions to the United Appeal.

SCHEDULE I

Presbytery	Contributing Families 1998	United Appeal 2000 £
Ards	10,094	267,611
Armagh.....	4,084	108,275
Ballymena.....	8,027	212,811
Belfast North	7,670	203,346
Belfast South	4,350	115,327
Belfast East.....	9,584	254,090
Carrickfergus	6,227	165,089
Coleraine	4,672	123,863
Derry & Strabane	3,715	98,492
Donegal	1,317	34,916
Down	5,050	133,885
Dromore	5,361	142,130
Dublin & Munster	1,298	34,412
Foyle.....	3,055	80,994
Iveagh.....	3,650	96,768
Monaghan.....	1,016	26,936
Newry	2,775	73,570
Omagh	2,557	67,791
Route	3,831	101,567
Templepatrick.....	4,745	125,799
Tyrone	4,086	108,328
	97,164	2,576,000

SCHEDULE II

	Requested 2000 £	Proposed Grant 2000 £
Home Mission	230,000	200,000
Church Extension	296,934	275,000
Christian Training & Evangelism	30,500	25,000
Irish Mission.....	336,000	275,000
Education Board.....	225,000	190,000
Students Bursary Fund.....	25,000	5,000
Chaplains Committee	22,000	22,000
Youth Board.....	225,744	220,000
Rostrevor Centre	2,000	1,000
Guysmere Centre.....	2,000	1,000
Lucan Centre	3,000	1,000
Social Witness Board.....	72,000	55,000
Social Issues & Resources Committee	5,000	5,000
ADE Committee.....	30,000	25,000
Thompson House	2,000	2,000
PCI Enterprises.....	13,000	10,000
Carlisle House	25,000	25,000
Residential Trust	100,000	50,000
Shankill Road Mission.....	24,000	5,000
Overseas Board	870,974	820,000
Department of Communications	117,500	115,000
TV/Broadcasting Committee	60,000	55,000
Union Theological College	239,615	220,000
Kinghan Mission	25,000	10,000
Board of Studies.....	54,000	54,000
Contingencies		200,000
	3,036,267	2,866,000
Less Bequests	290,000	290,000
	2,746,267	2,576,000

SCHEDULE III

Presbytery	Contributing Families 1999	United Appeal 2001 £
Ards	10,095	278,341
Armagh.....	4,024	110,951
Ballymena.....	7,925	218,510
Belfast North	7,348	202,600
Belfast South	4,092	112,825
Belfast East.....	9,238	254,712
Carrickfergus.....	6,030	166,260
Coleraine	4,637	127,852
Derry & Strabane	3,656	100,804
Donegal	1,318	36,340
Down	4,922	135,710
Dromore	5,243	144,561
Dublin & Munster	1,221	33,666
Foyle.....	3,009	82,965
Iveagh.....	3,604	99,370
Monaghan.....	1,000	27,572
Newry	2,692	74,224
Omagh	2,527	69,675
Route	3,462	95,455
Templepatrick.....	4,655	128,349
Tyrone	4,017	110,758
	94,715	2,611,500

SCHEDULE IV

	Requested 2001 £	Proposed Grant 2001 £
Home Mission	200,000	200,000
Church Extension	0	0
Christian Training & Evangelism	82,000	82,000
Irish Mission.....	329,000	300,000
Education Board.....	235,000	235,000
Students Bursary Fund.....	25,000	20,000
Chaplains Committee	22,000	22,000
Youth Board.....	223,204	223,000
Rostrevor Centre	8,000	8,000
Guysmere Centre.....	8,500	8,500
Lucan Centre	2,500	1,500
Social Witness Board.....	60,000	50,000
Social Issues & Resources Committee	5,000	4,000
ADE Committee.....	17,500	17,500
Thompson House	15,000	15,000
PCI Enterprises.....	15,000	15,000
Carlisle House	25,000	15,000
Residential Trust	145,000	145,000
Shankill Road Mission.....	10,000	10,000
Overseas Board	941,302	900,000
Department of Communications	140,000	140,000
TV/Broadcasting Committee	10,000	10,000
Union Theological College	216,500	200,000
Kinghan Mission	15,000	15,000
Board of Studies.....	55,000	55,000
		2,691,500
Currency losses		20,000
Contingencies		200,000
	2,805,506	2,911,500
Less 1/5 of Miss Salter's Bequest		*300,000
	2,805,506	2,611,500

* Miss Salter's Bequest ceases in 2001.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the United Appeal Board be given permission to include an amount for contingencies of £200,000 for the year 2001.
3. That the United Appeal for 2001 be as set out in Schedules III and IV.
4. That the United Appeal Board for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 287 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF MINISTRY AND PENSIONS

Convener: Rev D S GRAHAM

1. The Retired Ministers' House Fund has re-examined the question of interest rates and has now decided to adjust the rate on a daily basis in line with changes in the Bank of England base rate.

2. This year there will be a nett saving to congregations in assessments of 0.5p in the £ of Stipend paid.

	1998	1999	2000
CMF	28.75p in £ Stipend	26.00	25.00
WMF	6.75p in £ Stipend	6.75	6.75
RMF	9.5p in £ Stipend	11.50	12.00
MPS	16.25p in £ Stipend	16.25	16.25

3. We note with regret the resignation of Mr Robert Kerr as co-convener of the Committee on Retirements and Pensions.

4. Mr Kerr has served in this office with distinction. He brought to it integrity, skill and quite exceptional professional expertise, as well as a warm human sympathy.

5. We record our warmest thanks and appreciation to him for his unique contribution to the work of the Church in this specialised field.

6. Mr William Alexander has now served seven years as co-convener of the CMF Committee and would be due to retire this year. However, in view of the appointment of a new Financial Secretary, and a new co-convener of the Committee on Retirements and Pensions, it is proposed that Mr Alexander be continued in post for one further year in order to effect a smooth transition. An appropriate resolution is appended.

CENTRAL MINISTRY FUND COMMITTEE

1. At the end of the year the CMF had a retained balance of £1,959,974.00, which represents an increase on 1998, though again there has been a reduction in the assessment. The changing pattern of Ministry is reflected in the fact that there is now a very small number of Ordained Assistants, but a growing number of Associate Ministers. The Committee continues to monitor the development of the Associate Ministry scheme and its effect upon the Fund.

2. The basic ministerial minimum has been increased to £16,080.00, with comparable increases in the scale of increments.

3. This year the CMF achieved its long anticipated goal of paying the "Bonus" in full to all qualified Ministers - £1,250.00, from investment income.

4. The CMF is proposing to reduce its scale of assessment from 26p in the £ of stipend to 25p in the £. This further reduction, continuing the pattern of previous years bringing the CMF assessment from 33.33p in the £ in 1997 to 25p in 2000 enables congregations to have more funds available for congregational purposes while also maintaining an adequate stipend. These changes are only possible because of the continuing strong generosity of members of congregations in their support of congregational funds, which is particularly notable in a year which has seen such economic difficulty for the farming community. The CMF Committee gladly acknowledges the support given by the whole church and relies on members for continuing support.

5. As agreed at the 1999 Assembly, the CMF Committee has further examined the matter of Family Grants and believes that the resources available can be more equitably applied if Grants are awarded on the basis of the combined income of minister and spouse. Grants are made to assist families and, therefore, it is considered appropriate that the income of the family is used in determining Grants. Accordingly, it is proposed that, commencing in 2001, Grants will be calculated as follows:-

- (a) Grants will be payable in full if the Total Family Income, as defined in (b) below, falls below the Permitted Income which will be £19,330 (Republic of Ireland IR£21,830).
- (b) Total Family Income is defined as the Gross Income, for the last calendar year, before taxation and other deductions, of both minister and spouse. This includes the Minister's Income, including CMF Bonus and Augmentation but excluding Family Grant, returned on the Statistical Sheet and other earned income of the minister and spouse. It also includes, for minister and spouse, bequest income and endowment interest, rental income less allowable expenses, personal investment income (including tax credit, where appropriate) and gross interest, taxable Social Security Benefits (whether payable or not) and any other income subject to income tax.
- (c) If the Total Family Income is less than £26,000 (Republic of Ireland IR£28,500) but exceeds the Permitted Income, the Grants payable will be reduced by £1 by every £5 by which Total Family Income exceeds the Permitted Income.
- (d) If the Total Family Income exceeds £26,000 (Republic of Ireland IR£28,500), Grants will be calculated as in (c) above up to £26,000 (Republic of Ireland IR£28,500) and then reduced by £1 for every £2 by which the Total Family Income exceeds £26,000 (Republic of Ireland IR£28,500).
- (e) Grants payable will be reduced by £1 for every £1 over £1,000 received per child over 16 years of age by way of Scholarship or other monetary grant.
- (f) The amount of Grants payable shall be determined by the age of children on the 1st January of the year of the claim. Attention is drawn to the overture lying on the books anent Par 315 (4) of the Code.
- (g) Figures quoted in the above proposals are based on those that would have applied if this scheme had been in operation in the year 2000.

The rates of and conditions attaching to payments of grants will be fixed from time to time by the Board of Ministry and Pensions.

6. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2000:

(a) Ministerial Minimum	£16,080	(£15,600)		
After 5 years' service	£16,482	(£15,990)		
After 10 years' service	£16,884	(£16,380)		
After 15 years' service	£17,280	(£16,770)		
After 20 years' service	£17,688	(£17,160)		
After 25 years' service	£18,090	(£17,550)		
After 30 years' service	£18,492	(£17,940)		
 (b) Family Grants , payable as per regulations:				
Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland			
Birth to 10 years	£200	(£190)	IR£460	(£440)
11 to 15 years	£300	(£285)	IR£720	(£690)
16 years and over				
(i) at school or similar	£450	(£400)	IR£1,350	(£1,275)
(ii) at university or similar	£1,300	(£1,000)	IR£2,400	(£2,350)

7. The Grant in respect of any child who is 16 years of age or over falling into category (b) and who is in receipt of a maintenance or training grant shall be reduced by £1 for every £1 by which such maintenance or training grant exceeds £1,000.

8. That the amount a Minister may earn, apart from congregational work, without the Augmented Grant being affected shall be £2,750 under Par 316(2)(d)(i) or £1,650 under Par 316(2)(d)(ii) of the Code, the total in no case exceeding £2,750.

9. Bequests – a Minister may receive up to £750 per annum from the bequests received during his/her ministry without grants being affected.

10. Differential Grant – the Republic of Ireland differential for 2000 shall be IR£2,000 (IR£1,650).

11. That in reckoning augmentation for 2000 the Central Ministry Fund shall not take account of a sum not exceeding the Annual Bonus, being income from the Commutation, Sustentation and Central Ministry Funds (Code Par 316 (2) (e)).

12. That in reckoning Family Grants for 2000 the Central Ministry Fund shall not take into account the above mentioned Annual Bonus.

JOHN McVEIGH, W J ALEXANDER, Co-Conveners

COMMITTEE ON RETIREMENTS AND PENSIONS

WIDOWS OF MINISTERS FUND

1. The Fund showed a surplus of £41,804 leaving a retained balance of £124,687.

2. The Board approved the following recommendations for 2000.
 - (a) Widows Pension - £4,020
 - (b) Widows not in receipt of NI State Pension - £4,020 plus £475.
 - (c) Widows not in receipt of NI State Pension or PWFA - £4,020 plus £500.
 - (d) Widows whose husbands were not eligible for NI State Pension - £4,020 plus £3,510.
 - (e) Eire Differential – IR£888.

Presbyterian Widows Fund Association

All ministers join the Presbyterian Widows Fund Association at ordination. Membership provides an annuity to widows which is presently £1,164 pa. The above benefits under the Widows of Ministers Fund, together with the pension to widows from Ministers Pension Scheme 1978, and also the annuity to widows from the Southern Association Widows’ Fund were distributed through the Association. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Directors and officers of the Association for services provided.

RETIRED MINISTERS’ FUND

1. The Fund showed a surplus of £41,154, leaving a retained balance of £344,338.
2. The Board approved the following recommendations for 2000:
 - (a) Basic Retirement Allowance - £8,040
 - (b) Supplemental Grant for those living in the Republic of Ireland with no State Pension - £5,610 (married), £3,510 (single).
 - (c) Eire Differential – IR£1,320.

MINISTERS’ PENSION SCHEME 1978

1. The reports from the Trustees, Auditors and Investment Managers for the year ending 31 December, 1999 are included in the published accounts.
2. The Trustees have awarded a discretionary increase of 3% on pension payments (in excess of the guaranteed minimum pensions) for the year commencing 6 April 2000.
3. Of those ministers who opted out of Scheme membership, but who have since rejoined as contributing members, there are still 3 waiting to hear from their insurers on the issue of reinstatement of benefits forgone during the opted-out period or alternative compensation payment.
4. At 31 December, 1999, the value of the fund was some £39.36M with the assets exceeding the liabilities by £8.63M. This gave a healthy Minimum Funding Requirement level of 128%.

A full valuation will be due for the triennium ending 31 December 2000.

5. The management of the funds is now shared by 4 investment managers:-

Phillips and Drew	30%
Baillie Gifford	30%
Legal & General	20%
Friends Ivory and Sime	20%

6. The Board has asked the Committee to set up a representative working party to investigate and report on the options open to the Church to deal with early retirement on health grounds and the long-term illness of ministers.

7. The Committee granted leave to retire (Code Par 222(3)) to Rev. William James Waring (Ballyrashane) on or after 29 February, 2000, and to Rev. E D Smyth (1st Ballymacarrett) on or after 11 April, 2000.

D BODEN, R KERR, Co-Conveners

RETIRED MINISTERS' HOUSE FUND

1. The Committee was set up to provide assistance to ministers, widows and deaconesses in the provision of accommodation for their retirement. During the year loans amounting in total to £160,000 were made to 9 applicants. At 31st December, 1999 there were 36 members who were in receipt of loans totalling £628,000.

2. Due to the increase in applications we have had to give priority to those who are aged 60 or over and those who are in special need. During the year two families with particular problems were brought to our attention. Two bungalows were purchased by the Fund and have now been rented to these families.

3. Our income was boosted by the sale of two properties which had been owned by the Fund and were no longer required. We also received a bequest and an anonymous gift.

4. The committee has re-examined the question of interest rates and has decided to adjust the rate on a daily basis – in line with changes in the Bank of England base rate, based on the formula set out in last year's report.

5. The committee is most grateful to its co-convener Mr Noel McLaughlin for the time, effort and expertise which he gives to the work of the committee. His knowledge and experience of the housing market have been most useful, both to the committee and to members who have sought advice.

6. The Treasurer of the Fund is Mr Ted Jackson and we greatly appreciate his work and the assistance of his colleagues in the Financial Secretary's Office. While our resources are limited, we are keen to help anyone who requires advice or practical assistance with the provision of a home for retirement.

N McLAUGHLIN, L CASEMENT, Co-Conveners

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Central Ministry Fund

2. That Retired Ministers be paid in the current year a special grant (Code Par 315(5)) of £15 per month from Central Ministry Fund.

3. That the rate of assessment for CMF in 2000 be 25p in £ stipend.

Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)

4. That the rate of Assessment for 2000 for MPS 1978 remain at 16.25p in the £ of Stipend as shown in the column "Stipend paid to the Minister" or as fixed by the Union Commission in the case of a vacancy.

Retired Ministers' Fund

5. That the rate of Assessment for RMF for 2000 be increased from 11.5p in the £ of Stipend to 12p in the £ of Stipend.

6. That permission be given to the following to retire on or after their 65th birthday:

Rev Robert Cobain (Galway), Rev Richard Neville Gordon (Overseas Board), Rev James Boyd McCormick (1st and 2nd Moneymore), Rev Robert Allen (Rathcoole), Rev W E R Barton (Mosside), Rev Jas Briggs (Scarva St).

Widows of Ministers Fund

7. That the rate of Assessment for WMF for 2000 remain at 6.75p in the £ of Stipend.

General

8. That the resignation of Mr Robert Kerr as Co-Convener of the Retirements and Pensions Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that Mr John Millar, OBE be appointed in his place.

9. That Mr William Alexander be continued as Co-Convener of the Central Ministry Fund Committee for one further year.

10. That the Board of Ministry and Pensions with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 288 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 221 (2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 221 (2) of the Code be deleted, and that the following be substituted in its place:

(2) grant leave to a minister to retire early, nor transmit the request of a minister for leave to retire early from the active duties of his office, without affording the congregation, at a meeting duly convened for the purpose, an opportunity of expressing their views on the subject.

D S GRAHAM

Anent Par 223 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 223 of the Code be deleted, and that the following be substituted in its place:

223 (1) A minister who reaches 65 years of age is entitled to retire from the active duties of the ministry, with the emoluments accruing to a retired minister from the funds of the Church, if:

- (a) when applying to retire, he is a minister in good standing, and
 - (b) the congregation affected by his proposed retirement engage to pay to the Central Ministry Fund according to the rules applicable to his case.
- (2) The Presbytery shall have power, in the name of the General Assembly, to grant leave to retire to a minister who has reached 65 years of age.
- (3) Other ministers in congregations, including those who have reached 64 years of age, may be granted special leave to retire by the General Assembly, upon terms to be determined by the Assembly after recommendation to the Board of Ministry and Pensions by the Committee on Retirements and Pensions.
- (4) Ministers retiring from special work shall do so in accordance with the terms of their appointment, and with the consent of their Presbytery and the appropriate Assembly Board. Such retirement shall not entitle the minister to emoluments accruing to a retired minister from the funds of the Church, apart from such arrangements as may specifically have been made under the terms of his appointment.
- (5) In any event a minister shall retire not later than his 70th birthday.

D S GRAHAM

Anent Par 321 (3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 321 (3) of the Code be deleted, and that the following be substituted in its place:

(3) Ministers who have reached 65 years of age who are granted leave to retire, shall, on the recommendation of the Board, receive a pension equal to one thirty-fifth of the full pension for each year's service in this Church prior to 1st April, 1978, on condition that the sum thus calculated shall not exceed the full retirement pension.

D S GRAHAM

Anent Par 321(5) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 321 (5) of the Code be deleted, and that the following be substituted in its place:

(5) A minister demitting his charge after at least five years' ordained service in this Church completed before 1 April, 1978, may, upon application to the Board, be granted a pension equal to one fortieth of the full retirement pension for each year served in this Church, beginning at age 65 or on his date of retirement, if later, or on becoming permanently incapacitated for duty. No back payments shall be made for more than one year from the date of application.

D S GRAHAM

LICENSED AMENDMENT

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 321 (5) of the Code be deleted, and that the following be substituted in its place:

(5) A minister demitting his charge after at least two years' ordained service in this Church may, upon application to the Board, be granted a pension

equal to one fortieth of the full retirement pension for each year served in this Church, completed before 1 April, 1978, beginning at age 65 or on his date of retirement, if later, or on becoming permanently incapacitated for duty. No back payments shall be made for more than one year from the date of application.

D J BODEN

R KERR

Anent Par 321 (6) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 321(6) of the Code be deleted, and that the following be substituted in its place:

(6) A minister retired under special arrangements, other than for reasons of health, shall not be entitled to any benefit from the Fund until he has reached 65 years of age, save as permitted by Par 223 (3); but the Assembly shall have power, on the recommendation of the Board, to authorise ex gratia payments in cases of particular hardship.

D S GRAHAM

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 315(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 315(2) of the Code after the words "in excess of £4,300" there be added the words "or as may be fixed from time to time by the supervising Board".

D S GRAHAM

ADDITIONAL RESOLUTION

11. That under the provisions of Code Par 223(3), as now amended, the following be given permission to retire on or after their 64th birthday:

Rev James Harper (Ballygowan), Rev James Barnes (May St), their pension to be in accordance with the provisions of the Code and the rules of the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978).

D S GRAHAM

SHANKILL ROAD MISSION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev J S DALLAS

Superintendent: Rev W M CAMPBELL

1. As each year passes it becomes more evident how difficult it is to present the Gospel to people who have grown progressively deaf to its call.

2. At Shankill Road Mission, opportunities do present themselves because of the unique nature of the work, and they are a reason for thanksgiving to the Saviour.

Mission Worker

3. Mr Albert Lofthouse has been working steadily for a year as a Mission Worker. His efforts have NOT made an appreciable difference, but have opened up contacts and opportunities for the Gospel to be presented.

4. Mr Lofthouse has begun several activities within the Mission building to try to attract people, such as the Monday afternoon Men's Club and Tuesday afternoon Children's Meeting.

5. Mr Lofthouse has involved himself in the life of the Hostel for Single Homeless in Shankill Parade through morning prayers and also in the Café in a listening and sharing ministry with regular customers.

6. Systematic visitation of the Lower Shankill area has commenced but as yet, there is little to show for a great deal of effort.

7. Mr Lofthouse's ministry in the face of such hardness, apathy and indifference is one deserving of the prayers and support of the General Assembly at this time.

Hostel

8. Mr John McFarlane retired in October due to continuing ill-health and was replaced by Mr John Kennedy, a member of Crumlin Road Congregation.

9. Mr Kennedy has achieved a great deal in a short time, faced with increased difficulties in the whole area of Hostel work, not to mention a complete ignorance of the Hostel's existence as a Presbyterian facility by many working with Homelessness.

10. The continuation of the basic principles established 10 years ago – befriending, restoration of dignity; rehabilitation to the community; all in the name of Christ, have served the Hostel well.

11. With the continuing changes in the homeless area, Mr Kennedy and his staff, mostly newly appointed, face challenges in the coming months. They would value the prayerful support of the Assembly.

Café

12. Mrs Rosalind Wilson and her staff have again provided an excellent service to the Shankill Community. In addition to well-cooked, well-presented meals, subsidised in price by Shankill Road Mission, the warm Christian environment, with the opportunity for customers to listen to Christian music and take a piece of modern Christian literature home has been much appreciated.

13. The Games Room attached to the Café has been a rendezvous for Hostel residents to enjoy snooker, pool etc. A 'PATHWAYS' group of young people and a Pensioner's Club have also enjoyed this facility on a weekly basis.

Charity Shops

14. The Clothing and Furniture Shops, under the able leadership of Mrs Sandra Irwin provided an important service to the Shankill Community as well as much needed revenue for the Mission's Outreach.

Pensioners

15. Shankill Road Mission has been able to help our senior citizens again in specific areas over the past year. At Christmas, those in genuine need were given a substantial food parcel. In February, through various donations including the Lord Mayor's Fund, a gift towards heating costs was made.

In the summer, subsidised holidays were provided in Millisle, Ballywalter or Portrush. In this whole area of work, the need is increasing.

Commission

16. During the year the Commission was greatly concerned by the serious illness of the Honorary Treasurer, Mr Newton Compton, JP. His wise financial guidance has been sadly missed.

Thanks

17. The Commission would commend and thank the mission staff for their faithful and enthusiastic work during the year.

18. The Commission would thank all those Congregations and individual supporters of the Mission who gave financially and prayerfully to the work. Without the continued goodwill and committed support of so many in the wider family of the Church, the work of Shankill Road Mission would become even more difficult than at times it is.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That Mr Albert Lofthouse and Mr John Kennedy be commended to the prayers of the General Assembly in the difficult roles they undertake as Mission Worker and Hostel Manager.
3. That Shankill Road Mission Commission be appointed, for the ensuing year, in accordance with Par 129 of the Code as follows:

TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

1. The following is an extract from the Minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees at their Annual General Meeting held in Church House, Belfast, on 13 April, 2000.

2. The Report of the Executive Committee and the Statement of audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 1999 of the following were laid before the Trustees, and were adopted by them:

- The General Investment Fund
- The Commutation Fund
- The Non-Participating Trust Funds
- The Magee Fund
- The Tops Wilson Trust Fund
- The Fire Insurance Trust Fund
- The Fortune Mission Bequest

3. Moved by Very Rev Dr A J Weir, seconded by Mr W Cosgrove and unanimously agreed, that the Report and the Statements of Accounts be adopted, signed by three Trustees, inserted in the Appendix to the Minute Book and lodged with the Clerk of Assembly to be laid before the Assembly in June. The Report and the Statement of Accounts were, therefore, signed by Mr W Cosgrove, Mr A L Jamieson and Mr W C Henderson and lodged in accordance with the foregoing resolution.

4. It was reported that the Executive Committee had also received and examined the audited Accounts for 1999 of the Getty Trust, and The Ministers Pension Scheme (1978) and had accepted these for inclusion in the volume of Accounts to be submitted to the General Assembly. On the proposal of Very Rev Dr A J Weir, seconded by Mr W Cosgrove, this report was received.

5. Three retiring members of the Executive Committee were re-appointed for a further three years, these being Rev W D F Marshall, Mr G McCullagh and Mr John Millar, OBE

6. Mr D Bell and Mr John Millar were nominated members of the General Assembly, according to the provision of the Code Par 97 (h) (iii).

Trust Funds

7. **Mrs A M Davidson Trust.** The total income available in 1999 for distribution was £6,882.30. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Union Theological College	£3,000.00
Church House Redevelopment	£3,000.00
Nexus	£882.30
	£6,882.30

8. **Sir Wm V McCleery Estate.** The total income available for distribution is £35,932.68. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Central Ministry Fund	80%
Retired Ministers' Fund	10%
Widows of Ministers' Fund	10%

9. **Estate of Miss Irene Scott:** The total income for 1999 available for distribution amounts to £7,444.98. The Board of Trustees recommend to the General Assembly that this be allocated as follows:-

PCI Enterprises	£1,744.98
Thompson House	£1,700.00
Church House Redevelopment	£3,000.00
Guysmere Development	£1,000.00
	£7,444.98

10. **Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown.** The total income for 1999 available for distribution amounts to £4,777.92. The Board of Trustees recommend to the General Assembly that this amount be paid to the Church House Redevelopment Account.

GENERAL INVESTMENT FUND

11. Declaration of Dividend	15.4.99	15.10.99
Number of shares qualifying	4,789,794	4,800,943
	£	£
Income from investment for distribution and income tax recoverable less administrative charge and Investment Advisers' Fees	547,648	855,000
Dividend per share	11.00p	16.00p

Note: Net income available for investment included a special dividend from Unilever of £101,000 and other smaller special dividends.

In the year 1999 £108,000 was transferred to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve and the balance on the Dividend Equalisation Reserve at 31 December, 1999 is £484,500.

12. The combined annual Dividend of 27.00p per share is to be compared with 25.00 per share for 1998; 23.50 for 1997; 22.00 for 1996; 21.50 for 1995; 21.00 for 1994; 22.00 for 1993; 25.50 for 1992; 25.00 for 1991.

13. Valuation	15.4.99	15.10.99
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	32,752,675	29,783,066
Cash on Deposit	146,252	148,928
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	397,500	484,500
Property and Ground Rents	2,725,645	2,725,645
	£36,022,072	£33,142,139

No of Shares Issued	4,789,563	4,801,131
Share Value	£7.5210	£6.9029

Crescent Church Loan Fund

14. The Committee considered applications from congregations seeking loans from the Crescent Church Loan Fund. Loans totalling £48,000 were made.

Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)

15. The joint sub-Committee, representative of the Trustees and the Board of Ministry and Pensions, continues to monitor the investments, meeting regularly with the Fund Managers. In accordance with statutory requirements the Report of the Trustees and the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) together with the Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 1999 are included in the Volume of Accounts.

16. In the course of the year 20% of the investments of the Ministers' Pension Scheme were transferred from Philips & Drew Fund Management Limited to the Legal & General Consensus Index Fund. At time of writing the transfer of a further percentage to other Fund Managers is being actively considered.

Armaments

17. As directed by the 1999 General Assembly the Trustees have considered the Church's investments in the light of the Arms Trade report. They also conferred with those appointed at the last Assembly with a view to drawing up an ethical investment policy and now submit the following report.

ETHICAL INVESTMENT

1. The 1999 General Assembly asked the Trustees "to consider the Church's investments in the light of the Arms Trade report", and further requested them, in consultation with five named ministers, to "draw up an ethical investment policy and report to the next Assembly" (Minutes p.43).

2. The Trustees considered these two issues during the year, both in ordinary stated meetings and in special meetings with the five ministers appointed at the last Assembly. As a result of these discussions they now present the following report, beginning with an outline of the duties of trustees.

The Duties of Trustees

3. Trustees generally have considerable fiduciary and statutory duties. They must comply with all relevant legislation, and act within the authority of any relevant Trust Deeds. In the case of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, that includes acting within the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Act 1901 (See Code pp. 224-231).

4. It is not necessary for present purposes to deal with these matters in detail but trustees do have a primary and overriding duty to have regard to the financial benefit of the beneficiaries of the trust concerned. They are not as free as private individuals to decide that they will voluntarily accept a lesser income because of some point of moral or social principle.

5. There are, however, certain limited exceptions to this general rule, and these were stated in the judgement of Nicholls VC in the case of the Bishop

of Oxford –v- Church Commissioners (1992) 1WLR 1241. The case was brought by the Bishop and others concerned that the investment policy of the Commissioners was unduly concerned with financial return and failed to have regard to the promotion of the Christian faith.

6. In dismissing the Bishop's case the judge restated the primary duty of charity trustees to invest to obtain the maximum financial return consistent with commercial prudence. He did, however, identify certain circumstances in which this might not be the overriding investment criterion. In particular, charity trustees may exclude investment in companies whose objects conflict with the aims of the charity, e.g. investment by cancer charities in tobacco companies, by temperance charities in brewery or distillery companies and by the Society of Friends in arms manufacture. Such instances of true conflict would be comparatively rare and this exception to the general principle would be narrowly construed.

7. The position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on alcohol, tobacco and gambling is clear, but it is doubtful whether our Church, or some other Churches that have rejected investment in armaments, have in fact adopted the clearly pacifist position of the Society of Friends. It is also doubtful whether any person or body other than a civil court could lawfully direct any trustees to sell certain shares or certain types of share.

8. Most trustees of sizeable funds appoint independent advisers or investment managers to give advice on investment, and so do we, but the trustees remain ultimately responsible for the decisions made.

Ethical Investment Policy

9. A report on Investment Policy Criteria was presented to the General Assembly in 1974. Much of that report is now somewhat dated, eg the lengthy sections dealing with "the white-ruled countries of Southern Africa", but other parts of it remain the basis of the Church's ethical investment policy, especially the following extracts.

"7. Trustees are not legally obliged to take any action, eg in regard to an investment or sale, which may be considered contrary to the basic interest, principles or objectives of the beneficiary, either in particular or as a part of the Church, even though such action in itself may be financially advantageous.

8. So far, this has been applied by the Assembly Trustees to businesses clearly engaged in drink, tobacco and gambling enterprises. If investments in such businesses are given to the Trustees, eg under some bequest, they are disposed of as soon as may be convenient.

* * * * *

11. Moral judgements are also involved over a wider range of activities than those which raise puritan or racist/political objections. These involve investment in:

- (a) Monopolistic companies who are making an unreasonable profit by the exercise or exploitation of a monopoly situation.*
- (b) Companies whose activities appear to do unreasonable damage to the environment.*

- (c) *Companies where processes are carried out which are unnecessarily dangerous to their employees or to others. This might also cover production of and trade in arms.*
- (d) *Companies where wages and conditions do not afford employees a reasonable standard of living, particularly in relation to the profits made.*

Some of these considerations apply more urgently to operations in countries which lack effective government regulations or trades union organisation; though these countries at the same time may be most in need of massive development of industry and commerce such as the same companies are providing.

12. *There are a number of arguments used to favour investment in certain controversial areas, as tending to encourage positive economic, social or political developments, or as providing opportunities for influencing companies towards more beneficial policies.*

- (a) *While it is true that economic growth usually brings some benefits or increase in standards for the whole community, experience in Southern Africa shows that it may also increase relative inequalities and intensify the sense of injustice and frustration, if it is not matched by similar social and political development. Indeed urban industrialisation can even lower the real standard of living and diminish the liberties of the poor, as happened also with the English Industrial Revolution.*
- (b) *It is also true that stockholder pressure and publicity by Churches, etc., to secure from firms better conditions for their workers and more careful choice of activities to be undertaken, has achieved results. This has occurred with a number of British and American firms operating in South Africa. Not only firms but also governments are showing greater sensitivity to such pressures, as was shown too in Britain by the thalidomide campaign. It is uncertain, however, how far this has more than a marginal effect nationally.*

13. *As long as the Church is prepared to participate in a capitalistic free or mixed economy and world society, it should not be considered unethical to invest money for gain in industrial and commercial enterprises, as well as in utilities and in local and national government funds. At the same time it must be understood that, with the development of modern commerce and industry, there has been a tremendous growth in multi-purpose and multi-national businesses, having ramifications and widespread interlocking of interest. These do not always show to the casual or even the persistent inquirer. This makes it difficult to invest in many businesses, etc., of any size without being involved at some point in matters which some might prefer to avoid. Yet other aspects of their operations may be positively beneficial. Nor do these difficulties apply only to equities: national or local funds may also involve matters which give rise to scruples among some. Similarly many unit trusts and official charity investment funds hold part of their stock in highly profitable tobacco and drink businesses. It has accordingly been the policy of the Assembly Trustees not to invest in such if they are substantially involved, nor in businesses such as hotel chains, which*

would appear to depend significantly for their profitability upon trade in alcoholic drinks.

14. While such disinvestment may seem to be the easiest and most direct way of applying ethical criteria in cases where objections arise, its applications can only be quite limited. The wider the range of activities to be regarded with disfavour the more difficult it obviously becomes to engage in any general investment programme. It is a final sanction which, if used too liberally, leads to a contracting out of responsibility for the economic world as it is, and in which the Church and its members have their living. It should only be used where the prime objective or end product of a business, etc., itself ought to be repudiated by the Church. Where the objections or questions arise through the ongoing operation of the business, etc., ethical responsibility would suggest that investment should be accompanied by active participation as shareholders in the policy and decision making processes, in the interests both of employees and the community as well as the investor.

* * * * *

40. Having reviewed the various factors involved, it may be argued that there is no practical alternative to the policies followed by the Trustees until now. This would avoid investments directly concerned with interests in gambling, tobacco or the drink trade. For the rest, investments would be made over a range of stocks in the light of the probable financial returns and security offered, which in turn would depend on responsible management. Purchases and sales would be made from time to time, in consultation with professional advisers, having regard to developments in the market”.

10. The conclusions reached in Par 40 of that report are still a reasonable foundation for an ethical investment policy.

Armaments

11. More recently there has been concern in some Christian circles about the arms trade and further comments were made in subsequent years on one or other aspects of the arms trade, including the following references.

“The General Assembly are concerned at the grave burdens and dangers created throughout the world by the continued escalation in national armaments and in the international trade in arms. They pray that God who overrules both men and nations may direct those representatives of the United Nations now assembled that they shall reach decisions which lead to widespread disarmament, of such a balanced nature as shall not threaten the security of any. In this they not only urge measures to limit the stockpiling of atomic weaponry, whether old forms or new, holding such potentialities of horror in their use, but also measures to limit conventional weaponry, whose present use has brought such death and destruction even now in a variety of situations around the world.” (Mins. 1978 p.67 res. 14)

“The fact that there are endless supplies of arms and military equipment available worldwide to terrorist groups is a sad reflection on all nations and financiers who profit from their manufacture and those countries which harbour terrorists.” (General Board 26 February 1987 in Reports 1987 p.4)

“They would express their sense of deep regret that the United Kingdom had a part in the supply of arms and installations for Saddam Hussein’s war machine, and would urge H.M. Government to take whatever steps are necessary to secure the most far-reaching review and control of international arms trade.” (General Board 28 February 1991 in Reports 1991 p.61)

“The General Assembly urge the United Kingdom to join those countries who have banned the manufacture and export of all anti-personnel mines, or anything which might be defined as such.”

The General Assembly urge the United Kingdom to prohibit the use of its ports by any vessel carrying Anti-Personnel mines or weapons of a similar nature. They commend the Irish Government on its call for a complete ban on Landmines.” (Mins 1996 p.42 res. 25 and 26)

12. In 1999 a major report on the Arms Trade was presented to the General Assembly (Reports pp.35-39), by which stage a few such holdings had been acquired. Careful study of the 1999 report suggests that the primary concern of the authors was the arms trade with certain Third World countries with weak economies and dubious human rights records. It could, however, be argued that in an imperfect world the armies and police forces of responsible democracies will always need some guns to maintain law and order and prevent aggression. Arms in themselves are not necessarily evil.

13. Having noted the Church’s concern about recent tragic events in some areas of Indonesia, the Trustees decided to dispose of shares in one company engaged in arms trading with the government of that country.

14. While the issue of investment in armaments seems to be the most pressing just now, the Trustees are aware of many other topics which have been, or could be raised, including those listed in Par 11 of the 1974 Report, or the fur or asbestos trade, or “positive investment criteria”, “investing in companies that encourage fair trade, social and gender equality, and world development,” etc. The Trustees respect the right of the General Assembly to pronounce on activities “regarded as contrary to the interests of the Church” (Code Appendix 15 Bye-Law XIX (1)). They also recognise that no report on a subject of this nature could safely be regarded as absolute or final.

Conclusions

15. In the light of the foregoing the ethical investment policy of the Trustees could be summarised as follows.

- The Trustees will discharge their primary duty to have regard to the financial benefit of the beneficiaries of the trusts concerned, while seeing no substantial investments are made in any activity contrary to the interests of the church.
- The Trustees respect the right of the General Assembly to pronounce on activities regarded as contrary to the interests of the Church.
- Investments substantially concerned with gambling, tobacco, alcoholic drinks or the arms trade are to be avoided.
- Purchases and sales are made in consultation with professional advisers.

- Relevant information is obtained from a variety of Christian sources.
- The Trustees will, where appropriate, exercise their right to vote on relevant matters at company shareholder meetings.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON, Secretary

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommendation regarding the Mrs A M Davidson Trust be adopted.
3. That the recommendation regarding the Sir Wm V McCleery Trust be adopted.
4. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Irene Scott Trust be adopted.
5. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Ida Mary McGeown Trust be adopted.
6. That the General Assembly welcome the report on Ethical Investment and, in particular, the conclusions set out in paragraph 15.
7. That in accordance with the Will of the late John Getty the following be constituted as the Committee for the “direction and management of the application” of the income from the Getty Bequest:

Very Rev Dr S Hutchinson, Very Rev Dr A J Weir, Very Rev Dr T J Simpson, Revs J McAllister, OBE, W D F Marshall, R J A Bell; Mr Wilson Ervin, Sir Eric McDowell, Mr David Bell, CB, Mr A T Ross, Mr John Millar, OBE, Mr J I Bill, OBE.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE TYRONE MEMORIAL

Convener: Rev R KELLY

1. Last year the General Assembly agreed to send the Report of the ad hoc Committee to Presbyteries for debate and comment. Responses were received from nineteen Presbyteries. Those responses may be categorised as follows:

- 13 Presbyteries support changing the method of payment to ministers
- 5 Presbyteries opted for no change, rather a retention of the present system.
- 1 Presbytery did not reach a conclusion.

2. As the majority of Presbyteries were supportive of change, the next question arising was: which of the two proposed schemes would be most acceptable?

The responses were as follows:

- 5 Presbyteries preferred Scheme 1 (in 1999 annual Reports)
- 3 Presbyteries preferred Scheme 2 (in 1999 annual Reports)
- 2 Presbyteries found either Scheme preferable to the existing method
- 3 Presbyteries submitted no preference.

A further two Presbyteries, who had opted for “no change”, expressed support for Scheme 1, if change was to be implemented.

Scheme 1, therefore, enjoyed greatest support at Presbytery level.

3. After consideration of the comments received from the Presbyteries, some adjustments were made to Scheme 1, which is now presented to this Assembly.

4. The most significant adjustment is that the application of the basic percentage increase awarded would continue at the basic rate until a stipend of £20,999, before commencing the sliding scale. (Appendix)

5. PROPOSED SCHEME

How it would work.

At the close of each year the “Review Body” would send to each congregation a table detailing the annual percentage increases payable. The congregational committee would then apply this increase for the incoming year.

Example: Increase in stipend for 2000

<i>Present Stipend</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Present Stipend</i>	<i>Increase</i>
<i>£</i>	<i>Payable</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>Payable</i>
0 - 20,999	3.0%	28,000 - 28,999	2.2%
21,000 - 21,999	2.9%	29,000 - 29,999	2.1%
22,000 - 22,999	2.8%	30,000 - 30,999	2.2%
23,000 - 23,999	2.7%	31,000 - 31,999	1.9%
24,000 - 24,999	2.6%	32,000 - 32,999	1.8%

25,000 - 25,999	2.5%	33,000 - 33,999	1.7%
26,000 - 26,999	2.4%	34,000 - 34,999	1.6%
27,000 - 27,999	2.3%	35,000 - 35,999	1.5% etc

The stipend to be paid in 2000 would then be calculated.

Examples:

<i>Present Stipend 1999</i>	<i>Increase 2000</i>	<i>New Stipend</i>
£		£
8,000	3.0 %	8,000 + 240
16,000	3.0 %	16,000 + 480
24,000	2.6 %	24,000 + 624
32,000	1.8 %	32,000 + 576

6. NOTES

- (1) The percentage increase awarded, as calculated by the "Review Body" would reflect the rate of inflation, average wage increases in the public and private sector and other relevant economic factors.
- (2) The ministerial minimum and associated incremental payments would remain in place.
- (3) Congregations would retain all income received above that required to service the increase in stipend and the associated assessments.

Example: Consider a congregation with a stipend figure of £16,000

Stipend 1999	£16,000	Stipend 2000 (+ 3%)	£16,480
Assessments:	£12,000	Assessments:	£ 12,360
75% of Stipend (approx)		75% of Stipend (approx)	
TOTAL	£28,000	TOTAL	£28,840

An additional £840 is required to cover the increase in stipend and assessments. Any monies received in excess of this figure would be retained by the congregation.

Examples under the Proposed Scheme

- (i) Where an increase in contribution of £2,000 is received by the congregation, £1,160 is retained.
- (ii) Where an increase in contribution of £3,000 is received by the congregation, £2,160 is retained.

Examples under the Present Scheme:

- (i) Where an increase in contribution of £2,000 is received by the congregation, £688 is retained.
- (ii) Where an increase in contribution of £3,000 is received by the congregation, £1,032 is retained.

Therefore, the adoption of the proposed scheme will enable congregations to retain more of any additional income received.

- (4) If a congregation experiences a dramatic change in its congregational base, eg growth or decline, the stipend could be reviewed on request

to the Union Commission. Such a request, could be initiated either by the congregational committee or the minister to the Presbytery finance committee, or it could be initiated directly by the Presbytery finance committee at its annual review of congregational finances.

- (5) As at present the Union Commission would review stipend being paid by a congregation, at a time of vacancy and in the 7 year review process.
- (6) Congregations would be permitted to pay above the calculated stipend figure, if they so desired. However, assessments would continue to be calculated on the basis of the actual amount of stipend paid.
- (7) Congregations within unions would be treated as individual congregations in calculation of stipend, as is the situation at present.
- (8) While this proposed scheme removes the necessity of calculating "Specified Sources", it would be beneficial to all involved if such a figure were maintained in the initial years of the new scheme's implementation.
- (9) Presbytery have the responsibility of ensuring that the annual increases announced by the C.M.F. are applied in the congregations within its bounds.

7. One concern exposed in the responses from several Presbyteries related to the effect of the implementation of this scheme on assessments. While it would be unwise to offer any guarantee concerning the future, comparisons of the actual payments received by C.M.F from four Presbyteries, and the payments which would have been received under the new scheme reveal a slight increase in assessment income.

2.3	£27,000								
2.2	£28,000								
2.1	£29,000								
2.0	£30,000	30,600	31,212	31,836	32,472	33,122	33,784	34,460	35,149
1.9	£31,000								35,852
1.8	£32,000								
1.7	£33,000								
1.6	£34,000								
1.5	£35,000	35,525	36,057	36,598	37,147	37,704	38,270	38,844	39,427
									40,018

Notes:

- (1) The figures given in this illustration represent the amount paid by the congregation towards, stipend.
- (2) In this illustration the basic increase,, determined at 3%, would be applicable to all stipends up to £20,999. Stipend increases above this, amount would be calculated according to scale.
- (3) The percentage increase,, and the level of stipend to which it, would apply, would be determined annually.
- (4) As the application of the minimum would remain, no actual salary, would fall below this figure, as under the present system.
- (5) Present legislation concerning, additional payments, from Central Funds, would remain in place.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Scheme proposed in this Report be adopted.
3. That legislation to permit the implementation of the Scheme be prepared for submission to the General Assembly of 2001.
4. That the ad hoc Committee on the Tyrone Memorial be reappointed for a further year as follows:

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE MEMORIAL OF THE DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY

Convener: THE CLERK

INTRODUCTION

1. In 1998 the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster submitted a Memorial to the General Assembly on the subject of the payment of ministers. (Reports pp 243-244). The Memorial asked for examination of “the anomalies which exist within the current system”.

2. The matters raised in the Memorial were referred to an ad hoc Committee, which obtained further details from the Presbytery about their underlying concerns.

3. The Committee then considered the issues in depth and submitted a report to the 1999 Assembly (Reports pp 286-287), but was continued for a further year to deal with any outstanding matters.

4. As indicated in the 1999 report, one of the main difficulties is the exceptionally high cost of buying or renting accommodation in certain areas in the Republic (eg in and around Dublin), which can present problems when ministers are appointed to extra-parochial posts where there is no Manse. The Committee therefore submits the following Guidelines to the Assembly:-

- (i) Ministers appointed by Assembly Boards to non-parochial posts without manses in the Irish Republic should be paid a salary that takes account of the fact that accommodation is not provided.
- (ii) The cost of buying or renting property in the area concerned should be taken into account.
- (iii) The salary for such posts should not be less than the basic ministerial minimum, plus 25% plus the Eire differential.
- (iv) Expenses should also be paid.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Guidelines in Par 4 of the Report be approved.
3. That the ad hoc Committee on the Memorial of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery be thanked and discharged.

MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED

Interim Kirk Session of Movilla re full status	205
Rev Dr J W Cheshire re reception as a minister	(Daily Minutes)

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

Par 9	70
Par 30(1)	70
Par 128(1)	91
Par 132(4)	70
Par 221(2)	299
Par 223	299
Par 321(3)(5)(6)	300
Various	42

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Par 19(4)	70
Par 137	287
Par 172	70
Par 185(4)	71
Par 238(3)(4)	91
Par 268(4)(c)	46
Par 272(5)(b)	46
Par 272(5)(c)	46
Par 308	213
Par 315(2)	301

MOTION ON THE BOOKS

D W Lamb re Mr Charles Robinson	287
---------------------------------	-----

NOTICE OF MOTION

Very Rev Dr S Hutchinson re Mr H W Templeton	109
--	-----

