

Item 1 – BUSINESS BOARD – Supplementary Report

During the year the Business Board has carefully considered the invitation from the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal for the General Assembly to meet in Derry/Londonderry during 2013, the City's year as UK City of Culture. It also consulted with the General Board (see Supplementary Report), who invited Presbyteries to indicate their view also. It concurs with the General Board that the opportunity to share something of Presbyterian culture and heritage should be welcomed. It also recognises the importance of fostering good local relationships and so endorses the view that twenty additional invitations to Opening Night should be issued by the local Presbytery. While some questions have been raised as to cost, the Business Board is confident that the increased budget will not exceed £10,000 and does not believe this should be a determining factor. An appropriate resolution is attached.

The Business Board also considered requests for other Courts of the Church to meet to do business while the General Assembly is in session. The Board felt it necessary to turn down two requests – one from a Kirk Session and one from a Presbytery.

Additional Resolutions

1b. That the recommended Order of Business be adopted.

2a. That the General Assembly accept, with thanks, the invitation of the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal to meet in Derry/Londonderry in 2013, that the normal invitations to Opening Night be issued and that when the General Assembly meets outside Belfast twenty additional invitations to the Opening Night be issued by the local Presbytery.

The General Synod of the Church of Ireland (2011)

The Very Rev Dr J Stafford Carson reports:

Along with Mr George Russell, Session Clerk in First Portadown, I attended the Church of Ireland General Synod which was held in the City Hotel, Armagh from 12 to 14 May 2011. We were warmly welcomed and enjoyed rich hospitality and good fellowship with many long-standing friends.

In his presidential address, The Most Rev Alan Harper, Archbishop of Armagh, made a plea for passion in the discussion of key issues which were coming before the Synod. He believed that measured, tolerant and reserved contributions can sometimes be interpreted as indifferentism. He went on to say

that there was an important difference between engendering division and exposing division, and that diversity need not be a source of division. Sound-bite journalism trivializes issues and excludes good debate. The President asked the synodical delegates, “What are we passionate about?”

The next couple of days answered the Archbishop’s question. It revealed that some members of the Church of Ireland are passionate about mission and evangelism, and about the future of Christianity in Ireland.

But that passionate debate was prefaced by a more controlled and rather boring session as the synod used its traditional pattern of dealing with its business by following a 19th century form of parliamentary debate. An example of this was the proposal of Bishop Harold Millar to amend the Book of Common Prayer (2004) to include a prayer for the Northern Ireland Assembly. It took thirty-three separate steps and three days before the bill to include the new prayer was enacted. Afterwards I joked with my friend, Bishop Millar, that I hoped the re-constituted Northern Ireland Assembly would survive until the Church of Ireland were allowed to pray for it!

The passionate debate surrounded a report prepared by the Venerable Gary Hastings, Archdeacon of Tuam, on the future of the Church of Ireland. He prophesied that the “vanishing point” for many small churches is no longer over the horizon, but will arrive in our lifetimes. Young people, having departed from the church after confirmation, no longer return in later life with their own children as was once the case. A cord has been cut, the tradition of osmotically passing on the faith, combined with weekly church attendance, is past.

“Metaphors of cancer and the Titanic may be too dramatic, it’s more a matter of slow, quiet, respectable deflation, a gentle haemorrhaging allowing us to drift off to sleep in the damp but hallowed halls of elder glory. If it is a crisis, it is a crisis in slow motion. Yet things are going to change and we should prepare for the change. There is time but we should look at trends and plan ahead where we can.”

Presbyterians will readily identify the same disease as afflicting our own denomination, and will be interested in the response of our brothers and sisters in the Church of Ireland. Canon David McClay warmed our hearts as he reported on some exciting initiatives in Willowfield Parish in East Belfast, where a new concern to connect with people in their community is proving fruitful. Another speaker pointed out that Christ must be our primary identity and if Christ is not our primary identity, then we have no future. Many people are not clear what church membership is or what it means. For that reason, one speaker recommended that the parish must be seen as a unit of mission and not just pastoral care.

The General Synod also received the report of the Covenant Council and agreed to receive the "Second Statement on the Interchangeability of Ministry and Episcopate" and encouraged congregations to celebrate the Covenant relationship between the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church. Proposing the report and the accompanying motion, the Most Rev Richard Clarke, Bishop of Meath and Kildare, emphasised that this would not "organically unify" the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church, but would "effect a relationship parallel". It was crucial at this point that there be an identical intentionality in both Churches and not a "mere crafting of a form of words", in order that the shared place of the two Churches within the tradition of the historic episcopate should be made public and manifest.

Seconding the motion, the Rev Nigel Dunne (Diocese of Cork) told the Synod that the discussions between the two Churches had now arrived at the stage where both could mutually endorse each other's expression of the office and function of "episcopate", and that the time had come to move forward and bring this theological and ecclesiological agreement into real and tangible expression, in order that the mission of Christ's Church on this island might be strengthened.

The President of the Methodist Conference, the Rev Paul Kingston, was invited to address the Synod and told members that he was "very excited" about what was being proposed. Speaking of his positive experience of co-operation between the two Churches, Mr Kingston hoped that both would wholeheartedly embrace the concept of interchangeability of ministry, "in obedience to the prayer of Christ that his people might be one".

When I was given an opportunity to address the Synod, I endorsed the Archbishop's desire for passionate and heart-felt debate, but, in the light of the recent history of our own church, commended those who had an eye for detail and who were prepared to scrutinize the less exciting aspects of a denomination's common life to ensure that "all things were done decently and in order". These aspects are just as important to a denomination's life as are the enthusiastic and passionate debates.

Like ourselves, the times are a-changing for the Church of Ireland, but where there is a whole-hearted commitment to Christ and to the gospel there are indications that they will find new ways of living the gospel and of being a church.

The Church of Scotland General Assembly (2011)

The Right Rev Dr T Norman Hamilton reports:

The Church of Scotland is famous for the warmth and generosity of welcome to its visitors, and this year was no exception. There is also an oft expressed desire – even expectation – that visiting delegates will contribute to the debates, and I was privileged to do so on several occasions.

The most high profile debate of the week, with a whole day given over to it, was the report of a Special Commission on Same-Sex Relationships and the Ministry. The full report is available online on the Church of Scotland website, and I would urge all who are interested to read it there. The levels of angst were obvious from the earliest contributions, but the newly installed moderator, Dr David Arnott handled the whole day (indeed the whole week) with such great grace and sense of fairness that the angst never became adversarial or bitter.

Yet I sensed at the outset that the more ‘liberal’ option would be accepted, and it was. Whatever the nuances in the report (and there were many), the public understanding was expressed in the opening words of the leader article in *The Scotsman* the next day:

It was a long and understandably passionate debate, but finally last night the General Assembly of Church of Scotland voted to allow Presbyteries across the country to choose gay or lesbian ministers. The vote among the commissioners to throw out the ban on gay clergy brought in two years ago was clear, 351 to 294, but showed how divisive the issue has been in the Kirk.

There is a widespread view that the traditionalist position on the ordination of those who are gay/lesbian was rejected for what was described as the ‘revisionist’ position. Those who were advocating this latter position included one minister who spoke warmly of the contribution that bisexuals and those who are transgendered can make to Christian ministry, whilst another spoke of how the Bible had been shown to be wrong in the past and that we now know better. The traditionalist view was articulated by many in the Kirk, and by every visiting delegate who spoke (myself included), and there is no doubt that many of those who hold this position within the Church of Scotland seem seriously demoralised and deeply apprehensive about future developments.

It also has to be said however, that the Assembly was unambiguously clear that there should be no antagonism towards or marginalisation of those

who are gay / lesbian within congregations. This is as important a principle for us in PCI as it is for the Church of Scotland.

The other debate which I followed with great interest was the report of the Panel on Review and Reform. This was the product of work going back as far as 2001, and the Convenor reminded the Assembly that his role had been described as a 'poisoned chalice' when he took it up. That report too is available on-line, and from my perspective was memorable for two reasons:

(a) it is brutally honest about how the work of Presbyteries is perceived within the Church of Scotland.

(b) it does not recommend anything less than a total overhaul of the role and work of Presbyteries and has many highly creative suggestions as to how that might be done.

The vision for change was set out for the Assembly as follows:

Affirm that the purpose of Presbytery reform must be to enable the mission of Christ.

Affirm the vision begun at the Reformation and expressed in the Church without Walls (CWW) report1 that the Church of Scotland's foundation for mission is rooted in the local church, through the ministry of all God's people.

Affirm that local mission planning is a priority for the Church and the Presbytery is the church community which should resource and support the local gospel imperative.

Agree that Presbytery planning should take place within the wider context of Presbytery reform and be conducted in partnership with Presbyteries to ensure the strategic distribution of the Ministry and Mission allocation.

Note with concern the present situation in many Presbyteries where compliance with governance, planning and finance cannot be fully achieved.

Affirm the need for a mechanism of devolved authority to reform the present Presbyteries so that they may become the regional areas of proclamation, support and oversight as envisaged in the report.

It was however, largely rejected. What surprised me was the rejection did not seem to be based on the core thinking or rationale of the report, but on the practicalities of making the changes needed. I said it at the time, and am happy to repeat my view here, that there is much in this report that we would do well to take on board in our own review of our structures.

The other high profile event was 'Roll Away the Stone', described as follows: *On General Assembly Sunday, from 1pm till 6pm, the Church took over*

a large area of Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh for a time of Celebration, Inspiration and Discovery.

"Significance comes from the Cross and resurrection life flows from the Tomb." So celebration, inspiration and discovery began with reflections around a huge cross in the garden area near the Ross Bandstand. Meantime at the Bandstand itself, in the picturesque avenue and fountain areas, and in St Cuthbert's Church at the west end of the Gardens there was space for worship, praise and singing amongst a whole range of other things to see and do.

Between 5-6000 people attended. Personally the highlights were a splendid half hour gospel concert by around two dozen members of the Scottish African Massed Choir in full national dress with wonderful jazz accompaniment. The audience was enthralled. So was I.

The other enthralling event was a young man doing superlative rope tricks and explaining the core gospel message as he did it. Personal testimony to the transforming power of Christ given in a highly creative and compelling way.

Of course there were many other memorable events – the Ceremony of the Keys in Holyrood Palace; the great welcome of the 'Irish Gathering' of ministers, elders and their wives; the reception in the historic Parliament Hall attended by the first minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond, and the services in St Giles' Cathedral.

It was a privilege to attend, albeit it seemed to be a somewhat troubled Assembly in a somewhat troubled church. There was much to learn, but maybe most of the learning will happen in the weeks and months to come as members of and visitors to the Assembly reflect deeply on what happened and what was discussed – as they must and no doubt will do.

Item 3 – REPORT OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS AND DELEGATES - Supplementary Report

Irish Council of Churches

Rev Philip McKelvey should read Mr Philip McKinley

Add

Presbyterian Church of East Africa – The Rev Francis Njoroge
CCAP Nkhoma Synod – The Rev Davidson Chifungo
Church of North India Gujarat Diocese – Mr Reuben B Christie

Károli Gáspár University – Prof Anne Marie Kool

Item 6 – BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND – Supplementary Report

Strategy for Mission Committee –

The Rev Alistair R Bill reports:

Nightlight

The street outreach work of Nightlight continues in the entertainment areas of Belfast with Mr John Luke as Director. The staff team consists of Mrs Linzie Cobain (Development Officer, Golden Mile), Brian Simons (Development Officer, Odyssey Complex), and Mrs Catherine Dalzell (Clerical & Resource Officer). Teams of volunteers, working on rota, take Christ onto the streets in the Golden Mile on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, and on Friday and Saturday nights in the Odyssey Complex.

Team Members

Without voluntary Team Members Nightlight could not operate. Accordingly, the Panel is always looking for new people to come along, initially to watch and listen, and then to offer themselves on a weekly basis if possible. Night Tours are still available for individuals and groups - contact the Nightlight office (Tel +44(0)28 9033 2777). Team Members are provided with the Nightlight Mission Statement, the Nightlight Statement of Beliefs and Guiding Principles, and the Nightlight Guidelines for Voluntary Involvement and Recruitment. During the year a Team Member Agreement was also drawn up, to which those participating in the street work agree to adhere.

Training Programme

A pilot Training programme for street work was undertaken by members of the Core Group in the autumn of 2011. This programme is presently being refined and it is planned that all Team Members will undertake it beginning September 2011. It is anticipated that it will then be made available to other teams around the country. We are grateful to the Rev Danny Rankin for developing this programme.

Review of Nightlight

A comprehensive review process was undertaken during the period May to September 2010, under the visionary and efficient leadership of the Rev

David Thompson. This resulted in the identification of a significant number of desirable tasks for the improvement of the work. Grouped in 7 areas, these include a Values Statement (P - presence; U - unconditional kindness; R - relationship; E - evangelism) now being used on all Nightlight literature; a more solid connection of the Nightlight Panel to the Strategy for Mission Committee; the desire to build the network of those involved in street work across Ireland and beyond. We also plan to explore other sources of funding for the work.

The Rev David J Bruce writes:

The BMI conveys its deep appreciation to the **Rev William Henry** who since 2006 has served as Convener of the Home and Irish Mission Committee (latterly the Strategy for Mission Committee). William has brought gifts of communication and insight to his work with the Board and these Committees. His vision for the mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is rooted in his own experience as parish minister in Maze and Ballinderry. In this convenership William has always been ready to travel as a member of various working groups to all parts of Ireland where his wisdom and counsel have been highly valued. He has helped to steer the Board forwards through the process of Mission Planning towards Mission Development, and has been closely involved with the reconfiguration of Irish Mission work, and the management of Deaconesses by the Board. We pray God's blessing on William as he completes this period of service with the Board.

Additional Resolutions

6a. That the Panel on the Revision of the Book of Public Worship reviews the wording of the questions put at services of ordination, licensing and installation or induction and reports to next year's General Assembly.

6b. That the General Assembly request the Panel on the Revision of the Book of Public Worship to send the final sections of its work relating to the sacraments down to Presbyteries for consideration and response by 31 December, 2011.

6c. That in light of Presbytery comments received, the Board of Mission in Ireland be requested to publish all completed sections of the revision to the Book of Public Worship as an on-line, downloadable resource for general use by ministers.

8a. That the resignation of the Rev WJ Henry as Convener of the Strategy for Mission Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Business Board be authorised to make an appointment in his place.

Item 6a – ADDITIONAL OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 204 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 204 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

“204. The ordination or installation of ruling elders shall be conducted by the Presbytery, or a commission thereof, who shall appoint ministers and ruling elders to officiate at the service.”

Anent Par 205(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in sub paragraph 205(2) of the Code the words:

“(a) The Presbytery shall then be constituted publicly by prayer.

(b) The Moderator shall then make a Declaration on the following lines –”

be deleted and the following substituted in their place:

“(a) The Presbytery, having been constituted by prayer, the Moderator shall then make a Declaration on the following lines – ”

Anent Par 210(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that sub-paragraph 210(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

“(1) appoint ministers and ruling elders to conduct the service.”

Anent Par 212(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in sub-paragraph 212(1) of the Code the words “an address dealing with” be deleted and the words “an address or statement dealing with” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 212(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in subparagraph 212(2) of the Code the words “shall then be constituted publicly by prayer; and the Clerk” be deleted and the words “having been constituted by prayer, the Clerk or Convener” substituted in their place.

DJ BRUCE

Item 6b – MEMORIAL TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly to meet in Belfast on 6 June 2011

The Memorial of the Kirk Session of First Derry and Claremont Presbyterian Church Respectfully Showeth:

That a successful assimilation of First Derry and Claremont Churches has taken place.

That the city’s oldest congregation is known and exclusively referred to as First Derry.

That the congregation, following 8.75 years displacement due to severe structural problems caused by dry-rot, has returned to its spiritual home on the site of the first church built in 1690.

The Kirk Session considers that the appropriate name for the congregation, which has met on the same site since 1690 should now be First Derry Church (incorporating Claremont). Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Assembly to approve the change of name from First Derry and Claremont Presbyterian Church to that of First Derry Presbyterian Church (incorporating Claremont), and Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Adopted by the Kirk Session at its meeting on 27th March 2011

DAVID LATIMER, Moderator
DEREK R LEE, Clerk of Session

Licensed and transmitted by the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal at its meeting in Gortnessy on Tuesday 3 May, 2011 with the strong recommendation that the prayer of the Memorialists be granted.

R BUICK, Moderator
S STEWART, Clerk

Item 8 – BOARD OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL – Supplementary Report

Pensions and Assessments Committee

Retirements

Page 243 of the Boards report refers to the retirement of Rev Dr JA Thompson following his 64th birthday, on 4 May 2011. The date should have read 4 May, 2012. An amended resolution is appended.

DOUGLAS CROWE

Property Management Committee

Church House Development

The Contract for the refurbishment and redevelopment of the first phase of Church House, comprising the upgrading of the Assembly Hall and the second and third floor offices, together with the new entrance, lift and reception area, was successfully completed and handed over as agreed on 19 May 2011.

The next phase comprises the refurbishment of the first floor to provide committee/meeting rooms and to upgrade the offices for the staff in the Finance and Personnel department.

Savings on the external works contract, reported to the 2010 General Assembly, together with the anticipated savings on this current contract amount to a total of approximately £350,000, although final figures have not yet been agreed in detail with the relevant contractors.

The current contractor, Felix O'Hare & Co Ltd, has indicated his willingness to carry out additional work to the first floor at competitive rates based on the existing contract, and it is anticipated that the savings outlined above should substantially complete the first floor work. It is therefore recommended that the saving of approximately £350,000 should be utilised for this work as an extension to the existing contract.

It is fully appreciated, in these stringent economic and financial times, that expenditure should be kept to a reasonable minimum, and therefore that the additional costs should not exceed the amounts already approved by the General Assembly. A resolution is appended.

Shopping Mall

The Property Management Committee is currently marketing the vacant retail units in the Spires Mall. Consequently the letting agents have received a number of inquiries from the “Service Sector.” While such operations are not strictly retail they may require Sunday opening. The Property Management Committee would therefore seek guidance from the General Assembly on the acceptability of such potential occupiers. A possible resolution is appended.

R ADRIAN McLERNON, J HUBERT MARTIN

FINANCE, LEGAL AND IT COMMITTEE

Presbytery Returns

In 2009, the General Assembly passed a resolution “That Presbyteries submit an annual statistics return, in a form to be approved by the Board of Finance and Personnel, and that a summary report be prepared each year for the General Assembly; the first return to be made for the year ended 31 December, 2010”.

The Board asked Presbyteries to “trial run” a proposed form for the year ended 2009 with a view to introducing the new form for the year ended 31 December 2010. All Presbyteries submitted a return for 2010 and a summary of the returns is appended.

Appointment of Auditors

In accordance with the provisions of the Code Para 286(3) (b), the Board of Finance and Personnel nominated Ernst & Young for re-appointment as Auditors. This re-appointment to apply to the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2011.

MICHAEL FITCH

Appendix 1 – Tyrone Memorial Review Panel

The following sentence to be included at the end of paragraph 19 of the report (page 263 of the Annual Reports):

“In the absence of clear agreement on the level of payment, the Panel decided to give further consideration to whether the non Regium Donum part of

the Bonus should be incorporated into either the Basic Minimum or the Incremental Allowances.”

JOHN HUNTER

SUMMARY OF PRESBYTERY RETURNS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

		[----- INCOME -----]				[----- EXPENDITURE -----]				SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	CLOSING BALANCE	
		OPENING BALANCE	Assessment Congregations	Other	TOTAL INCOME	Presbytery Clerk	Other Staff	Insurance	Other			TOTAL EXPENDITURE
1	Ards	9,036	21,512	759	22,271	(9,823)	(5,343)	(213)	(2,242)	(17,621)	4,650	13,686
2	Armagh	3,226	11,052	503	11,555	(7,447)	(1,000)	(205)	(1,873)	(10,525)	1,030	4,256
3	Ballymena	10,422	15,605	22,220	37,825	(10,555)	(2,000)	(205)	(12,720)	(25,480)	12,345	22,767
4	Belfast North *	5,193	17,118	8,378	25,496	(9,922)	(11,927)	(303)	(3,201)	(25,353)	143	5,336
5	Belfast South	4,212	19,640	3	19,643	(7,970)	(340)	(126)	(14,236)	(22,672)	(3,029)	1,183
6	Belfast East	8,609	18,952	506	19,458	(8,570)	(1,600)	(205)	(12,962)	(23,337)	(3,878)	4,730
7	Carrickfergus	6,683	10,159	6	10,165	(7,076)	(1,918)	(126)	(1,426)	(10,546)	(381)	6,302
8	Coleraine & Limavady	26,919	16,810	2,384	19,194	(7,809)	0	(284)	(3,003)	(11,096)	8,098	35,017
9	Derry & Donegal	34,268	18,029	24,129	42,158	(11,474)	(13,751)	(283)	(16,224)	(41,732)	426	34,694
10	Down	1,779	9,532	2,010	11,542	(5,611)	(1,000)	(205)	(1,177)	(7,993)	3,549	5,328
11	Dromore	639	12,714	10	12,724	(10,090)	(1,419)	(205)	(408)	(12,122)	602	1,241
12	€ Dublin & Munster	49,014	20,158	40,367	60,525	(6,489)	(24,758)	(630)	(12,697)	(44,574)	15,951	64,965
13	Iveagh	9,111	13,212	446	13,658	(10,867)	(500)	(205)	(1,421)	(12,993)	665	9,776
14	€ Monaghan	65,535	6,270	718	6,988	(2,050)	(2,385)	(382)	(4,808)	(9,625)	(2,637)	62,898
15	Newry	1,514	7,266	1,213	8,479	(6,648)	(140)	(126)	(1,287)	(8,201)	278	1,792
16	Omagh	12,376	10,943	340	11,283	(6,890)	(1,296)	(205)	(2,605)	(10,996)	287	12,663
17	Route	56,758	11,179	10,077	21,256	(8,463)	0	(205)	(5,049)	(13,717)	7,539	64,297
18	Templepatrick *	11,696	16,600	3,605	20,205	(7,938)	(5,170)	(269)	(8,907)	(22,284)	(2,079)	9,617
19	Tyrone	3,777	8,590	1,395	9,985	(7,340)	(500)	(205)	(2,933)	(10,978)	(993)	2,784
Sterling		206,218	238,913	77,984	316,897	(144,493)	(47,904)	(3,575)	(91,674)	(287,646)	29,252	235,469
Euro		114,549	26,428	41,085	67,513	(8,539)	(27,143)	(1,012)	(17,505)	(54,199)	13,314	127,863

* for the year ended 28 February 2011

Licensed Amendments

10. That the General Assembly approve the proposals of the Tyrone Memorial Review Panel, *with the exception that the maximum Local Allowance shall be 50% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum*, subject to the General Assembly agreeing to the proposal of the General Board Panel on Pensions and Assessments to move the basis of assessments to assessable income and that the proposals be implemented from 1 January, 2013.

10. That the General Assembly approve the proposals of the Tyrone Memorial Review Panel, (with the exception that the maximum Local Allowance shall be 50% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum,) subject to the General Assembly agreeing to the proposal of the General Board Panel on Pensions and Assessments to move the basis of assessments to assessable income; *that where an initial Local Allowance has been agreed by the Union Commission, Congregations will be permitted to request a review of the Local Allowance as paid to the Minister subject to the maximum level*; and that the proposals be implemented from 1 January, 2013.

DAVID JOHNSTON

Additional Resolutions

11a. That the contract of Felix O'Hare & Co Ltd be extended to carry out work to the first floor of Church House, up to a value of the savings of approximately £350,000, but that no additional money be expended which has not already been approved by the General Assembly.

HUBERT MARTIN

11b. That the General Assembly authorize the General Board to advise the Property Management Committee, if necessary, in agreeing terms with potential tenants.

ADRIAN McLERNON

12a. That Ernst & Young, LLP be appointed as auditors for all the Committees, Boards, Trusts, Commissions and Agencies of The General Assembly for the year 2011.

JOHN HUNTER

Amended Resolution

13. That under the provisions of the Code Par 556(3) the Rev JA Thompson (Dervock) be given permission to retire on or after his 64th birthday, on 4 May, 2012.

Item 10 – BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING – Addition to Resolution**Resolution 2**

Norman Kennedy
Jeff McWatters

Wellington
West, Bangor

Ballymena
Ards

JNI McNEELY

Licensed Amendment**Resolution 12**

That the General Assembly *normally require* Ruling Elders to participate in ‘learning opportunities’ as outlined in paragraph 14(B)(ii) of the report of the Panel on Leadership (pp 200-201).

MARGARET L JOHNSTON

Item 14 – GENERAL BOARD – Supplementary Report**General**

The General Board discussed in detail the invitation from the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal to hold the General Assembly in Derry/Londonderry during the year in which the City will be UK City of Culture, 2013. The Board also consulted with Presbyteries. It recognised the opportunity to share something of Presbyterian culture and heritage in this important year in the life of the City and recommended to the Business Board that the invitation be accepted. It further recommended that to acknowledge the importance of building good relationships locally, when the General Assembly meets outside Belfast an additional twenty invitations to the Opening Night should be issued by the local Presbytery. The resolution to the General Assembly on this matter will come from the Business Board.

Parish Bounds

The East Belfast Presbytery reported as follows:

Ballymacarrett Congregation amalgamated with Ravenhill Congregation on 31 October, 2010. Presbytery has reviewed the Ballymacarrett parish bounds and agreed that the district be subsumed by Mountpottinger, Westbourne and Mersey Street Congregations. It also wants to take this opportunity to transfer the bounds of the former Megain Memorial parish into the name of Mersey Street Congregation. The boundary between Ravenhill and Mountpottinger now follows a main road rather than several side streets.

Agreement has been obtained on behalf of all Congregations concerned.

PROPOSED NEW BOUNDARIES

Westbourne

From Albert Bridge (3496 7396) down river and round lower Twin Island, and up Musgrave Channel to South End (3555 7517), thence by straight line to Convention Court (3565 7464), along Convention Court via Tower Street to Newtownards Road, along Newtownards Road to Templemore Avenue (3560 7437) to Albertbridge Road, to Lagan River at Albert Bridge (3496 7396).

Megain Memorial – name change to Mersey Street

From where the Conn's Water goes under Sydenham By-Pass (3563 7503) to Connswater Bridge (3635 7422), along Newtownards Road to Albertbridge Road (3622 7425), thence along Albertbridge Road to Templemore Avenue (3568 7394), thence along Templemore Avenue to Newtownards Road (3549 7437), thence along Newtownards Road to Tower Street, thence along Tower Street to Convention Court and continuing in a straight line to the South West end by Musgrave Channel (3555 7515).

Mountpottinger

From Lagan River at Albert Bridge (3496 7396) along Albertbridge Road to Newtownards Road (3622 7425), to Connswater Bridge (3636 7422), along Connswater river to Loop Bridge (3637 7354), along Beersbridge Road via Cherryville Street to My Lady's Road, along My Lady's Road to Ravenhill Road to Lagan River at Albert Bridge (3946 7396).

Ravenhill

From Lagan River at Albert Bridge (3496 7396) up Lagan River to point opposite Balfour Avenue (3457 7271), thence across Ormeau Park to Earl Haig Gardens (3561 7263), to Ardenlee Avenue (3506 7261), up Ardenlee Avenue to Ardenlee Gardens (3550 7250), to Ranelagh Street (3566 7268), to Carlingford Street (3561 7289), by Killowen Street (3558 7306) to Woodstock Road (357 7310), to My Lady's Road (3559 7346), to Pearl Street (3552 7343), along Cherryville Street (3543 7354) to My Lady's Road, along My Lady's Road to Ravenhill Road, to Lagan River at Albert Bridge (3946 7396).

Memorial Record

The Very Rev Dr W Donald Patton reports:

The Rev David Alderdice, MA, BD, Minister Emeritus of the congregation of Wellington, Ballymena, in the Presbytery of Ballymena, died on 23 April, 2011 in the 82nd year of his age and the 58th year of his ministry. He was born on 19 June, 1929, the youngest of five children to David Alderdice, farmer, and his wife Amy, née King, who lived at Mullaghglass, near Bessbrook, in County Armagh. He was educated at Mullaghglass Primary School and Shaftesbury House College, Belfast. At the age of 16 he responded to the call of Christ to take Him as his personal Saviour and he responded to the call of God to serve him in full-time ordained ministry. He worked hard to complete the entrance requirements for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church and studied at Magee University College, Londonderry; Trinity College, Dublin; New College, Edinburgh and the Assembly's College, Belfast. He graduated BA in 1950; BD in 1953; and achieved his MA in 1959 while ministering in his first congregation. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Newry on 8 June, 1952 and served as Assistant in the congregations of Nelson Memorial and Strand, Belfast. He received a call from the congregation of Donacloney and was ordained there by the Presbytery of Banbridge on 4 March, 1954. On 3 April that year he married Annie Margaret Helena Shields and in the years following four children were born to them, David King, Helen Anne, John Thomas, now Lord John Alderdice, and Ruth Pauline. In 1960 he moved to Westbourne in East Belfast being installed there on 21 January, and served for five years until his call to Wellington Street, Ballymena, where he was installed on 8 January, 1964 and remained until his retirement on 30 June, 1994. A big man with a big heart, David was a caring pastor and fluent preacher. His gift for evangelism was recognised by the wider church when he was appointed to the Panel of Evangelists, and he conducted many evangelistic missions throughout the land being used of God to win souls to Christ. He had a wonderful memory for literature and story which he used to great effect in his

preaching. His evident humanity and sense of humour commended the man and his message, opening up many opportunities to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the pulpit and in personal conversation. His main hobby was gardening and for some years he shared his knowledge with readers of the *Presbyterian Herald* in the articles he wrote under the heading 'Into the Garden'. He and Helena retired to Glenariffe, where they created a beautiful garden from moor land which they opened to visitors, hosting many church outings. He put together a slide presentation of their work and spoke to church meetings using it to present the Gospel to his audience with wit and wisdom. It was said of him – 'True instruction was found in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.' (Malachi 2:6) He was delighted to be present at the official opening of the new Wellington church premises at Galgorm on 4 April, 2009, rejoicing in the growth of the congregation. During the last year of his life he battled courageously with illness drawing strength from his faith, his family and the prayers of God's people. He now enjoys the presence of his Lord in the heavenly country and our thoughts are with his wife Helena, their children and the wider family circle whom we commend to the comforts of Christ the Saviour.

The Rev Samuel Malcolm McSparran, BA, Minister Emeritus of Monreagh congregation in the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal, died on 13 May, 2011 in the 94th year of his age and the 67th year of his ministry. He was born on 17 January, 1918 at Lockgate, Balne, Yorkshire, to James McSparran, farmer, and his wife Catherine, née Creswell. Following the tragic death of his father on Christmas Eve, 1930, his widowed mother returned to her roots at Beachmount, Nedd, Ballykelly, with her six children. Mr McSparran began his education at Pollington Elementary School, Yorkshire, then Ballykelly Elementary School, and Limavady Academy. He went on to study at Magee University, Londonderry; Trinity College, Dublin; the Assembly's College, Belfast and New College, Edinburgh, graduating BA. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Glendermott on 5 December, 1943 and served as Assistant in the congregation of Nelson Memorial on the Shankill Road. He was ordained and installed in the congregation of Monreagh in the Presbytery of Donegal on 12 January, 1945 and remained there until his retirement on 31 October, 1987. He married Mary Margaret McCartney on 4 September, 1945, and four children were born to the marriage, two sons, John and David, and two daughters, Ruth and Claire. Mr McSparran was well known to all the people around Monreagh and enjoyed happy cross- community relationships. He is remembered, in particular, for his part in securing a piped water supply from nearby mountain springs to the homes in the parish to replace water drawn from wells. This was initiated as a private scheme to which householders subscribed but was taken over later by the public authorities. His successor, the Rev Dr David Latimer, also minister of First Derry, in a funeral tribute observed of him that

‘Christianity for the Rev McSparran ... primarily was being amongst the people and living out the love of God in a host of everyday practical ways.’ Mr McSparran’s enduring legacy lies in the hearts and memories of those among whom he lived and worked during his long and settled ministry in this County Donegal parish. To his family we extend our sympathy and appreciation of their father’s life and work together with the assurance of the prayers of the Church in their loss.

Priorities Committee

If the General Assembly agrees to the Priorities Committee developing an Assembly theme each year, beginning in 2012-13, there would need to be some budget available from the Incidental Fund for the production of resource materials and other initiatives around the theme. This would need to be carefully managed by the General Board. An additional resolution asks the Assembly to provide the General Board with a budget for this purpose of up to £20,000, but only to be used at the discretion of the Board.

DONALD WATTS

Church Relations Committee

The Rev Cheryl Meban reports:

World Communion of Reformed Churches European Area Council

Leaders of 24 European churches belonging to the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) gathered in Prague on 4-5 March 2011 to renew relationships and to discuss developments in European and global church life. The Rev Dr Donald Watts represented the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

WCRC President, Dr Jerry Pillay, (South Africa) brought input from the strategic planning process that is underway, focussing the vision and purpose of WCRC to further the Mission of God in the world, through holistic mission that includes seeking justice and deeper communion.

Dr Guy Liagre (Belgium) spoke about the future of reformed theological work in Europe. There was also an opportunity to discuss with him personally the complexity of the current political situation in Belgium, and the strain on the church of functioning in different languages, particularly at times when the different ethnicities of the country are pulling apart.

Meanwhile the Hungarian Reformed Church has been able to reunite six different church groupings in different jurisdictions which had been split since World War 1. It was salutary, too, to be in the company and receiving the hospitality of Czech leaders who, having lived through the persecution of Communist regime, now face the tides of secularism in the form of consumerism, and to talk with our Romanian brother about the ongoing discrimination against the Reformed Church in his country.

Rev Cheryl Meban, one of the four European members of the WCRC Executive Committee, was also present. Cheryl has been part of the strategic planning process of WCRC, and attended the European Steering Group meeting in October. She has been involved in the process of selecting a new Executive Secretary for Justice and Partnership, and continued her involvement with the Strategic Planning Group and Executive Committee in Geneva in May. Her presence in Europe and beyond ensures that the commitment of PCI to the mission of Christ in the world, and our Board of Mission Overseas emphasis on Leadership Development, are being put at the centre of WCRC's Vision, Mission and Strategy.

LORRAINE KENNEDY-RITCHIE

Church and Society Committee

Sectarianism

1. The recent murder of Ronan Kerr was a criminal act, with little political support, and is to be condemned as wrong. It reminds everyone of the need to maintain a real and practical commitment to a society in which violence has no part, in which differences are resolved by peaceful means and in which there is mutual respect and tangible growth in trust and co-operation. There is a need to remain vigilant and attend to separation arising from different histories, geographical locations, cultural backgrounds, and education systems, otherwise there will remain great potential for sectarianism to take root and flourish.

2. The responses from Presbyteries were careful to note that no one can claim to be free from sectarianism, not least because it so often 'blind sides us'. So boundaries may become hardened without it being noticed, other people may be overlooked and feel overlooked again without this being noticed and it is only a short step to words and then practices that marginalize, belittle, dehumanize or demonize. The act of recognising and accepting sectarianism as part of one's own behaviour as well as that of others, is perhaps even more painful and sobering than the recognition of the sectarianism of others. But any hope of healing and reconciliation depends deeply on both forgiving and being

forgiven. All acquiescence, acceptance or collaboration with sectarianism, including that which is quite unintentional and due more to neglect, has to be clearly identified and purposefully resisted.

3. It cannot be said often enough that relationships matter. At the heart of the gospel lies relationship with God. How relationships are constructed with neighbours feeds the kind of society that grows and develops over a period of time. So if good relationships with neighbours, particularly those who are different, are not attended to then they are likely to fall by the wayside and eventually break down. Such break down may only become evident at times of difficulty or contention, otherwise the break down lies under the surface but with separateness being built up as communities live parallel, rather than integrated, lives.

4. It is with all of this in mind that the Committee appends a resolution asking that everyone be careful not to focus on any speck in someone else's eye while ignoring the log in their own. (Matthew 7:3-5) The Committee also invites members of congregations to seek to build relationships with neighbouring Catholic people, or to renew those relationships that may have fallen by the wayside. Joint worship is not being advocated, although some may choose to worship with their Catholic neighbours. Rather the Committee is asking that some form of relationship be developed which allows people to get to know each other without fear and to live less parallel lives; to respect one another despite differences and, while not compromising matters of faith, to become friends. Such relationships could, for example, take the form of social events, or of taking the opportunity to talk about local socio-economic issues, or an Open College Network course addressing transition from conflict in countries including Northern Ireland which gives people the opportunity to talk about past experiences and hopes for the future. What happens locally can change the atmosphere and landscape both locally and further afield.

5. Across society there are many groups working towards the better relationships that not only bring sectarianism to light but also help communities to find alternative ways of being together, ways built on co-operation and not contention. Local Councils have Good Relations Partnerships or Community Relations Officers. These groups and individuals have a much clearer picture of what is going on than churches do. They have knowledge and learning to share. At the same time they may have little understanding or knowledge of what churches are doing or of what they potentially could do. So the Committee is asking Presbyteries to take a determined lead in making connections with their local councils through their Good Relations or equivalent committees or through their Community Relations Officers. The Committee believes there is much to be learned from them and much for churches to put their weight behind

in partnership with others so that much more effect is made on sectarianism in society and more hope is seen for a shared and better future.

6. The Committee is greatly encouraged that the responses from Presbyteries show there is scope and willingness for much more work to be done in this area. To test the mind of the Assembly as to what that further work might be resolutions are appended to facilitate debate.

Three further avenues for work remain possible:

- (i) Through asking the Church & Society Committee to make sectarianism a particular focus of conversations with political parties and to develop an informal group with the Catholic Church in Ireland, perhaps through its bishops, to consider the issue;
- (ii) Through the General Assembly's Good Relations Committee whose work has always focused more towards congregations and local groups. Within their remit they could, for example, be asked to consider developing some materials for use by primary schools and Sunday schools to help address sectarianism and building good relationships. This can, of course, take existing work both from within PCI and also other organisations into account;
- (iii) Through a specially appointed panel or group to consider all the suggestions made by Presbyteries which could be undertaken at denominational level and to decide on which are viable and how they might be achieved. Having made that decision, and gaining the approval of the appropriate Board, they should then be tasked to take the work forward.

8. Every time sectarianism is spoken about it needs to be remembered that there are those who still carry hurts from the past that run deep and bring very painful memories to mind. It is important that this work continues to be victim-sensitive in the areas of both politics and sectarianism. The Committee will continue to work with groups such as the NI Commission for Victims and Survivors and encourage local ministers in the sturdy pastoral work that they have offered over the years.

Decade of Centenaries

9. As the decade of centenaries approaches the Committee is aware of both the challenges and opportunities of remembering the past. On the one hand, it is

important to note that remembering can undermine processes of reconciliation and can put unnecessary stumbling blocks in the way of others. On the other hand, it is equally important to be aware that remembering is part of who people are and it is only in owning and sharing who they are, and meeting others who likewise own and share who they are, that there is any real chance of understanding and reconciliation.

10. The Committee attach a short reflective paper to give the General Assembly the opportunity to think and talk about how to remember and how to approach the decade of remembering. Resolutions are appended to focus that discussion.

Prisons, Prisoners and the Work of Reform

11. In conjunction with the Director of Social Service the Church & Society Committee is in the process of setting up an inter-board panel to reflect on work that is being done in prisons, the prison structure and the impact on prisoners and the potential for their reform.

12. All of this work will be done with particular reference to the final report from Dame Anne Owers, who was appointed by the Minister for Justice to head a Prison Review Team. An interim report was received in February and a full report is expected soon.

13. The format for the work of the Panel on Prisons will be consultative and it will report to the Church & Society Committee and hence to the General Board.

Recent Events

14. Across the Island of Ireland, on both sides of the border, there was warm welcome for the visit of the Queen. The grace with which Her Majesty carried out her visit, the warmth with which she was received by President McAleese and the people of Ireland and the wisdom of their words all inspired real hope for the future and for better and more reconciled relationships across the Island of Ireland and across these Islands. On this island near neighbours to one another remain people who have much to learn about one another.

15. Towards the end of the Queen's visit the Committee was saddened to hear of the death of Dr Garrett Fitzgerald, former Taoiseach and an individual who would have greatly appreciated and welcomed what the Queen had to say. While it is obvious that not everyone shared Dr Fitzgerald's politics, it is the case that he had a warmth of personality and a commitment to something better in terms of relationships between North and South than was the case at the

height of the Troubles. The Committee extends sympathy to his family and note the contribution he made and the hopes he had for a new Ireland, North and South, in which there would be respect for one another and a greater commitment to sharing.

APPENDIX C

DECADE OF CENTENARIES

“With the benefit of historical hindsight we can all see things which we would wish had been done differently or not at all.”

Queen Elizabeth II, speaking at Dublin Castle on 19 May, 2011

The upcoming decade of centenaries is both a challenge and an opportunity for society. This short paper is offered not as a position paper but as a tool for reflection. The resolutions appended to the main report provide the opportunity for the General Assembly to discuss, consider and decide what might be done as the decade approaches.

The years 1912-1922 were critical years in shaping the life of the different parts of Ireland up until the present day, including events concerning Home Rule, the gunrunning and birth of the Ulster Volunteers, the Ulster Covenant, the rise of armed Nationalism, and significant turning points in gender and labour politics. But the past is over, and the Church wants to be forward-looking. So why should the Presbyterian Church in Ireland be interested in how our history is remembered?

Let us look at our calling and how it relates to the context in which we find ourselves.

What is our role as Church?

- To love our God, our neighbour and our enemy. And to bear witness to the love of God that we have received in Christ, which is available to all.
- To keep close (or get close) to the outcast and the marginalised – we won't be faithful to Jesus if we fail to listen to those who have felt excluded.
- To articulate a view of the past, present and future which take account of the dignity of all human beings, as creatures made in the image of God, and which deals with the reality of human wrongdoing, falling short of God's glory.
- To pass on to children and children's children the story of God's grace justice and truth, at work in the midst of human weakness, betrayal and injustice.

- To demonstrate the power of God for change in human lives and societies, as illustrated in our own life, by our willingness to take responsibility for our past wrongdoing, and to live lives of hope in the transforming grace which allows us to break the cycles of hatred and violence and guilt and fear which bind human individuals and societies.
- To grow into maturity, so that while there are elements of the past we can take as a model, an encouragement and wisdom for the future, there are also elements of what was done – on every side – which were less noble than we would wish.
- To graciously remind ourselves and the world that most of the time people are doing the best they can, and that this falls short of our calling, which is the perfect love of God.
- To be able to say that the Church played its part in history, and takes seriously her responsibility for the fear and distrust fomented at any given time.
- With an eye to faithful interpretation of Scripture and discernment of the leading of the Holy Spirit, to learn from how the Bible and theology were used (and abused) in the past, both to reinforce the quest for justice and truth, and to justify people acting out of fear rather than love.
- To discern the “signs of the times”, and to guard against the trap of theologising the spirit of this age, rather than daring to trust in God for the future.

Rather than leave reflection on the events of a century ago to those with a political agenda, who may wish (or feel the need) to be selective in order to gain support from one part of society over against another, it is the place of the Church to deal in truth and in honest, humble relationships that sow seeds of peace.

Humble reflection on the past is required for an honest relationship with God, both as individuals and as a whole community and Church. Is it legitimate to say, as we look at our history, that as a Church, we at times have allowed ourselves to become unduly co-opted by the powers of this age? Have we fed the hatred and fear that led to injustice, oppression or conflict? Have we at times failed to remember that our enemy and our neighbour were also created in God’s image? Have we (or our forebears) preferred to trust in chariots and horsemen, or at least in battalions and guns, rather than trust God to protect us? Insofar as any of that is true, and while it is important that we recognise the context and reasons for why they did what they did, we would do better to acknowledge humbly that there might have been a better way, and set ourselves the task of engaging constructively and relationally with those who may have suffered from our past actions, however well intended.

Some may call for public acts of repentance for the part we played in the past. Indeed, there may be times and places where public apology and repentance is what is required, in order to move forward. Whilst there may be appropriate opportunity for this, we should be careful not to engage too lightly in such acts, lest we cause more hurt and alienation, particularly amongst the poor or marginalised. More significant in kingdom terms is active engagement in a new life, a new way of living, a turning away from fear, and a turning towards God and towards our diverse neighbours in love and confidence. We cannot fix the past by symbolic acts of repentance, but we are called to engage with each other towards a shared future. Parts of the Church remain in fear, bound by hatred and distrust. Sectarianism is deeper within us than we care to admit. Yet the presence of Christ among us demands that we dare to face down the demons of fear and hatred, and make room instead for the Spirit of courage, love and self-control.

As the Church, can we help our society to find a more sophisticated vocabulary than that of victimhood? How can we look at the past and say, we did some wrong and we did some right, we suffered wrong, and we received kindness. Terrible as parts of the past have been, we must also recognise the Good that has accompanied us, without which, the bloodshed might have been substantially worse. Now, as recipients of such grace, how can we be gracious to each other? We are called, not to judge our neighbour or our predecessors or ancestors, but to judge ourselves with the measure of grace we hope will be used in judging us. We may then receive with gratitude the gift of life we have been given, and then offer the same to others, past and present, in the same spirit of faith, courage and generosity.

What are the Risks of remembering?

There are risks to remembering the past: Those suffering from old hurts, from unhealed trauma, may feel their pain revived by talking about the past. Equally, the old bitternesses and animosities may be revived by taking people back to places in their minds and memories where they felt threatened, humiliated, depersonalised, diminished or outraged.

Another major risk in looking at history is to fall into the trap of believing that from our current perspectives, we are in a position to judge or approve those who acted in ways that undermine or affirm us and our position now. It is human nature to tend to select the parts of a story that resonate with current feelings, and to ignore the actual context which pertained at the time of the events being addressed. We may become side-tracked into introversion – looking inward whilst forgetting to learn about the wider European and global contexts. Our reading of history can therefore be a rewriting from 21st Century perspectives, and through preferred cultural and political lenses, which affirm

prejudices and assumptions rather than challenging and maturing us in our current relationships. Our reading of history, as with our current relationships, ought to make us more compassionate, more understanding of those who do not behave as we think we would like. And history should enable us to engage locally as the global church, rather than be held hostage to local and national imperatives.

The task of exploring and remembering may raise the ante for those for whom reading history is a competitive activity, and for those for whom a selective reading is a central tenet of cherished commitments. There is the risk that by treading in these waters, the church be blamed for muddying them.

What are the Risks of doing nothing?

Whoever controls the past controls the future. The way we engage with the power of (his)storytelling is crucial to the envisioning of future generations and peoples for or against each other. For the Church to fail to engage in exploring the history would allow others with different agendas to set the agenda for the future and rewrite the history without corrective influence or balancing voices.

But more crucially, we have an opportunity to engage with our neighbours, to learn together and to communicate the love and value God places on them by our willingness to listen and learn from their experience and perspectives. To avoid looking at the history of this place is to miss our responsibility to love our neighbour (and even our enemy) by denying their place in our history, and the place of their voice in our understanding of the past and our commitments to create a shalom-filled community and society.

“...we have much to do together to build a future for all our grandchildren; the kind of future our grandparents could only dream of.”

Queen Elizabeth II, speaking at Dublin Castle on 19 May, 2011

LESLEY CARROLL, ALAN BOAL

Additional Resolutions

5a. That the General Assembly approve an additional budget to the General Board from the Incidental Fund of up to £20,000 for the use of the Priorities Committee, if necessary, in providing helpful materials to focus the mind of the Church on the agreed theme for 2012.

DONALD WATTS

6a. That the General Assembly endorse the actions of the General Board and the Clerk (Reports p 16) in relation to the “Special Commission on Same-Sex Relationships and the Ministry” of the Church of Scotland and view with concern the deliverances of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on the Report of the Special Commission.

JOHN W LOCKINGTON, NIGEL J McCULLOUGH

Revised Resolution

20. That the General Assembly note the appointment of a Panel from the Church and Society Committee in conjunction with the Board of Social Service to consider prisons, prisoners and the work of reform and encourage the Panel to fully consider the proposals of Dame Anne Owers and to consult on this issue, including consultation with PCI’s Prison Chaplains.

LESLEY CARROLL

Additional Resolutions

20a. That the General Assembly believe sectarianism is insidious, is no respecter of persons, is historically rooted and given vitality by perceptions and by narrow or parallel lifestyles that take little or no account of the ‘other’ and that Sectarianism therefore needs to be addressed with urgency if it is not to continue to take root in the Church and in society.

20b. That the General Assembly, believing in the insidious nature of sectarianism, encourage every Presbyterian when thinking about those who are different, or when speaking about sectarianism to first of all look for the log in their own eye.

20c. That the General Assembly, recognising that sectarianism can thrive where separation and a measure of ‘parallel living’ exists, encourage:

- (i) all congregations to find ways to build relationships with their Catholic neighbours;

- (ii) Presbyteries both to acquaint themselves with ‘good relations’ committees and Community Relations Officers at local council level and also to identify with some of their work that they can support, lead or get involved in.

20d. That the General Assembly request the Church & Society Committee to:

- (i) make sectarianism a particular focus of conversations with political parties;
- (ii) develop an informal group with the Catholic Church in Ireland, perhaps through its bishops, to consider the issue of sectarianism and report to the 2012 General Assembly.

20e. That the General Assembly request the Good Relations Committee to consider developing materials for use by primary schools and Sunday schools to help address sectarianism through building good relationships and to keep sectarianism as a concern in their work.

20f. That the General Assembly request the Church & Society Committee to consider all the suggestions made by Presbyteries with regard to addressing sectarianism and bring proposals to the 2012 General Assembly regarding those which could be undertaken at denominational level.

20g. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations and Presbyteries to take every opportunity to seriously engage across the community with neighbours and (former) enemies and to use the decade of centenaries to listen, learn and love, bringing our own cultural and moral selves to the encounters, so that sharing our history can teach us what are the challenges, obstacles, and useful pathways, towards a shared and peaceable future.

20h. That the General Assembly, mindful of the risk of polarisation in the next decade, ask that those engaging with others would seek to do so constructively and in such a way as to encourage a more inclusive listening, learning and sensitive commemoration of events for community-building, involving both intra and inter community meeting and engagement.

20i. That the General Assembly invite individuals, Congregations and Presbyteries to set their hearts to listen for the Spirit of God as He convicts of sin and so makes His people slow to judge and gracious and patient towards those who may have sinned against them.

20j. That the General Assembly commend the initiative of Contemporary Christianity in Ireland to facilitate a well-researched and presented History Roadshow, with a view to making available to schools, church fora, cross-community, good relations and combined single identity groups, an opportunity to engage in history together.

LESLEY CARROLL

28a. That the General Assembly confirm the changes to Parish Bounds as reported by the East Belfast Presbytery.

DOUGLAS C COWAN

Item 16a – OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 76(e) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in subparagraph 76(e) of the Code the words “proportional to the amount of stipend paid,” be deleted.

Anent Par 235 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 235 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

235. (1) Within the total income of a congregation certain items are designated as Assessable Income and include –

- (a) Weekly Freewill Offering;
 - (b) Income for Stipend;
 - (c) Income for the Central Ministry Fund;
 - (d) Sunday and other collections for general congregational purposes;
 - (e) Rental income retained for general purposes less related expenditure including financing costs on related loans;
 - (f) Income on general bequests;
 - (g) Any other general income on which no restriction has been applied by the donor.
- (2) Money received by way of repayment of Income Tax on a contribution shall be treated as part of that contribution.
- (3) Assessable Income does not include collections for building and repairs, repayment of debts and other designated objects approved by the Presbytery with reference, if necessary, to the Board of Finance and Personnel, monies raised in Sunday School or Church organisations (other than for general

congregational purposes), collections for the United Appeal, World Development or other religious and charitable objects, bequests, grants and restricted endowment income.

Where a congregation adopts the Weekly Freewill Offering method, the Congregational Committee shall provide envelopes and appoint a WFO Secretary to supervise their distribution and return.

Anent Par 313(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in subparagraph 313(1) of the Code the words “on the stipend paid to the minister in the preceding year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy,” be deleted and the words “on Assessable Income,” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 318(B)(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in subparagraph 318(B)(2) of the Code the words “in the preceding financial year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy,” be deleted.

Anent Par 320(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in subparagraph 320(2) of the Code the words “assessed on the stipend paid to the minister in the preceding financial year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy,” be deleted and the words “on Assessable Income,” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 325(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in subparagraph 325(2) of the Code the words “on the stipend to the minister in the preceding year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy,” be deleted and the words “on Assessable Income,” be substituted in their place.

DJ WATTS

Item 21 – UNION COMMISSION - Supplementary Report

At its meeting on 31 May, 2011 the Union Commission briefly considered the issue of holiday entitlement for Ministers in Pastoral Charges, an issue which had been raised with the Commission by the Clerk's office.

It was noted that the Call to a Minister, from a congregation or linkage, includes the following promise from the congregation(s):

...and to meet as a congregational expense the cost of a holiday pulpit supply for one month annually during vacation ...

It was further noted that in 1979 the General Assembly decided (Minutes page 99 resolution 17):

That congregations should consider granting their minister holidays, which would include a Sunday, following Christmas and Easter.

Over the years there have been various interpretations of the exact meaning of these decisions and it is felt that greater clarity would assist all concerned. For instance, both Ministers and congregations often seek to ascertain what is the exact holiday entitlement of Ministers because of a genuine desire to do what is right. Further, those dealing with these issues in College, and especially in Licentiate training, need clarity so that there can be a consistency in what is said.

The Union Commission therefore proposes to consult with others, as appropriate, regarding this issue, and report back to the 2012 General Assembly with any necessary recommendations.

SA MATTHEWS

Item 23 – TRUSTEES – Supplementary Report

Since the Report was written the resignation has been received with regret of Mr RA Wilson from the Board of Trustees. The Trustees wish Mr Wilson well in the future.

DONALD WATTS