



GENERAL ASSEMBLY



ANNUAL REPORTS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Notes: Business commences at 9.30 a.m. each morning.

Luncheon adjournment at 1.00 p.m. each day.

The figures printed in brackets are page references to the Annual Reports.

References to the Minutes of Assembly are given in full.

Tuesday

Business

Communications

PWA

Social Witness

Board of Studies & Christian Training

Finance and Personnel

Wednesday

General (Committees)

General (Panels)

Thursday

Mission in Ireland

Overseas

Judicial Commission

Reception of Ministers

Union Commission

Youth and Children's Ministry

Friday

Trustees

Trusts

United Appeal

Education

Nomination

Assembly Conference

Hymnal

NOTES

MONDAY, JUNE 6

Within Church House

7.00 p.m.—

Service of Worship
Constitution of Assembly
Memorial Roll
Election of Moderator

TUESDAY, JUNE 7

9.30 a.m.—

1. BUSINESS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (105-112).
Arrangements Committee.
2. Reports of Synods and Presbyteries (95-104).
- (10.00) 3. Reception of Corresponding Members and Delegates.
Church of Scotland: Rt. Rev. David Lacy, Rev. Janet S. Mathieson, Mr. Michael Lacy.
United Reformed Church: Rev. Sheila Maxey.
Presbyterian Church of Wales: Rev. Gareth Edwards.
Church of Ireland: Rt. Rev. A.E.T. Harper, Mr. H.T. Morrison.
The Methodist Church in Ireland: Rev. J. Rea, Rev. Ruth Craig.
Irish Council of Churches: Mr. Michael Earle.
- (10.30) 4. Church House Centenary
5. BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS: Report and Resolutions (113-117)
Communications Administration; Communications Develop-ment; Church Architecture.
- (11.40) Intermission

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

12.00 noon Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

2.00 p.m.—

6. PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION: Report and Resolutions (171-174).
- (2.30) 7. BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS: Report and Resolutions (175-202)
Social Issues and Resources; Addiction and Education Services; War Memorial Hostel; Kinghan Mission; Presbyterian Residential Trust; Marriage and the Family; Forces; Chaplains.
- (3.30) 8. Overture anent Par. 281(2) of the Code (202).
- (4.00) 9. BOARD OF STUDIES AND CHRISTIAN TRAINING: Report and Resolutions (225-232).
Ministerial Studies; College and Magee Management; Resourcing Christians for Ministry.
- (5.00) 10. BOARD OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL: Report and Resolutions (240-262).
Finance, Legal and IT; Personnel; Assembly Buildings; Pensions and Assessments.
11. Overture on the Books anent Par. 111(6) of the Code (262).

Lapsed Business.
- (6.30) Close of Business.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8

9.30 a.m.—

12. GENERAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (9-68).
Priorities; Doctrine; Church and Society; Moderator's Advisory; Recognised Ministries; Global Concerns; Church Relations.

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

12.15 p.m.—

Worship.

2.00 p.m.—

(2.00) 13. GENERAL BOARD: Report and further Resolutions (9-68).

Church House; Manses; Centres Review; Presbytery Bounds; Foyle Memorial; Education/Promotion.

14. Overtures anent Pars. 25(1); 30(3); 50(2); 272(4)(d); 272(5)(a); 272(5)(b); 272(5)(c); 272(6); 281(3) of the Code (67-68).

Lapsed Business.

(5.30) Close of Business.

7.45 p.m.— Evening Rally.

THURSDAY, JUNE 9

9.30 a.m.—

15. BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND: Report and Resolutions (151-170).

Education and Promotion; Home and Irish Mission; Congregational Life; Shankill Road Mission.

16. Memorial of the Interim Kirk Session of New Mossley (169-170).

(11.00) 17. OVERSEAS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (119-150).

Asia; Europe and Middle East; Africa, Caribbean and Latin America; World Development.

18. Overtures anent Pars. 61(c); 97(c); 115(1), (2) of the Code (150).

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

19. Overtures anent Pars. 202(5), (6); 205(6), (7)(b); 212(7), (8)(b), (9); 268(4)(b); 279; 290(1), (2), (3), (4); 291(1), (2), (3); 292; 293; 308(8); 331(2)(b) of the Code (150).

12.15 p.m.—

Worship

2.00 p.m.—

In Private

20. JUDICIAL COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (69-78).
21. Committee on Reception of Ministers and Licentiates: Report and Resolutions (233-238).
22. Memorial of Rev. H. Higgins (235-236).
23. Memorial of Mr. J. Lehman (236-237).
24. Memorial of Rev. G.W.D. Stewart (237-238).

In Public

- (3.15) 25. UNION COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (79-94).
26. Overture on the Books anent Par. 128(1) of the Code (94).
27. Overture anent Par. 82(4) of the Code (94).
- (4.00) 28. BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY: Report and Resolutions (203-213).
Training; Research and Education; Resources; Ministry Opportunities; Ministry Events.

Lapsed Business.

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

(6.00) Adjournment.

7.00 p.m.—

Lapsed Business, if any.

FRIDAY, JUNE 10

9.30 a.m.—

29. TRUSTEES: Report and Resolutions (271-274).

30. COMMISSION ON TRUSTS: Report and Resolutions (239).

(10.00) 31. UNITED APPEAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (263-270).

32. Overtures anent Pars. 287(1); 287(3)(a), (b), (c); 287(4)(d), (e), (f) of the Code (269-270).

33. BOARD OF EDUCATION: Report and Resolutions (214-224).

State Education; University Education.

34. BOARD OF NOMINATION: Report and Resolution (118).

35. Assembly Conference Committee: Report and Resolutions (275).

36. Hymnal Committee: Report and Resolutions (276).

12.15 p.m.—

Worship.

Late Business, if any.

Lapsed Business.

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

BUSINESS BOARD, Final Report.

CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY.

7.45 p.m.— YOUTH NIGHT

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

NOTES

BUSINESS BOARD

A Guide to Assembly Procedure

1. **Members** of Assembly consist of all ministers in active duty or retired and some elders, ex officio, together with a representative elder from each established congregation plus other elders commissioned by Presbyteries to correspond with the number of ministers serving in special appointments. Deaconesses, representatives of the Women's and Youth Movements and some others have now been invited to "sit and deliberate" as associates — i.e., to take part with members freely in debate but without voting. The Assembly quorum is fifty members.

2. While members should bear in mind any opinions or concerns of their Congregations, Kirk Sessions or Presbyteries, neither ministers nor elders attend as "delegates", obliged to vote as instructed by any of these. The Assembly should be a gathering of fully responsible, free Christian men and women, always open to spiritual guidance and information on a Church-wide basis, not a device for counting up decisions already made elsewhere.

3. **The Moderator** is chairman of the Assembly, in charge of proceedings, but he should not take sides in debates. **Former Moderators** may deputise from time to time at his request, should he wish to take part in debate or to withdraw from the House. When the Moderator rises to speak at any point all other members must yield to the Chair. Members should stand when the Moderator enters or leaves at the beginning or end of proceedings. Members may enter or leave at any time during proceedings, but should do so with as little disturbance as possible. It is a courtesy in so doing to give a slight bow to the Chair.

4. With the changing composition of the Assembly the recommended form of address to the House is simply "Moderator" (not "Mr." Moderator, etc.). Speakers should face towards the House and the microphones, not towards the Moderator.

5. **Work for which the Assembly** is responsible is generally entrusted to various permanent or temporary (“ad hoc”) committees. These must each present a report to the Assembly. Working Committees concerned with related matters are grouped under a supervising Board. A Commission of Assembly is a committee entrusted with the executive powers of the Assembly, within the terms of its appointment. Members of committees, etc., are appointed by the Assembly on the nomination of various bodies and have a Convener (i.e., executive secretary, in Irish usage) in charge.

6. **Reports.** While the Assembly is obliged to “receive” the report of each committee, etc., it does not “adopt” or accept responsibility for the contents of any report. Reports carry only the authority of the committee concerned and not of the Assembly. If found too unsatisfactory, the report may be received and referred back. Any matter to which the Assembly is to be committed must be stated in a specific resolution. Resolutions should be kept to conclusions, rather than include arguments in support such as are appropriate to speeches. Similarly, speeches in the Assembly carry the authority only of the speaker.

7. Reports, together with any appended resolutions, are first of all “presented”, usually by a Board or Committee Convener. There is then an opportunity for **questions** to be asked. These should quite strictly be asked only for further information or explanation, whether of something in the report or not in the report but for which the Board, etc., carries responsibility; they should not be rhetorical or debating “questions”, to score a point.

8. **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.

9. After Questions, the presenter of the report formally proposes the appended resolutions in block and another person seconds, with a speech taking up any other aspects requiring treatment.

10. **The Resolutions** are then taken in succession. The first of these is always “that the report be received”. This is the point where members may discuss (not ask questions about) any matters in the report or for which the Board, etc., should bear responsibility, but which do not arise under any subsequent resolution.

11. Unless otherwise arranged, speeches are limited as follows:—

Presenting a group of reports and resolutions 10 minutes

Seconding a group of reports and resolutions 7 minutes

All other speeches 5 minutes

If lapsed business accumulates, the normal abbreviated timings are as follows:—

Proposing a group of Reports – 10 minutes reduced to 7

Seconding a group of Reports – 7 minutes reduced to 5

Other speeches – 5 minutes reduced to 3.

A flickering light is given 1 minute before the end, a steady light at 30 seconds and a buzz when the time is up. Before commencing, speakers should announce their name and congregation, or for Women’s and Youth representatives, their name and Presbytery. Apart from the proposer (or alternatively the seconder) having the right to speak again in closing the debate, no one may speak twice in debating any one resolution or amendment, except to clarify some misunderstanding.

12. Resolutions are called by number. Those wishing to speak should at once come forward, or otherwise indicate their desire to speak.

13. **Amendments** may be moved without prior notice by any member so as to change the terms of a resolution within its general scope but not so as to introduce another subject. Before debating proceeds the amendment should be given in writing to the Clerk’s desk. Any amendments previously received and licensed by the Business Board, however, have precedence. At least one day’s notice must be given of an amendment which would substantially affect the scope of a motion or overture. A plea for the outright rejection of a resolution is not an amendment.

14. An amendment, if seconded, must be dealt with before further debate on the original resolution or consideration of any further amendment. If passed, the

amendment is then put as a substantive motion, when one more amendment may be considered. If the first two amendments are rejected, one more amendment may be considered before reverting to the original resolution.

15. **Additional resolutions**, concerning some matters not covered by an existing resolution, may be submitted by any member or associate as notice of motion for license. Unless there are exceptional circumstances these should be received by the Clerk at least one week before the Assembly. Resolutions rescinding or reversing a previous decision of the Assembly require notice of motion to be first given and accepted at the preceding annual meeting. Those invited to sit and deliberate may “present” resolutions or amendments in the usual way, but these must be formally proposed and seconded by a member of Assembly before being debated.

16. 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.

17. **Voting** may be by voice, when the Moderator calls for those in favour to say “Aye” and those against to say “No”, or by a standing vote to be counted by tellers; or by ballot, asked for by not fewer than twenty-five members or, at the discretion of the Moderator, by the showing of voting tickets, to be counted by tellers. Proxy voting for an absent member is not allowed. A member may intimate his personal dissent or protest against any decision immediately after it has been pronounced, but does not thereby free himself from obligation loyally to implement the decision taken.

18. An “**Overture**” is a proposal for a change in the “Code”, or law of the Church’s Constitution and Government. Changes in rules, of which notice has been given in the

printed Reports, may be adopted forthwith if approved by a two-thirds majority, or without such notice if approved nem. con. If approved by a lesser majority, it is "placed on the books", to be decided at the following Assembly. This applies also to rules governing the Central Ministry Fund and other Ministry Funds. In the Basic Code, where immediate operation is desirable, the change may be adopted temporarily during the intervening year as an "interim act". If an overture contemplates a constitutional change it must also be sent down to Presbyteries to be voted on during the intervening year.

19. A "**Memorial**" is a petition to the Assembly, usually from some person or body who is not a member of Assembly, such as a subordinate court of the Church, a Church member or group of members, or persons unconnected with the Church. Procedures and forms are laid down by which the circumstances of the Memorial are outlined and a definite request or "prayer" is stated. A Memorial is also the procedure by which someone, whether member of the Assembly or not, asks for exemption from some Church rule on the plea of special circumstances.

NOTES

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
ACCOUNTS 2004 — 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.

2003 Column is period to 31 December 2003.

2004 Column is year to 31 December 2004.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**CENTRAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2004**

	<i>2004</i>	<i>2003</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Received from Congregations		
– Assessments	3,699,686	3,765,602
– United Appeal	2,988,538	2,934,238
– World Development	581,127	552,897
– PWA	663,103	634,532
– PWA Deaconesses	149,850	132,303
– Moderators Appeal	371,752	46,777
– Other	113,675	120,259
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	8,567,731	8,186,608
Trust and Investment Income	1,388,055	1,416,118
Interest Receivable	675,888	531,930
Donations and Bequests	3,034,824	1,409,379
Residents fees	3,655,376	3,487,910
Church Publications	290,625	289,833
Funding from Outside Agencies	1,099,853	1,116,627
Property Rental Income	497,521	491,471
Union College Student Fees	388,066	317,761
Café and Shop Receipts	140,413	151,373
PWA & YWG Membership Fees	45,646	52,463
Fees from Youth and Other Events	68,349	79,581
Fees from Special Assembly	76,424	–
Cost allocated to Trustees	75,182	73,174
Other Income	155,885	141,736
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	20,159,838	17,745,964
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Business Board	14,185	13,447
Communications Board	311,756	301,936
Overseas Board	2,870,214	2,907,571
Board of Mission in Ireland	1,191,186	1,181,688
Board of Social Witness	4,931,238	4,445,407
Youth Board	688,954	715,551
Board of Education	327,934	317,015
Board of Studies	1,237,073	1,097,942
Finance and Personnel	4,928,420	5,016,773
United Appeal Board	13,345	28,874
Shankill Road Mission	204,944	200,394
Presbyterian Women's Associations	823,031	718,904

Local Bible Fund	1,687	132
Moderators Appeal	458,979	157,233
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	18,002,946	17,102,867
NET INCOMING RESOURCES	2,156,892	643,097
Gains (Losses) on disposal of Fixed Assets	228,108	329,047
Transfer to Restricted Funds	23,144	-112,177
Transfer to Designated Funds	-8,750	-309,068
	2,399,394	550,899
TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	29,141,111	28,590,212
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	31,540,505	29,141,111

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at 31 December 2004

	<i>2004</i>	<i>2003</i>
	£	£
1. Congregational Assessments		
– Central Ministry Fund	1,489,858	1,435,149
– Retired Ministers Fund	915,410	886,717
– Widows of Ministers Fund	644,960	624,762
– Sick Supply	8,119	8,107
– Incidental Fund	440,682	401,596
– Ministerial Development Fund	20,756	60,239
– Prolonged Disability Fund	179,901	349,032
	<u>3,699,686</u>	<u>3,765,602</u>
2. Church Publications		
– Herald	108,727	108,629
– Herald Advertising	33,617	29,175
– Points for Prayer	19,806	20,772
– Public Worship	–	–
– Wider World	47,858	46,967
– Christian Irishman	59,956	62,341
– Christian Irishman Calendars	16,532	17,302
– Scriptures	4,129	4,647
	<u>290,625</u>	<u>289,833</u>

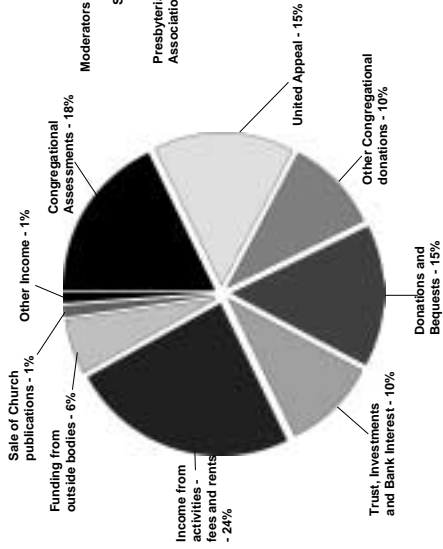
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**CENTRAL BALANCE SHEET**

As at 31 December 2004

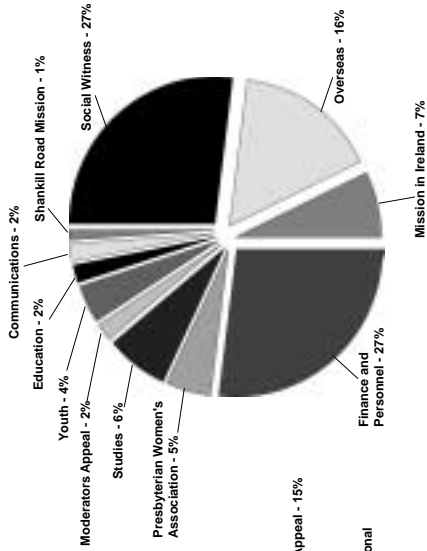
	<i>2004</i>	<i>2003</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
FIXED ASSETS		
Land and Buildings	21,002,849	18,911,904
Computer Equipment	180,131	74,337
Fixtures and Fittings	936,347	927,094
Motor Vehicles	115,778	131,042
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	22,235,105	20,044,377
	<hr/>	<hr/>
INVESTMENTS	2,639,042	2,847,671
	<hr/>	<hr/>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Northern Bank No. 3 Account (Statement of Liquid Funds)	12,215,353	11,952,623
Other Bank balances and cash in hand	1,860,193	1,800,230
Debtors and Prepayments	2,250,035	1,950,754
Stock	5,436	9,615
Loans	482,149	577,187
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	16,813,166	16,290,409
	<hr/>	<hr/>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors and Accruals	1,030,238	866,955
Bank Overdraft	—	—
Loans	659,572	658,506
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,689,810	1,525,461
	<hr/>	<hr/>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	15,123,356	14,764,948
	<hr/>	<hr/>
DEFERRED INCOME	349,361	393,854
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL ASSETS	39,648,142	37,263,142
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Represented By		
Unrestricted Funds	31,540,505	29,141,111
Restricted Funds	4,596,450	4,619,594
Designated Funds	3,511,187	3,502,437
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	39,648,142	37,263,142

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland Income and Expenditure 2004

Income
Total £20,159,838



Expenditure by Board
Total £18,002,946



PRESBYTERIAN MEMORANDUM CENTRAL

Board/Agency	2004 £000's	2003 £000's	2004 £000's	2003 £000's	2004 £000's	2003 £000's	2004 £000's	2003 £000's
	Congregational Assessments		Other Income from Congregations		United Appeal Grants		Investment and Interest Income	
Business Board								
Communication Board					164	225	7	3
Overseas Board			608	580	950	930	249	268
Board of Mission in Ireland	8	8	11	12	575	380	162	183
Board of Social Witness			15	18	198	230	182	184
Youth Board					285	203	12	8
Board of Education					235	195	2	2
Board of Studies			73	67	658	488	151	146
Board of Finance & Personnel	3,692	3,757					1,097	1,019
United Appeal			2,989	2,934			93	69
Shankill Road Mission					3	5	20	22
PWA			813	767			46	47
Local Bible Fund							2	2
Moderators Appeal			372	47			7	7
Total	3,700	3,765	4,881	4,425	3,068	2,656	2,030	1,960
Less Inter Board/Agency Income			(12)	(4)	(3,068)	(2,656)	35	(12)
Less Gain on disposal of Fixed Assets								
Per Income & Expenditure Account	3,700	3,765	4,869	4,421			2,065	1,948

CHURCH IN IRELAND INCOME 2004

2004 £000's	2003 £000's	2004 £000's	2003 £000's	2004 £000's	2003 £000's	2004 £000's	2003 £000's	2004 £000's	2003 £000's
Donations and Bequests		Residents Fees		Funding from Outside Agencies		Other Income		TOTAL	
						16	15	16	15
						196	193	367	421
759	860			99	125	286	266	2,951	3,029
184	203					277	107	1,217	893
69	83	3,564	3,419	781	662	45	41	4,854	4,637
107	99	82	60	91	135	78	90	655	595
		9	10	32	20	41	44	319	271
28	19			65	78	495	728	1,470	1,526
1,807	102			32	98	670	537	7,298	5,513
8	4						500	3,090	3,507
65	26					86	84	174	137
8	13					113	119	980	946
								2	2
								379	54
3,035	1,409	3,655	3,489	1,100	1,118	2,303 (339)	2,724 (799)	23,772 (3,384)	21,546 (3,471)
						(228)	(329)	(228)	(329)
3,035	1,409	3,655	3,489	1,100	1,118	1,736	1,596	20,160	17,746



REPORTS: JUNE, 2005

BELFAST

GENERAL BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. This has been the first year of the re-structured General Board and Committees have largely been coming to terms with their new remits. At the same time there have been a significant number of important panels meeting and reporting to the Board. The main business considered, which is not part of separate reports from Committees and Panels, was as follows:

APPRAISALS COMMITTEE

2. The Overview of Funding Panel has been replaced by an Appraisals Committee of the United Appeal Board. It is recognised that it also needs to inform the General Board of its work. The remit of the Committee has been considered and the following Terms of Reference agreed:-

Role of Committee

The Role of the Committee is to have oversight of the revenue and capital expenditure of the Boards and their Committees and specifically in the light of priorities set by the General Assembly on the advice of the Priorities Committee of the General Board

- (i) To approve all new posts;
- (ii) To approve new projects and capital expenditure;
- (iii) To approve the disposal of major assets including all property (unless referred to a panel of the General Board);
- (iv) To request Church Agencies to review existing projects where they are no longer financially viable or the cost to the Church cannot be justified;
- (v) To deal with any matter referred to it by the Finance Committee of the Board;
- (vi) To request the preparation of 5 year plans from the Agencies of the Church, as and when required;
- (vii) To issue advice on salary increases which are above inflation;
- (viii) To request Boards to submit revised budgets as and when required.

Authority

The Committee has been given power to issue by the United Appeal Board.

Appeals

If a Board is not satisfied with the decision of the Appraisals Committee it may appeal to the United Appeal Board and then to the General Board.

OVERTURES RE ELDERS

4. The General Assembly last year instructed, "That overtures be prepared by the Clerk and presented to the General Assembly of 2005 to accommodate elders who may wish to give up the duties of eldership for a period of time" (Minutes, 2004, p41, res2). The relevant overtures are now appended.

5. In preparing the overtures it was assumed that the intention of the General Assembly was to provide that a person may retain the office of the ruling elder but step aside from the duties for a time. It was also assumed that this temporary stepping aside from the duties need not be reported to the Presbytery but agreed by the Kirk Session. The resignation of an elder either from the duties of the eldership or the office of the eldership would still be referred to the Presbytery as before.

6. Other overtures to clarify the Code are also appended.

SYNODS

7. In 1999, overtures were passed by the General Assembly to remove the role of Synods as appellate Courts. Since then many of the Synods only meet formally to appoint Commissions. In 2003 the Assembly resolved in principle to abolish Synods. Two remaining functions remain for Synods and it is hoped that they can be dealt with in other ways in the in-coming year:

- (i) nominations to the Judicial Commission;
- (ii) appointments to the Education Board of the Synod of Belfast.

Overtures will be presented in 2006 to abolish Synods.

CONCILIATION PANEL

8. A panel of conciliators has been in place for some years and they continue to be used from time to time. As a reference group, there has also been a Conciliation Panel but it had not met recently. The General Board agreed that the role of facilitating the Panel of Conciliators be given to the Moderator's Advisory Committee and that the Board of Mission in Ireland's Committee on Congregational Life be asked to consider ways in which a culture of conciliation be promoted throughout the Church.

MARRIAGE CELEBRANTS

9. During the debate last year there was the view expressed that Licentiate Assistants should be able to celebrate marriage. This would require a change to the Code Par 85(1). To test the mind of the Assembly a resolution is brought this year and if it is passed an overture can be prepared for 2006.

CONVENERSHIPS

10. The Very Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop was appointed Co-Convenor of the Church and Government Committee in 2003. He has taken the Committee

through the challenging procedure of change to the Church and Society Committee, which is now established. This is a very demanding co-convenership and Dr Dunlop is Minister of a very busy Congregation, so he now feels it is time to step down. He is to be warmly thanked for his dedicated work and insight.

11. The Rev Lesley Carroll has convened the Global Concerns Committee since its inception last year. This has been a challenging task in bringing together, in panels, diverse aspects of work. The Church is grateful for her dedication and her continued commitment, in agreeing to be nominated as co-convenor of the Church and Society Committee.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE STAFF

12. The work of the General Board and the General Assembly depends greatly on the dedication and good will of the office staff, under the leadership of Mrs Joyce Anderson. Thanks are expressed to Joyce, Jenny, Liz, Michelle and Ellery for all their hard work and cheerfulness.

PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

1. Following the ad-hoc Committee on Priorities and the restructuring of the General Board, a Priorities Committee was established under the General Board. Its task is stated as “to prioritise the mission and ministry needs of the whole Church” and “to develop a close relationship with the other Boards and provide co-ordination between Boards. It may also give guidance at times to the Business Committee on the Board’s own priorities”.

2. To ensure the close relationship with other Boards the membership of the Committee consists of a representative of each of the other Boards, with an equal number of members of the General Board.

3. As this is a new Committee it will obviously take some time for it to settle down and a working pattern become established. The following comments are offered as evidence of a work in progress. More specific priorities will be identified as the discussion continues.

OUR TASK

4. As the Presbyterian Church in Ireland today we seek to be obedient to the crucified and risen Christ and so present His gospel in a meaningful way to our “Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. As the Church is sent in mission to the whole world, so our vision must be of a Church whose heart is in radical obedience to the word of God, which calls us both to proclaim the word of the gospel and manifest the works of the gospel. This is the calling of the Church in every age and location. It is a costly vocation, since it is the crucified Jesus who commissions us saying, “As the Father has sent me so I send you.” Our acceptance of that vocation will inevitably involve pain, loss and rejection, as well as joy, resurrection and great gain as we represent Christ and the gospel in a fragmenting society. Our witness is to a Western European

culture that wishes to turn its back on its Christian roots and a world that is intolerant of the uniqueness at the core of the Christian message.

OUR REFORMED IDENTITY

5. Our reformed and reforming identity does not consist of merely understanding accurately the liberating truths that distinguish us or of resting comfortably within their expressions and forms over the centuries, but in a continued and courageous outworking of our vocation to be a Biblical Church in the generation in which God has placed us. The Church should be committed to a view of Christian faith and presence which is not only personal and private but which is vibrantly public and engaged with the world for Christ's sake.

Central to our reformed faith is the challenge to call the world to repentance, faith in Jesus Christ and a new obedience empowered by his Spirit. That power is released into the Church, and through the Church into the world, by prayer. We are called in prayer to open our lives and structures to the leading of the Spirit.

OUR ASPIRATIONS

6. While only the Holy Spirit knows what the Church will be like in the future, the Committee identified six characteristics to which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should aspire if it is to have a strong witness in the present time.

- A Church that is secure and confident in its Christian identity, so that all other identities (national, cultural, social and political) are secondary;
- A Church where the leadership shares a common vision, experiences growing unity and enjoys fresh clarity of purpose, while celebrating and making room for genuine Christian diversity;
- A Church that is balanced in its commitment to the great commission and the great commandment, placing emphasis not simply on mission to the world but on mission in the world;
- A Church which, rooted in the Bible, proclaims the gospel of grace with clarity in its preaching and demonstrates in its living Christ's power to forgive and bring new life;
- A Church that at every level opens its heart to those who are different from us, warmly welcoming the stranger, the immigrant, the vulnerable, the prisoner, the poor and marginalised;
- A Church in reciprocal relationship with the worldwide Church, in a way that displays a fresh humility to listen and learn, and a confidence to share and serve that takes us from the end of the pew to the end of the earth.

OUR CHURCH

7. If this is to be recognised as a vision for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, some key ideas flow from it which must shape our priorities in mission and witness. Our Church must be:

- (a) **A prophetic voice**, confidently proclaiming where it stands and who it stands beside, in a society which is increasingly secular and often opposed to Christian values and lifestyle;
- (b) **A caring fellowship**, welcoming the stranger and learning from one another, valuing the gifts of each individual, while offering prayer and pastoral support to all in need;
- (c) **A platform for service and outreach**, with each Congregation seeking to identify the needs of the community where it is placed and encouraging its members to act as Christ's representatives in the place where they live and work;
- (d) **A place of transformation**, where people do not leave as they have entered but are challenged and changed, having encountered the living God present in the worship and the lives of his people;
- (e) **A community of global concern**, learning from and sharing with our brothers and sisters in the world Church, while recognising with them those issues of concern for our stewardship of the world's resources where together we must challenge injustice, poverty and oppression in Jesus' name.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

The Doctrine Committee has two main items on the agenda at present.

Public Events at which non-Christian religions participate.

1. The Committee is planning brief guidelines which hopefully will prove helpful for those involved in public events at which members of non-Christian religions have also been asked to participate. A first draft of these guidelines is given below as Appendix I. The Committee is aware that strong views are held on this issue from a variety of perspectives. The Committee would request that comments on these draft guidelines should be sent to the Convener by 31 December 2005. The Committee will give careful consideration to all comments and will bring a fresh set of draft guidelines to the 2006 Assembly.

Response to the Resolution of the 2004 General Assembly.

2. The amended first resolution of the 2004 General Assembly was as follows:

“That the report be received and in its further deliberation, the Committee be asked to consider how best the truth of the historic doctrine of Justification by Faith can be proclaimed relevantly in our present situation and to set up the mechanism to examine the Biblical nature, role and relationship of the Minister, elder and deacon, including the meaning of ordination and appropriate ways of training elders.”

The Committee has always assumed that the Doctrine of Justification by Faith is fundamental for our Church. The Committee wishes to affirm its

commitment to the Doctrine of Justification by Faith and to the importance of relevant and regular preaching of this historic doctrine. We do not believe that there is much more we can say on this subject.

With regard to the wider brief of the resolution, the Committee has prepared a preliminary paper (Appendix II below) which is intended to set the scene and raise some of the relevant questions. The Committee is in the process of appointing a working group to undertake a more in-depth study during 2005/2006.

Accordingly, we propose that this programme be put in place in Autumn, 2006 and that a Committee be formed to guide the Church towards implementation – perhaps under Board of Mission in Ireland auspices.

The 2004 General Assembly also passed a resolution calling on the General Assembly to encourage every member ministry and calling for a “six month programme focusing on ministries in the Church”. This six-month programme has not proved possible, perhaps for two reasons. First, the reach was too ambitious; and, second, no mechanism was put in place for implementation. However, many of the relevant issues have already been taken up by the BMI and its associated panels. The suggestion of the Doctrine Committee is that this programme be in place in the autumn of 2006 – and that a Committee should now be formed under BMI auspices to guide the Church towards implementation.

J PATTON TAYLOR, Convener

APPENDIX I

Draft Guidelines for PCI members on public events at which representatives of non-Christian religions participate

Arising out of their experience, and desiring to share lessons learned with the wider Church, Dublin and Munster Presbytery requested principles to be drawn up by the General Assembly in order to give practical guidelines to Ministers and representatives of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland who may find themselves in a government, civic or local context where representatives of non-Christian faiths are invited to participate along with representatives of Trinitarian Christian denominations.

The motivation is primarily to safeguard the integrity of the gospel and secondarily to fulfil our obligation to others as Christ’s representatives, in a fitting and Godly way.

The purpose is to give help where hitherto none has been available, to provide parameters to enable those who represent the Church to do so with theological wisdom and personal integrity.

The ‘Christendom’ model of society is decaying rapidly but, because of the power of tradition, Christian Churches will continue to be invited to participate in public societal occasions for the foreseeable future. Our participation can only be on the foundation of our missionary mandate - to bear public witness to Jesus Christ and to be salt and light in our community. We recognize that two types of scenario may present: one, which offers no difficulty and one which may do so because some form of “inter-faith” worship may be asked for. It is particularly

for the latter type of situation that we recommend a set of guidelines which we believe to be a fitting solution.

Increasingly Ireland (North and South) is multicultural in its makeup. At civic functions leaders representing various world faiths and none are on occasions requested to be present and sometimes invited to bring greetings. This presents no difficulty for Presbyterians who rejoice in opportunities to 'stand alongside' strangers and thus to challenge attitudes of religious prejudice or ethnic racism which may exist.

At other events however, Presbyterians, along with other Christian denominations, may be requested to participate in an "inter faith service" where worship is offered by members of a religion who do not share the Christian belief that Jesus Christ is God and Saviour.

This second scenario presents great embarrassment for Presbyterians, who, while respecting those who hold other beliefs, cannot with integrity participate in a common act of worship with those who do not accept Jesus' claim that "No one comes to the Father but by me". Typically this model is based on a loose desire to see everyone 'playing their part', and rarely invites prior discussion or participation in planning. *In such circumstances we suggest it would be appropriate that Presbyterians respectfully express their reasons for non-participation and withdraw.*

There is an alternative, which Presbyterians have helped to shape locally within the Dublin and Munster context and which the Doctrine Committee offers as a useful model for the wider Church.

This typically involves careful prior planning and preparation and seeks to involve all, while respecting one another's convictions and sensitivities.

This model may be called a "multi-faith event" as distinct from an "inter-faith service". Even though we distinguish clearly between inter-faith worship and a multi-faith event, we realize that theological justification is required for participation in the latter. Although Scripture touches on the question of other faiths in many places, it does not give us an explicit directive in this matter. But is there anything implicit? In general, the commands to love God and neighbour and the Great Commission both mandate maximum involvement in all the spheres of life, except where that would corrupt or compromise the Christian's profession. The logical question is, therefore, whether a multi-faith event compromises us. It need not. Care must be taken to make clear that this is not worship offered on the basis of a belief that there are many roads from us to God. There is certainly a risk of misunderstanding. But there is equally a risk involved in withdrawing, as though we shall not participate in anything which involves other people who are explicit about their non-Christian religious convictions. Our judgment is that, if we attend carefully to the form and the context of such events and to the way that misunderstandings might arise, participation in multi-faith events is possible in principle. Taken as a whole, we are bound to believe that other faith traditions mistake the truth, but they may contain elements of truth, in accordance with the principle of God's general revelation and, through these, they may positively contribute to society, according to the principle of common grace.

In a multi-faith event a series of short acts of worship may be offered, but clearly differentiated from one another, so that in no sense can the Christian act

of worship be confused with that offered by a non Christian religion. The Christian singings, readings and prayers may typically be introduced in the Triune Name, “In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit” and concluded with the benediction, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you”. Between these, the content should be Christ-centred and Jesus-honouring. The other religious representatives may speak before or after our Christian contribution, there being no other Christian element at any time, thus making clear that this was a “multi-faith event” rather than a syncretistic “inter-faith service”.

When this model has been followed in the Republic, at events such as the National Day of Commemoration, the Accession of new nation states to the EU, and Presidential Inaugurations, no one feels put down, personal relationships are maintained and everyone maintains theological integrity. We suggest that this model might be of much value at such future events as Remembrance Day Commemorations and other state or local civic functions.

In summary:

- The Church has a missionary mandate to participate in public societal events;
- Any Christian contribution should normally be introduced with a Trinitarian formula and completed with a Trinitarian benediction;
- Between these boundaries it would be best to use unambiguously Christian content;
- No offence should be given by Christians except that which may be the unavoidable accompaniment of a sensitive but clear expression of our faith.

APPENDIX II

Preliminary Thinking of the subgroup to consider taking forward the recommendations of the 2004 Assembly Resolution regarding ministry in the local Congregation.

The remit of the subgroup was to consider how to take forward the recommendations of the Doctrine Committee report (2004), paying special attention to the issue of the nature of ordination. Initial discussions have raised many questions and the size of the task has only gradually become apparent. We also recognise that the Board of Mission in Ireland is looking at similar issues, so our brief must be primarily theological rather than attempting to devise structures to put theology into practice. However, theology is the expression of eternal treasure in the currency of a given temporal situation; therefore the situation in which we are to address the issues is of crucial importance. What follows is an initial reflection on the current situation in PCI and a brief outline of the Biblical principles that must be applied in this living context. These are followed by a set of speculative questions, engaging in some “blue sky” thinking about how Scripture and context might interact.

1. The current situation in PCI

A significant number of ‘Additional Pastoral Personnel’ are currently employed whose status within the PCI is ambiguous. While issues such as terms of employment have been addressed, there is no consistency in such matters as their relationship to Kirk Session or Presbytery and the form of liturgy to be used in their formal commissioning into service. The Ballymena Presbytery has been proactive in addressing this issue and their work should prove fruitful as a stimulation to others.

The ministry of deaconesses is invaluable in PCI; but it seems anomalous that, if the ordained ministry is open to both sexes, some form of ‘diaconate ministry’ should not be open to both sexes.

The work of the Irish Mission is also invaluable; but if the Board of Mission in Ireland is thinking creatively about its work then it is appropriate for the relationship between Irish Mission workers and the local Congregation and Presbytery, to be given more structure and understood on a less *ad hoc* basis.

2. The current situation in sister denominations.

Many other denominations make use of people who make a part time or unpaid commitment to formal ministry (as we do already with retired Ministers). These can be divided into a number of categories, eg:

1. Non-stipendiary, full time clergy;
2. Non-stipendiary, part time clergy;
3. Paid part time clergy;
4. Lay readers;
5. Lay pastoral workers;
6. Youth Pastors.

It seems appropriate that we investigate some of these models and seek to develop patterns of ministry that will meet the needs of PCI in the coming decades.

3. Biblical guidelines

There seem to be seven clear Biblical principles. First the Church ought to have consistency. What is acceptable in one part ought not to be in conflict with what happens throughout the community as a whole.

Second, there ought to be flexibility within structures. What is useful and helpful in one situation may not be so in another therefore there must be freedom to contextualise the universal to meet the needs of the local. There will always be some tension between these first two principles.

Third, any structure must enable rather than constrict the use of the gifts given by God to his whole people for ministry. It is equally important that a structure should also provide constraints on the abuse of God’s gifts.

Fourth, while the ministry of word and sacrament is unique, there is no biblical reason to restrict this ministry to full time, paid personnel.

Fifth, there seems to be no solid Biblical reason to maintain that the ‘General Practitioner’ approach to the ordained ministry is the only approach. In the Scriptures people were set apart for and commissioned to more or less restricted fields of service as the need required and God called.

Sixth, it is important that all whom God calls to the ordained ministry be part of a stable pastoral support network. This network should provide fellowship and lines of accountability.

Seventh, any development of 'official Church workers' should be designed to enable and not restrict the ministry of the whole people of God. The widening of the concept of ministry from a single individual in a Congregation to a small team of a few people may be of only limited value – though it may also be the case that a full-time team is necessary in order to support and enable every-member ministry. Ministry is a work of the whole body; 'professionals' (for want of a better word) should be enablers as well as doers.

4. Some questions for consideration.

Alongside the General Practitioner clergy, could we ordain people to particular ministries such as Church planting, chaplaincy, youth ministry, or cross cultural mission?

Could ordination for these people be restricted in role so that they might be 'ordained to the ministry of Church planting' or 'ordained to the ministry of hospital chaplaincy'? Could we have a situation in which a person is 'ordained and commissioned'? The ordination aspect could be recognition of spiritual maturity and call to leadership in general and the commissioning aspect could be recognition of specific gifts and setting apart to use those gifts to fulfil a particular role. It should be remembered that we already ordain within limits of ministry in our distinction between ruling and teaching elders.

There is no Biblical reason why eldership in the local Congregation should follow a 'General Practitioner' model similar to that of the teaching elder. Could we conceive of ordination to leadership and commissioning to particular roles? This means that a Kirk Session could be constituted of some who are gifted for and commissioned to pastoral care, others to strategic planning, administration or mission. This, in turn, means that when an election of elders comes along a Congregation might be asked to select a number for each category in which there is a 'vacancy'. In addition, this will give considerable flexibility and allow elders to fulfil the roles for which God has gifted them without worrying about having to be capable in all areas of leadership. This could be done within the framework of our current understanding of ordination.

If the General Assembly wishes, we will continue our discussions but we would suggest that we do so in co-operation with the Board of Mission in Ireland in order to produce a comprehensive report on ministry and ordination to the General Assembly.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE

1. By the time the General Assembly meets the Church and Society Committee will have met formally on nine occasions, and informally a number of times. The report includes four appendices and it is likely that there will be a supplementary report in the Daily Minutes.

2. It has been a year of marked contrasts. From June to November there were high hopes that there would be a political agreement between the DUP and Sinn Fein leading to the resumption of an Assembly and a power-sharing Executive at Stormont. The breakdown of talks in early December did not seem insurmountable, but the Northern Bank robbery later in the month destroyed any remaining prospect of sharing power with Sinn Fein until it put its house in order. The highs and lows are traced in the Church and Society reports to the General Board (Appendices A and C). In February the General Board issued a strongly worded Statement (Appendix D).

3. With a General Election expected in early May, and the British Government due to chair the G8 summit at Gleneagles in July, there is little likelihood of any political progress of any sort until later in the year.

4. When talks do eventually resume, the challenge for the British and Irish Governments, and in particular for the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach, will be whether they will concentrate on pursuing political progress with those political parties which are committed solely, completely and irrevocably to democratic politics. Those political parties which are ambivalent about this, using the system for their own ends and masquerading under a flag of convenience, must understand that no political party can be part of a shared future until it “renounces and forsakes criminality, engages in complete, verifiable de-commissioning, and is fully committed to democratic methods alone” (General Board Statement, Appendix D). The Prime Minister and Taoiseach must also understand this moral imperative and act accordingly.

5. The involvement of members of the IRA in the murder of Robert McCartney, the subsequent forensic cleansing of the murder-site and the intimidation of witnesses, led to unprecedented pressure being brought to bear upon Sinn Fein for the disbandment of the IRA. Enormous credit should be given to the McCartney family for their courage in publicly standing up to the IRA, their refusal to be intimidated or silenced, and their persistence in keeping the issue in the public spotlight. Their stand has been a great encouragement to the whole community, and especially to those who know what it is to be oppressed by intimidation, whether republican or loyalist.

6. Sinn Fein must grasp this opportunity to deal once and for all with the IRA’s addiction to criminality. The extent of this addiction was highlighted by the astonishing “olive branch” offered by the IRA to the McCartney family of shooting those IRA members responsible for the murder. The subsequent denial by the IRA in its Easter message of any involvement in the murder - despite the offer to murder those members responsible - and its description of the murder as “murder” and “a crime,” seemed a clear case of shutting the stable door after the horse had bolted and a damage limitation exercise.

7. It seems grotesque that people in this day and age can actually believe such an offer to be an acceptable and a positive response. It stems, however, from the fundamental claim of the IRA (and Sinn Fein) to be the only legitimate government of Ireland, and therefore the only legitimate army. This claim is preposterous, but nonetheless its pretensions to moral authority must be challenged in a more comprehensive way. The history of Ireland needs to be interpreted not through “green” or “orange” spectacles but by biblical principles. Bible passages such as the following could be studied with profit by all,

including politicians: Matthew 17:24-27, Mark 12:13-17, Luke 10:25-37, John 19:11, Romans 13:1-7 (some might include vs8-10), 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, Titus 3:1-2, 1 Peter 2:13-17.

8. Given the history of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland - eg Scots' roots, the Ulster-Scot influence in the American Declaration of Independence and the War of Independence, the '98 Rebellion, the Home Rule crisis - and given the place Presbyterians give to the Bible - "the Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the supreme standard of the Church" - the Presbyterian Church is well placed to do some work on this with a view to engaging Sinn Fein in some serious discussion.

9. The Church Initiatives Group sponsored by The Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland (formerly ECONI) has continued to meet on a monthly basis and to prove a useful forum for the exchange of information and ideas. Following the breakdown of political talks it has been working on "Creating Hope," a short document which it is hoped will be ready by the end of May.

Dealing With the Past

10. Debate has centred on the particular contribution Presbyterians might make to the ongoing discussion of dealing with the past. Others, notably the Northern Executive of the Methodist Council on Social Responsibility, have produced useful pieces of work, particularly in clarifying the issues. There is no point in re-inventing the wheel, yet there is a real contribution that we can and should make. "...it is important that the voices of those who are hurting must be given opportunity to be heard. Some victims and survivors feel that the Church as a denomination could have done more to help them. Some feel they have been forgotten" (Appendix C, paragraphs 13-15). In the months ahead it is hoped to hold four or five meetings in various locations where a small group, including the Moderator, can meet with and listen to those within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland who have suffered directly as the result of the violent actions of others.

Republic of Ireland

11. The Church and Society Committee dealt with a number of issues of concern relating to the Republic of Ireland. While the wider question of the Peace Process was high on the agenda, attention was given to other topics to do with the well being of society from a gospel standpoint, in keeping with the focus of the Committee given at the last Assembly.

12. In September 2004, the Committee met with members of the Department of the Taoiseach in Government Buildings in Dublin in advance of the Leeds Castle phase of the **Peace Process**, when the Irish Government was encouraged to seek a political settlement without any "fudge" or ambiguity. The Committee met officials in Dublin again in February 2005 when, sadly, the optimism of the earlier meeting had waned. The Committee was glad to hear of the firm line being taken by the Government with Sinn Fein. However, there was little hope expressed of political progress before the end of 2005 at least.

13. In October 2004 the Committee met with officials from the Departments of the Taoiseach, Health and Justice. It also met with representatives of Fine Gael in Leinster House, including the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Enda Kenny TD, and the spokesman on Justice, Mr Jim O'Keefe TD. The Committee was warmly welcomed at each meeting.

14. Among the issues raised was the **Hanly Report** on the Review of Medical Staffing in the Health Service. Concern was expressed at the implications for the provision of services at many smaller hospitals and at the pressure being brought to bear for the immediate implementation of recommendations in the Report.

15. A subsequent meeting in the Department of Health in December reiterated that the Hanly report was to be the way forward. However, in February 2005 it became clear that the report was being sidelined. While many in small, outlying areas welcome this, the challenge to provide an efficient, easily accessible hospital network across the country remains unresolved.

16. Another issue raised in October 2004 was the **accountability of An Garda Síochána** in the light of investigations into their actions through the Barr and Morris Tribunals. The Committee felt that structures such as exist in relation to the PSNI, particularly the creation of a Police Ombudsman, would help public confidence in the Gardai.

17. It is hoped that a Policing Bill currently going through the houses of the Oireachtas will produce the kinds of changes required, though regrettably as yet there appear to be no plans for the creation of an Ombudsman.

18. Also in October 2004 concerns were raised by the Committee concerning the issue of **Immigration**, in the light of the Referendum in June 2004 which gave effect to the Supreme Court ruling that children born on the island of Ireland were not automatically entitled to Irish Citizenship. With many refugees and asylum seekers in our Congregations the Committee raised questions about the future status of such people and the length of time taken to process applications.

19. In early 2005 the Department of Justice introduced a scheme to permit the non-national parents of Irish born children to be given leave to remain and then to work legally. The Committee felt that this was a generous and gracious initiative in an area where many ungracious emotions are stirred.

20. In December 2004 members of the Committee, along with Rev Uel Marrs, met with Mr Conor Lenihan TD (Minister of State responsible for Overseas Aid) on the Government's announcement that it would not meet its public commitment of granting 0.7% GDP to **Overseas Aid**.

21. Submissions were also made to the Dáil Committee on the Constitution, in respect to its review of those aspects of the Constitution relating to the Family; and also to the Department of Justice on the forthcoming Immigration and Residence Bill.

ALASTAIR DUNLOP, DAVID MOORE, Conveners

APPENDIX A**REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD: 14 OCTOBER 2004**

1. The Committee met four times since the General Assembly, twice in Belfast and twice in Dublin.

2. In the light of the change of name from 'Church and Government' to 'Church and Society' consideration was given to the remit and way of working. It was agreed to set up three sub-groups on (a) Dealing with the Past (b) Republic of Ireland issues (c) European issues. The first of these will produce a response in due time, while the others will deal with issues as they arise, reporting in the first instance to the Committee and through it to the General Board.

3. Some time was spent at the 25 August meeting reviewing the situation over the summer, primarily in North and West Belfast. It was clear that the parades issue was a significant factor on the wider political scene, and consideration was given as to how best to facilitate discussion between the various parties involved.

4. After the General Assembly, Sinn Fein requested and was given a copy of the Committee's report to the Assembly. This was followed by two meetings between representatives of the Committee and Sinn Fein. Contacts have also been maintained with other political parties at an informal level.

5. The pace of political life increased in September with the Leeds Castle Talks involving the two Governments and the Northern Ireland political parties. The Talks did not produce the agreement about the restoration of devolved government that many hoped for, but may yet, in the words of Senator Maurice Hayes, 'herald the end of the beginning of the peace process, the beginning of a real end to the conflict.' It is encouraging that the DUP, although still refusing to engage directly with Sinn Fein, brought serious proposals to the talks. It is also encouraging that gaps between the parties were reported to have narrowed. It is important that they be encouraged (a) to persist until such gaps have closed sufficiently for devolution to be restored, and (b) to resist the temptation to engage in a 'blame game' for apparent lack of progress so far.

6. However, concerns remain. If Christian principles demand, as they do, that political parties engage together in genuine dialogue, they also demand that those parties commit without reservation to democratic methods alone. Hints and suggestions from Sinn Fein that the IRA and its arms may soon be de-commissioned are simply not acceptable negotiating ploys in modern democracies, nor an acceptable quid pro quo for demilitarisation. Christian principles demand that all such armies and arms be de-commissioned, while common sense demands that such de-commissioning be verifiable.

7. The Committee adopted and forwarded a response to 'Taking our Place in Europe', a Consultation Paper on Northern Ireland's European Strategy. The response incorporated some helpful comments by Rev Matthew Ross of the Church and Society Commission. Responses to EU Green Papers on Equality and Non-Discrimination and on Maintenance Payments were also forwarded.

8. The Committee met on 6 September in Dublin with officials from the Department of the Taoiseach. There was a useful exchange of views on a range

of topics including the forthcoming Leeds Castle talks, parading issues, Sinn Fein attitude to PSNI, north/south co-operation on policing issues, the threat posed by republican dissidents, dealing with the past, and the need for verifiable de-commissioning.

9. A further meeting was held in Dublin on 6 October to coincide with the visit of the Moderator to the Dublin & Munster Presbytery. The Committee met with officials from the Departments of Health and Justice, as well as the Department of the Taoiseach. In the afternoon there was a meeting with Enda Kenny, the leader of Fine Gael, and Jim O'Keefe, the FG spokesman on Justice. Issues raised included

- the Hanly Report on Health Service restructuring, and hospital services in the Cavan/Monaghan region;
- issues arising from the Barr and Morris Tribunals into policing;
- immigration and asylum policy, including a comprehensive Immigration and Residence Bill currently in preparation;
- the recent talks at Leeds Castle in Kent.

10. In addition, the Moderator met with the Minister of Justice on 8 October to continue the discussion on immigration and asylum policy and to present two specific cases.

11. The Committee noted that President Mary McAleese has been elected unopposed for a second 7-year term of office. She has worked tirelessly in the interests of reconciliation and a better understanding between north and south, displaying a spirit of warmth, generosity and hospitality.

12. The Committee agreed to a request from the Presbytery of Omagh for support to be given to the Gangmaster (Licensing) Bill.

13. The Committee agreed to a request from the Presbytery of Templepatrick for support to be given to its opposition to the commencement of a Sunday market at Templepatrick.

14. The Committee was represented at a number of conferences and consultations, the usual plethora of consultation documents and reports were received, and correspondence on a wide variety of matters was dealt with.

APPENDIX B

RESOLUTION OF THE GENERAL BOARD: 14 OCTOBER 2004

That President Mary McAleese be congratulated on her unopposed re-election to office and commended to the prayers of the Church.

APPENDIX C

REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD: 24 FEBRUARY 2005

1. The Committee met three times since the last meeting of the General Board. It continued to keep under review the current political situation, with members engaging with a wide variety of politicians and parties.

2. During November there was considerable optimism about the possibility of the restoration of devolved government to Northern Ireland. This

came to a head in early December when a week of frenetic activity by political parties and the two Governments gave the impression that an agreement between the DUP and Sinn Fein was within touching distance. Allied to this was intense speculation in the media about the possibility of a Protestant Minister and a Roman Catholic priest witnessing IRA de-commissioning. The subsequent failure to agree terms appeared at the time to be the result on the one hand of IRA refusal to permit photographic evidence of de-commissioning, and on the other hand of intemperate language by the DUP. With hindsight, although the talks seemed tantalisingly close to success, there was a deep lack of trust between the two main political parties, and this might well have doomed any agreement to failure.

3. The £26 million Northern Bank robbery on 20th December, including the kidnap of hostages, was a defining moment for the relationship of Sinn Fein with the two Governments, with the other political parties, and with the populations of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Ultimately it may prove to have been a defining moment for the peace process itself. The assessment of the PSNI, the Garda Síochána, the two Governments, the International Monitoring Commission, in fact everyone except Sinn Fein, was that the IRA was responsible for the robbery and kidnapping, that senior figures in Sinn Fein knew about the robbery plans in advance, and that the IRA was also responsible for three other major robberies carried out in recent months. The clarity with which this assessment was made was unambiguous.

4. In the midst of the recriminations, the IRA issued two statements, the first denying involvement in the robbery and blaming the two Governments for the breakdown in negotiations, the second and much briefer one warning the two Governments not to underestimate the seriousness of the situation. Whether the latter statement should be construed as a threat or not, it indicates that an intense debate is taking place within republicanism about its future direction. It is to be hoped that this debate will focus on what it means to be fully democratic, on the incompatibility of engaging in both democratic politics and criminal activity, and on the need to be fully committed to peace as distinct from being fully committed to a peace process. The debate also needs to focus on the fundamental need for veracity. The simple fact is that Sinn Fein has a huge credibility issue. In spite of its increasingly angry denials, it is no longer believed.

5. The extent of the problem within Sinn Fein was highlighted by Mitchel McLaughlin's comment on RTE's "Questions and Answers" (17 January) about the murder of Jean McConville, for many years one of "the disappeared." When he was asked whether he classified her kidnap and execution as a crime, he said, "I do not", though he conceded that the act was "wrong." Such a response shows the extent of the hypocrisy within Sinn Fein and a disturbing lack of understanding of what constitutes a crime.

6. Despite all of this, it is unlikely that the two Governments will press ahead towards any form of devolved government without Sinn Fein. The Unionist parties and the Alliance Party have lobbied both Governments hard on this point. But unless and until there is greater support from the SDLP, they appear unlikely to succeed. The General Election is likely to take place on 5 May, with any political progress having to wait at least until after that, and probably until September.

7. All of this may make for a difficult spring and summer. The parading season starts early, with an early Easter. Last year there were difficulties, particularly in North and West Belfast. Tensions came to the surface in a number of situations, and but for hard work by politicians and community representatives, things could have been much worse. This year, indications are not good and attitudes appear to have hardened. There seems a greater distance than ever between the Parades Commission, the loyal Orders, and the local communities most directly affected. The wider context will not make this distance any easier to bridge.

8. Moral murk is not confined to republicanism. Loyalist paramilitaries have operated criminal activities for many years. Extortion, intimidation, drug dealing, prostitution, feuding, murder - all these and more have been the traditional marks of loyalist paramilitarism. While the Loyalist Commission continues to play a valuable role in seeking to wean it away from community destruction to community building, it is shameful that still within its ranks are those who are involved in serious criminality. Until they leave this lifestyle behind for good, they cannot expect to be treated as serious political players, and must expect to be challenged about their methods, influence and ethos.

9. Recent events have highlighted an increasing uncertainty in the current peace process. Despite the uneasiness felt by many about moral aspects of the Belfast Agreement, such as the early release of prisoners, there was a willingness to put up with these, and with ambiguities and fudge, in the interests of the greater good and the prize of peace. Many are now asking whether such goodwill was misplaced. Lack of moral integrity on the part of some of the major players in the process is causing many to say "enough is enough." There is a sense of betrayal. There is a perception that people of goodwill, including the Churches, have been "used."

10. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland does not consider herself to be perfect. We recognise our contribution to the malaise in society by our failures in forgiveness, in love and in relationship-building. We recognise also our reticence about affirming and living the values of righteousness and godliness. The goal of the Church is the glory of God. Despite our failures, this remains our clear goal. We want to see a society marked by truth, justice, righteousness, faithfulness, love, peace.

11. It is time to take stock. Until such time as republicanism and loyalism face down the hard men within their communities and put their houses in order, including an end to all criminality and the complete, verifiable de-commissioning of their weaponry, their political representatives should be excluded from all negotiations about the future governance of Northern Ireland. Society has a right to expect moral integrity from political parties and from both Governments. God cannot be mocked. People reap what they sow.

12. At the same time, it is important to state that the hopes of the people for a true and lasting peace have not gone away. There is still a strong desire for a deal that is truly fair and inclusive. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland strongly believes in a future that is co-operative rather than competing, where there is political inclusion rather than exclusion. That vision and hope remains at the centre of our energy and prayers.

Dealing with the Past

13. As the community of Northern Ireland struggles to leave behind its violent past, those who have suffered most during “the troubles” must not be forgotten. For many people the experience of personal loss and the physical and psychological scars remain. Society is at a loss to know how to respond to the communal and individual needs of those who are regarded as “the victims”. Some victims demand justice, others want truth; there are those for whom the legacy of the past is grief, pain, disability, trauma, economic hardship or some other health or welfare issue; many simply want acknowledgement and a dignified form of remembering.

14. One of the “survivors” (the term preferred by the individual concerned) who assisted the sub-committee on Dealing with the Past by providing a personal account of her story, said:

“I don’t know what can be done to help victims and survivors but anything done regarding the past will be a token and cannot right the wrong.”
“Sometimes I feel that people like me are just getting in the way of the political process. We are an embarrassment. They wish we would go away.” *“I once heard someone say, ‘We do not want to live in the past but we do not want the past to be forgotten.’ That is how I feel.”*

15. The Church has also found it difficult to know how to respond even to individuals within our own denomination who have suffered. However, it is important that the voices of those who are hurting must be given opportunity to be heard. Some victims and survivors feel that the Church as a denomination could have done more to help them. Some feel they have been forgotten. The Church and Society Committee is exploring the possibility of arranging a series of meetings in various locations where a small group could meet with those within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland who have suffered directly as the result of the violent actions of others.

Republic of Ireland

16. Representatives of the Committee, together with Rev Uel Marrs, met on 1 December with the Minister of State responsible for Overseas Aid. Later in the day the representatives, together with a representative of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery, met with an official of the Department of Health about the Hanley Report and about Marriage Registration changes.

17. Since then it would appear that the Hanly Report on restructuring in the health service has been abandoned, as the Hanly Committee has been discharged. The issues raised will not go away, but politically it seems that the Hanly Report was too controversial.

18. Statements were transmitted to the Committee on the Constitution on the issue of the family, and to the Department of Justice on the Citizenship Bill and a forthcoming Immigration and Residence Bill.

19. The Moderator wrote a letter of approval to the Minister of Justice in relation to non-national parents of Irish born children being given leave to remain in the State.

20. The controversy over the remarks by the President, where attitudes towards Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland were likened to those toward Jews

in Nazi Germany was addressed by her with a swift apology. Although this was accepted by unionist representatives and by the Orange Order, unfortunately damage had already been caused. It remains to be seen how long it will take for this damage to confidence to be repaired.

21. The Taoiseach was forthright in the Dáil concerning the involvement of the IRA in the Northern Bank robbery before Christmas. He also listed other activities such as punishment beatings. A joint Fianna Fail/Fine Gael motion in the Dáil called on the IRA to give up all criminality and to proceed with decommissioning their weapons.

22. Representatives of the Committee met with officials of the Department of the Taoiseach in Dublin on 9th February. They thought that little progress in the peace process was likely before the autumn. The Government has asked Sinn Fein and the wider republican movement to reflect on their position. What was clear was that the issue of trust was central to any move forward. When asked, however, the officials were not prepared to commit themselves to any action without Sinn Fein. They also indicated that the suspicion of IRA responsibility in the Northern Bank robbery was not solely based on the word of Hugh Orde, and that he made his comments because of the accountability structures of the PSNI.

Europe

23. The Clerk attended a meeting of the Peace, Security and Reconciliation Working Party in Brussels in late November, and reported that next year's meeting may be held in Ireland.

24. The Clerk agreed, in the light of discussion, to draft a response to a letter from the Secretary-General of the Department of the Taoiseach about what structures might be put in place to facilitate the open transparent dialogue with faith communities referred to in the European Constitution.

25. George McCullagh continues to attend the Forum on Europe which meets in Dublin.

Other

26. The World Development Committee raised an issue about British Government Aid being used to buy military equipment for Nepal. It was agreed to pursue this through one of the Westminster MPs.

27. A letter was written to the BBC in response to a number of representations from Ministers concerned about the screening on 8 January on BBC2 of the stage musical "Jerry Springer - The Opera."

28. In view of the renaming of the New Opportunities Fund as the Big Lottery Fund, it was agreed to write to the Department of Education drawing attention once again to the policy of the General Assembly with regards to lottery funding.

29. Doug Baker reported to the Committee about his role as a Church representative on Belfast City Council's Good Relations Steering Panel.

30. Due to pressure of work, Alastair Dunlop gave notice of his intention to stand down as Co-Convenor at the forthcoming General Assembly.

APPENDIX D**STATEMENT ISSUED FOLLOWING THE MEETING OF THE
GENERAL BOARD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2005**

The General Board is dismayed at the £26.5 million Northern Bank robbery on 20 December 2004, and at the subsequent revelations implicating Sinn Fein. This wilful and planned act

- violated the law of God
- subjected bank employees and their families to terror and cruelty
- betrayed relationships with the two Governments, other political parties and people of goodwill
- destroyed trust in the commitment of Sinn Fein to seek peace.

The General Board notes the repeated denials by Sinn Fein of any involvement in the bank robbery, despite the assessments of the PSNI, the Garda Síochána, the two Governments, and the Independent Monitoring Commission. Veracity is fundamental to the integrity of any person or political party. Without veracity, there is no credibility. The denials of Sinn Fein ring hollow.

The General Board sees the bank robbery as further evidence of a criminality which is deeply ingrained in some sections of Northern Ireland society, both republican and loyalist. It is deeply concerned at the lack of clarity about what is right and what is wrong. It reminds all citizens alike of the Moral Law of God, set out in the 10 Commandments, and the commands of Jesus to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind' and to 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Matt 22:37,39).

The General Board believes that until political parties end all connections to criminality, and fully commit to democratic methods alone, there is no place for them in the future government of Northern Ireland. Sin, cruelty and duplicity are incompatible with peace, trust and respect for human rights.

The General Board, therefore, calls on the two Governments to restore moral integrity to the peace process by insisting that no political party shall participate in the future government of Northern Ireland unless it renounces and forsakes criminality, engages in complete, verifiable de-commissioning, and is fully committed to democratic methods alone.

The General Board reiterates its commitment to a political settlement in Northern Ireland that is just and inclusive and longs for the day when people can live together in true peace, mutual respect and tolerance. This will require integrity of purpose, speech and deed. Believing in the potential of the whole community for a much brighter future, it calls on the members of the Church to renewed commitment to pray and to work for that vision to be realised soon.

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. The Moderator's Advisory Committee met once during the year to appoint assessors at the request of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery. It also accepted the suggestion of the General Board that in future the Panel of Conciliators should be facilitated by the Committee.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

RECOGNISED MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

1. In March the Committee reviewed the position of Ministers and Licentiates 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 David McKee	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev D M Spratt	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Armagh	Rev F C A Wilson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
North Belfast	Rev J S Carson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev C I McKnight	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev W A Shaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev W M Smyth	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev W G Stewart	To be retained as Minister Without Charge.
South Belfast	Rev F W Vincent	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev W B Martin	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
East Belfast	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 Rex Pedlow	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Carrickfergus	Rev W J Harshaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev D R Byers	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Coleraine	Rev J D Mark	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Derry/Strabane	Rev J C Teeney	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Down	Rev S Armstrong	To be retained as Minister without Charge
	Rev R N Stewart	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).

Dublin & Munster	Rev Ruth Gregg	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Foyle	Rev K G Patterson	To be retained as Minister without Charge
Iveagh	Rev E G McAuley	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Route	Rev Dr Victor Dobbin	To be retained as Minister without Charge.

2. The last General Assembly asked the Committee to review the Recognised Ministry Scheme. It considered the need to have “recognised ministry” status as well as that of “Minister without Charge”, but concluded that both are distinct and necessary at present. The Committee therefore recommends no change to the present procedures.

3. At the General Board in April a request was received that the Committee consider the organisation “Embrace” as suitable for the Call of a Minister under the Recognised Ministries Scheme. Arrangements are being made to consider this request and a recommendation will be brought in the Daily Minutes.

Ministers in Recognised Service

The Rev Desi Maxwell reports:

4. Teaching at Belfast Bible College continues to be a great joy. It seems that the world comes to Dunmurry and it is a privilege to be involved in the shaping of minds for future ministry all over the world. It is particularly encouraging to explore the Hebraic roots of our faith with people both in college and in a much wider ministry throughout the British Isles and further afield.

The Rev Dr Ruth Patterson reports:

5. Some highlights of our year in Restoration Ministries have been:
- Another series of ‘Difficult Conversation Evenings’ to encourage and support people in beginning conversations about things that matter;
 - A visit by twelve Restoration Ministries’ volunteers on Palm Sunday weekend to Trosly, the birthplace of L’Arche, where Jean Vanier and I facilitated a retreat on our theme for the year – ‘On the Road’. This was preceded by a speaking engagement at the American cathedral in Paris on St Patrick’s night on the theme of reconciliation;
 - An Advent retreat led by Andrea Wigglesworth of the National Counselling Service of the Church of Scotland;
 - A study series on St John’s Gospel using the Jean Vanier videos;
 - Continued travel around Ireland and beyond, speaking at Church gatherings, facilitating retreats and participating at conferences.

Prayer is the heartbeat of our work. We are grateful to those who support us in this vital way.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

GLOBAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met three times during the last year. In this, its first year, the Committee brought together the work of Peace & Peacemaking, Race Relations and the Environment into three panels.

2. The Committee, in its desire to provide a think-tank and educational resource for the wider Church, considered items of interest for the work of new panels. Suggestions included Christian Zionism, Urbanisation and the Sustainability of Rural Communities, Relationships between nations, Immigration, the Extradition of Sex Offenders and What does 'transparency' in political processes mean?

3. Following a presentation from delegates to the 2004 WARC Assembly in Ghana and their discussion of the document, 'Covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth,' it was agreed that a Panel to consider this document should be set up under the convenership of Rev. Dr Alan Russell – Panel on the Global Economy.

4. The Committee hopes that, in its service to the wider Church, other Boards and Committees will refer matters of interest and importance to them so that some focussed and extended work can be done on their behalf.

5. The Committee remains concerned that it not only produce reports but that it take opportunities to engage in processes of education for the whole Church where there is need and interest.

PANEL ON PEACE AND PEACEMAKING

The Rev DR Baker writes:

6. The Peacemaking Panel continues to be focused on challenging members, Congregations, Presbyteries, Boards, and Agencies of PCI to identify ways in which they may foster improved relationships across all kinds of divisions and equipping them for initiatives that will contribute to stable peace in wider society.

7. "*Lost in Transition*" was the title of a day conference in November co-sponsored by the Race Relations Panel and attended by over 150 Peace Agents and others. The Church's Peace Vocation Statement adopted by the Assembly in 1994 included this phrase: "We understand peacemaking to be an affirmation and accommodation of diversity." The conference aimed to encourage Presbyterians to explore the implications of this statement in light of the increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of Ireland – north and south – and escalating reports of racially motivated attacks. The Rev Sahr Yamsu examined Acts 10 as an account of embrace across cultural divisions. A panel of recent immigrants to Ireland shared their experience of welcome and exclusion. Speakers from four different Congregations spoke about initiatives they are taking to build positive relationships with ethnic minority groups in their settings.

8. For several years now the Peace and Peacemaking Committee (now Panel) has been conscious of the need to secure a staff person to help the panel, working with Congregations, Presbyteries, Boards and Agencies, take forward

the implications of the Church's Peace Vocation statement adopted by the General Assembly in 1994. In Spring 2004 we became aware of an opportunity to apply for funding through the International Fund for Ireland and informed the General Board of our intention to pursue this. An application was prepared in conjunction with representatives of the Youth Board and was submitted in September 2004. At the October meeting of the General Board we received permission, in principle, to pursue match-funding and discuss job descriptions for peacemaking programme workers with the Appraisals Committee and report to the February meeting of the Board. In January 2005 we were notified that we had been successful and that IFI is offering a grant of £223,000 over three years toward salary costs to employ two workers, one focused on adults and one on youth, and toward other related expenses. In order to access that grant we are required to secure the balance of funding, including a contribution from PCI. We met with the Community Relations Council and Youth Link and received verbal promises for support of £22,500 and up to £9,000 respectively. We then met with Eileen McClenaghan, Head of Personnel, to help draw up a Job Description for the adult-focused post and submitted a request to the Appraisals Committee for support for the creation of this new post. The discussion of the detail of the job description for the youth-related post is being processed by the Youth and Children's Ministry Board but is not finalised at this time. A full description of the proposal is contained in Appendix 1.

9. The panel thanks all those at Congregational and Presbytery level who have accepted responsibility as Peace Agents and urges the wider Church to support and encourage them in responding to "the Church's own proper calling to seek peace and the things that make for peace." (Church's Peace Vocation Statement adopted by the Assembly, 1994).

APPENDIX

Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Peacemaking Programme Proposal

A Broadening Vision for Peace-building

THE PROPOSAL IN SUMMARY:

While an emphasis on peace building is not new in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, this proposal incorporates plans both qualitatively and quantitatively different to what has been done in the past or are currently in place. It envisages

- a denomination-wide approach targeting both adults and youth;
- the development of an 'in-house' introductory course more likely to be utilised by Presbyterian Ministers and Congregations than those without a Presbyterian brand attached to them;
- securing, for the first time, a full-time position focused on enabling adult leadership in local Congregations and on central Boards, Committees and Agencies to understand and respond to challenges and opportunities in contributing to a stable peace in this society. The provision of such a central staff person will make possible much more

extensive training opportunities and support for Peace Agents and others in local Congregations than has been possible heretofore;

- development of youth-focused peacemaking initiatives under the guidance of the Youth and Children's Ministry Board;
- developing capacity in terms of individuals and structures to sustain long-term commitment to peace building by the Presbyterian Church;
- strategic approaches to key Boards, Committees and Agencies to help embed peace building in mainstream activities of the Church;
- encouraging and supporting more Congregations to embark on practical local initiatives that will contribute to peace in the wider community.

The initiatives envisaged in this proposal require both a greater financial and personnel commitment from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland than has been made to date and support from others. The specific funding request from the Church attached to this proposal is an increase of the grant from the Incidental Fund from £2500 per year to £8000 per year for three years.

BACKGROUND:

Both of the following statements are true:

- (a) Despite the adoption of the Church's Peace Vocation Statement by the General Assembly in 1994 and its reaffirmation in 1996, and despite considerable effort to increase grassroots awareness of and commitment to peacemaking as an integral part of Christian discipleship, a significant percentage of Presbyterian Church in Ireland members do not perceive peacemaking as a priority for themselves personally, for their Congregation or for the denomination as a whole.
- (b) A significant percentage of members are convinced of the responsibility Christians have to be peacemakers in our society, the need for the Presbyterian Church to challenge and equip its members, Congregations, Boards, Committees, and Agencies to contribute to peace-building in society and are looking for support in doing so. Feedback indicates that the movement at Congregational level from discussion/study to encounter and/or action is the most difficult and where most help is required. There is a need for someone with both the expertise and time to accompany Congregations on this journey.

In addition,

- (c) Although there are various Agencies offering materials and peace-building courses to Congregations, experience has demonstrated that there is value in offering a specific structured introductory programme, produced by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and designed to help local Congregations explore the effect living in a divided society has on them, understand the Biblical commission to be peacemakers and begin to explore some of the implications in their setting.
- (d) There is need at this point in time to address other 'dealing with difference' issues in this society, such as race relations and social division alongside sectarianism.

All of this has led the Peacemaking Panel, in cooperation with the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, to pursue ways to create a joined-up initiative that will:

- (i) build on both:
 - the Church's Peace Vocation Statement and the success of the Peace and Peacemaking Committee to date
- AND
- the success of the Preparing Youth for Peace Programme in engaging a large number of youth leaders and young people in thinking through their response to living in a divided society;
- (ii) focus on both youth and adults;
- (iii) continue to challenge the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to examine both ways in which it contributes to sectarian division and its biblical vocation to be peacemakers in a divided society;
- (iv) inform, equip, resource and support members, staff, Boards, Committees, Agencies and Congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to engage in peace building in wider society.

The Vision

Our vision has several components

- Building on the *Preparing Youth for Peace* programme. This requires continued facilitator training and publicity within the Church to make available youth focused peacemaking discipleship training to Congregations where it has not been used and a new emphasis on facilitating opportunities for groups who have completed the PYP course and who wish to do so to engage in cross-community encounters and/or social action projects contributing to peace in the wider community;
- The development of new aspects of 'dealing with difference' in youth training on building good relations, notably race relations and bridging socio-economic divisions;
- The development of an in-house adult programme exploring peacemaking as an integral aspect of Christian discipleship;
- The development of more direct cross-community networking and social action projects involving youth, youth leaders and adults;
- The continuation of a youth focussed post and the creation of a new staff position which has the specific purpose of promoting and supporting an adult programme and keeping matters of peace building before the leadership of the denomination.

Purpose

To challenge, equip and support members, Congregations, Presbyteries, Boards, Committees and Agencies of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to contribute more actively to a stable and lasting peace in Ireland.

Aims

- (i) Increase acceptance within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland that peace-building and reconciliation are a priority in the ministry of the whole Church.
- (ii) Deepen understanding of the measures required for a stable peace and good relations by leaders and members within the Church.
- (iii) Strengthen the capacity and infrastructure within the Church to sustain long-term peacemaking activities.
- (iv) Increase the number of Congregations developing cross-community contacts and/or undertaking ongoing initiatives that will contribute to peace in society.
- (v) Encourage Boards, Committees, and Agencies to explore their own contribution and make a commitment to improving community relations in this society.

Overall Strategy

- (a) **Both single identity and cross-community:** The project will engage with members, local Congregations, Presbyteries, central staff, Boards, Committees and Agencies of the Church in both single identity work and by encouraging/facilitating cross-community dialogue and/or practical initiatives that will contribute to peace.
- (b) **Mainstreaming peace building:** Whenever possible the project will encourage the integration of learning opportunities about peace building and opportunities for encounter into existing programmes and events in the life of the denomination and its Congregations, rather than set up additional groupings or events. In this way it is more likely to connect with a wide cross-section of the membership, rather than attracting only those already committed to improving community relations.
- (c) **Communicating the vision:** The initiative will require a good communication strategy designed to communicate the vision, keep the wider Church informed about developments and maximize momentum. This will include recording and distributing stories of Congregations that have experience of cross-community contact and/or have engaged in shared social action initiatives so that other Congregations have access to practical ideas.
- (d) **Equipping for action:** The project will seek to equip members, Congregations, Boards, Committees and Agencies for practical action that will contribute to peace in wider society.
- (e) **Providing support:** Opportunities for sharing ideas, help in making connections and development of resource materials for
 - individuals with particular responsibility (Presbytery and Congregational Peace Agents, youth leaders, Ministers, etc);
 - groups/Congregations engaging in cross-community contact and action.

Practical Needs:

Funding required for staffing and core programme activities: £276,230.

Staffing:

Considerable activity has already been undertaken by volunteers and will continue to be. However, the scale and complexity of the work envisaged in this initiative absolutely requires full-time staff. Ideally this initiative will have two programme officers – one concentrating on youth and one on adults – closely in touch with each other and working collaboratively wherever possible:

- (i) **Youth Programme Co-ordinator:** This person's role will be concerned with the promotion of Presbyterian youth courses, delivering programmes and coordinating Facilitator Training; as well as facilitating cross-community encounters, where local Congregations wish, and supporting social action initiatives undertaken by Presbyterian young people.
- (ii) **Adult Programme Co-ordinator:** This post will have three key elements to it (a) to develop and deliver the adult programme (b) to support Congregations involved in cross-community encounters and/or social action contributing to peace in society (c) to foster commitment to peace-building within the institution of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Thus this second role would be educational, motivational and transformational.

These persons will hopefully be experienced facilitators/trainers in conflict transformation, peace-building, leadership development, and organisational change, with working knowledge of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, biblical approaches to peace-building, political/social context of both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland and education approaches appropriate to the age group targeted in each position.

Location:

Staff will require two offices, ideally in Church House.

Management:

The project will have a management committee comprised of the Clerk, the Director of Youth and Children's Ministry, the Convener and one other member of the Peacemaking Panel and the Convener and one other member of the Resources Committee of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, with the possibility of co-opting individuals from other Churches or groups as required.

Budget

(Includes 3% p.a. inflation and salary increments)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	TOTAL
Salaries				
1 Youth Programme Co-ordinator (PCI Executive Scale 2)	23441	24644	25883	73968

GENERAL BOARD

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2	NIC	1740	1852	1967	5559
3	Pension contribution	4922	5175	5435	15532
4	Adult Programme Co-ordinator (PCI Executive Scale 2)	23441	24644	25883	73968
5	NIC	1740	1852	1967	5559
6	Pension contribution	4922	5175	5435	15532
	SUB-TOTAL	60206	63344	66574	190126
	Expenses				
7	Mileage PYP Co-ordinator 5000/p.a. x £0.40	2000	2000	2000	6000
8	Mileage P P Co-ordinator	2000	2000	2000	6000
9	Training	1000	1000	-	2000
	SUB-TOTAL	5000	5000	4000	14000
	Administrative Costs				
10	Recruitment	750	-	-	750
11	Office rent/light/heat/ insurance	2800	2884	2970	8654
12	Telephone, internet, postage	1500	1500	1500	4500
13	Stationery/supplies/ photocopying	1000	1000	1000	3000
14	Communications: Printing and disseminating materials; Website development and maintenance	3000	2000	1500	6500
	SUB-TOTAL	9050	7384	6970	23404
	Programme Costs				
15	Venue hire: Residential events		2000	2000	4000
	Day conferences	1500	2000	1500	4500
16	Food and refreshments	2500	2500	2500	7500
17	Outside trainers/facilitators	1000	1500	2000	4500
18	Revision/development of course materials	5000	-	-	5000
19	Printing training materials	-	5000	-	5000
20	Training facilitators	4000	4000	4000	12000
	SUB-TOTAL	14000	16500	12000	42500
21	External Evaluation Production of report			6200	6200
	SUB-TOTAL			6200	6200
	TOTAL costs per year	88255	92227	95741	£276230

Note: the grading of the Programme Co-ordinator posts has still to be finalised.

FUNDING:

International Fund for Ireland	223000
PCI Incidental Fund (£8,000 p/a. The current level is £2,500 p/a)	24000
Community Relations Council: Toward Programme Costs:	22500
Youth Link (in kind staff time up to £3000 p/a)	9000
Income generation: Voluntary contributions from participants/sale of resources/etc	1500
TOTAL	£280000

PANEL ON RACE RELATIONS

The Rev Dr RJG Gray writes:

10. The past year has seen race relations emerge as a major public issue in both parts of the island of Ireland. Weekly, and often daily, the media carry reports relating to the ethnic minority communities who are for the most part a recent addition to the cultural, economic and indeed religious complexion of both north and south.

11. Sadly, these reports are often of a negative character: the *problem* of immigration, the *scandal* of racially-motivated attacks on newcomers, and occasionally the *plight* of immigrant workers. The case of Oksana Sukhanova, the young Ukrainian woman who, after the ending of her temporary employment, became homeless and ill in the Ballymoney/Coleraine area, eventually having to have both legs amputated, created widespread shock when her tragedy hit the headlines at the New Year. How could such a thing happen in a civilised, compassionate and essentially Christian society? Her suffering however, once it became known, did elicit a caring response, not least within the healthcare and welfare system and from concerned individuals. It has also focussed attention on the needs of those coming to this country to work, as well as on the contribution they are making in sectors of our communal life, from hospitals and nursing homes, in hotels and restaurants as well as in lower-paid jobs in industry – jobs which employers find it difficult to fill from local sources. Current estimates are that there are around 26,000 guest workers in Northern Ireland and that some 50,000 are required each year in the Republic.

The Churches

12. While a number of these are of faiths other than Christianity others are contributing to the revitalisation of Irish Church life. Some join in established Congregations and Parishes, while others have formed new ethnic Churches, from Russian and Coptic Orthodox to African Independent or Pentecostal Churches. The Panel was represented at a major conference, *A Colloquium on Multi-Cultural Congregations in Ireland* last September. The face of Irish Christianity is being transformed. However this poses new

questions: is Irish Christianity to become divided along ethnic lines? And, on the other hand, how can 'mixed' Congregations become 'transcultural' communities, where traditions and styles of worship are genuinely shared at a deep level, rather than merely places of co-existence?

13. All the Irish Churches face in a new way and with real urgency the challenge of becoming *Centres of Welcome*, as we indeed underlined in the Assembly Reports of 2003 and 2004. Some Congregations and Presbyteries are already responding in imaginative ways and are to be commended for this. A number of Presbyteries have appointed Race Relations Agents, some of them doubling as Peace Agents.

Race and Peace

14. That the issues of Race and Peace, though essentially separate, are somehow linked was illustrated by the *Lost in Transition?* Conference last November for representatives of Congregations. This was organised jointly by the Panels on Peace and Peacemaking and Race Relations. See the Report of the Peace and Peacemaking Panel for a fuller report. A follow-up regional Conference is in planning. The Race Relations Panel was also represented, by invitation, at the launch on 9 March of the Loyalist Commission's programme *Declare War on Racism* – a programme directed at members of their own constituencies. Further reflection is needed on the links between racism and sectarianism. At the very least, they seem to stem from a similar mind-set.

Inter-Church Developments

15. The Panel, like the previous Race Relations Committee, have benefited from being able to use the resources of the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ), associated with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). A CCRJ initiative has led to the setting up of The All-Ireland Churches' Consultative Committee on Racism, now associated with the Irish Council of Churches. This is enabling the Irish Churches increasingly to work together on this new challenge to the Churches' mission in this island. A major inter-Church Conference, to include representatives of ethnic minority communities, originally planned for November 2004, has been postponed by a year to enable fuller preparation to take place.

Structure

16. It has become increasingly obvious that within the broad spectrum of asylum, immigration and race relations, the situations in the Republic and Northern Ireland are distinctive, albeit related. To enable the Panel to work effectively it has begun to operate in two geographically oriented sub-groups, each open to all Panel members, but focussing on matters relevant to their respective jurisdictions. The Rev Katherine Meyer has agreed to coordinate communication within the Republic of Ireland, in association with the Churches' Asylum Network, which is Dublin based. It has also been agreed that the Panel work with and through the EMBRACE organisation in Northern Ireland, as appropriate.

The Wider World

17. The Panel, under the aegis of the Global Concerns Committee, will continue to relate to the continuing though changing race relations scene in South Africa. It will also seek to be alert to other situations where race is an issue, particularly where local Christian minority communities are under pressure.

Local Congregations

18. In line with our stated policy as a Church, namely to encourage and enable Congregations to become centres of hospitality, advocacy and support, an Information Pack is being prepared for every Congregation, as a supplement to this year's Assembly Report. It is hoped that this will be found to be of practical help as well as a source of vision and inspiration. The time for practical action has arrived.

PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The Rev Dr J Harper writes:

19. This year has seemed to be a quieter year for the Panel, but in reality its work has continued to expand. Two major changes have occurred; the reorganization of Assembly structures now places us under the Global Concerns Committee, and Rev SJ Millar vacated the Convenership to be replaced by Rev Dr J Harper. Rev Sam Millar, as an angler, brought an intimate knowledge of water issues, while his successor is a practically-minded exponent of energy saving devices.

20. As in previous years, the Panel alternated indoor and outdoor meetings; perhaps the most interesting of these was the visit to the farm of Mr John Gilliland where we saw the generation of power from farm crops. Mr Gilliland is a past president of the Ulster Farmers' Union, and we congratulated him on his appointment as Commissioner for Sustainable Development for Northern Ireland.

21. Still on the farming theme, we remain concerned about the future of the farming industry throughout Ireland. While we can see the merit in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, and in the introduction of the Nitrates Directive, we feel that not enough has been done to bring the real economic issues facing farmers before the general public and thus to add weight to arguments put before politicians here and in Brussels.

22. We have again been active in supporting the Route Presbytery in opposing threatened lignite mining in their area.

23. In May 2005 two members of the Panel are hoping to attend the Conference of the European Christian Environmental Network in Basle, Switzerland; reports on this will appear in summary form in the Green Page of the Presbyterian Herald and in the Panel's report to next year's General Assembly.

Panel members are available to talk to Church organizations on environmental issues generally, and to Congregational Committees and

Presbyteries on the preparation of environmental audits undertaken as part of the Presbytery Consultation process.

PANEL ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

24. The purpose of the panel is to consider the global economy and its relationship to justice and poverty in particular. While the focus of the Panel is specifically to respond to the WARC document, "Covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth," it will also consider the publication of information material, theological underpinnings as well as practical implications, and educating the whole Church.

LE CARROLL, Convener

CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. This was the first year of the Church Relations Committee. There were four meetings throughout the year.

2. At the first meeting in June, time was allowed to give a briefing on the various Church bodies and denominations the Presbyterian Church in Ireland relates to. Tasks were delegated throughout the Committee. As delegates attend and report on various inter Church bodies it was agreed they bear the following questions in mind.

- (a) What does our Church need to learn from the wider Church?
- (b) What could the wider Church learn from our Church?
- (c) Where do reports need to go within our Committee and Board structure?
- (d) Is there a need to report items of interest through the Information Office?

World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)

3. Russell Birney, Tony Davidson, Liz Hughes, and Louise Matthews were delegates to the 24th General Council of WARC in Accra, Ghana. There were over 400 delegates from 215 Churches in 107 countries. David Mitchell, Alan and Frances Martin were guests. 43 percent of delegates were women and 12 percent were young people. The Council was hosted by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana. David Mitchell and Louise Matthews attended the Reformed Youth Forum; Frances Martin attended the Woman's Pre-Council Forum.

4. The changing context of world Christianity was very obvious. For example there were almost as many delegates from Indonesia as from western Europe. The Council's format facilitated studying the Bible together, listening to stories from reformed Christians throughout the world and participating in discussion and decision making processes. Highlights of the Council included a visit to Christian Aid partners working in some of the poorest districts of Accra; a very lively Sunday service in Independence Square attended by Presbyterians in the Accra area; a weekend visitation programme to Churches throughout

Ghana which gave our delegates an opportunity to worship with and address Ghanaian Presbyterians. The General Council as always gave great opportunities for networking and befriending Christians in Churches throughout the world. The theme 'That all may have life in fullness' from John 10v10 was examined under seven categories: healing, honouring diversity, inclusiveness and participation, peace, gender justice, creation and economic justice. The experience of visiting the slave dungeons and witnessing the Reformed Church built within earshot of the cries of people enslaved, made delegates aware of the colossal danger of separating worship from life. Undoubtedly WARC helps us to tune into the cries of suffering brothers and sister. Many reformed brothers and sisters experience what they describe as the 'Oppression of the global economic system'. These Christians believe they are suffering due to an economic ideology that has taken on the characteristics of an idolatry. The main achievement of the 24th Council was to agree the 'Accra Confession' entitled 'Covenanting for justice in the economy and the earth'. A panel has been set up under the Global Concerns Committee. They will be seeking to work out how best to respond to this document.

5. Liz Hughes writes: 'The challenge I have come away from Ghana with – is a challenge to make sure that experience of worship is not divorced from real life but enabling me to be alert to my brothers and sisters across the world to listen to their cry and commit myself to work for change'.

6. Louise Matthews writes: 'Whatever about material wealth, it's we in the west who are spiritually poor in comparison to the Africans. I think it will be the memory of their ability to rejoice and praise in the face of unimaginable hardships that will stay with me the longest'.

7. Russell Birney writes: 'I was forced to consider issues that before I had not given much thought to; issues which are matters of life and death for millions of people. Representatives of those millions were speaking passionately about globalisation, economic justice, the environment and peace. In our context as members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, I have seen and heard within the courts of the Church these subjects being dismissed with scarcely concealed contempt, but not by these people who were at the receiving end of exploitation, greed, cruelty and war'.

8. Gabrielle Farquhar is a member of WARC European Area Committee, which met in Edinburgh last November. The present Area Committee has now been working together for 2 years on the tasks set for them by the European Area Council, which met in 2002. The sub-committee working on better co-operation and contact between member Churches in Europe has just completed an analysis which will be available on the WARC web site this Autumn. It includes information about each member Church, theological partnerships, dialogues and exchanges, and the projects that they support. The sub-committee on Theology is working on a project entitled 'Justification as Reconciliation'. The authors are looking at present day situations needing reconciliation rather than events of the past and a document will be published in November.

9. The future role of WARC Europe is still unclear. The needs and expectations from the member Churches vary greatly. The larger member Churches in West and Central Europe value theological discussion between

member Churches while the Churches of the East, both large and small, struggle to cope with the practical needs of the day and need help and support from their Reformed Church family.

10. A second meeting of Reformed Church leaders has been called for September with the purpose of exchanging views on the future of the Reformed Church family in Europe.

11. Cecil McCullough reported on 'the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe', formerly entitled 'the Leuenberg Fellowship'. He has been involved in a dialogue with the Baptist Churches. While no final agreement was possible, especially on the issue of rebaptism, it was a very useful dialogue with a large measure of agreement on the nature of the gospel.

12. Donald Watts represents our Church at the United Reformed Church Ecumenical Committee. He attended the Assembly in July 2004. It is always interesting to see how another Church does its business. The restructuring of CTBI was a major agenda item.

Conference of European Churches (CEC)

13. Heather McKinley continues to serve on the Executive of CEC. The search for a new General Director to succeed Keith Clements continues. The Central Committee plans to meet in Ireland in May, 2006. The third European Ecumenical Assembly is planned for September 2007 in Sibiu, Romania. Religious freedom is still an issue for CEC member Churches in some Eastern European countries.

Other Church Relationships

14. The Committee have discussed our relationship with Churches in USA, Canada and South Africa.

15. In response to a resolution at last year's General Assembly the Committee sought to meet with the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. A response from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is still pending.

16. However, the Committee met with David McKay, Minister of Cregagh Reformed Presbyterian Church and John McEwen an elder from Newtownards Reformed Presbyterian Church. There was an apology from the Clerk of the Synod. David is the Inter-Church correspondent. They outlined the history of our relationship. Until about 30 years ago their Moderator would not only have attended the Opening Night of the General Assembly but also would have addressed our Assembly. Our Moderator would also have attended the Reformed Presbyterian Assembly and would have spoken at it. There are now 36 Congregations in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland. They have a close relationship with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ireland and other Churches in Scotland, USA, Australia and Cyprus as well as relationships through the 'International Conference of Reformed Churches' which represents 500,000 reformed Christians. They pointed out how disproportionate our numbers were; how there often are very good local relationships; how we could sometimes speak with one voice in the area of public morals. However, they would be fearful of developing any closer links with the Presbyterian Church in

Ireland at a denominational level. Nor did they want to pursue any links with the Irish Council of Churches. The meeting was conducted in a cordial atmosphere.

17. The 'Covenant Council of the Church of Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland' was set up after bipartite talks between the Church of Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland. They have invited our Church to become observers. Since we are already involved in the alternating ministry scheme and work together in theological colleges and in chaplaincies, especially with the Methodist Church, the Committee feel we should respond positively to this request.

18. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) are restructuring; the proposals are giving more authority to the English, Scottish and Welsh national bodies. Obviously this has implications for the Irish national Church bodies. However, it has been the negotiating position of the Church Relations Committee that the Irish Council of Churches continues to be a non voting member of CTBI. It is felt that this option is most in line with past decisions of the General Assembly regarding our relationship with CTBI.

Irish Council of Churches (ICC)

19. Michael Earle has been General Secretary of ICC since 19 July 2004. Michael served in New Zealand before his present appointment but has lived and worked in Ireland in the past. He has brought a new energy and vision to ICC and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. The AGM of ICC took place in Cooke Centenary, Belfast on March 15. The theme was 'At the Crossroads: next steps?'

20. Rev Dr Richard Clutterbuck, Principal of Edgehill College, spoke on the theme of the Church as a lifelong learner. Bishop Peter Barrett was appointed as President of ICC in succession to Major Rik Pears of the Salvation Army. The Antiochian Orthodox Church which has a Congregation in Belfast was accepted into membership.

21. The Rev Dr Jim Campbell is Moderator of the Board of Overseas Affairs. Its main areas of interest are – world mission, international affairs, and development and relief issues. The 2004 World Mission Committee Conference was on the theme 'Return to Sender'. Views were shared on how each group helped returning personnel to reintegrate into the life and work of the Church in Ireland and also looked at the scope for resource sharing.

22. The Woman's Link Annual Fellowship Day was in Armagh where the speaker was Lady Eames on the theme 'Women making a difference'.

Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM)

23. The next Inter-Church meeting is in Cork on 5 and 6 May. The theme is 'Spirituality and Culture'. There will be a report on the Working Party on Spirituality. 'People are searching for spirituality but the search is increasingly disassociated from clearly defined belief systems or corporate loyalties. There is a profound suspicion of institutions and ready made answers. We have to find new ways of engaging with the new worlds that are emerging north and south. The Irish version of Christendom – the assumption that people are formed in and with a Christian consciousness, either in a Protestant or a Catholic version – is disappearing. We are moving into a profoundly missionary context'.

24. The Committee met with the All Ireland Churches' Consultative Committee on Racism; discussed the referendum on citizenship in the Republic; the Irish Church relationships with CTBI; considered a paper on the theme of 'dealing with the past' and set up a working group to meet with the Principals of the four theological Colleges on this island.

25. The Department of Social Issues are examining their future role and terms of reference. Issues which they have dealt with include: prosperity and poverty, environmental issues, alcohol use and abuse, dealing with the past, asylum and racism issues and restorative justice.

AD DAVIDSON, Convener

CHURCH HOUSE PANEL

The Rev Dr Donald J Watts reports:

1. The Church House Panel met frequently during the year to progress the remit given to it by the General Assembly. There were three main areas of work:

- (a) to sell the present buildings;
- (b) to seek out an alternative;
- (c) to prepare a list of historic items, memorials and gifts for removal from Church House.

2. In order to sell the present building it was agreed to invite five firms of Estate Agents to submit proposals for the sale. Three were shortlisted and interviewed. Following this process it was agreed to appoint DTZ McCombe Pierce as Agents. On their advice it was also decided to proceed to sale by tender. While the General Assembly had not asked for any restrictive covenants to be introduced, the Agent was informed of uses which would be of concern to the Church, especially the guidelines of the Trustees on ethical investment, and made aware that these would be a consideration. It was also agreed to commission a planning report from DTZ Pieda Consulting to assist the sale process.

3. A sub-group, under the guidance of Mr Alastair McQuoid, were detailed to search for possible sites and/or buildings. A meeting with staff had taken place to ascertain their views. Some key principles were identified:

- the new building must have a presence appropriate to our denomination and should be clearly identifiable as the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland;
- the building must be flexible and versatile, to meet not only current but the future needs of the Church;
- the building will be required to provide the necessary facilities for full-time staff and accommodate regular Board and Committee meetings, but not an Assembly Hall;
- the building must be easily accessible to staff, Board and Committee members and the general public. It should therefore be convenient to the main transportation links.

At the time of writing several sites are being assessed.

4. The Panel are grateful to the Very Rev Dr Sam Hutchinson for working with others to provide a list of memorials and gifts in the present

Church House. As many as possible will be moved to the new location but there are some which it may not be possible to move, especially those which are essentially part of the building. It is hoped to move all significant plaques and stones and most stained glass windows.

5. During the year, correspondence was received from a number of individuals, Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries. The Armagh Presbytery asked that a special meeting of the General Assembly be called to receive notice of motion to rescind the decision to sell. Some of the letters were concerned that the General Assembly had not sent the issue down to Presbyteries, or Kirk Sessions, for consultation and comment. Others were more concerned with the future nature and location of Church House. While the panel took note of the views expressed it did not sense that there was any strong desire for a special meeting of the General Assembly.

6. When it became evident that the Estate Agents would not be bringing tenders for the sale of Church House before mid-April, it was decided that the Panel should report on progress to a special meeting of the General Board on 10 May, 2005. It is hoped that at the meeting several possibilities for the resiting of Church House will be presented, along with a report on the sale. The Board will then report, with a recommendation, to the General Assembly for final decision on the sale and re-location. A separate, supplementary Report, will be sent out with the Annual Reports.

MANSES PANEL

The Rev JH Robinson reports:

INTRODUCTION

1. The remit of the Panel was to examine the Memorial of the Presbytery of East Belfast, which stated, "that in an age when tied houses are considered a liability by most professions and employers, manses, being no longer regarded as a benefit in kind, may not always best serve the Church's purposes or best interest. It therefore prays your Venerable Court to establish an ad hoc Committee of the Assembly to investigate the matter of Ministers being allowed to purchase their own house in place of a manse, and report to the General Assembly 2004. And Memorialists as in duty bound will ever pray..."

2. This Memorial was tabled successfully in 2003, but its Prayer was amended such that it was to be investigated by the General Board rather than an ad hoc Committee of the Assembly. Within the General Board delay was occasioned through reaching agreement on the membership of the Panel, making impossible a full Report to the 2004 General Assembly.

3. The Panel became quickly aware of the complexity of the issues involved and of the difficulty in reaching a clear consensus as witnessed in the reports and recommendations of previous Committees and comments of Presbyteries on same. Desiring to consult with the wider Church at an early stage, the Panel issued questionnaires and is sincerely appreciative of the replies from 18 Presbyteries, 445 individuals and 178 Congregational Committees.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

4. The specific remit was an exploration of the desirability and practical ramifications of extending the degree of flexibility currently offered to Ministers to live in their own home instead of a manse. This set the Agenda for protracted discussions in the Panel and determined the line of investigation of the questionnaires. Having enumerated the perceived advantages and disadvantages to Congregations, Ministers and Manse families of (a) maintaining the status quo and (b) extending the degree of flexibility presently offered, the Panel did not see a clear way forward (see Appendix).

5. Similarly, in analysing carefully the responses to the questionnaires the Panel did not perceive itself in receipt of unambiguous guidance. For instance, while 70% of Ministers in active service expressed a preference for living in their own house, only 26% of retired Ministers would have preferred to have done so during their ministry. Or again, while a clear majority of individual respondents felt that “the dependence that pertains when Ministers rely on the Church to provide and keep up a residence for them is no longer a good idea”, nevertheless an almost identical proportion acknowledged that “the advantages of retaining Manses are far outweighed by the advantages of Ministers living in their own homes”. Or further, while 60% of Congregational Committees favoured, following appropriate consents, “the option of allowing the Minister to reside in a house of their own as an alternative to the Manse”, the majority were opposed to equity-sharing or to paying increased salary from the interest on the capital realised by the sale of the Manse in order to make house purchase more viable. In other words, while apparently favouring greater flexibility no alternative means of provision appeared to commend itself.

6. Since no clear-cut conclusions could be deduced from the survey beyond a general sympathy to home ownership, after careful consideration of the replies and of financial implications the Panel decided that a more telling and pertinent consideration by which to judge the issue would be the vocation of the Congregation, and as an element of that corporate calling, the vocation of the Minister. The Panel began, therefore, to ask, what are the advantages (or otherwise) to the mission and service to the local community of (a) the Congregation, and (b) the Minister, of residing in a Manse or living in one’s own home?

RESIDING IN THE MANSE:

7. Some perceived ADVANTAGES to the mission and service to the local community of (a) the Congregation, and (b) the Minister:

- Provision of Manses may facilitate a greater degree of movement of Ministers bringing with them to their new Congregations fresh insights and approaches;
- A traditionally recognisable location to which members of the community can turn when in need;
- The Minister is very largely freed from ongoing maintenance and upkeep and thereby not distracted from service and mission;

- A suitably-sized Manse may facilitate consultation with individuals and the holding of small group meetings (in the advantageous setting of a home) without impinging on the Minister's family.
8. Some perceived DISADVANTAGES to the mission and service to the local community of (a) the Congregation, and (b) the Minister:
- Some financial resources that might otherwise be utilised in mission and service are being used to maintain a manse, which sometimes by its size or age (or both) requires considerable periodic expenditure;
 - The imposing appearance and perception of affluence of some Manses can act as a barrier to members of the community;
 - The distraction of the Minister having to raise funds for Manse upkeep, repairs, renovation or replacement;
 - Tensions that can arise between Congregation, Minister/Manse family about suitability, upkeep or renovation of the Manse, thus potentially harming the spirit of service and mission;
 - Anxiety about future housing provision in event of illness, bereavement or retirement, thereby diverting attention from and energies for service and mission.

LIVING IN ONE'S OWN HOME

9. Some perceived ADVANTAGES to the mission and service to the local community of (a) the Congregation, and (b) the Minister:
- Monies currently used for the purchase and upkeep of Manse could be used towards other avenues of service and ministry;
 - Providing the home is situated in the heart of the local community, home ownership may better 'model' an incarnational and servant approach to ministry;
 - Minimising of sensitivities and tensions in respect of Manse maintenance. Energies then better spent in reaching out;
 - A more approachable location to which to turn in need;
 - Relief from worry or stress about future home ownership or rental as time goes on allowing the Minister to focus better on his/her calling;
 - Freedom from responsibility for fund raising for a Manse;
 - Freedom from the distraction of having to provide and maintain alternative accommodation.
10. Some perceived DISADVANTAGES to the mission and service to the local community of (a) the Congregation, and (b) the Minister:
- Some of the time and energy which could be devoted by the Minister to service and mission are taken up in maintenance, repairs and replacements;
 - The Minister is likely to have less disposable income thus contracting the opportunities for refreshment and renewal so essential for creative and effective ministry;
 - Ministerial mobility in response to Call may be curtailed;
 - People may be more hesitant about contacting the Minister in his/her own home.

A WAY FORWARD?

11. As with the financial and family considerations, the yardstick of vocation also yields advantages and disadvantages. However, it also provides, in the Panel's judgement, a possible way forward, namely: *if, in the situations where there is a viable choice, it could be demonstrated that the vocation of the Congregation and Minister would be enhanced by one type of residency rather than the other, and if appropriate safeguards were in place to ensure that released resources were in fact applied directly to service and ministry, then greater flexibility than at present could be permitted.*

12. This overall proposal recognises that in some situations there is no viable alternative to occupancy of the Manse. For example, a Manse set in the grounds of a Church or a Manse which would by virtue of the terms of its Title Deeds cease to belong to the Congregation when not being used as a Manse. It also recognises that the monies donated originally for the erection of the Manse, and subsequently for its maintenance, were effectively for the enhancement of the ministry of the Congregation and that any realisation of these assets should be similarly employed.

13. If this proposal should commend itself in principle, further detailed consideration would require, in the Panel's estimate, to be given to such matters as:

- (a) Which bodies should be required to approve any move of residency of the Minister in a particular Congregation or union of Congregations? Congregation and Presbytery and Union Commission?
- (b) What safeguards would have to be put in place to ensure that any realised assets were applied directly for service and mission?
- (c) At what distance from the Congregation(s) can a Minister live before there is impairment to pastoral care and to service and mission to the surrounding community?
- (d) Should the current Church Architecture Committee's "Manse Guidelines" be revisited with a view to lessening Congregational expenditure on same, thus potentially releasing greater resources for other ministries?
- (e) What provision for housing should be made on retirement for those who occupy a Manse?

APPENDIX

Some of the advantages and disadvantages to Congregations, Ministers and Manse families of moving away from the present 'Manse' model were enumerated as follows:

Advantages to the Congregation:

- (i) Relief from the burden of upkeep;
- (ii) Avoidance of periodic fund-raising for Manse upkeep;
- (iii) No longer the embarrassment of maintaining a dependency culture;
- (iv) Avoidance of major fund-raising for new/replacement manses to Church Architecture Committee specification;

- (v) End of resentment on part of some Congregational members;
- (vi) Release of funds for other purposes such as more adequate Congregational staffing;
- (vii) Capital released and invested could provide a small housing allowance from the Interest, as well as making possible other ministries;
- (viii) A move away from what is perceived to be an antiquated and anachronistic system.

Disadvantages to the Congregation:

- (i) A regular sum would have to be set aside for a small housing allowance;
- (ii) Not all areas would have suitable housing stock;
- (iii) A Church office may have to be provided, together with suitable facilities for consultation;
- (iv) Mobility could be curtailed;
- (v) A housing allowance may deter some Ministers from applying for those vacancies where it was offered in preference to a Manse or vice versa;
- (vi) Some Manses, especially in Church grounds, may not be saleable; others, by virtue of the terms of their Title Deeds, may revert to the Landlord;
- (vii) Contributing substantially, and perhaps over a lengthy period, toward something from which they receive no financial return.

Advantages to the Minister:

- (i) Ministers would be freed from the dependency culture fostered by the present policy;
- (ii) They would be on the same footing as other professions in respect to home ownership;
- (iii) They would not be involved in the embarrassment of fund-raising for their own accommodation – new, replacement or up-grading;
- (iv) Anxiety about providing for a retirement home would be alleviated, as would the embarrassment of depending on relatives or others for accommodation in retirement;
- (v) They would have security for spouse and family in the event of illness or premature deaths;
- (vi) They would have personal control of their accommodation and its upkeep;
- (vii) The difficulty of providing and attending to a second, if modest, residence would be avoided;
- (viii) Savings toward a home of their own would not be out-paced by house price inflation as at present.

Disadvantages to the Minister:

- (i) Affording a mortgage, especially after a number of years as a student and Assistant;

- (ii) Some affluent areas of NI and many areas of ROI would be financially “beyond the reach” of many, particularly as a first charge;
- (iii) Financial considerations could constrain mobility;
- (iv) The greater likelihood of a Retired Minister in his own home continuing to reside in the parish;
- (v) Few being able to afford the typically spacious Manse-type accommodation which helps compensate for the ‘24-7’ existence;
- (vi) Congregational or individual expectations of hospitality and ‘open house’ may linger even when space does not permit;
- (vii) The perception by some members that they are paying the Minister’s mortgage.

CENTRES REVIEW PANEL

The Rev Dr Donald J Watts reports:

1. The following report was received by the General Board in March:-
 - (i) The Centres’ Review Panel was originally set up by the General Board, at the request of the then Youth Board, to consider the future of the three Youth Centres at Lucan, Guysmere and Rostrevor. It made immediate recommendations in regard to financial and health and safety issues at Lucan and also recommended limited work to progress at Guysmere, taking account of disability legislation. However, the Panel considered that the main emphasis of its remit should be on the future provision of residential accommodation for use by all in our denomination, including young people but also available for a wide variety of groups, who meet in Congregations for fellowship and training.
 - (ii) To ascertain the needs and potential usage of such a Centre or Centres, the Panel conducted a survey of all Congregations and was pleased to receive an almost 30% response. Of those who responded, 50% considered the Centres to be important or very important to the work of their Congregation, although almost half of those had not used one of the present Youth Centres during the previous three years (2001-2004). The Centres were mainly used by youth groups (74%), with family groups also represented. The Panel also invited Boards to indicate their potential use for a Residential Centre and while the response was uncertain it did indicate some interest in use for day and overnight meetings of planning and training groups.
 - (iii) The Panel is aware that there is strong attachment to the present Youth Centres and appreciates the genuine depth of feeling from those who would wish to retain and develop the particular Centre which has been significant in their lives. It says much for the work of the Centres that such strong emotional attachment exists and many lives have been changed over the years. The Panel would wish to honour that work, but it would be beyond the resources available to bring all three Centres up to the standards required of residential Centres in the 21st century.

- (iv) The Panel is also aware that there are those who will argue that providing residential accommodation is not a priority for our Church and Congregations should be encouraged to make other arrangements. The Panel, however, has taken the view that appropriate residential provision can be helpful in building up Congregational life and witness.
- (v) The proposal is therefore that our denomination should provide one new, purpose-built residential Centre which can be used by youth groups, but also by a wide variety of other groupings in Congregations and from elsewhere. It should be flexible, to provide for the needs of one large group or a number of smaller groups. It should be staffed to arrange for the programme needs of a group to be met, although those who wish to provide their own programme will be equally welcome. It is hoped that the reconciliation vision, so important to those in the Lucan context, may be retained in the new arrangements for residential accommodation.
- (vi) The siting of this new Centre is clearly important. Reasonable access for as many Congregations as possible is one criteria. It is also believed that this may become an important meeting-place for Presbyterians both North and South of the border. For these reasons the Panel would wish to explore, in the first instance, the use of the Rostrevor site which presently belongs to Rostrevor Congregation. Representatives of the Congregation have expressed willingness to discuss the use of the whole site, with the exception of the Church building.
- (vii) The proposal would be to sell the other two sites, or transfer them for other uses. The deeds are presently being checked for any restrictive covenants. The Dublin and Munster Presbytery has developed an interesting proposal for mixed use of the Lucan site, retaining ministry there, although further thought needs to be given to the emerging vision. At Guysmere, it would be proposed to keep the Centre open in the short-term until the new Centre is ready, although the market value of the site will need to be tested soon.
- (viii) It is recognised that these proposals make real demands on those who have developed particular vision for the work of the various Youth Centres which have achieved much for the Kingdom over the years. It is offered in the belief that a new residential Centre may similarly be used of God in the future to strengthen the vision and mission of our Church.

2. The Panel also held a meeting in March to share this vision with the relevant Committees of the present three Centres. Discussion with them and others who have expressed interest continues. The situation with regard to legal title is also in the process of being clarified. An updated report, with resolutions, will be printed in the Daily Minutes.

PRESBYTERY BOUNDS PANEL

The Rev Dr Donald J Watts reports:

1. The following report was received by the General Board in March:-
The General Assembly in 2004 appointed a Panel to “consider the number and boundaries of Presbyteries and report through the General Board” (Min 2004, p72, res 7). The membership of the Panel was: Moderator, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Synod Clerks; Revs JG Faris, TC Morrison; WH Scott, S Warnock.

BACKGROUND

The decision of the General Assembly in 2003 to abolish Synods raised a particular problem with regard to the future of the Education Board of the Synod of Belfast. It also opened up the question of whether in the absence of Synods, Presbyteries need to take on a more regional role. The discussion takes place in the context of an increasing number of Presbyteries struggling to provide considered nominations to Boards and Committees, or to appoint interim Moderators to cover vacancies. At the same time Presbyteries are being encouraged both to take on a more strategic, leadership role in mission and to provide adequate pastoral care for Ministers, their families and Congregations. It is clear that some consideration needs to be given to the size of the present Presbyteries and their efficiency.

THE PROCESS

The Panel carefully considered the way ahead, recognising that a consensus to change is not easy to achieve. It decided to follow a two-stage process, in the first year clarifying the principles to be followed before going on to recommend specific changes. It also considered that a “one size fits all” approach will probably not be adequate for the future needs of our Church, recognising the variety of situations in which Presbyteries are placed – rural, urban, sparsely populated by Presbyterians, Congregations placed closely together etc. The size and boundaries of Presbyteries must follow on from the roles and responsibilities allocated to them.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Five key roles and responsibilities were identified, all of which should be reflected in the size and definition of Presbyteries.

- Oversight of Congregations and Ministers, both pastoral and judicial;
- Strategic planning and leadership in mission;
- Fellowship of Presbyteries beyond their Congregational units and specifically for Ministers and their families. Encouraging fellowship within Congregations;
- Considered representation on General Assembly Boards and Committees
- Speaking publicly through the press and media to issues of local concern.

In carrying out these key responsibilities and recognising that Congregations are at the leading edge of mission, Presbyteries should:

- Encourage Congregations in their individual mission;
- Provide information and resources where appropriate;
- Encourage and where appropriate resource joint Congregational activities;
- Provide teaching, stimulation and an opportunity for reflection;
- Offer vision for the overall work of Congregations in the area.

NEXT STEPS

The Panel has now received reports from all Presbyteries and these are being considered. It may be helpful to clarify some points:

- The Panel does not intend to recommend Presbyteries of such size as to require a full-time Clerk;
- While the situation in Belfast has to be resolved, a one-Presbytery model is not the only solution;
- There are no plans to alter the balance of representation on Boards between those appointed by Presbytery and by the Business Board. If anything, the number of Business Board representatives should be decreased;
- The Panel favours an approach which where possible recognises the natural links of Congregations to major towns, but would value comment;
- Having considered the responses from Presbyteries and the debate at the General Assembly, the Panel would hope to discuss further in the Autumn with those Presbyteries who may be most affected by any change and send a report to all Presbyteries in the New Year.

FOYLE MEMORIAL PANEL

The Rev Dr Donald J Watts reports:

1. The General Assembly, 2004, received the following Memorial from the Foyle Presbytery and resolved that its prayer be granted:

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet at Belfast on the 7th day of June 2004.

The Memorial of the Presbytery of Foyle Respectfully sheweth:

That there seems to be some confusion as to the function and title of a Retired Minister as a member of the Kirk Session as outlined in Par 225(1) of the Code. Such membership has often been viewed as an honorary position rather than bestowing right to active participation within the Kirk Session. The title 'Senior Minister' is not present in the Code of our Church.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Court to refer the matter to the General Board for consideration of

1. *A Retired Minister's continued membership of the Kirk Session.*
2. *The most appropriate title to be used in reference to the retired Minister of a Congregation.*
3. *Advice for retired Ministers on their involvement and relationships within their previous Congregation/s*

And report back to the General Assembly of June 2005

And Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

2. At its October meeting the General Board appointed a small Panel to consider the prayer of the Memorial. The Panel reported in March with the following recommendations:

- (A) The Panel recommends that Par 225 (1) of the Code be deleted, removing the right, however rarely exercised in practice, of a retired Minister to continue as a member of Kirk Session.
- (B) In regard to “the most appropriate title”, that of “Senior Minister”, though absent from the Code, is now common. However, in spite of its frequent usage, the Panel considers that it is potentially misleading, especially for those outside the Church and for those more familiar with the American scene. It also judges that the terms “Retired Minister” or “Minister, Retired”, while paralleled in various professions, do not sufficiently recognise the distinctly vocational, “for life”, dimension of ordained ministry. It therefore suggests that the term “Minister Emeritus” is most appropriate and recommends that it be used forthwith.
- (C) In respect of offering advice, the Panel’s assessment is that in the vast majority of instances the recently-retired Minister is conscious of the need to disengage from the life and activities of their former charge and does so willingly, while the successor is equally conscious of the personal and pastoral ties that have been forged and offers appropriate opportunities to the Minister Emeritus to be involved periodically in the life and fellowship of the Congregation. Where such mutual wisdom and benefit prevail no further advice, in the Panel’s judgement, is necessary. However, in the small minority of instances where either the Minister Emeritus fails to grasp the necessity of “letting go” or the new incumbent fails to appreciate the lingering bonds, the Panel recommends:
 - (a) that there should be no involvement in the life of the Congregation by the Minister Emeritus without prior consultation with the Minister (or Vacancy Convener);
 - (b) that the succeeding Minister (or Vacancy Convener) should be sensitive to the relationships of trust and affection that exist between the Congregation and his/her predecessor and should facilitate suitable opportunities for their expression.
- (D) Pars 225(2) and 225(3) do not fall directly within the remit of the Panel, but are nevertheless closely related and should, in the Panel’s view, be now altered and/or deleted. In regard to Par 225(2), the Panel recommends that the Minister in active duty should receive the benefit of all general endowments for the Minister of the Congregation unless specifically allocated otherwise by the terms of the trust on which they are held.

3. A resolution is appended to test the mind of the General Assembly and, if approved, overtures will be prepared for 2006.

MISSION EDUCATION, PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATIONS PANEL

The Rev Dr Donald J Watts reports:

1. The General Assembly, 2004, resolved that the General Board should appoint a panel to report to the 2005 General Assembly “with regard to the issues in the second paragraph of the ‘Outstanding matters’ section of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities.” This focussed on the need within the Mission Boards for effective education in mission, with resource implications, and for recognition of the co-ordination role of the Communications Board. It identified specifically the issues of executive staff posts in mission education and the number of magazines being produced (Reports, 2004, p 355).

2. The General Board in October appointed a Panel to consider these issues. To ensure that the main Mission Boards were not just consulted but involved in evolving the policy, each was asked to appoint an appropriate person to the Panel.

3. In April the Panel reported that it had met on three occasions and identified three issues to be addressed:

- Provision of a co-ordinated communications strategy involving the various Boards in conjunction with the Board of Communications;
- Rationalisation of the various magazines produced within the Boards;
- ‘Other related matters’ and particularly the position of ‘education officers’ within individual Boards.

4. Co-ordinated Communications Strategy

4.1 Organisational Responsibilities of the Board of Communications

The Board of Communications should have responsibility for the general communication of the Presbyterian Church and an involvement with every Board, assisting it in effective communications and overseeing co-ordination between Boards in communications matters.

Its target audience should be the entire membership of the Presbyterian Church and beyond in addition to assisting individual Boards who wish to communicate beyond their support group and groups of Boards who wish to co-ordinate their communication.

Its organisational responsibilities should include:

- Establishment of a communications co-ordinating panel;
- Production of co-ordinated diary and plan for overall communication – a development of the diary at the front of the directory;
- Production of a corporate design handbook specifying use of logo and layout of common materials eg letterhead etc;
- Development of a simple and effective approval or sign off procedure so that people who need to have a final overview of an item of communication do so;
- Establish a preferred list of production houses who are briefed on Presbyterian corporate design – the production department in Church House being one;

- Production of templates for each department and training how to use them to print headed letters, etc on their own computers and printers;
- Briefing Boards on their communication responsibilities and opportunities particularly encouraging them to develop their contact lists of supporters;
- Briefing Congregations on the resources available to them for communicating to their Congregations etc and assisting them through training and advice;
- Working with the IT department to fulfil the requirements regarding technology access, database requirements, appropriate hardware and software and regularly liaising with them on progress and developments.

4.2 Practical Responsibilities of the Board of Communications

The Board should have responsibility for the design, production and development of the following:

- The Briefing – A pamphlet distributed to all families marketing our areas of national ministry to enthuse people, educate them and achieve their financial support through United Appeal;
- Video News – Largely for distribution to Churches, these 4-5 minute films would bring to life the stories in the Briefing and other relevant work of our Church. Clips would be used as part of Church services to highlight a particular area of work and pointing people to the web for information;
- Posters – Regular production of posters promoting aspects of national ministry of the Presbyterian Church and pointing people to the web for further news;
- Stories for Congregational announcements and magazines – Regularly distributed to their editors;
- Decision Makers Newsheet – This should be distributed to decision makers in Congregations ie Ministers, elders and Committee members and would disseminate official decisions, policy and views of the Presbyterian Church;
- Internet – The Board of Communications are responsible for the home pages which should have a strong news feel and give direction to other interest areas which, by agreement, would be maintained by the Board of Communications or the relevant Board. The availability of news on the web needs to be strongly promoted;
- Summary Annual Report – a glossy annual report (say 16 pages) to be particularly distributed to people who should have a regular overview of what the Church in doing and saying, eg MPs, MLAs, Education Board Chairs, etc;
- Board Leaflets – The Briefing provides a regular story about the work of all Boards. These leaflets should be available for people who want to know more about a particular Board and give more detailed information about every aspect of its work together with contact details for more information;

- Church wide campaigns – Things like promoting Gift Aid or Get A Life to the whole Church;
- Roadshows – Taking the stories and promotion of the ‘national ministries’ of the Church to other locations;
- Denominational Magazine – see later comments;
- Resources Catalogue – A listing of the resources produced by the Church and a way to order them would be helpful;
- Information in Reception – Our reception and our public areas need to display our work and ministry. In any change to premises there should be a marketing area right at the entrance where people can get information, see and pick up the range of resources that we produce and leave with a feeling of excitement about what the Presbyterian Church is doing;
- Revised Media Strategy.

4.3 Organisational Responsibilities of Individual Boards

- Have meaningful representation on a co-ordinating panel;
- Have necessary IT hardware and software – eg access to databases, internet and good computer printers etc;
- Have a member of departmental staff with responsibility for communications issues who represents the Board on the co-ordinating panel. They would ensure that anything produced by the Board is within the overall agreed framework and has had appropriate sign off.
- Actively develop contact lists of supporters who are specifically interested in the work of their Board;
- Develop ways in which they can communicate effectively with their supporters;
- Actively consider ways in which they should be talking to the whole Church, in co-ordination with other Boards.

4.4 Practical Responsibilities of Individual Boards

- Supporter Groups – Each Board should have responsibility for communicating their news to their support group by whatever method is appropriate and within the corporate guidelines. The exception to this would be media which should go through the press office. Each Board would be responsible for the content (not necessarily the technical support) of their part of the web site;
- Sources of News – Each Board should be proactive, passing stories to the Board of Communications for use in overall communication materials;
- Growth of Support – Each Board should be enthusing and expanding their support group through whatever materials they want within the corporate guidelines;
- Need for co-ordination – There must be a recognition that when a Board wants to communicate to a wider group of people outside its supporters there is a need for co-ordination with other Boards.

5. Rationalisation of the various magazines

The interests of each of the magazines currently produced – Wider World, Christian Irishman and Herald – were represented on the panel by a member of the relevant supervising body.

The panel was agreed that all three magazines fulfilled a function which could be incorporated within the Communications Strategy above, but would require some changes to branding and content.

Wider World

- This is the magazine of the PWA but needs to be more clearly branded as such. In the revised layout as of March 2005 the cover appears to identify it as a magazine of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland rather than the PWA.

The Christian Irishman

- The Board of Mission in Ireland has some very important information to disseminate to the Church in terms of its various panels on Congregational Life. It requires to challenge existing practices and develop new thinking;
- This will need effective communication to ‘movers and shakers’ within the Church and a subscription magazine may not be the best way to do this. Other better channels may exist, as identified under the individual Board’s responsibility in the Communications Strategy section of this report;
- Other aspects of the Irishman, including its reporting of the day to day work of the Irish Mission and devotional articles, would reach a wider audience and be more appropriate in a single denominational magazine.

The Presbyterian Herald

- The Presbyterian Herald needs to establish itself as the denominational magazine of the Presbyterian Church. In doing this it needs to take account of the possibilities offered to monthly magazines through electronic publishing on the web and by email and the opportunities of more effective distribution.
- The Herald should gather and disseminate news and information and provide comment and analysis about every aspect of the denomination and its work to Church members and the public. As such it should have editorial freedom and independence to report fully and fairly.
- Included should be a devotional aspect which reflects the various theological opinions within the Church as well as informing its readership of the work of individual Boards and Agencies. This may eventually incorporate a prayer focus to complement the annual Points for Prayer handbook.
- The possibility of a full time post should be considered with responsibilities to include editorship of the Herald and the website together with managing regular dissemination of information to Congregational magazines and announcement sheet editors.

6. Position of Education Officers within Individual Boards

It is clear from 4.4 above that each Mission Board should have someone with responsibility for the education and promotional aspect of its work. That person will also need to have the authority to take part effectively in the Co-ordinating Panel, set up by the Communications Board if this strategy is adopted. The Panel considers that it is for each Board to decide, working within its budgetary and resource constraints, how that function should be carried out. It may be an area where joint Board co-operation would be appropriate. One Board already combines the "education" function with responsibility for another area of work. Naturally, if a Board considers that to undertake this work requires additional staff, the normal processes will apply.

MEMORIAL RECORD

Rev Walter Kerr, BA, BD, Senior Minister of First Boardmills died on 5 October, 2004, in the 94th year of his age and the 71st year of his Ministry.

A Donegal man, he grew up within Trinity Presbyterian Church, Letterkenny, was educated at Barkhall National School, St Eunan's College Letterkenny, Magee University College, Londonderry, Trinity College, Dublin, from which he graduated in Arts. He subsequently graduated in Divinity from Queens University Belfast. Having undertaken his theological studies at what was then Assembly's College, Belfast, and on completion of his assistantship in Ballysillan Church, he was ordained to his first and only charge – First Boardmills – at the tender age of 23 years. He quickly settled into what was a long, happy and greatly blessed ministry.

In 1938 he married Jean McConnell, daughter of the Rev and Mrs James McConnell of Spa. She predeceased him by approximately one year. They had two daughters, Ruth Nan Armstrong and Maureen Semple to whom the sympathy of their many friends is directed.

An avid reader, among his great interests was History and Egyptology. He published a Brief History of First Boardmills in 1938 and the 'Bi-centenary of First Boardmills' in 1948. He was Moderator of the Synod of Belfast in 1956 and Clerk of the Down Presbytery from 1958-1964.

Rev Dr Alan Lynd McAloney, BA, BD, Senior Minister of Old Congregation, Randalstown died on 6 October, 2004 in the 80th year of his age and the 54th of his Ministry.

Growing up in the Congregation of Cooke Centenary, Belfast, he was educated at Rosetta Primary School and the Royal Belfast Academical Institution from which he proceeded to Trinity College, Dublin where he graduated in Arts. Subsequently he acquired the BD degree from Queens University, Belfast. It was during his undergraduate year that he received a call to the Ministry and undertook his theological studies at what was then Assembly's College, Belfast. On completion of his assistantship in Fisherwick Congregation he received a call to Old Congregation, Randalstown, where he spent his entire active ministry – a ministry greatly appreciated not just for the quality of his thoroughly prepared pulpit work but his devotion to and care for his people.

Alan McAloney's ministry extended far beyond the bounds of Old Congregation, Randalstown. From 1968 to 1976 he was Convener of the General Assembly's Student Studies Committee and from 1976-83 he was Convener of the Board of Studies. Within these capacities he exercised a most effective ministry in the assessment, supervision and care of students for the Ministry of our Church. He initiated the Students Committee within the Templepatrick Presbytery and, as Convener for many years, guided that Committee in a thorough and gracious manner to test the call of students, emphasizing the need for appropriate academic standards, true spiritual convictions and in the preaching of the Gospel, the importance of thorough preparation, vivid presentation, immaculate appearance and the correct use of the English language. His many friends were delighted when his work in these and many other capacities was recognized in the conferring by the College Faculty of the Degree of Doctor of Divinity, so well deserved!

In the year 1986 the dark shadow of bereavement crossed Alan's pathway in the death of his wife, Sybil – a severe blow both to him and their daughter Alison. Some years later however, he found new happiness in his marriage to Joy who survives him. To her, Alan's daughter Alison, her husband Graham Jones and their two children Sian and William, the sympathy of their many friends is directed.

Rev Frederick Alexander Bradley, BA, BD, Minister of Whitehead Presbyterian Church died on 31 October, 2004 in the 53rd year of his age and the 24th year of his Ministry. Spending the earlier part of his life in Armagh and Armoey he was educated in Armoey Primary School, Dalriada Grammar School, Ballymoney, Queens University, Belfast and New College, Edinburgh. From Queens he graduated in Arts and from Edinburgh he graduated in Divinity. For some time he taught in a Roman Catholic School in Papua New Guinea and often spoke of how enriching this experience had been. Ordained in Stormont Church where he did his assistantship, in 1982 he received a call to his first charge – Second Killyleagh and in 1993 to the Congregation of Whitehead where he remained until his death. In addition to a thoughtful pulpit ministry he exercised a particularly warm and caring pastoral ministry which was appreciated both within and beyond his Congregations. He served the wider Church as Convener of the Chaplains Committee from 1988-1995. He had one daughter – Katie – to his first marriage which sadly broke up. Happily he found new joy in his marriage to Christina, herself a Minister of our Church. To her, Katie, and his two step daughters, Christina Beatny (De La Rosa) and Rosane Frida (De La Rosa), the sympathy of their many friends is directed.

Rev Herbert Watson Brooks, BA, Senior Minister of Armoey died on 7 November, 2004 in the 87th year of his age and the 58th of his Ministry. Born at Stranorlar in Co Donegal he was educated at Finn College Ballybofey, the Royal School Raphoe, Magee University College, Londonderry and Trinity College, Dublin from which he graduated in Arts. He undertook his theological studies at what was then Assembly's College, Belfast. He was licenced by Donegal Presbytery and ordained to his first charge – Lisbellaw and Tempo in 1946. In the year 1957 he received a call to the Ballyreagh Congregation and in

1964 he was installed as Minister of Armoy where he remained until retirement in 1982. His administrative skills were put to good use as Clerk of the two Presbyteries successively - Clogher and Omagh. Among his many interests were the unusual ones of Marquetry and Cactus growing.

His first wife was the former Evelyn Adelaide Duncan to whom he had two sons, David and Charles. Sadly in 1977 she died. His second wife Ruby predeceased him by less than one month. His pulpit ministry bore the marks of thorough preparation and his pastoral ministry tender loving care of his people. His passing leaves our Church mourning the passing of a colleague held in great respect and affection and the sympathy and prayers of their many friends are with his sons David and Charles.

Rev Arthur Harold Graham, BA, DD, Director Emeritus of Christian Training died on 7 November, 2004 in the 73rd year of his age and the 47th of his Ministry. Brought up in the Ballymena area he attended High Kirk Church and was educated at Ballymena Model, Ballymena Academy, Magee College Londonderry, New College Edinburgh and he completed his theological studies at what was then Assembly's College, Belfast. After a happy assistantship in Sinclair Seamen's Congregation he was called to his first charge, Second Boardmills and Killaney in 1957 from which he was called to Gt Victoria Street, Belfast, in 1964. He remained in this charge until 1980 when he became the first Director of Christian Training under the Magee Fund Scheme Committee. This position he held until retirement in 1999. His wide experience of effective parish ministry in both country and city Congregations made him ideally suited for this latter post. As Director of Christian Training he worked tirelessly, read widely and travelled extensively in the pursuit of materials to resource the wide variety of courses which he conducted at both Congregational and Presbytery level. An able preacher he was much in demand as an Evangelist at Congregational Missions. Through these many testified conversion experience and nothing pleased him more than to meet people, often years later, who told him that they found Christ at such and such a Mission which he had conducted. His administrative gifts were put to good use as Convener of the Church Extension Committee 1968-78, Convener of the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training 1980-87 and as Convener of the Strategy for Mission Committee 1988-91. Outside the Presbyterian Church he was Chaplain to the Shaftesbury Square Hospital and Governor of several Schools including Balmoral High School of which he was Chairman of the Board of Governors. His ready pen published a number of useful publications including – 'Divine Healing in the Church Today'. An enthusiastic member of a Ministers Club called the 'Browns Study' he was Secretary for many years and members of that club will long remember the meticulous way he performed his duties in ensuring year after year an interesting list of Speakers, enjoyable outings and well run meetings. Outside Church work his great interests were family and sport and especially Rugby and Golf: interests which he passed on to his sons Keith, Gareth and Neil. To them and their mother Olive the sympathy of their many friends is extended.

Rev Thomas Alexander Houston, MA, Senior Minister of Cloughey and Portavogie died on 16 January, 2005 in the 86th year of his age and the 53rd of

his Ministry. On leaving school he found employment in Messrs Harland & Wolff (Shipbuilders). Before long however he felt the call of God to the Ministry. He studied for matriculation at Renshaw's Academy and thereafter proceeded to Magee College, Londonderry and subsequently he graduated in Arts from Trinity College, Dublin. He undertook his theological studies at what was then Assembly's College, Belfast.

Licensed as a probationer for the Ministry by the Presbytery of Belfast he served his assistantship in McQuiston Memorial Church, before being called to Loughmourne where he was ordained. In 1956 he moved to Garryduff Congregation and finally to Cloughey and Portavogie where he remained until retirement, due to ill health, in 1979. In addition to his greatly appreciated work as a parish Minister he was an enthusiastic fundraiser for Cancer Research and, through his involvement in the Ministry of Divine Healing, many people testified to being greatly blessed.

Greatly loved and respected by his family and many friends, he will be sadly missed.

Rev George Brian Greer McConnell BA, MA, DD, Senior Minister of Donore Presbyterian Church died on 12 February, 2005 in the 91st year of his age and the 63rd year of his Ministry. A son of the Manse he was brought up in Markethill, Belmont and Stormont. He was educated at Mourne Grange, Campbell College, Queens University, Westminster College, Cambridge and what was then Assembly's College, Belfast.

Serving Assistantships in Ekenhead, Abbey and Bray in the early 1940's he became Minister of Donore in 1945 and remained there until retirement to his beloved Warrenpoint in 1980. The fact that Donore was a smallish Congregation made intimacy possible and his genuine compassionate interest in the affairs of his people was greatly appreciated.

He, his wife Molly and their two daughters Ann and Isobel, worked as a team and their Manse was an open House where warm hospitality embraced not only members of their Congregation but very many others. Their daughters Ann and Isobel and their families will be the focus of much genuine sympathy from their many friends within and far beyond the bounds of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Not only did he exercise an effective ministry within the Congregations where he served but also to the wider Church and indeed Churches. He was, for example, Dean of Residences at Trinity College Dublin; a Catechist to the same University and that of St Andrews College; he was Chaplain to Mountjoy Prison; Chaplain to St Kevins Hospital; a member of the Board of Christian Aid. Within Presbyterianism he was Convener of the Committee on National and International Problems where his sharp and well stocked mind made an enormous contribution to many moral and ethical debates and useful reports on issues as diverse as the Irish Question, Sexual Ethics, Abortion, Euthanasia and Suicide. His many friends both within and beyond Presbyterianism will ever be thankful to Almighty God for the wide variety of gifts given to him. But also for the way that these gifts were used to benefit others. For example, his pleasure in stimulating conversation, his wisdom and integrity, his moral courage, his

enthusiasm for life and beauty, his love for people, irrespective of class or creed and his devotion and service to Almighty God.

Rev John Loughran Keenan, Minister of Spa and Magherahamlet died suddenly on 19 February 2005 in the 61st year of his age and the 19th year of his Ministry. Although born in Belfast he was brought up in the Congregation of Millisle where in addition to his involvement in Youth Work he became an Elder. He was educated at Regent House Grammar School, Newtownards, Stranmillis College, Belfast and undertook his theological studies at Union Theological College, Belfast. In his early working life he taught in Bangor High School and eventually became Head of RE in Gransha High School. Having thought and prayed about entering the Ministry for several years he eventually made an approach and was accepted as a student for the Ministry. On completion of his studies at Union College he was assigned as assistant to the Congregation of First Comber in 1987 after which he was called as Minister to the Congregations of Spa and Magherahamlet. Within these Congregations he exercised a much appreciated ministry to both young and not so young. He took a keen interest in a wide variety of sports and was greatly interested in history, especially within the various localities where he worked and lived.

Knowing his wife, the former Isabel Coulter, from childhood - indeed they went to the same Primary and Grammar Schools and to Stranmillis College together - they were married in Shore Street, Donaghadee in 1973. They had two sons, Nigel and Michael. To them, and his wife Isabel the sympathy of their many friends is directed.

Rev James McAllister, OBE, MA, Senior Minister of Fortwilliam Park died suddenly on the 13 March, 2005 in the 81st year of his age and the 54th year of his Ministry. Born at Glarryford in Co Antrim he was brought up in the Congregation of Wellington Street, Ballymena and educated at Ballymena Academy, Magee University College, Londonderry, Trinity College, Dublin and what was then Assembly's College, Belfast. He was the holder from Trinity College of a First Class Moderatorship in Mental and Moral Science. Licenced as a probationer for the Ministry by his home Presbytery - Ballymena - he was Assistant for short periods in Stranorlar, Ulsterville and Cregagh Congregations. He was ordained to his first charge - Sloan Street, Lisburn - in 1951. In 1964 he was called to the Congregation of Megain Memorial and in 1977 to the Congregation of Fortwilliam Park where he remained until retirement in 1990. Greatly gifted with words, his pulpit ministry was much appreciated far beyond the bounds of the Congregations in which he ministered and indeed, through his frequent broadcasts, he touched for good the lives of many.

A lover of the 'wide open spaces' he had a tremendous appreciation of nature in its various forms and, for relaxation, took great delight in co-operating with God in the Garden and in particular growing fruit and vegetables. Among his wide variety of interests was fishing.

His love and compassion for people were evidenced in his enthusiasm for the provision of suitable housing accommodation for those affected by Redevelopment in 'downtown' Belfast. For him work in Housing Associations was a labour of love. The world of 'education' lay dear to his heart. As

Chairman of the Belfast Education and Library Board he wasn't content just to chair the plethora of meetings, but loved to get out into the schools to meet the pupils and encourage the teachers. In this whole area he made an immense contribution for which he was deservedly awarded the OBE.

His experience in education made him an ideal Chairman of the General Assembly's Board of Education - a post which he held with distinction from 1998-2004. From 1970-1978 he convened the Retirements and Retired Ministers Fund Committee and from 1985-1986 he convened the Ministry and Pensions Committee. He was a former Clerk of North Belfast Presbytery and Moderator of the Synod of Belfast in 1981. Naturally it was in his home that he was known best and loved most. Hence it is in his home that he will be missed most. His wife Edna, daughters Hazel, Helen and Heather Claire and son Charles can rest assured that they will be in the thoughts and prayers of their many friends within and far beyond the bounds of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly adopt the key ideas identified in the Priorities Committee report, to shape our priorities in mission and witness.
3. That comments on the draft guidelines on Public Events at which non-Christian religions participate be sent to the Convener of the Doctrine Committee, by 31 December 2005.
4. That the Board of Mission in Ireland be given responsibility for implementing the 2004 resolution on every member ministry.
5. That the General Assembly agree the supervision of the Conciliation Panel as a responsibility of the Moderator's Advisory Committee.
6. That the General Assembly adopt the recommendations of the Recognised Ministries Committee on Ministers and Licentiates without Charge.
7. That the General Assembly approve the proposal for the development of a peacemaking programme and the appointment of two programme officers, with the financial arrangements and management structure outlined.
8. That the General Assembly appoint:
 - To the Irish Council of Churches: Rev J Brackenridge, Rev Dr SJ Campbell, L Conway, OBE, Rev LE Carroll, Mrs Pat Crossley, Rev AD Davidson, Rev GAJ Farquhar, Miss D Gilmour, Rev Dr RJG Gray, Rev R Herron, Rev Dr S Hutchinson, Mrs M Irwin, Rev L Kennedy-Ritchie, R Kerr, Rev C McClure, Rev D Nesbitt, JA Patterson, Ms Valerie Steele, Rev Dr DJ Watts.
 - To the Irish Council of Churches Executive: Rev J Brackenridge, Rev L Kennedy- Ritchie, Rev AD Davidson, Rev Dr DJ Watts.
 - To the Irish Inter-Church Committee: Rev AD Davidson, Rev Dr DJ Watts.
 - As an observer to the Covenant Council of the Church of Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland: Rev AV Martin.
9. That the resignation of the Rev Dr Donald Watts as the Presbyterian representative on the Ecumenical Committee of the United Reformed Church be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and the Rev Brian Boyd be appointed from 2005-2008.

10. That the General Assembly welcome plans for the Central Committee of the Conference of European Churches to meet in Ireland during 2006.

11. That the General Assembly agree in principle the “way forward” outlined in paragraph 11 of the Manses Report.

12. That the Panel on Manses, in consultation with other relevant bodies, bring to the General Assembly of 2006 specific recommendations and resolutions in respect of the outworking of these proposals.

13. That the General Assembly recognise the key roles and responsibilities of Presbyteries identified in the report of the Panel on Presbytery Bounds and ask the Panel to bring specific proposals for adjustment to the size and boundaries of Presbyteries to the General Assembly of 2006.

14. That the General Assembly recognise Licentiates under the care of a Presbytery as officiants, registered to celebrate marriage.

15. That the General Assembly approve the recommendations of the Foyle Memorial Panel and ask for overtures to be prepared.

16. That the following budgets be set for the Incidental Fund:

Church and Society (General)	£2,000
Church and Society (Brussels)	£9,500
Peace and Peacemaking Panel	£5,000
Conciliation Panel	£1,000
Environment Panel	£1,000
Irish Council of Churches	£16,400
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	£8,000
Conference of European Churches	£5,000
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	£10,500
Community of Protestant Churches in Europe	£1,000
General work of the Board	£8,000
Race Relations Grants:	
Embrace	£500
Churches' Asylum Network	£250
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities	£250
Irish Refugee Council	£250
Diakonia Council of Churches (South Africa)	£750
Vuleka Trust (South Africa)	£750

17. That the resignation of the Very Rev Dr HA Dunlop as Co-Convener of the Church and Society Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and the Rev LE Carroll appointed in his place.

18. That the resignation of the Rev LE Carroll as Convener of the Global Concerns Committee be accepted, that she be thanked for her services and _____ appointed in her place.

19. 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 TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 25(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 25(1) of the Code, after the word “congregation” there be inserted the words “except that a ruling elder may be given permission by the Kirk Session not to carry out the duties of the eldership for a specified time” and after the word “vote” there be added the sentence: “Where a ruling elder has been temporarily released from the duties of the eldership in the Congregation for a specified time, that elder shall not act as a member of the Kirk Session and shall not be entitled to attend, speak or exercise a vote in the Kirk Session.”

Anent Par 30(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 30(3) of the Code the words “but the Kirk Session may assign such other duties as it sees fit” be added after the word “report”.

Anent Par 50(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 50(2) of the Code the word “being” be deleted and the words “discussed and” added in its place.

Anent Par 272(4)(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 272(4)(d) of the Code be deleted and that sub paragraph (e) be redesignated (d).

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

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 272(5)(a) of the Code the words “or authorities of the Armed Services” be deleted.

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

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that the present Par 272(5)(b) and (c) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted as Par 272(5)(b): “to submit nominations for the offices of Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Theological Professors and College Principal.”

Anent Par 272(6) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 272(6) of the Code be deleted.

Anent Par 281(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 281 of the Code a new sub-paragraph (3) be added as follows:

“(3) The Board is authorised

(a) to call Ministers recommended by their Presbyteries who have been offered full-time chaplaincies in HM Forces, or in hospitals, hospices or prisons; and

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

upon condition that Ministers called or nominated under the foregoing subparagraphs (a) or (b) report as follows:

(i) full-time chaplains shall report in writing on their work to the Board or to 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.

And that sub-paragraph (3) be re-numbered as (4).”

DONALD J WATTS

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: THE CLERK

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

FOYLE PRESBYTERY RE DUNGIVEN AND LARGY

2. On 21 June, 2004 the Commission considered a letter from the Foyle Presbytery asking for a determination on amended Terms of Union between the Congregations of Dungiven and Largy. The particular issue related to the respective responsibilities of the Congregations to meet the expense of maintenance of Dungiven Manse. Correspondence from the Union Commission to the Minister of the joint charge, dated 24 November, 1995 and certified copies of the Minutes of Largy Committee, dated 28 November, 1995 and Dungiven Committee, dated 30 January, 1996, were also submitted.

3. The Commission considered that under Code Par 47(1) the Congregational Committee has the duty “to administer the temporal affairs of the congregation”. In addition to the functions outlined at Code Par 47(2)(a-g), it shall “carry out such other functions as may be prescribed”. (Par 47(2)(h)).

4. It also noted that Code Par 274(6)(a) states: “Where in the opinion of the Commission, the pastorate of two or more congregations may be united, with the agreement of the representatives of the congregation concerned, terms of union shall be fixed ...”

5. In the light of the above, the Commission determined that it was appropriate for the Union Commission to recognise the Congregational Committees as the “representatives of the congregations” and to amend the terms of the union to which both Congregational Committees, who are the representatives of the concerned Congregations, had agreed on 28 November, 1995 and 30 January, 1996. In the light of the Committee agreements the terms of union include the term regarding the maintenance expenses of the Manse.

SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY RE McCracken Memorial

6. The Commission met on 11 October, 22 October, 10 December, 2004 and 21 January, 2005 to consider a reference by the South Belfast Presbytery under Code 224 in relation to the minister of McCracken Memorial Congregation. Papers were submitted which included copies of:

- (i) the Minute of Presbytery dated 22 March, 2004, which set up a Presbytery Commission to investigate the situation at McCracken Memorial;
- (ii) the Minute of Presbytery dated 23 June, 2004, which received a report from the Presbytery Commission;
- (iii) Minutes and notes of meetings of the Presbytery Commission and related meetings between 30 March, 2004 and 1 October, 2004.

7. In the Minute of Presbytery dated 23 June, 2004, the Presbytery agreed “to the issue being passed to the Judicial Commission under Par of the Code 224 for their ruling and finding on the matter”. However the Presbytery

had not conferred with the minister under Code Par 224 as required. While the Presbytery Commission did subsequently meet and confer with the minister, the Presbytery had already made its decision rather than given the Commission power to issue. It was decided that the reference to the Judicial Commission was not competent in its present form and it was sent back to the Presbytery.

8. The Judicial Commission also instructed the Presbytery Commission to direct the minister to take no further part in the affairs of McCracken Memorial Church until the matter is resolved, though he must attend meetings of the Judicial Commission, the Presbytery or the Presbytery's McCracken Memorial Commission, to which he may be summoned. His salary and his right to occupy the manse would not be affected during this process. A statement was read at morning worship in McCracken Memorial on 24 October 2004, to keep the Congregation informed of the situation.

9. As the Assembly's Solicitor, Mr Alastair Rankin, was not eligible to advise on this matter it was agreed that the Clerk, in consultation with the Very Rev Dr Samuel Hutchinson, should invite another solicitor to be available for advice as required. Subsequently the firm of Carson McDowell, Solicitors, agreed to act and Mr Neil Faris attended the Commission.

10. On the 10 December, 2004, the Judicial Commission received a referral from the South Belfast Presbytery Commission dealing with matters in McCracken Memorial, under Code Par 224. This was accepted as in order and plans put in place to begin a hearing on 4 January, 2005. The Judicial Commission also received correspondence from members of McCracken Memorial Congregation.

11. The question was raised as to the status of the Rev Brian Martin should he voluntarily resign the charge of McCracken Memorial under Code Par 226 and the nature of any financial arrangement which might be made. It was agreed to direct the South Belfast Presbytery that should the Rev Brian Martin voluntarily resign under Code Par 226, he should be received as a minister without charge under the care of the Presbytery and if he received a Call credentials should be issued. A special financial arrangement was agreed and forwarded for discussion by the Union Commission. An announcement indicating progress to date was made in McCracken Memorial at morning worship on 12 December, 2004.

On 4 January 2005, a letter from the Rev Brian Martin indicated that he wished to voluntarily resign the charge of McCracken Memorial. This was referred to the South Belfast Presbytery who, on 21 January, 2005, accepted the resignation and released the Rev Brian Martin from his charge with effect from 28 February, 2005.

13. The following statement was agreed to be read to the McCracken Memorial Congregation at morning worship on 23 January, 2005:

"You will be aware that the Presbytery of Belfast South referred matters concerning the continuing ministry of the Rev Brian Martin in McCracken Memorial Congregation to the Judicial Commission, under Code Par 224. The Judicial Commission planned to begin its consideration of this matter on Tuesday, 4 January. However, the Judicial Commission became aware that the Rev Brian Martin was considering a voluntary resignation and adjourned its consideration of the matter (Code Par 162(1)). Subsequently, a letter of

resignation from the charge of McCracken Memorial was received from the Rev Brian Martin and accepted on the 21 January, 2005 by the Presbytery of Belfast South, who released him from his charge with effect from 28 February, 2005. The Presbytery of Belfast South also received the Rev Brian Martin as a minister without charge under the care of the Presbytery.

The role of the Judicial Commission in this matter has come to an end, but the Judicial Commission continues to express pastoral concern for the Rev Brian Martin and his family, the congregation of McCracken Memorial and the Presbytery of Belfast South. All are commended to the compassionate love and grace of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

TYRONE PRESBYTERY REFERENCE

14. The Tyrone Presbytery asked on 16 September, 2004 for clarification on the period permitted for the notification of an Appeal under Code Par 164(1). This was followed by a letter dated 5 October, 2004 from Mr WS Alwyn Mitchell indicating that he wished to appeal against the decision dated 5 October, 2004 of the Tyrone Presbytery which permitted Claggan Congregation to proceed with the demolition of their Manse. While the permitted period of ten days was no longer an issue, the Judicial Commission ruled that under Code Par 163(2) Mr WS Alwyn Mitchell did not have the right of appeal as he is not a member of Presbytery and is not a party in a case.

APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION OF THE DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY

15. A Notice of Appeal was received, in the name of Mr Richard Williams, against the decision of the Presbytery Commission investigating matters in the Congregation of Howth and Malahide not to take action under Code Par 224. Supporting documents were also submitted.

16. The relevant minutes of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery did not record that Presbytery had made a decision, nor that the Presbytery Commission had power to issue, therefore the matter was sent back to the Presbytery with the instruction that the Presbytery make a clear decision on the matter and announce the decision to the Congregation.

17. Subsequently two Notices of Appeal were received, in the name of Mr Richard Williams dated 16 December, 2004 and Mrs Ann Coulter dated 19 December, 2004, against the decision of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery, taken on 7 December, 2004, not to take action under Code Par 224 in the matters concerning the Congregation of Howth and Malahide. It was decided that the Judicial Commission would hear the appeals jointly on the following terms:

“The Judicial Commission will not decide issues of fact in relation to any allegations which may be directed against the Minister by the Appellants or by any of their witnesses, but will consider only whether the Appellants have established a prima facie case that the Presbytery should have more fully inquired into the usefulness of the Minister pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 224 of The Code. The Minister will not be required in the course of the hearing of the appeal to respond to any allegations which may be made by the Appellants and any of their witnesses during the hearing of this appeal.”

18. The parties to the appeals against the Dublin and Munster Presbytery, which were heard on 14 February, 2005, were as follows:

Appellants: Mr Richard Williams and Mrs Ann Coulter accompanied by Mr A McMurtry, Mrs B McMurtry, Mr K Caldwell, Rev K Meyer.

Respondents: The Dublin and Munster Presbytery were represented by Very Rev Dr T Morrow, Revs J Faris, F Sellar, Mr R Poynton.

Invited Observers: Rev Dr G Millar, Mr G Evans.

19. Following the hearing the Judicial Commission discussed the evidence and agreed to allow the appeal and set aside the decision of the Presbytery for the reasons stated in the following Finding:

**Appeals of Richard Williams and Ann Coulter from the Decision of the
Dublin & Munster Presbytery concerning the Minister of the
congregation of Howth & Malahide**

(1) The Judicial Commission convened on 21 January and 14 February, 2005 upon the appeals of Mr Richard Williams and Mrs Ann Coulter from the decision on 7 December, 2004 of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery that the complaint against the Rev Dr Gary Millar under paragraph 224 of The Code is without substance and there is no cause for an investigation into his usefulness, which was announced to the Congregation on 12 December, 2004.

(2) The Judicial Commission acts so far as is possible in a pastoral manner while also acting judicially, and is concerned for the glory of God, for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom, for the peace of the Church, and in particular for the welfare of those who appear before the Commission and their families.

(3) The Judicial Commission emphasises that it has not been considering any charges of impropriety against the Rev Dr Gary Millar and that it neither decided nor considered whether there was any substance in the Appellants' complaint and whether there was cause for an investigation under paragraph 224 of The Code into the usefulness of the Rev Dr Gary Millar.

(4) The Judicial Commission commends the Commission of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery for all that was done pastorally during its attempts since March 2003 to assist the Kirk Session and the Congregation in connection with the situation in Howth and Malahide. The Judicial Commission accepts that Mr William's complaint and request is motivated by his belief, which he genuinely holds, that he acts for the benefit of a sizeable proportion of more longstanding members of the Congregation whom he believes have been hurt and dismayed as a result of changes which have occurred since Dr Millar's installation in 2000.

(5) Having investigated the matter and having heard the submissions and opinions of the Appellants and a witness, and the responses and opinions expressed on behalf of the Presbytery Commission, the Judicial Commission finds: -

- (i) The complaint which is the subject of this appeal was intimated by Mr Williams to the Dublin and Munster Presbytery on or about 20 April 2004 in written form, and included an allegation expressed in terms that Dr Millar was not a fit person to be the Minister of Howth and Malahide and a request for his removal under the provisions of

paragraph 224 of The Code. At that time a Commission of Presbytery had already been appointed in March 2003 to provide, in addition to other purposes, assistance to the Minister and Kirk Session of the Congregation, and a member of the Commission had attended meetings of the Kirk Session to observe the conduct of business. The Commission had received information from correspondence and conversations with numerous members of the Congregation which included opinions on the nature, direction and speed of changes within the Congregation initiated by Dr Millar and the Kirk Session.

- (ii) Some oral evidence before the Judicial Commission was at variance with Minutes of the Presbytery. Oral evidence from the Presbytery was to the effect that on 19 April 2004 two members of that Commission met informally with Mr Williams for the purpose of ascertaining the nature of his complaint against Dr Millar under paragraph 224 of The Code and the extent of support in the Congregation for the complaint, and that this was the only meeting with Mr Williams; it took place before the Commission had the remit to investigate matters within the provisions of paragraph 224 of The Code. The Minute identified 19 May as the date of the meeting. In either event, the Commission and Presbytery did not meet with or interview Mr Williams, or any of the members who had expressed by their signatures their support for transfer of Dr Millar from the Congregation, after the meeting with two members of the Commission.
- (iii) On 4 May upon the request of the Commission, the Presbytery extended the remit of the Commission to address the matters under paragraph 224 of The Code in a pastoral way and to report to Presbytery. The Commission had not been given power to issue when constituted in March 2003, or when its remit was extended on 4 May 2004.
- (iv) By letters dated 23 April 2004 and 15 July 2004 the Commission requested Mr Williams to provide a list signed by those he purported supported his complaint, with details of their status in the Church and a list of agreed reasons why the signatories believed Dr Millar was no longer fit to be Minister of the congregation, to be received before the beginning of September 2004. On or about 28 June 2004 Mr Williams provided a list of 20 signatories, but without details of their status. It would have been possible for the Clerk of Presbytery to have ascertained those signatories who were voting members and those who were not, by a comparison with the list of voters in the Congregation which had been compiled for the purpose of election of Elders in 2004.
- (v) The Commission met with the Kirk Session on 6 September 2004, when eight of the eleven Elders were present. Three Elders whom the Appellants assert were sympathetic to and supportive of their complaint were not present, either because they were unable to attend or had not received notice sufficient for their attendance or because of a breakdown in communication. As a result of the meeting with the

Kirk Session and the information already gleaned in the course of the work of the Commission since its inception in March 2003, the Commission concluded on 7 September 2004 that the Elders present at the meeting were strongly supportive of Dr Millar, and were not without pastoral concern for those with different views; the Commission recorded regret that some Elders had not attended the meeting at which strong feelings had been expressed about Mr Williams. The Commission, having taken into account that strong feeling, agreed on 7 September 2004 that it should declare his allegations to be unfounded and that while there had been painful division in the Congregation there was no reason to take action against the Minister under paragraph 224.

- (vi) The Commission reported to Presbytery on 7 September 2004 that the complaint under paragraph 224 of The Code had been examined and found to be without substance. It was agreed by Presbytery that the report be received, and that the Commission should remain in place. The Commission did not purport to use any power to issue.
- (vii) By letter dated 22 September 2004 to the Clerk of Presbytery, Mr Williams included a list of 53 signatories seeking Dr Millar's transfer under paragraph 224 of The Code and again sought a meeting to discuss.
- (viii) The Commission reported to Presbytery on 7 December 2004 that it was aware that painful division has taken place within the congregation and that the nature, direction and speed of change had surprised some and offended others, and furthermore that the Commission was aware that some things might have been handled differently. The Commission reported its view that nevertheless the complaint against the Minister was without substance and that he had not placed himself in a position where it was impossible for him satisfactorily to discharge the duties of his charge, nor had his usefulness been seriously impaired. The Presbytery agreed, with one vote against, on 7 December 2004 that the complaint against the Minister under paragraph 224 was without substance. The dissenting vote was cast by Mrs Coulter, who did not speak on the subject at the meeting.
- (ix) In light of the foregoing the Judicial Commission further finds that notwithstanding Presbytery's and its Commission's laudable attempts to act pastorally both before and after the Commission's remit had been extended to examine the complaint within the provisions of paragraph 224 of The Code, and notwithstanding its conclusion that the Elders on 6 September 2004 were strongly supportive of Dr Millar, the Commission erred pastorally and judicially by failing to meet with and interview Mr Williams or any of the 20 signatories before reaching its conclusion on 7 September 2004, and Presbytery erred in similar manner before it reached its decision on 7 December 2004 by which time Presbytery had received the 53 signatures (representing 42 families) in support of Mr Williams' request. The only meeting with Mr Williams had been informal and with two members of the

Commission and there was no meeting or interview thereafter with him or with any members who had expressed by their signatures their support for transfer of Dr Millar from the Congregation.

(6) The Judicial Commission allows the appeals and sets aside the decision of Presbytery and directs:

- (i) that Presbytery by its Commission, which should be given power to issue, shall investigate the complaint further by meeting and interview with the Appellants and such of the 53 signatories who are present or former members and adherents of the Congregation as are willing to meet with the Commission, which must be quorate; and
- (ii) after having taken account of all the information which had already been taken into account before the decisions of 7 September 2004 and 7 December 2004 and of any additional information emanating from the aforesaid meeting and interview, the Commission shall decide whether there is substance in the Appellants' complaint; and
- (iii) if, in the light of such evidence it appears to the Presbytery Commission that the minister may have placed himself in a position where it is impossible for him satisfactorily to discharge the duties of his charge, or that his usefulness has been seriously impaired, to further investigate under the provisions of The Code, including paragraph 161 in the first instance, and if deemed appropriate in the light of all the information, to investigate further and issue under the provisions of paragraph 224; but
- (iv) if the Presbytery Commission is satisfied that the facts do not call for further investigations by it, or that appropriate action has been taken to remedy any irregularity, omission or failure disclosed by the facts and to prevent the recurrence thereof, to direct that no further proceedings be taken and to find and issue accordingly.

(7) The Minister, his family and the Appellants and the people are commended to the Grace of God.

(8) The Clerk of The General Assembly will transmit this Finding to the Appellants and to the Clerk of Presbytery by e-mail and post, and a copy shall be posted on the notice boards in the churches at Howth and at Malahide, and copies shall be made available by the Rev Frank Sellar, Convener of the Commission, to such members of the congregation, if any, who request them. The Judicial Commission recommends that the additional investigations and results thereof remain confidential to the Minister and members of the congregation and Presbytery, and should not be disclosed to the media.

Delivered this 22nd day of February 2005

Mervyn A Morrow, Chairman
Rev Dr Donald Watts, Clerk

INTERPRETATION OF CODE PAR 163(2)

20. The Judicial Commission considered in a number of contexts the interpretation of Code Par 163(2) as to who has the right of appeal. An overture is submitted to clarify The Code on this point.

APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION OF THE BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY

21. The Rev Daniel John Kane submitted a Notice of Appeal dated 10 November, 2004, against the decision of the Ballymena Presbytery not to nominate Mrs Linda Mary Keys to the Board of Studies and Christian Training as a candidate for the ordained ministry. It was decided that in hearing the appeal two members of the Board of Studies and Christian Training, experienced in the nomination process of students for the ordained ministry, be invited to sit as advisers. Subsequently the Revs G Moore and S Moore were appointed.

Appellant: Rev DJ Kane, accompanied by Mrs Linda Keys and the Rev Richard Ross.

Respondents: The Ballymena Presbytery represented by the Revs Joseph Andrews, David Murphy and Albert Baxter.

22. Following the hearing on 7 March, 2005 the Judicial Commission resolved to allow the appeal and directed the Presbytery to nominate Mrs Linda Mary Keys to the Board of Studies and Christian Training. The reasons are set out in the following Finding:

Appeal of Rev Daniel J Kane against the action of the Presbytery of Ballymena concerning the application of Mrs Linda Mary Keys for nomination by the Presbytery to the Board of Studies and Christian Training as a candidate for the Ordained Ministry

(1) The Judicial Commission convened on 14 February and 7 March 2005 upon the appeal of Rev Daniel John Kane from the action of the Presbytery of Ballymena on 2 November 2004 in not including the name of Mrs Linda Mary Keys (“the applicant”) in the list of those being nominated as candidates for the Ordained Ministry pursuant to the provisions of Par 215 of The Code. The appeal is brought on behalf of the applicant by her Minister, the Rev Daniel Kane.

(2) At the request of the Judicial Commission two representatives of the Board of Studies and Christian Training were in attendance on 7 March to advise and assist the Commission.

(3) Having read the relevant minutes of

- (i) the Presbytery of Ballymena, and
- (ii) its Students Committee; and

having investigated the matter, and having heard the questions relevant to the issues raised in this appeal which had been posed to the applicant by the Students Committee and her responses thereto, and having considered the written and oral submissions of the Appellant, and the assertions of the applicant, and the responses and opinions expressed on behalf of the Presbytery and its Students Committee, and the comments of the representatives of the Board of Studies and Christian Training, the Judicial Commission finds:-

- (i) The appeal is brought on behalf of the candidate with the support and encouragement of her Minister, the Rev Daniel Kane, and of the Kirk Session of West Church, Ballymena.
- (ii) The Students Committee considered three applications to the Presbytery for nomination as candidates for the ministry in addition to

the applicant's. The applicant had previously applied to the Presbytery, unsuccessfully, for nomination.

- (iii) The Students Committee's minute of its decision stated that, in relation to the core question of the applicant's sense of call to the Ordained Ministry, the Committee "was not convinced that this was from God." This was the reason for the Committee's decision not to include the applicant's name in its list of names recommended to the Presbytery for nomination. In other respects the Students Committee would have recommended the Presbytery to nominate the applicant.
 - (iv) At the hearing of the appeal on 7 March the Presbytery representatives clarified the reason why the applicant had not been nominated: the Students Committee accepted that the call which the applicant had discerned was a call from God, but the Committee had not been convinced that the call was to the Ordained Ministry, as distinct from a call to "ministry", such as the Christian work upon which she had been and continued to be engaged as Pastoral Assistant in the congregation of West Church.
 - (v) The Students Committee reported to Presbytery on 2 November 2004 that it had met on 18 October to interview four applicants for the Ordained Ministry. The Convener of the Committee then proposed a resolution which asked the Presbytery to nominate three named applicants as candidates for the Ordained Ministry, but made no other mention of the fourth applicant, Mrs Keys. This resolution was duly seconded and passed.
 - (vi) However, the rights, powers and duties of a Presbytery in nominating for the approval of the General Assembly persons desiring to undertake the work of the ministry are set out in Par 215 of The Code. In particular, Par 215(2)(b) specifies, "They shall make such enquiries as to his personal character and gifts as they consider necessary to satisfy themselves that he is a suitable person for nomination, and they shall interview him at a convenient time."
 - (vii) The Judicial Commission finds that there is sufficient evidence of the applicant's personal character and of her gifts for the office of the ministry as required by Par 215(2)(a)(ii) and (b) of The Code to justify the Presbytery in nominating the applicant as a candidate for the ministry.
- (4) Consequently the Judicial Commission allows the appeal and directs the Presbytery of Ballymena to nominate Mrs Linda Mary Keys as a candidate for the Ordained Ministry pursuant to Par 215 of The Code.

Delivered this 5th day of April 2005

Mervyn A Morrow, Chairman
Rev Dr Donald Watts, Clerk

**REFERENCE BY THE FOYLE PRESBYTERY OF THE SITUATION
IN LARGY CONGREGATION**

23. Matters affecting Largy Congregation have come to the Judicial Commission both as a Notice of Appeal against the Finding of the Foyle Presbytery Visitation Commission and as a Reference from the Foyle Presbytery. At the time of writing a preliminary enquiry in terms of Code Par 161 is being carried out by the Judicial Commission on 16th April, 2005 at Largy Church, and a report will be submitted in the Daily Minutes.

REFERENCE FROM THE NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY

24. The North Belfast Presbytery has referred allegations made against a minister under the care of the Presbytery, asking the Judicial Commission for a determination. Following investigation, the Commission will report in the Daily Minutes.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

25. During the year the Union Commission consulted the Judicial Commission on special arrangements on a number of occasions.

OVERTURES

26. Overtures to be presented to the General Assembly in the Annual Reports were considered and amended where necessary.

MEMBERSHIP

27. The Judicial Commission was deeply saddened by the sudden death of the Rev James McAllister, OBE. After consultation with the Belfast Synod another name in his place will be submitted in the Daily Minutes.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 163(2)(b) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 163(2)(b) of The Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place:

“(b) any party to a decision of a court who feels aggrieved by the decision and desires to have it reviewed;

(c) any member or adherent of a congregation who is affected by a decision of a court and desires to have it reviewed.”

DONALD J WATTS

UNION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev TJ STOTHERS
Secretary: Rev SA MATTHEWS

INTRODUCTION

1. The period covered by this Report is from March 2004 to February 2005.

2. Following the discharging of the Personnel and Planning Committee last year, the internal committees of the Commission have been reorganised as follows: Allocation (Secretary, Rev JH Robinson), Additional Appointments (Convener, Rev CD McClure), Expenses and Fees (Convener, Mr J Hutcheson), Manses (Convener, Rev PT Dalzell) and Reviews (Convener, Rev Dr I Hart.)

3. The number of charges seeking Leave to Call has not been as large as in previous years, but is still considerable at 31 vacant charges and 2 congregations seeking Leave to Call an Associate Minister. The number of long-term vacancies continues to rise and more Presbyteries are struggling to cope with a large number of vacancies. One of the congregations seeking Leave to Call an Associate Minister had their request turned down. The Union Commission felt that the number of contributing families and the requirements of the congregation concerned did not justify the appointment of an Associate. A further factor, though, was the large number of vacancies and the current supply of new ministers to fill them. There is an argument that the creation of Associate Ministry posts further exacerbates the problem for smaller charges in filling vacancies. It should be pointed out, however, that 8 of the 31 vacant charges appearing before the Union Commission had less than 60% of the average number of contributing families per minister in the General Assembly (ie less than 140), so it could equally be argued that the number of smaller charges is also exacerbating the situation, perhaps even more so. At the time of writing, of the 39 vacant charges with Leave to Call, one is an Associate Ministry and 15 have less than 60% of the average number of contributing families per minister. The Union Commission has been involved with the Board of Mission in Ireland over setting priorities and targeting resources. It looks forward to being given a definite strategy from the Assembly through this Board, and will support necessary changes in the Code to allow unions, amalgamations and dissolutions of congregations to be effected more easily than at present.

4. Consultation has continued with the Presbytery of Monaghan concerning how best to provide ministry in the circumstances there, and was extended to consultation with congregations in South Armagh. The Union Commission has views on the way forward, but the difficulty in effecting unions, amalgamations and dissolutions when congregations do not co-operate prevents implementation. It was not possible to implement the resolution passed last year concerning the dissolution of the congregation of Corlea (Minutes, page 60) as suitable arrangements could not be made for the distribution of its assets. However, in the meantime, the possibility of an amalgamation with a

neighbouring congregation has emerged and an appropriate resolution is appended.

5. Much valuable work has been done by the Presbytery of North Belfast on making suitable arrangements for the future of the congregations of Macrory Memorial and Duncairn & St Enoch's. In both cases, amalgamations are to take place with other congregations, and the bulk of the assets placed in an Urban Mission Trust Fund, which can then be drawn on for the work of Urban Mission in the Presbytery bounds. Suitable resolutions are appended.

6. The positive note expressed last year that there were fewer instances where Leave to Call was held up because of uncertainty over what work, if any, may need done on a Manse in the vacancy proved premature. A large percentage of charges were held up by this in the past year. It must be stressed that the Union Commission will not give Leave to Call where there is any uncertainty in this regard. The Congregational Committee must have had sight of a structural report on the Manse and decided on what work, if any, needs to be done, and agreed an approximate budget and time-scale. Where appropriate, Congregational approval will also be needed. The Guidelines for Manses in a Vacancy were presented in 2001 and can be found in the General Assembly reports pages 67f. It should be noted that these are distinct from any guidelines produced by the Church Architecture Committee. The Commission recommends that Presbyteries continue a Vacancy Commission to oversee any work needing done on the Manse until completion, if this is after a new Minister is installed.

7. Congregations should note that if their Minister is elected as Moderator of the General Assembly, they will be expected to pay a portion of the cost of the provision of ministry during the year.

8. The panel appointed to take an overview of the provision of ministry in Inner-City Belfast was transferred during the year to the Board of Mission in Ireland.

SICK SUPPLY FUND

9. The following extension to Sick Supply Provision has been implemented:

For ministers returning to active service after an extended period of absence due to illness, and whose duties include more than one Service per Sunday reimbursement may be sought from the Sick Supply Fund as follows:

- (a) For up to (and including) three Sundays of eligibility for Sick Supply funding — a single-service Supply Fee for three Sundays.
- (b) For every additional four Sundays, up to a maximum of twelve such Supply Fees in any twelve month period — a further single-service Supply Fee per Sunday. Travelling expenses should be paid by the congregation in accordance with Par 238(4) of the Code. Reimbursement should be sought using the appropriate form, at the conclusion of the arrangement.

MANSES AS A BENEFIT FOR THE MINISTER

10. A matter that the Commission has given considerable thought to is 'Manses as a Benefit for the Minister'. Since 1949 the Commission has been

operating on the basis of the advice of the then Law Agent that, unless there is an indication otherwise, there is an assumption that Manses, land associated with them and Manse Funds are a Trust held for the Benefit of the Minister. This was based on Par 214 of the Code then in force, which indicated that the Manse is a trust for the use of the Minister. At that time there was still a right of residence in the Manse after retirement for most ministers.

11. The situation now is somewhat different, in that no such clause exists in the current Code, and that there are now no ministers living in a Manse in which they have a right of residence after retirement. In 2003 the Commission had cause to consult with the General Assembly's Solicitor over the use of money raised by the sale of the Manse of a congregation which was to be amalgamated with another. His advice was that there is an arguable case that the opinion of 1949 has been superseded and that the assumption of an implied Trust for the Benefit of the Minister no longer automatically applies. In fact the assumption ought to be that, unless there is something in the deeds, or the history of the obtaining of the property, or some other matter that indicates there is a Trust for the Benefit of the Minister, there is no such trust. The General Assembly's Solicitor further advises, however, that present arrangements in settlements where there is income to the Minister from Manse land, Manse lettings, and Manse Funds remain in place until vacancies occur, when alterations may be made with the agreement of the Union Commission.

12. In view of the radical implications of this change in policy, the Union Commission has taken time to deliberate this carefully. The General Assembly's Solicitor has confirmed his opinion after some questions and points were put to him. Research has discovered that in 1994/5, Queen's Counsel gave opinion on some matters concerning manses which relate to this issue and which confirms the approach taken by the General Assembly's Solicitor. It also indicates that Union Commission approval for a sale will still be needed where the title of the property in some way (including by implication) incorporates the Code, and that the Courts of Law would want to place some restriction on the use of any assets realised.

13. This part of the opinion of 1949 still holds: 'The position is governed in each case, partly by the Code, partly by the Deeds and partly by the history of the property, and it is unsafe for the Union Commission to lay down any conditions regarding a Manse without regard to all three.'

14. The Union Commission concludes that it is bound to operate the following principles concerning Manses, land associated with them and Manse Funds:

- (i) There is no assumed trust 'for the benefit of the minister'.
- (ii) Existing arrangements (including for Manse Funds) will continue until vacancies or until new sales or lettings occur.
- (iii) The deeds of any property must be examined before any sale or letting can take place - this would best be done at Presbytery level.
- (iv) Unless there is something indicating otherwise the trustees will need to observe the Code.

15. However, the Commission feels the matter to be of such importance that it is necessary to have the approval of the General Assembly before implementing these principles and a suitable resolution is appended, along with

an Overture to amend the Code to remove ambiguity. If passed by the Assembly, the Commission will not obstruct congregations in the appropriate use of any assets realised, but will operate the following rules:

- (i) No capital funds created by a previous sale of a manse, glebe or manse farm, shall be used for any purpose other than previously agreed without permission of Presbytery and the Union Commission.
- (ii) No permission for the use of proceeds from a sale shall be given without Presbytery and the General Assembly's Church Architecture Committee first certifying that the existing Manse accommodation is adequate.
- (iii) Where there is augmentation, or the possibility of augmentation, no permission for the use of proceeds from a sale shall be given until the Commission has satisfied itself that the congregation will make appropriate payments to Stipend and Expenses.

16. It should be noted that this matter arose independently of the matters being discussed by the Panel on Manses under the General Board and should not be confused with the work of that Panel; and that the phrase 'Benefit for the Minister' is a legal term and is without prejudice to differing opinions over whether the requirement that a Minister live in a Manse is advantageous or otherwise.

LEAVE TO CALL MINISTERS

Note: This is only a summary, not all of the conditions attached to the Leave to Call may be recorded. Expenses are initial expenses to be kept under review; they do not include telephone expenses.

Congregation	Stipend		Expenses
Clogher	£11,275	(2004)	£3,600
Glenhoy	£ 7,100	(2004)	£2,400
Christ Church Dundonald	£23,670	(2004)	£5,500
Sandholes	£12,500	(2004)	£2,900
Pomeroy	£13,500	(2004)	£4,000
Donoughmore	€11,486	(2004)	€5,670
Stranorlar	€ 7,000	(2004)	€3,000
2nd Newtownhamilton	£ 8,000	(2004)	£3,000
Creggan	£ 3,000	(2004)	£1,200
1st Keady	£ 8,250	(2004)	£3,300
Armaghbrague	£ 5,500	(2004)	£1,700
2nd Keady	£ 7,600	(2004)	£2,900
Drumhillery	£ 7,150	(2004)	£2,150
Badoney	£ 6,100	(2004)	£2,228
Corrick	£ 3,100	(2004)	£1,486
Glenelly	£ 3,700	(2004)	£1,486
Magherally	£20,500	(2004)	£6,200
Connor	£31,000	(2004)	£6,600
Seskinore	£10,800	(2004)	£3,200
Edenderry	£ 7,250	(2004)	£2,180
Lissara	£23,000	(2004)	£6,000
Ballykelly	£24,500	(2004)	£6,200

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Magheragall	£16,500	(2004)	£5,200
Belmont	£32,000	(2004)	£5,100
Carnlough/Cushendall	£10,045	(2004)	£2,700
Newtowncrommelin	£10,860	(2004)	£3,500
Killead	£15,000	(2004)	£3,500
Loanends	£15,000	(2004)	£3,000
Strabane	£25,500	(2004)	£6,500
St Johnston	€10,000	(2004)	€3,800
Ballylennon	€9,000	(2004)	€3,600
Craigavon	£12,800	(2004)	£3,800
Vinecash	£ 6,200	(2004)	£2,700
Union Road Magherafelt	£16,000	(2004)	£4,000
Lecumpher	£10,000	(2004)	£2,400
Templepatrick	£29,000	(2004)	£6,500
Garvaghy	£ 8,100	(2004)	£2,850
Anaghlone	£ 8,300	(2004)	£2,850
Rosemary	£29,000	(2004)	£6,000
Kilcooley	£12,300	(2004)	£5,500
Waterside	£24,000	(2005)	£6,200
Fahan	€ 7,561	(2005)	€1,200
Donacloney	£23,000	(2005)	£6,000
Loughgall	£12,000	(2005)	£3,470
Tartaraghan	£ 7,200	(2005)	£2,600
Glengormley	£31,000	(2004)	£6,500
Armagh Road Portadown	£27,000	(2004)	£6,800
Cavanaleck	£11,000	(2005)	£3,750
Aughtentaine	£ 6,700	(2005)	£2,300
Hilltown	£11,000	(2005)	£2,900
Clonduff	£12,000	(2005)	£3,120

LEAVE TO CALL AN ASSOCIATE MINISTER

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

Congregation	Salary	Expenses
Hamilton Road, Bangor	£18,500	£3,500

LEAVE TO CALL REVIEWED

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses
Clontarf	Appropriate Ministerial Minimum	€7,200

LEAVE TO CALL A MINISTER ON THE RESTRICTED LIST

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses
Clontibret	€13,585 (2004)	€4,100

LEAVE TO CALL UNDER HOME MISSION DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses
Tullamore	€ 1,150 (2004)	€ 105
Mountmellick	€ 1,045 (2004)	€ 105
Carlow	€ 7,000 (2004)	€2,000

REVIEWS

Garnerville: Stipend 2004 £16,000 and again urge Congregational Committee to review expenses. Further review in 2005.

2nd Castlederg: Stipend 2004 £17,000 with further review in 2005.

Alt: Stipend 2004 €3,200 and request Congregational Committee to review expenses. Further review in 2005.

1st Comber: Stipend 2004 £28,500 and Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2005.

2nd Dromara: Stipend 2004 £15,300 and Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2005.

Moirá: Stipend 2004 £24,000 and Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2005.

Kilbride: Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2004 and request Congregational Committee to review expenses.

1st Ballymoney: Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2004.

Woodlands: Presbytery to track Specified Sources for 3 years. Request Congregational Committee to review expenses. Tyrone Memorial to continue.

Portstewart: Stipend 2004 £27,250 and Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2005.

Legacurry: Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2004.

St Columba's, Lisburn: Stipend 2004 £14,500 with further review in 2005.

Crumlin: Stipend 2005 £14,000 and Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2006.

REVIEW UNDER 'REVIEWABLE TENURE'

Fortwilliam Park: Following a thorough review of the situation and the last five years of ministry it was agreed that the reviewable tenure ministry should be renewed on similar terms as before.

EXTENSION OF THE TERM OF AN ASSOCIATE MINISTRY

The term of the First Bangor Associate Ministry was extended for a further three years.

The term of the Westbourne Associate Ministry was extended for a further year.

The term of the Shore Street, Donaghadee Associate Ministry was extended by a few months to allow the Associate to receive a Call while still in post.

RIISING COST OF THE ASSOCIATE MINISTRY SCHEME TO THE CENTRAL MINISTRY FUND

The Union Commission took notice of the rising cost to Central Ministry Fund of the Associate Ministry scheme. The rate of Assessment on CMF was set to minimize the net inflow from CMF to congregational funds in the following cases: First Bangor, Bangor West and Hamilton Road, Bangor.

TEMPORARY ORDAINED ASSISTANT

The Commission agreed terms for the appointment of Rev Joan Scott as a temporary Ordained Assistant in Belmont from 1 June 2004, the arrangement to terminate no later than 25 November 2005.

APPLICATION FOR HOME MISSION DEVELOPMENT STATUS

Westbourne was given permission to apply to the Board of Mission in Ireland for Home Mission Development Status.

STATED SUPPLY

Clontibret: Rev TJ Hagan was nominated as stated supply for twelve months from 1 December, 2004 on terms agreed by the Commission.

Ballina, Killala and Ballymote: Rev John Mann was nominated as stated supply from 1 March 2005 for a maximum of twelve months on terms agreed by the Commission.

Gortnessey: Rev AMcM Kerr was nominated as stated supply for a further 12 months from 1 April 2004 on terms agreed by the Commission.

Duncairn and St Enoch's: Rev W Shaw was nominated as stated supply for a further 12 months from 1 June 2004 on terms agreed by the Commission.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Where financial support of ministers was necessary because of sickness, redundancy, resignation or other special circumstances, special arrangements were made.

RESTRICTED LIST

The Commission continues to apply the following rules and it is the responsibility of the individual minister to apply for an extension:

- (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:
 - (i) The Convener may grant an extension of up to two months, in consultation with the Clerk of Assembly.
 - (ii) The Allocation Committee may place a new applicant on the restricted list.

The Commission granted the requests of four ministers to be added to the restricted list.

MANSES

Decisions on Manses are made by the Commission on the understanding that the required permissions from other bodies are obtained and that the appropriate guidelines are observed.

The following congregations were given permission to let the manse during a vacancy: Loughbrickland, Finvoy and Tullamore.

Monreagh and Carlow were given permission to let the manse.

Claggan was given permission to demolish the Manse, which has not been occupied by a minister since 25 April 1957.

Kircubbin was given permission to sell the manse under certain conditions.

Tullamore was given permission to sell the manse and purchase a new one.

Kilfennan was given permission to sell the manse.

Ballylinney was given permission to demolish their manse and to divide the site (just over 1 acre) in two, on which to build a new manse and another house to be sold.

Albany was given permission to use 100% of the future rental income from the manse, in view of the fact that the manse has been unoccupied for over 5 years and has fallen into a state of disrepair. This arrangement is to stay in place until cost of the repairs has been met.

Eglisish was refused permission to extend a special arrangement made in 1993 concerning the disbursement of the income from the Manse rental.

The Minister of First Ballynahinch was given permission to vacate the manse for a limited period. Permission was subsequently given for the demolition of the Manse.

The Minister of First Derry was given permission to temporarily vacate the manse.

Macosquin was granted permission to use part of the Manse Farm (1.3 acres) to extend the existing graveyard under certain conditions.

Dundrod was given permission to use a small portion of the manse garden and manse field required by the Road Service for road widening under certain conditions.

Orritor was given permission to place in its property fund, £20,000 given in compensation for frontage of church grounds and a small part of the Manse garden being used for way leaves.

One minister whose date of retirement is 25 January 2006 was given permission to vacate the Manse from October 2004 to live in his own bungalow, approx 6 miles from the church. Permission was given in light of the special health circumstances in this particular case.

Rev Paul Dalzell was appointed to represent the Commission at a meeting to be arranged by the Clerk of the General Assembly to discuss Water Rates with representatives of the Church of Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland, with power to co-opt.

The Commission noted that under the Common Agricultural Policy reform Land Area Payments will be available for farms in connection with congregations and for manse farms. Efforts were made to make this information available to Ministers and Congregations.

The Commission decided that when giving Commission permission for major schemes involving the Manse, even when there is not a vacancy in the

Congregation, that it be recommended to the Presbytery that a Commission be appointed and that another minister take the chair at Church Committee meetings during consideration of matters concerning the Manse.

ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS

The Commission, through its Additional Appointments Committee, processed and approved 13 Additional Pastoral Personnel (APP) posts. The mechanism for approval has been streamlined to give congregations maximum assurance that their process conforms to current employment legislation and best practice. The procedure is usually as follows:

1. Generate a job description and personnel specification etc in consultation with "Peninsula" (each congregation will have received contact details).
2. Agreed by Kirk Session and submitted to Presbytery and Union Commission (Additional Appointments Committee) for approval.
3. Advertisement, short-listing, interviewing, selection and appointment. Presbytery "shall ensure that the person to be appointed is in sympathy with the doctrines and practices of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland". (Annual Reports 1997 p 57).

Four ministers sought permission to undertake extra-parochial work. In each case the duties involved did not exceed six hours per week, which is taken as the standard.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

The 2005 recommendations for travel expenses were set according to the established formula for a car of 1400cc and average 'business' mileage of 13,000 miles (NI) and 14,400 miles (RI). The standing costs attributable to private motoring have also been factored in.

NI £5,016 (2004: £4,800)	RI €7,716 (2004: €7,200)
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These figures are average figures issued for guidance of Congregational Committees. They cover motoring costs only, and should not be automatically and universally applied as the appropriate amount for each minister.

INADEQUATE EXPENSES GRANT SCHEME

Applications for grants towards inadequate expenses in the year 2003 were approved for 11 ministers in RI and 2 in NI.

The total grants paid amounted to €48,080 and £3,559.

This compares with 18 applications for 2002 (RI €69,311 and NI £7029).

The Committee appreciates the diligence of Ministers, Congregational Treasurers and Presbytery Clerks/Finance Conveners in supplying relevant information and authorisations with the application forms (which are due after the March Presbytery meetings).

The recommended limits for 2005 claims under this scheme are as follows:

NI £5,200 (2004: £5,100)	RI €7,800 (2004: €7,650)
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SUPPLY FEES

In pursuance of Par 238(3), as amended in 2000, the supply fee for the year 2005 will be NI £78 or RI €125, with NI £52 or RI €83 for a single service supply. Travelling expenses should be paid in accordance with the rates for travel by car fixed for attendance at Assembly Boards, or be based on second class rail or bus fares Par 238 (4). Currently this rate is 12p or 20 cents per mile.

**ASSESSMENTS ON FULLY CONSTITUTED CHURCH EXTENSION
CHARGES — 2005**

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

	<i>Fully Constituted</i>	<i>Families (†)</i>	<i>Assess 2005 £</i>	<i>Spec. Sources £</i>	<i>Income £</i>
Downshire	1993	255 (207)	310	58,623	92,251
Lisnabreen	1993	240 (135)	202	41,532	58,308
Scrabo	1994	252 (170)	255	56,483	88,396
Burnside	1995	176 (167)	250	61,510	125,348
Movilla	2001	234 (170)	255	50,415	88,341

† Families contributing at least £5.00 per annum

ASSESSMENTS ON CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES — 2005

<i>Church</i>	<i>Building £</i>	<i>Spec. Srs. £</i>	<i>Stip. £</i>	<i>C.M.F. £</i>	<i>Ch. Ext £</i>	<i>H.M. £</i>	<i>Total £</i>
New Mossley*	2,850	19,257	4,814	2,311	1,541	963	9,629
Ballysally*	7,821	27,721	6,930	3,327	2,218	1,386	13,861
Strathfoyle*	—	2,799	336	168	112	67	683
Taughmonagh	1,553	16,354	4,906	2,453	1,635	981	9,975

* Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES — 2005

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £14,325 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, 2005

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Cregagh	A. Best*	04.06.04	27,766 (30%)	8,831	6,496
1st Antrim	D. Brown*	04.06.04	30,803 (30%)	9,742	5,585
Harmony Hill, Lambeg	K. Campbell*	13.06.04	31,302 (30%)	9,892	5,435
Hillhall	K. Jones*	30.05.04	31,156 (25%)	8,290	7,037
Fisherwick	R. Kerr*	06.06.04	32,780 (30%)	10,335	4,992
Whiteabbey	J. Rogers*	20.06.04	32,640 (30%)	10,293	5,034
Craigy Hill	J. Sloan†	20.06.04	28,500 (30%)	8,901	6,126
Malone	P. Wilson†	20.06.04	31,920 (30%)	9,927	5,100
Terrace Row, Coleraine	R. Campbell*	03.12.04	35,013 (30%)	11,005	4,322
Cunningham Memorial	M. Lindsay*	13.06.04	31,140 (30%)	9,843	5,484
Dundonald	C. Kennedy*	27.06.04	36,644 (30%)	11,494	3,833

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance

LICENTIATES — 2005

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £14,325 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, 2005

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Ballyclare	W. J. Hayes*	22.06.03	30,395 (30%)	9,620	5,707
Ebrington	D. B. McCorriston*	08.06.03	27,986 (30%)	8,897	6,430

* Married House Allowance

ORDAINED ASSISTANTS — 2005

From 1st January, 2005

<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Date of Ord.</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>% Min.</i>	<i>Salary</i> £	<i>House Allow.</i> £	<i>Total</i> £	<i>Cong. Cont.</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Marlene Taylor	Cooke Centenary	11.01.85	23,805	100	19,100	1,002	20,102	10,618	9,484
Christina Bradley	Rosemary	23.02.86	28,728	100	19,100	1,002	20,102	12,710	7,392

ASSOCIATE MINISTERS 2005

<i>Name</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Salary</i>		<i>House Allowance Paid</i>	<i>Annual Assessment Recovery</i>
		<i>Paid</i>	<i>Recovery</i>		
		£	£	£	£
N. S. R. Lockhart from 12 Jan 2005	Hamilton Road, Bangor	18,555.00	14,438.15	1,942.96	620.42
G. Kennedy	First Bangor	19,100.00	13,008.80	1,500.00	601.59
R. Montgomery from 23 June 2004	Bangor, West	21,500.00	15,600.00	2,000.00	2,691.28
M. Henderson to 20 February 2005	Shore Street	2,628.00	1,714.85	276.39	81.45
L. H. Eagleson	Carrmoney	19,100.00	14,053.60	2,000.00	622.48
A. Gibson	Bloomfield	20,055.00	13,370.00	2,000.00	1,148.39
C. Glover	Stormont	22,170.75	18,198.75	0.00	3,464.60
D. Montgomery	Knock	23,566.00	23,094.40	0.00	3,326.59
A. Carson from 4 April 2004	Orangefield	29,181.00	22,149.00	3,000.00	4,289.11
M. Gibson	Westbourne	19,100.00	s/a 9,512.00	2,000.00	531.65
C. A. Reid	Gilnahirk	19,100.00	12,415.00	2,000.00	589.71
		€	€	€	€
K. McCrory s/a Special Arrangement	Lucan-Liffey Valley	31,269.00	20,846.00	0.00	0.00

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the CMF be authorised to pay grants towards expenses incurred by ministers in congregations, up to a limit of NI £5,200 or RI €7,800 within the terms of resolution 3, p 70 General Assembly Minutes 1988.
3. That the General Assembly note that the Urban Mission Panel now operates under the Board of Mission in Ireland.
4. That, following the failure to make suitable arrangements for the distribution of its assets, the congregation of Corlea be amalgamated with the congregation of Rockcorry on terms agreed by the Union Commission on 1 July 2005 or other suitable date.
5. That the congregation of Macrory Memorial be amalgamated with the congregation of Fortwilliam Park on 1 July 2005 or other suitable date.
6. That the congregation of Duncairn and St Enoch's be amalgamated with the congregation of Whitehouse on 1 October 2005 or other suitable date.
7. That the General Assembly endorse the policy on Manses as outlined in pars 10-16 of the report.
8. That the Union Commission be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 128 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 82(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 82(4) of the Code the words "held for the benefit of the minister," be deleted; that after the word "sold" the words "nor its proceeds used for any purpose" be added; and that after the word "obtained" a new sentence be added: "No capital funds created by a sale of a manse, glebe or manse farm prior to 31st December, 2005, shall be used for any purpose other than as previously agreed without permission of the Presbytery and the Union Commission."

TJ STOTHERS

OVERTURE ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 128(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 128(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

"The Union Commission shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Convener and Secretary of the Commission, the Secretary of the Board of Mission in Ireland, the Convener of the Home and Irish Mission Committee, one representative of the Central Ministry Fund, together with two persons (one, only, to be a minister) nominated by each Presbytery and up to eight by the Business Board appointed annually by the General Assembly."

TJ STOTHERS

REPORTS OF SYNODS AND PRESBYTERIES

SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN

The **SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN** report that the Rev WL Haslett, MA, is their Moderator, and their next meeting is appointed to be held at Church House, Belfast, during the General Assembly.

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev William Sinclair, BA, PGCE, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev Thomas Alexander Houston, MA, died on 16 January 2005; that the Rev Dr Stewart Robert Jones demitted his charge as Minister of Kilcooley on 17 June 2004, having received a Call to the Congregation of Donemana and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Foyle; that the Rev Stephen Charles Calder, BSc, BD, Associate Minister in the Congregation of Hamilton Road, demitted his charge on 7 September 2004 and was furnished with Credentials; that Mr Samuel Newell, licentiate in Regent Street demitted his charge on 7 September 2004 having received a Call to the Congregations of Tullylish and Gilford and was furnished with Credentials to the Iveagh Presbytery; that the Rev David Neville Gray, BA, BD, having presented Credentials from the East Belfast Presbytery was installed as Minister of Cloughey and Portaferry on 14 June 2004; that the Rev Richard John Montgomery, BA, BD, MA, having presented Credentials from the Carrickfergus Presbytery was inducted as Associate Minister in West Church, Bangor on 23 June 2004; that the Rev Norman McAuley, BSc, BD, having presented Credentials from the Tyrone Presbytery was installed as Minister in Greenwell Street, Newtownards, on 3 September 2004; that Mr Nial Lockhart was inducted as Associate Minister in Hamilton Road, Bangor, on 12 January 2005; that Mrs Amanda Best was licensed on 4 June 2004 and furnished with Credentials to the East Belfast Presbytery; that Mr James Rogers was licensed on 20 June 2004 and furnished with Credentials to the North Belfast Presbytery; that Mr Christopher Kennedy was licensed on 27 June 2004 and furnished with Credentials to the East Belfast Presbytery; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Rev D McKee, BD, the Rev CD Mawhinney, BD, the Rev DM Spratt, ALCM, BEd, DipTh; that they have under their care as students Messrs Nigel Craig, Colin Dickson and Ivan Thompson; that during the year they held Consultations with the Congregations of Ballyblack and Ballycrochan; and that the financial reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Died
Resigned

Installed

Licensed

Consulted

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev MM Stewart, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev AJ Thompson, BA, BD, Minister of Craigavon and Vinecash, resigned his charge on 16 June 2004, having accepted a Call to the Congregation of Elmwood and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that the Rev FAC Wilson, MA, Minister of Armagh Road, Portadown resigned his charge on 1 August 2004 on grounds of ill health and was received as a Minister without Charge; that the Rev BA Small, BEd, BD, Minister of Loughgall and Tartaraghan, resigned his charge on 2 September 2004, having accepted a Call to the Congregation of Raffrey and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that the Rev RIA Allely, BA, BD, was installed in Craigavon and Vinecash on 3 December 2004, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone; that Mr SJM Lindsay was licensed on 13 June 2004 and was presented with Credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that they have under their care as students for the ministry, Messrs RS Agnew, A McConnell, JD Montgomery and K Nelson; that during the year they consulted the Congregation of Lislooney; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev David Samuel McIlwrath, BA, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev Walter Kerr, BA, BD, Senior Minister of First Boardmills died on 5 October 2004; that the Rev Robert Ernest Boggs, MA, Minister of Downpatrick, retired on the 31 January 2005; that the Rev Andrew Arthur Cole, BEd, BTh, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh, was installed to the pastoral oversight of Kilmore Congregation on 18 June 2004; that the Rev Brian Small, BEd, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh, was installed to the oversight of Raffrey Congregation on 3 September 2004; that the Rev Robert Ian Abraham, BA, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Omagh, was installed to the pastoral oversight of Lissara Congregation on 10 December 2004; that the Mr Paul Jamieson, BA, resigned as Assistant Minister of Second Comber on 30 September 2004, having received a Call from the Congregation of Christ Church, Dundonald and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs RN Stewart, BA, BD, D Stanfield, BA, BD, and S Armstrong, BSc, BD; that they have under their care as students Leslie Patterson and Mark Catney; that during the year they undertook consultations with First Ballynahinch and Second Killyleagh; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

The **DROMORE PPRESBYTERY** report that the Rev RA Liddle, BEd, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev MG McClelland, Minister of Magheragall, resigned his charge on 30 April 2004 and became a Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery; that the Rev MG McClelland, having received a Call from the Board of Youth

and Children's Ministry to a recognised ministry as National Director of the Boys' Brigade, was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast on 5 October 2004; that the Rev SWW Neilly, MA, MAR, ThM, PGCE, Chaplain to HM Prison Maghaberry, having received a Call from the Congregation of Third Portglenone, was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that the Rev AJ Thompson, BA, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh, was installed to the pastoral oversight of Elmwood Congregation on 14 June 2004; that the Rev BJ McCroskery was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, inducted and Commissioned as a Missionary to Indonesia on 5 November 2004; that Mr KA Jones was received as a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone; that Mrs K Campbell was received as a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that they have under their care as students for the ministry, Mr Michael Anderson and Mr Colin McKibbin; that during the year they held a Consultation with the Congregations of St Columba's and Sloan Street; and that Financial Statements are being published separately by each Congregation.

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev HSW Cubitt, BA, BD, is their Moderator; that on 30 November 2004 the Rev J Hagan, FIMLS, BD, retired from the duties of the active ministry and demitted the charge of Donacloney; that the Rev A Cole, BEd, BTh, resigned as Minister of Garvaghy and Anaghlonge on 17 June 2004 having received a Call from the Congregation of Kilmore and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that the Rev RM Murray, BA, BD, resigned as Minister of Hilltown and Clonduff on 27 January 2005 having received a Call from the Congregation of Connor and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that the Rev MN Davidson, BA, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick was installed as Minister in Drumgooland and Kilkinamurry on 10 September 2004; that the Rev PA McBride, BEd, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Donegal was installed as Minister in Loughbrickland and Scarva on 15 October 2004; that the Mr S Newell, BTh, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Ards was ordained and installed as Minister in Gilford and Tullylish on the 17 September 2004; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge (retired) the Rev EG McAuley, BA, BD, MSc, and as a student Mr TN Bingham; that during they year they consulted with the Congregations of First, Second and Third Rathfriland; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev BD Colvin, BA, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev WT Bingham, BA, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone was installed as Minister of Mourne on 23 April 2004; that the Rev SS Johnston, BAgr,

BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster was installed as Minister of Kilkeel on 3 September 2004; that the Rev BAH Wilson, MA, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine was installed as Minister of Second Newtownhamilton and Creggan on 3 December 2004; that Richard Cameron Kerr was licensed as a probationer for the Christian ministry on 6 June 2004 and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that during the year they held Consultations with the Congregations of Cremore, Fourtowns and Poyntzpass; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Licensed

Consulted

SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE

The **SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE** report that the Rev SS McFarland, BA, is their Moderator and that the next Stated Meeting will be held in Church House, Belfast, on Thursday, 9 June, 2005.

The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev AWT Brown, BSc, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev M Dunn, BSc, BD, resigned his charge as Minister of Carnlough/Cushendall and Newtowncrommelin on 13 May 2004 and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Pittsburgh; that the Rev SWW Neilly, MA, MAR, ThM, PGCE, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore, was installed as Minister of Third Portglenone on 3 September 2004; that the Rev RM Murray, BA, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh, was installed as Minister of Connor on 28 January 2005; that Mr JE Sloan, BA, DipMin, was licensed as a probationer for the Christian ministry on 20 June 2004 and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that Mr SJM Lindsay, BD, DipMin, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh, was received as a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery on 14 September 2004; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry, Messrs: ME Donald, BEd, MAEd, TP McCullough and R A Mulholland, BTh, HND; that the Congregations of First Broughshane, Second Broughshane and First Portglenone were consulted; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Resigned

Installed

Licensed

Under Care

Consulted

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev B McMillen, BA is their Moderator; that the Rev GL McAdoo, BA, BD, MTh., Senior Minister of First Larne, died on 4 April 2004; that the Rev FA Bradley, BA, BD, Minister of Whitehead, died on 31 October 2004; that the Rev DJ Paul, BEng, BD, was installed as Minister of Gardenmore on 2 April 2004, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Foyle; that the Rev RJ Montgomery, BA, BD, MA, Minister without Charge, having received a Call to be Associate

Died

Installed

Minister of Bangor West, was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Ards on 22 June 2004; that the Rev DR Byers, BA, DipTh., Minister without Charge, having received a Call to the Congregations of Cladmore and Tassagh, was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh on 1 February 2005; that they have under their care as Minister without Charge the Rev DR Byers, BA, DipTh.; that they have under their care as Licentiates Mr WJ Hayes, MA, DipMin, and Mr JE Sloan, BA, DipMin; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry, Miss HM Rendell, Mr RSJ McIlhatton and Mr MJ Gracey; that during the year they conducted consultations in the Congregations of First Carrickfergus and Loughmorne and that the Financial Statements of Congregations are being printed separately.

Credentials

Under Care

Consulted

The **COLERAINE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Robert McMullan, BA, MTS, HDipED, BD, is their Moderator; that on 24 June 2004 the Rev Stephen Williamson, HND, BSc, PhD, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane, was installed as Minister of Ballywillan Congregation; that on 20 June 2004 they licensed Philip B Wilson, BA, BD, ThM, PhD, as a probationer for the ministerial office and furnished him with Credentials to the South Belfast Presbytery; that the Rev Brian Wilson, MA, BD, having demitted his charge with the Overseas Board and having accepted the Call of Second Newtownhamilton and Creggan Congregations, was furnished with Credentials to the Newry Presbytery; that the Presbytery has under its care as a Minister without Charge the Rev J Douglas Mark, MA, BD; that the Presbytery has under its care as students for the ministry Patrick Martin Baxter, David S Brownlow, J Emerson McDowell, and William Montgomery; and that Congregations present their Financial Statements individually.

Installed

Licensed

Credentials

Under Care

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev AC Rankin, BSc, BD is their Moderator; that the Rev HW Brooks, BA, Senior Minister of Armoy, died on 7 November 2004; that on 20 August 2004, the Rev M Jones, MB, BCh, BAO, MDiv, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast, was ordained and installed at Roseyards; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge, the Rev V Dobbin, CB, MBE, MA, MTh, PhD, DD; and as a student for the Ministry Mr G Chestnutt; that during the year they consulted with the Congregations of Ramoan and Dervock; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Died

Installed

Under Care

Consulted

The **TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev S Simpson, BSc, BTh, is their Moderator; that the Rev C Corkey, BA, Senior Minister of HydePark, died on 26 May 2004; that the Rev Dr AL McAloney, BA, BD, Senior Minister of OC Randalstown died on 6 October 2004; that the Rev WD Weir, BA, BD, DipEd, Minister of Killead and Loanends, retired from the active duties of the ministry on 31 May 2004; that the Rev TH Wilson, ACII, BD, Minister of

Died

Retired

Credentials	<p>Templepatrick, retired from the active duties of the ministry on 31 August 2004; that the Rev MN Davidson, BA, BD, Associate Minister of First Antrim, having received and accepted the Call of the Congregations of Drumgooland and Kilkinamurry, demitted his present charge on 9 September 2004 and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; that the Rev RD Cameron, BD, Missionary to France, having received and accepted the Call of the Congregations of Seskinore and Edenderry, resigned from the Overseas Board on 20 January, 2005 and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Omagh; that Mr DH Brown, a Licentiate, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone, was received under their care on 14 September 2004; that during the year they held Consultations with Second Ballyeaston and OC Randalstown; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.</p>
Resigned	
Credentials	
Consulted	

SYNOD OF BELFAST

The **SYNOD OF BELFAST** report that the Rev Robert Harkness, BD, BA, is their Moderator; that their next meeting is appointed to be held in Church House on Wednesday, 8 June 2005 and will meet by Commission on 14 March 2006.

Retired	<p>The NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY report that the Rev ID Neish, BSc, BD, GradCertEd, is their Moderator; that the Very Rev John Dunlop, CBE, BA, BD, DD, DD, LLD, LLD, retired from the active duties of the ministry on 30 September 2004; that the Rev William Hugh Galloway Crawley, BA, MPhil, MDiv, PhD, Chaplain to the University of Ulster at Jordanstown resigned the office of the ministry on 8 December 2004; that Mr Noel Patrick, BTh, a Licentiate under the care of the Presbytery resigned on 2 March 2004; that the Rev Ronald Samuel Hetherington, BA, BD, demitted the charge of Glengormley and was installed to the post of Director of Ministerial Studies on 15 October 2004; that the Rev Paul Linkens, BA, a Licentiate under the care of the Presbytery, on receipt of a Call from the Congregation of Tullycarnet was issued with Credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that the Rev J Stafford Carson, MA, MAR, MTh, a Minister under the care of the Presbytery, on receipt of a Call from the Congregation of First Portadown was issued with Credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs JS Carson, CI McKnight, WA Shaw, WM Smyth, MP, WG Stewart and FW Vincent; that they have under the care as a Licentiate, Mr James Rogers, BEd, DipMin; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry, Messrs William G Hamilton, David Laney and Mark Shaw; that consultations were held with the Congregations of Ballysillan and Carnmoney; and that Congregational Financial Reports are being printed separately.</p>
Resigned	
Installed	
Credentials	
Under Care	
Consulted	

The **SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev WPH Erskine, MA, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev Harold Graham, BA, DD, formerly Director of Christian Training, died on 7 November 2004; that the Rev Brian Martin, BEd, MCS, resigned as Minister of McCracken Memorial on 28 February 2005 and is retained as a Minister without Charge under the care of the Presbytery; that Dr Mark Jones, a Licentiate under the care of the Presbytery, having received and accepted a Call from the Congregation of Roseyards was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Route; that the Rev James Burnett, BA, MPhil, MA, was installed as Minister of Finaghy, Lowe Memorial, on the 14 May 2004 having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Omagh; that the Rev George McClelland was inducted on 17 October 2004 to a ministry with the Boys' Brigade, on receipt of Credentials from the Dromore Presbytery; that having presented Credentials, Richard C Kerr was received as a licentiate from the Presbytery of Newry; Philip B Wilson was received as a Licentiate from the Presbytery of Coleraine; that David McCarthy, David McIlwaine, Edel McLean, Dario Leal, Graeme Fowles and Karen Simpson are students for the ministry under the care of the Presbytery; that Consultations were held with the Congregations of Fisherwick, Dunmurry and Great Victoria Street; that Financial reports are being printed separately.

Died

Resigned

Installed

Inducted

Credentials

Under Care

Consulted

The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Alistair R Bill, BA, BD, MTh, is their Moderator; that the Rev Harold Boyce retired as Director of Evangelism on 31 January 2005; that the Rev David N Gray, BA, BD, resigned as associate Minister in Belmont Congregation on 13 June 2004 having received and accepted a Call to the Congregation of Cloughey and Portaferry and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that the Rev John Peacock, BA, BTh, resigned as Associate Minister in Newtownbreda and was inducted to recognised ministry with Youth Link on 16 January 2005; that the Rev Alan W Carson, BSc (Econ), BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Donegal was inducted as Associate Minister of Orangefield Congregation on 4 April 2004; that Mr Paul Linkens, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast, was ordained and installed as Minister of Tullycarnet on 24 September 2004; that Mr Paul Jamieson, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Down, was ordained and installed as Minister of Christ Church, Dundonald on 1 October 2004; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs RA Crooks, MA, IR Pedlow, MA, WJ Harshaw, BEd, BD, Dr E Jamieson, BA, MEd, MTh, PhD; that Mark Welsh, Martin McNeely, Alastair Dunlop and Scott Woodburn are students for the ministry under the care of Presbytery; that Consultations were held in the Congregations of Cregagh, Garnerville and Cooke Centenary during the year and that financial reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Retired

Resigned

Inducted

Installed

Under Care

Consulted

SYNOD OF DERRY AND OMAGH

The **SYNOD OF DERRY AND OMAGH** report that the Rev DS Irwin, BA, BD, is their Moderator, and that their next stated meeting is appointed to be held in Drumachose Presbyterian Church, Limavady, on Wednesday, 8 March 2006, at 2.30 pm.

The **DERRY AND STRABANE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Joseph Kerr McCormick, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev Stephen David Hill Williamson, BSc, BD, PhD, demitted his Charge as Minister of Strabane on 23 June, 2004 having received and accepted a Call from the Congregation of Ballywillan and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine; that they licensed Mr Roy Alexander Campbell, BA, MDiv, to preach the Gospel publicly as a probationer for the ministerial office on 3 December 2004; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge the Rev John Craig Teeney, BSc, BTh; that they have under their care as a Licentiate, Mr Darran Basil McCorrison, BA, DipMin, MDiv; that they have under their care as a Student for the Ministry Mr Nigel John Edward Reid; that the Congregations of Second Derry (Strand and Bunrana) and Burt, are being visited by way of the Presbytery Consultation Process and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being published separately.

Resigned

Licensed

Under Care

Consulted

The **FOYLE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev John Alexander Noble, BD, BA, is their Moderator; that the Rev Desmond Joseph Paul, BEng, BD, demitted his charge in Ballykelly Congregation on 1 April 2004, having received a Call to the Congregation of Gardenmore and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that the Rev Kenneth George Patterson, BA, DipTh, resigned as Minister of Glendermott Congregation on 31 December 2004 and was placed under the care of the Presbytery as Minister without Charge; that the Rev Stanley Stewart, BSc, DASE, BTh, resigned as Minister of Donagheady Congregation on 31 December 2004 to take up the post of school chaplain in the Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe, Co Donegal; that having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Ards the Rev Stewart Robert Jones, BD, DipSocStudies, MTh, MA, DPhil, was installed as Minister of Donemana on 17 June 2004; that during the year a Consultation was held in the Congregations of Banagher and Largy and the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

Demitted

Resigned

Installed

Consulted

The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Geoffrey David Allen, BA, BTh, is their Moderator; that the Rev James Robert Burnett, BA, MA, MPhil, having received and accepted a Call from the Congregation of Lowe Memorial, demitted his charge as Minister of Seskinore and Edenderry on 13 May 2004, and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Belfast South; that the Rev Robert Ian Abraham, BA, BD, having received and accepted a Call from the

Resigned

Congregation of Lissara, demitted his charge as Minister of Cavanaleck and Aughentaine on 9 December 2004, and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that the Rev Rodney David Cameron, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick, was installed to the pastoral oversight of the Congregations of Seskinore and Edenderry on 21 January 2005; that they have under their care as Student for the Ministry Mr Philip Lyndsay McKelvey; that the Consultation Process was held with the Congregations of Aughnacloy and Ballymagrane; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being published separately.

Installed

Under Care
Consulted

The **TYRONE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev TWA Greer, LLB, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev Samuel Moles, BTh, Senior Minister of Union Road, Magherafelt and Lecumpher, died on 3 March 2004; that the Rev William Bingham, BA, BD, resigned his charge of Pomeroy and Sandholes on 23 April 2004 having received and accepted a Call from Mourne Congregation and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Newry; that the Rev Norman McAuley, BSc, BD, resigned his charge of Lecumpher and Union Road, Magherafelt on 3 September 2004 having received and accepted a Call from Greenwell Street, Newtownards Congregation and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that the Rev RIA Allely, BA, BD, resigned his charge of Dungannon on 3 December 2004 having received and accepted a Call to the Congregations of Craigavon and Vincemash and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh; that Mr David Irvine, BSc, MDiv, was ordained and installed to the charge of First Stewartstown, Brigh and Albany on 1 September 2004; that Mr Knox Jones was licensed as a probationer for the ministerial office on 30 May 2004 and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr David Brown was licensed as a probationer for the ministerial office on 4 June 2004 and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that they have under their care as a Student for the Ministry, Mr Adrian McAlister, BSc, MSc; that during the year they consulted with Upper and Lower Clonaneese Congregations; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being published separately.

Died

Resigned

Installed

Licensed

Under Care
Consulted

SYNOD OF DUBLIN

The **SYNOD OF DUBLIN** report that the Rev Stephen Lockington, BA, BD, is their Moderator and that the Synod will meet on Tuesday, 7 June, in Church House, Belfast.

The **DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev SJ Richmond, BD, MSc, is their Moderator; that the Rev AW Carson, BSc (Econ), BD, having received a Call to the associate ministry of Orangefield Congregation, resigned his charge as Minister in

Resigned

Donoughmore and Stranorlar Congregations on 3 April 2004 and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that the Rev PA McBride, BEd., BD, having received a Call to the pastoral oversight of the Congregations of Loughbrickland and Scarva, resigned her charge as School Chaplain on 14 October 2004, and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; that the Congregation of Carnone was consulted during the year; that the Financial Statements of the Congregations are being published in a Year Book.

Consulted

The **DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Dr DK McCrory is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr GBG McConnell, Senior Minister of Donone and Lucan, died on 12 February 2005; that the Rev SG Anketell, MA, BD, resigned his charge at Enniscorthy, Wexford and Gorey on 17 June 2004, having received a Call from the Congregations of Trinity Bailieborough, First Bailieborough and Corraneary and was furnished with Credentials to the Monaghan Presbytery; that the Rev SS Johnston resigned his charge at Carlow on 2 September having received a Call to the Congregation of Kilkeel, and was furnished with Credentials to the Newry Presbytery; that Mrs K Campbell was licensed on 13 June 2004 and furnished with Credentials to the Dromore Presbytery; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs R Gregg and L Kennedy-Ritchie and as Students for the Ministry Messrs G McFadden and A Carroll; that a Consultation took place with the Congregation of Adelaide Road; that the Financial Statements of all Congregations are being published separately.

Died

Resigned

Licensed

Under Care

Consulted

The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Ian Carton, BA, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev SG Anketell, MA, BD, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster was installed as Minister of Trinity, Bailieborough, First Bailieborough and Corraneary on 18 June 2004; that during the year the Congregations of First Castleblayney and Frankford were consulted; that the Financial Statements for each Congregation are being printed separately.

Installed

Consulted

Installed

BUSINESS BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The Board considered the following items of business during the year. The first was an appropriate way to mark the centenary of the opening of Church House, on 5 June, 1905. It was decided that a reference and prayer should be made by the out-going Moderator at the Opening Service of the General Assembly and a brief statement on the history of the building made on the Tuesday morning.

2. The Board was concerned at the possibility of amendments to the first resolution unduly delaying discussion of the main items in a Board's report. While various suggestions were discussed, it was agreed not to seek any amendment to The Code at present but to encourage a strict interpretation of Par 149.

3. It has been an important tradition of the Assembly that the widows or widowers of ministers who have died during the year are invited to the Opening Night. It was agreed that this invitation should include the reception afterwards, but they would not then be invited on the Wednesday evening.

4. The Board considered a proposal to invite President Mary McAleese, along with the Lord Lieutenant of Belfast representing Her Majesty the Queen, to the Opening Night of the Assembly, thus recognising that the Church bears witness in both jurisdictions. This was agreed, subject to ratification by the Church and Society Committee through the General Board (Code Par 272(4)(c)).

5. Attention is drawn to the "Guide to Assembly Procedure" printed in the yellow pages at the front of this volume of Reports. Questions should be written out and lodged in the box provided in good time, and amendments must be written out and lodged at the Clerk's desk before they are spoken to. Those who wish to speak in a debate should come forward in good time and take their place in the row of seats at the front reserved for that purpose.

6. Copies of the Annual Accounts are available to members of Assembly in the Financial Secretary's Office upon request.

Board Membership

7. 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 2005-2006, together with the associated Arrangements Committee is as follows:-

THE CLERK, Convener

- (a) The Moderator, Clerk and Deputy 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 WT Cordner; W Graham — Rev CG Harris; WJ Hamilton — Rev BCG Black; M Barbour — Rev DB Knox; J McDowell — Rev GE Best; E McCleary — Rev Dr MA Barry; W Grills.
- (c) Rev JJ Andrews; WG McDowell — Rev AE Tolland; N Carmichael — Rev D Clarke; _____ — Rev Ian McClean; RH McIvor — Rev D Bannerman; RJ Johnston.
- (d) Rev TV Patterson; Miss M Torrens — Rev James Burnett; V Elliot — Rev JR Lambe; DC Cowan.
- (e) Rev Dr WJH McKee; Mrs R Millar — Rev Dr SR Jones; T Allen — Rev R Herron; J Cochrane — Rev H Ross; S McKinney.
- (f) Rev S Richmond; O Perry — Rev GA Mitchell; W McIlreavy — Rev D Nesbitt; A McAdoo.

A. ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE (5) Rev TC Morrison, Convener

- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Moderator-Designate, Deputy Clerk, Information Officer, Hospitality Secretary, J Kelly; Rev TC Morrison.
- (x) Revs Alan S Thompson _____; D Crowe, M Fisher
- (y) Revs JR Lambe, GE Best, WT Cordner, AE Tolland, R Herron, D Bannerman; Miss M Torrens, WG McDowell.

Other Churches

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

Church of Scotland 2005: Rt Rev Dr KNE Newell, Rev WI Hull, Mr D Boyd

United Reformed Church 2005: Rt Rev Dr REH Uprichard

Presbyterian Church of Wales 2005: Rt Rev Dr REH Uprichard

Church of Ireland General Synod 2005: Very Rev Dr RI Birney, Mr Alan Foster

Methodist Conference 2005: Very Rev Dr IA McKay, Miss Daphne Gilmour

The URC Assembly 2004

Rt Rev Dr KNE Newell reports:

1. This year's Assembly was held in the University of Glamorgan, Treforest, Pontypridd, Wales, from 3-6 July.

2. The day before I flew to Wales for the URC Assembly I bought myself a digital camera. During the four days of the Assembly it was busy: so much business and so many new experiences were packed into each day. We began with Worship at 9.00 am and ended with Night Prayer twelve hours later. As I look back, several snapshot impressions remain with me.

The geographic spread of the Church: its 1750 congregations are distributed throughout England, Scotland and Wales; it is subdivided into 13 Synods stretching from the Orkney islands in the far north, to the Channel Islands off the coast of France. It is served by 1100 ministers, both women and

men, and comprises 150,000 adults and 100,000 young people and children. When you consider that our own Presbyterian Church in Ireland has 530 congregations, you realise the size of the URC. The Assembly echoed to many regional accents; quite often the Welsh language was used since the Synod of Wales was hosting the event.

Their warmth of welcome: from the moment Dr Donald Watts and I set foot on the hillside campus of the University, we were shown excellent hospitality. The fact that all the delegates were living on site created many opportunities to share meals and conversations with the URC members appointed to look after us. The outgoing Moderator, Rev Alasdair Pratt and his wife Sheila, had been guests at our Assembly in Belfast the previous month. They welcomed us as friends.

That welcome included all who had come as guests from other Church bodies: the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Congregational Federation, the Church of England, the Moravian Church, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the Roman Catholic Bishops Conference, the Church in Wales (Anglican), the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church, the Union of Welsh Independents, the United Free Church of Scotland, the Conference of European Churches, the Council for World Mission, Guyana Congregational Union, the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, United Protestant Church in Belgium, the Reformed Church of Hungary, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Uganda, the Presbyterian Church of Mozambique, the Churches of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa, the Church of North India, the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Cuba. The URC is strongly committed to the unity of Christ's Church; its guest list reflects that.

At the Opening Ceremony the new Moderator, the Rev Sheila Maxey, invited all of us to come forward and greet her personally on the platform. It was an honour for Donald and I to extend to her the best wishes of our own General Assembly on her election as Moderator.

The freshness of worship: one hour each morning was set aside for Bible Study and Prayer. The inter-active liturgies were printed for all to use and the mixture of old and new songs, sung quietly or with rousing passion, was moving. The Bible Studies were given by Rev Dr Janet Tollington, Tutor in Old Testament at Westminster College, Cambridge. At the end of the Communion Service on Sunday afternoon the Assembly of 800 people wanted to sing on – despite the band having stopped! It was like Spring Harvest as we sang, “*Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the word around: loaves abound!*” On another occasion a choir from the Korean Presbyterian Church which meets in a URC Church in Swansea sang for us. The women wore their bright national costumes of green, red, pink and yellow. Their first song was in English, the second in Korean. Rarely did my mind wander during the worship.

Their intentional inclusiveness: although there is great diversity within the URC, the members feel comfortable with each other. There are delegates from congregations that are evangelical, charismatic and liberal, but they influence and challenge each other. There is an increasingly good balance between youth and older members: I was impressed by the fact that 40 youth delegates from FURY (The Fellowship of United Reformed Youth) played an active part. They arrive at the Assembly two days before it begins in order to

evaluate the agenda from a young person's perspective; they are frequently at the microphone speaking on the issues they deem important. There is also a better gender balance than would be found at our own Assembly. About 35% of the delegates were women. In fact, the Moderator for the incoming year is the Rev Sheila Maxey, a remarkable person. She candidated for the URC ministry after rearing her children and was ordained at the tender age of 43. Twenty years later she was appointed Moderator. Finally, it was good to see delegates from African, Pakistani, Korean and Indian backgrounds now living in Britain and taking leadership in the Church. This trend will increase because of the strong anti-racism position adopted by the URC.

The sense of being a marginalized minority: the central piece of business before the Assembly was the 'Catch the Vision' Report presented by Rev Dr David Cornick, the General Secretary of the URC. It sets the Church's Mission Agenda for the decades to come. Some quotations from it are worth recording: "*Lesslie Newbegin once called Britain the hardest mission field he had ever encountered. We see no reason to contradict him. For the last century or more the church has been pushed to the margins, quietly written out of the mainstream of culture, irrelevant to the daily round, until of course joy or tragedy need ritual management ... but God is the God of the margins. God has been there before. Once the powers that be tried to force him out of his own story on Jerusalem's rubbish heap, only to discover that he is mightily powerful in the margins, indeed, you might say that he did his best work there ...*" Although aware that it is a marginalized minority, the URC has, through its congregations, developed a host of local initiatives designed to impact the community. I have rarely encountered a Church with such a strong social commitment. I have no doubt that in time the tide will turn, and many will seek the Christ behind such initiatives of compassion and caring.

Openness to the future: URC members know they face an uphill battle with a culture that is deeply secular and alienated from the Church. But there was little evidence of despair at the Assembly. In fact, I found just the opposite. There was a quiet confidence in God, a clear focus on mission and an openness to God's future, whatever that might mean. The Report of the Thames North Synod lists ten 'qualities of openness' essential for congregations desiring to reshape their witness in order to impact the communities in which they are set:

Open to the Spirit
Open to one another
Open to people
Open to change
Open to the community around
Open to receiving help
Open to developing local leadership
Open to learning and nurturing
Open to listen
Open to the workplace

One final observation: as I stood on the platform of Treforest Station waiting for the train to take me to Cardiff to catch my flight back to Belfast I was trying to clarify in my own mind the impact that the URC Assembly had had on me. Three words kept recurring: 'inspiring, illuminating and challenging'.

I thank God for the privilege of being able to attend as a representative of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. I will always look upon the life and witness of the URC in a new light and with a greater affection and respect. I will also pray that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will turn the spiritual tide for all the churches of Christ in these islands, and beyond.

The Methodist Conference 2004

The Very Rev Dr TWJ Morrow reports:

1. The 235th Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland was held in Dublin from Friday, 11 June to Tuesday, 15 June. It was based in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra and was the first occasion that a Conference was residential.

2. The numbers of people attending Conference was increased by the addition of a Connexions Advocate from each circuit who had the right to speak but not vote.

3. The observers from PCI were the Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow and Mrs C Poynton. There were also observers from the Church of Ireland and the Religious Society of Friends as well as representatives from the British Conference.

4. The observers and representatives were warmly welcomed and Dr Morrow brought greetings from the Presbyterian Church. The Most Rev Dr Diarmuid Martin brought the greetings of the Roman Catholic Church, the first time that a Roman Catholic Archbishop had addressed Conference.

5. On Friday evening, 6 June, the opening service was held in Centenary Methodist Church, Leeson Park, when Rev W Brian Fletcher, BD, PhD, was installed as President of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

6. On Sunday evening, an Ordination Service was also held in Methodist Centenary Church, Leeson Park, conducted by Rev Neil Richardson, President of the Conference. There was only one candidate for ordination to the Methodist ministry this year and as part of her ordination she gave her testimony as to what had brought her from her family in the USA to Ireland and her decision to study for the ministry in Ireland.

7. There were services of Worship and Bible Study held after lunch on the other three days. On Saturday the Bible Study introduced the "Conversation on the Work of God", a sharing of stories from the various Districts. On Monday worship introduced the discussion on membership in the Faith and Order report. Worship was also the final act of the Conference on Tuesday.

8. The business sessions were conducted in a less formal manner than the General Assembly and covered a wide range of issues reflecting the Methodists concern and involvement in society in Ireland and around the globe – Church Administration and finance, Mission in Ireland and overseas, Education and Social Responsibilities.

9. A recurring theme was the challenge presented by the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society which now exists in Ireland, the situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers and how the Church should respond. To help local congregations deal constructively with this challenge, every member of

Conference was given a copy of the PCI Race Relations Committee 2003 report to the General Assembly to study with their congregational leaders.

10. To assist in disseminating information and furthering discussion Conference delegates were assigned to workshops on Ministries on Saturday afternoon and Social Responsibility on Monday morning. The same groups met for seminars on Connexions.

11. There were two important appointments:

- (i) Rev Winston Graham was elected to succeed Rev Edmund Mawhinney who was retiring as Secretary of Conference and of the Methodist Church in Ireland;
- (ii) Rev Desmond Bain, currently General Secretary of the Home Mission Department was elected as President Designate, to be installed as President at the 2005 Conference.

12. There was a warm sense of fellowship at Conference, partly the result of the small numbers and greatly increased by the Conference being residential. Observers and other representatives were not only welcomed but were very much included in the fellowship. It was a privilege and pleasure to represent the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

The Welsh Assembly 2004

The Rev Dr DJ Watts reports:

1. It was a great privilege for me, with Fiona, to attend the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales from 12-15 July, 2004 and to bring the greetings of our Church. Being a relatively small Assembly it is possible for most of the representatives and guests to stay on site at the University of Lampeter and this gave the meetings a warm and friendly atmosphere. At the front of the Agenda the expectation is stated – “Every representative is expected to be present in every Session”. While this wasn’t strictly carried through there was certainly a good attendance right through the Assembly.

2. Every Assembly has its own traditions. I was impressed by a simple but symbolic act at the beginning of the Assembly where the “Assembly Bible” was carried in before the Moderator and he opened it to signify the opening of the Assembly. At the end it was closed again.

3. Moderators share the business more than in our Assembly and so we had the privilege of hearing two Moderators, both of whom are known to us in Ireland – Rev Dafydd Owen was handing over to the Rev Gareth Edwards. Interestingly both, in their time, had been Clerks of Assembly in the Welsh Church, so procedure came naturally to them and the business ran very smoothly.

4. As well as the singing in Welsh, which most people comment on, there was a noted enthusiasm to this Assembly, although the Church in Wales is undoubtedly facing many difficulties – far too many Churches and too few ministers being one. Other familiar themes were the review of their three residential centres, child protection guidelines and the development of part-time ministry. The Welsh Church is being imaginative in its use of limited resources.

5. While the Assembly was conducted in Welsh, with good translation, there were also speeches in English. The Church is made up of three Associations – two Welsh-speaking but an English-speaking Association in the East. At times the tensions between the two became clearly evident. One interesting practice was for the Associations to bring business directly to the Assembly – perhaps something we might think about for our Presbyteries?

6. We were impressed by the involvement of young people who had met beforehand and gone through the agenda, clearly in some detail. They were invited to bring their response to each main item of business. Once again there may be lessons for us.

7. It was particularly pleasing for Fiona and myself to be present when the Welsh Assembly welcomed home one of its own – Prof Stephen Williams. He had been invited to give the historical lecture on the Welsh Revival, during which his grandfather, Nantlais, was a noted hymnwriter. In Wales Stephen is always – Stephen Nantlais Williams! It was interesting to hear him chat away in Welsh, although he did give the lecture in English. It was also a privilege to meet his mother who attended much of the Assembly and welcomed us to her home in Aberystwyth.

8. Our few days in Wales was a wonderful experience of being looked after by a caring people for whom hospitality comes naturally. We also experienced a Church deeply rooted in faith but facing present-day challenges with courage. Our relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Wales is undoubtedly one we should cherish.

ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Transport

1. A complimentary limousine has been provided by Logans, Ahoghill, for the use of the Moderator during the week. A similar facility for the outgoing Moderator on the Monday evening is provided by Browns, Houston and Williamson. The thanks of the Assembly is expressed to all concerned.

Communion Service

2. The Communion Service this year will once again be held in Church House commencing at **12 noon** on Tuesday. There will be a coffee break immediately prior to this service, but members of Assembly are asked to be in their seats not later than 12 noon since late arrivals tend to disrupt the worship and distract other worshippers. Your help in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Catering Arrangements

3. Bread and Cheese lunches will be available at lunch time on Tuesday, with proceeds going to the World Development Appeal as usual. On other days there will not be any lunch time meals or tea/coffee available for sale in the Minor Hall. Tea/coffee etc will be available for purchase in the Minor Hall – as well as on the Concourse – at the stated coffee breaks.

Voting Cards

4. 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. **Ministers please note once again this year that when obtaining your voting cards, you are asked to produce the Registration Card which is enclosed with these Reports.**

Admission

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

Expenses

6. 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. Full details of rates are printed on the form.

COLIN MORRISON, 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 £14,000 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 2006, be appointed in accordance with Par 275 of the Code.

BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Convener: Rev WA KENNEDY

Secretary: Mr STEPHEN LYNAS

1. The Board of Communications still continues to develop within the various changes the recent reorganisation has made to its remit. We believe that one of our main responsibilities is to arrange a coherent and centralised system to direct both the publicity of our Church as a whole and the flow of information amongst the agencies of the Assembly and throughout the wider church. Work in hand involves negotiations as to how the corporate identity of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland can be promoted and refined, and ways in which the increasing opportunities of new technologies can be exploited for the best in communication amongst our congregations as well as within our central organisation and the wider world of contemporary media.

2. During the past year the Board has continued to support and encourage its various committees and the Communications Department in their various areas of work. Stephen Lynas has continued to manage our media presence with his usual efficiency and effectiveness and his leadership of the Department demonstrates his continued openness to new ideas and fresh thinking. During his time of sabbatical towards the end of 2004 he was given the task of compiling a report for the Communications Strategy Panel. This involved a wide-ranging review of communication within our Church and detailed areas of work which will appear on the agenda of the Board. We also acknowledge the continuing efficient and productive work of Anne McCully, Edward Connolly and the other staff within the Department.

3. Since our last report to the Assembly our Church has celebrated the launch of its new hymnbook. We are gratified to have been the Board under which the Hymnal Committee completed their fine achievement and it is good to see that their work has been so well received by so many of our congregations.

4. Sadly, we have to report the illness of Rev Ivor Smith, joint convener of the Communications Administration Committee on behalf of the Historical Society. Our prayers and hopes are for a swift recovery and return to his enthusiastic support for our church's awareness of its historical heritage.

5. We look forward to a year in which we can consolidate our role in servicing the mission boards of our church and move our ideas from discussion to reality.

Mr Stephen Lynas writes:

Regrettably this report is being written during the temporary absence of the Convener, Rev Alistair Kennedy, while he is recovering from recent illness and is awaiting surgery. We appreciate his vision and enthusiasm for the work of the Board and we look forward prayerfully to his return.

Minister in Recognised Service

Rev Dr Bert Tosh reports:

1. I continue to work with the BBC in Belfast as the Senior Producer of Religious Programmes. This is a crucial period for the BBC with the process of renewal of the Royal Charter, by which the Corporation operates, well underway. As I write this, the Government's Green paper with suggestions for the future has just been published. It is right that there should be public debate about the future shape of the BBC and the scope of its operations. As I have indicated in previous reports, the world of broadcasting is changing at an amazing - some would say, alarming - rate. If much of what is considered best in broadcasting in the United Kingdom is to be conserved, then there continues to be a powerful case for a strong public service broadcasting organisation.

2. Specifically, as far as religious broadcasting is concerned, the small unit continues to produce a large number of programmes of various types, with Sunday Sequence going through a particularly good period at present. As usual in this report I express my appreciation to all who make important contributions to programmes.

3. At the beginning of February, I became convener of the vacancy in the congregations of Cargyreevy and Loughaghrey.

COMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Department

1. This has been a year when we have been working through the implications of reorganisation for the work of the Communications Department. Since our last report we have been able to add to staffing but extra demands on our resources, such as the work for 'Get a Life', demonstrate a need for some further expansion.

2. We continue to appreciate the hard work and leadership of Stephen Lynas and it is our aim to promote an even more effective use of his department throughout the various Boards and agencies of our Church.

Presbyterian Herald

3. Rev Arthur Clarke continues in his role as a creative editor and we are grateful to him and the staff for the production of the Herald. However we do need to consider how we can increase the circulation of our denominational magazine, especially among younger age groups.

R ALAN RUSSELL, Convener

COMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT 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 continue to inform us of developments in broadcast media and the Presbyterian Church continues to enjoy good relationships with broadcasters.
3. Rev Liz Hughes reported on a new series of *Journeys* aired at prime time 7.30pm in January 2005. Along with other religious programmes, the four Church Leaders were interviewed during the New Year period.
4. Rev Frank Sellar reported on correspondence received from RTE regarding *Commitment to our Audience 2004*. He highlighted the issues affecting religious broadcasting in the Republic of Ireland, in particular the twin-banding policy for worship services (broadcasts switch from FM to LW) and issues of religious and cultural diversity. In the light of these diversity issues the Church of Ireland hosted a *Consultation on Diversity* conference with RTE and other relevant bodies on 14 October 2004 which the Convener and Rev Frank Sellar attended. Rev Frank Sellar was also a contributor to the Presidential Inauguration ceremony on 1 November.
5. The Committee noted the excellent coverage given to the launch of the new PCI hymnbook on BBC Radio Ulster last year.
6. It was noted that the Information Officer and Convener had received several enquiries regarding the BBC's screening of *Jerry Springer: the Opera*. Enquirers were given full details of how to contact the BBC and relevant bodies if they wished to make a comment.
7. It was agreed that the Church sends a representative to the Churches' Media Council to be reviewed at the end of 3 years. The Churches' Media Council, originally CACLB - the Churches' Advisory Council for Local Broadcasting - aims to advance the Christian faith through the media. The Council's annual conference brings together the Churches, Christian people working in or with the media, the broadcasting authorities, trainers and other relevant national bodies, as well as hosting the annual Andrew Cross Awards for local and regional religious broadcasting. This will provide PCI with the opportunity to be actively informed about the far-reaching changes currently occurring in UK broadcasting as well as benefit from training opportunities.
8. Ten short audio-visual presentations to promote the United and World Development Appeals are to be commissioned in the coming year. These will inform congregations about financial needs and show how contributions are making a genuine impact throughout Ireland and the rest of the world.
9. Ofcom's Public Service Broadcasting Review continues to have wide ranging implications. The recent decision to remove any obligation from ITV to produce regional interest programming further threatens the place of religious broadcasting. While UTV will continue to produce 4 hours weekly of regional interest programming, market forces will increasingly dominate schedules.
10. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport published a Green Paper setting out the British Government's thinking on the BBC's future, which will be followed by a final White Paper in late 2005

(www.bbccharterreview.org.uk). Of particular importance are issues relating to the future of religious broadcasting and governance of the BBC.

11. In light of Ofcom's decision to remove any obligation from the independent sector to provide religious broadcasting, there is a greater need than ever to ensure that the BBC, as a national and local Public Service Broadcaster, continues to provide this service. The Government states that the BBC should "provide a range of programming reflecting different religions and other beliefs that is appropriate to multi-faith Britain. Such programming in prominent positions in both TV and radio schedules, reflecting diversity within, as well as between faiths and beliefs. Such programming should include coverage of acts of worship and key events in the religious calendar as well as drama and current affairs programming that explores religious issues and other belief systems in different ways, for different audiences." (*Reflecting the UK's Nations, regions and communities*, Section 1, page 40, Green Paper). This commitment to continue providing religious coverage is to be welcomed but it must reflect both the UK's religious diversity and also the particular characteristics of each region - Northern Ireland's comparatively high-level of church attendance should continue to be reflected in local broadcasting.

12. The Government proposes to "create a new 'BBC Trust' which embodies the public interest, reflects the views of licence fee payers and safeguards the independence of the BBC. Members of the Trust would be appointed by the Crown (as the Governors are now) and subject to the full Nolan procedures for public appointments" (Section 5.24). However this carries no obligation to ensure that Trustees are representative of the various BBC nations and regions, in particular Northern Ireland. Nor is there any obligation to ensure that the newly proposed BBC Executive must include representation from the nations and regions. This serious omission must be addressed by the Government before the publication of the final White Paper in order to ensure BBC national policy reflects the interest of Northern Irish licence fee payers.

13. The Committee also notes the lack of clarity regarding the future of the BBC National Broadcasting Councils (page 11). We believe it very necessary that the BCNI - or equivalent body - should continue in existence in order to ensure that local Northern Ireland programmes fully reflect the rich life of the region.

14. The BBC is an important contributor to the local economy and the proposed efficiency measures, that the BBC should be "as small in terms of numbers and infrastructure as it needs to be to carry out those functions and to fulfill its public purposes" and that the BBC "should be big enough to deliver the services audiences demand, but as small as its mission allows" (Section. 6.5), have direct consequences for both employment and the production of local quality programmes in Northern Ireland. There is no assurance that money saved will be reinvested locally.

C GLOVER, Convener

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE

1. Since the last report the Committee has met on nine occasions.

2. Submissions are received from a large number of congregations and dealt with in an efficient and helpful way. Seventy-one submissions were dealt with since the last report.

3. A number of site visits were made and advice given.

4. Congregations are to be congratulated on the care and attention given to their properties.

5. The attention of congregations is drawn to the fact that the Disability Discrimination Act is now in force.

6. In October the Committee visited Richhill, Hamilton Road and Carnmoney. We were impressed by the work done and the vision of these congregations. Thanks to those who received us so graciously.

7. Congregations are reminded that plans for all work undertaken should be sent to the Committee for approval.

8. My sincere thanks to all the members of the Committee for their dedication and hard work. I would like to thank the experts who work on this Committee for the time given and the advice offered. Their knowledge is greatly valued by the Committee.

GEORGE D SIMPSON, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the General Assembly commend the work of the Communications Department and express thanks to the Information Officer, the office staff and the Editor of the Presbyterian Herald.

3. That a grant of £1,500 be paid from the Incidental Fund to the Church Architecture Committee.

4. That a grant of £14,700 be paid from the Incidental Fund to the Presbyterian Historical Society.

5. 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 did not meet during the year as no appointments were being considered.
2. Overtures are submitted to give effect to the recommendations of the Nomination Board Review, adopted by the General Assembly 2004.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 276 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 276 of the Code be deleted.

DONALD J WATTS

OVERSEAS BOARD

Convener: Very Rev Dr SJ DIXON

Secretary: Rev WS MARRS

Serving a mission-hearted church

1. As the Overseas Board moves towards the conclusion of a period of review, it is with the conviction that mission is not just one of the Church's activities, but is at the heart of all its activities; indeed mission is fundamental to its very existence. So it is that the Board's **vision** for the future is **to serve a mission-hearted church**. It is one thing to be mission-minded, but we also need to be enlivened in our hearts with a passion for mission, that we might fulfil effectively our **purpose** which is **to proclaim Christ and his universal reign**.

2. We aim to pursue our purpose in the future by upholding **values** that have become important distinctives for our church in overseas mission down through the years. We are eager to be **God-centred**, that is to glorify the Father, fix our gaze upon His Son, Jesus Christ, and be led in all we are and do by the Holy Spirit; to be **People-focused** because God more often than not, reaches people through people, and ultimately direct personal missional encounter is crucial; to be **Church-based** as we commit ourselves to the building up, in the first instance, of church to church partnerships for mutual encouragement, challenge, witness and ministry; to be **Forward-thinking**, trusting for discernment to recognise and creatively respond to new God-given opportunities, and developing new spheres and methods of service.

3. Having set out our values, we have highlighted four **priorities** which will provide clear foci for our future work, while not excluding other areas involvement. In **Mission Engagement** we underline that mission is the calling not simply of individual missionaries, but of the whole church at every level. We aim, therefore, to develop the missional identity and responsibility of all our members, enabling appropriate and effective involvement; the renewed emphasis on **Outreach Initiatives** builds on our existing relationships with the Church around the world in order to share with them in God's call to make disciples, especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel; engaging in **Compassionate Ministries**, we want to see our church share in God's creative and just purposes in active compassion for all He has made, such that all peoples might know fullness of life in Jesus Christ; as we rejoice in the growth and vitality of some of our partner churches, especially in the Southern Hemisphere, the priority of **Leadership Development** highlights our willingness to share with them in facing up to the challenges such growth brings, and our commitment to the equipping of indigenous church leaders.

4. The findings of the Review Committee are set out fully in Appendix B, which examines in more detail the process of consultation, theological reflection, the questions frequently asked and the conclusions reached in the review process that has been running alongside the ongoing work of the Overseas Board.

ASIA

5. Our desire to be a mission-hearted church has taken us again out among the great peoples of Asia. Our partners in this region face political instability, continuing persecution of minority Christian communities as well as the devastation caused by the Aceh earthquake and subsequent Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 26th 2004.

6. The Board acknowledges the remarkable response of our people and appreciates the focused service of our development partners Tearfund and Christian Aid in ensuring that much-needed assistance could find its way to the most-needy. The Board was also gratified that funds were available for partner churches in Asia, who are themselves carrying forward relief and reconstruction programmes for those affected by the Tsunami disaster.

7. At the time of writing, visits have been planned by members of the Board to our partners in the spring and summer of 2005, including a visit by the Moderator to some of the Tsunami affected regions. It is envisaged that these visits will provide up-to-date and accurate assessments of the situation faced on the ground and allow us, even at a great distance, opportunity to show the Lord's compassion to those who suffer.

8. We are also aware of the continuing struggles for freedom and justice in many parts of Asia and commend the strong Christian witness borne in situations of great hardship. It is hoped that the General Assembly will again receive leaders from Asian churches who will represent among us this remarkable story of courage and humility.

9. While the number of our personnel serving in Asia has dropped in recent years, we are pleased to note the placement of personnel in Nepal, Indonesia and China, and note through the Review Process the strategic importance of this region where all the world's major faiths and so many strong cultures are found.

10. We place on record our thanks to missionaries who have returned to Ireland on completion of periods of service in Asia. We look forward to the valuable contribution these former missionaries will now make to the life and mission of our church here at home.

11. This past year has been one of trial and turmoil for many in Asia. The Bishop of Gujarat, Rt Rev Vinod Malaviya, was in Ireland last year and spoke to a large gathering about the situation in Gujarat. He reflected the widely held hope that inter-communal relations would improve following national elections in **India** and the unexpected removal from power of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He continues to keep us informed of the challenges facing the Church in India, particularly in Gujarat. **The Church of North India's** (CNI) involvement with the Tsunami has brought much pressure on its leaders in the media spotlight surrounding this natural disaster.

12. **Nepal** has faced increased tension and uncertainty since 1st February 2005, when King Gyanendra dismissed the government, declared a nationwide state of emergency and assumed direct control of the country. He claims his actions were both necessary and justified because the government had failed to take effective measures to end the Maoist insurgency, which has claimed almost 11,000 lives since 1996.

13. These moves have been widely criticised by the international community, with calls for the restoration of democratic government without delay. A number of countries, including the UK, the USA, France and India withdrew their ambassadors from Nepal for a short period of time – a strong diplomatic signal of their discomfort with the present situation.

14. **The United Mission to Nepal (UMN)** continues to oversee its personnel and to progress its work as well as is possible in a very unstable situation.

15. Through visits to **Pakistan** over the past year, we have sought to strengthen our partnership with **The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (PCP)**. Uel Marrs' comments following his visit in November 2004, express our renewed concern for the Church and its witness: "The Christian Church in Pakistan is relatively small but strategically placed for evangelisation in the Muslim world. It is a church that faces institutionalised persecution and many other challenges, not least leadership development and the provision of material resources for the future. We can learn much from them as they engage in mission and yet they need our help, not least financially but also in terms of personnel in a few areas."

16. While **Indonesia** continues towards democracy, and its new President and Government settle into their terms of office, the need for improved human rights remains a pressing concern. The activities of separatist movements continue to threaten national stability, especially in Aceh, the centre of the Tsunami destruction, where communal tensions are very real.

17. Our partner churches in East Indonesia, **Gereja Masehi Injili di Halmahera (GMIH)**; **Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT)**; and **Gereja Kristen Sumba (GKS)** continue their work of building up community and bringing in the Kingdom in the face of poverty, disease, privation and spiritual challenge.

18. Rev Elsy Niap, a bursary student at the Irish School of Ecumenics, returned to GMIT's service in November 2004, joining the staff of their Theological School in Kupang.

19. Christians in Halmahera have seen tensions ease over the past months but divisions still exist and fear is an ever-present reality. It is hoped that Uel Marrs, Nigel Eves and James Haire (a former PCI missionary to Halmahera) will be able to visit GMIH in August of this year.

20. **Eukumindo** (an umbrella organisation of European churches and missions involved in Indonesia) continues to coordinate response and encouragement for this vast nation. Its wisdom and advice is invaluable in addressing the challenges of both natural disaster and the ongoing work of the gospel.

21. **The Amity Foundation's** commitment to serve the poorer and less well developed regions in **China** remains strong, though teacher numbers for their programme have been further reduced in the past year. The Government of China welcomes workers who come to share in educational and economic development. In some areas this can allow for 'tent-making' ministries to develop alongside the witness of local Christians. PCI has responded positively to one such opportunity.

22. We continue to send an observer to meetings of the China Forum, which in recent times has reflected on continuing crackdowns suffered by the house churches in certain areas and noted that Christian intellectuals are also the target for state interference at times. Regular visits to China take place as Forum members seek to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the State and the Church, as well as between the registered ‘three-self’ church and the house church movement.

23. **The Lamp of Thailand** continues its vital ministry of outreach to Thailand’s needy millions through its literature distribution work. The Lamp also provides encouragement and much-needed Christian teaching for the many small and scattered Christian communities throughout Thailand. It is hoped that representatives of the Board will visit The Lamp of Thailand and **The Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT)** in August 2005.

24. We continue to offer support to our partner churches in these areas and seek through the work of our missionaries, the visits of the Board’s executive staff, and the giving and prayers of our people, to see God’s blessings poured out on Asia again.

EUROPE

25. The Church in Europe was once an institution which had a presence and influence across the continent. This is no longer the case: the “de-churching” or secularization of Europe has been a trend which has meant a loss of influence of the Church in the public arena, and the movement from a religious to a non-religious world of meaning means that now the church has little relevance for the majority of people. Europe is therefore, for the Overseas Board, an area of particular strategic concern. The vast movement of peoples into and across Europe has intensified the missionary challenge and there are enormous social problems which call for attention and involvement.

26. We have sought through partnership to be an encouragement to the Church in her mission in the European context, and have promoted relationships at different levels between PCI and our partner churches in Central Europe, France and in Spain. PCI personnel continue to be engaged in mission through church-based ministry, theological training and evangelism.

27. PCI has been in partnership with the **French Reformed Church (ERF)** since 1987 and has had personnel working in parish ministry for the past 15 years, however involvement in this ministry has now come to an end.

28. The ERF has appointed a new head of International Relations, Rev Didier Crouzet, who is charged with strengthening links with partner churches and promoting exchanges. Each year we send a representative to the ERF Synod which in May 2005 will take place in Aix en Provence. This year PCI will be represented by the Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Ken Newell.

29. Our partnership in theological training with **The Free Faculty of Reformed Theology (FLTR)** continues. This year, in which the College celebrated its 30th anniversary, has seen a significant increase in student numbers. Over the years the College has been training men and women for pastoral ministry and mission in various Reformed or Protestant denominations in France and throughout the French-speaking world.

30. PCI supports the work of '**Jews for Jesus**' in Paris. There are more Jews in Paris than in any other European city - some 350,000. A 'Behold Your God' campaign was held in Paris from 22 September to 24 October 2004 and another campaign in Marseille is in the planning. Opposition to evangelism is on the rise in France and the campaigners find they are receiving more insults during their outreach. Anti-Semitism is also on the increase and attacks have been made on Jewish centres and synagogues, and cemeteries have been desecrated.

31. Over the past number of years links have been developing with **The Spanish Evangelical Church (IEE)**. The IEE has for some time been working amongst immigrants, seeking to bring them into the community of faith. The increase in attendance experienced in some of the IEE congregations in recent years is often related to the influx of immigrants from South America and elsewhere.

32. PCI has continued to support the IEE in its ministry to the social and spiritual needs of the English-speaking residents on the Costa del Sol. This community is growing at a tremendous rate as hundreds of English speaking people are buying homes in the area. The Torre del Mar Congregation continues to seek to be relevant in her outreach to the community.

33. Communication with the **Kirchenkreis** is ongoing regarding the future of the **Jerusalem Church, Hamburg** and as yet no final decision has been made.

34. Twinning between congregations is the core strand of our relationship with **The Church of the Brethren** in the **Czech Republic**. This church, in its 14th year since the velvet revolution, has seen continuing growth in membership. There are now 60 congregations and 80 preaching stations. This represents an increase of over 25% in this period. Pavel Cerny provides visionary leadership as the President of the growing church that is served by The Evangelical Theological Seminary (ETS) which has already trained 30 pastors and has many more in training. A strong commitment to Bible teaching and openness to contemporary ministry underpins the growth process.

35. Our partnership with **The Hungarian Reformed Church (HRC)** continues, particularly through leadership development. Nora Pinter is undertaking post graduate studies at Union Theological College for one year from September 2004 and next year we hope to welcome two further students.

36. We also continue to relate to the HRC in **Romania**, with **The Transylvanian District** through Bishop Geza Pap and in **The Kiralyhagomellek District** through Bishop Laszlo Tokes. In October 2004 Bishop Tokes was re-elected Bishop for another six year term of office.

37. The Hungarian minority in Romania feels oppressed as it seeks to preserve its language, culture and the Reformed faith. These people now feel further isolated after the recent poll by the Hungarian nation declined to give them dual nationality.

38. In the ongoing context of developing our links with the Reformed Church in Romania, two teams were sent in the summer of 2004 to Transylvania, one to Szilagyseh and the other to Algyogy. The team members established good relationships with the Transylvanian young people and gained

insight into their situation and the wider Hungarian-Romanian situation. The Overseas Board is sending three summer teams to Romania in 2005.

39. In **Ukraine** this year we will participate in a summer camp for young people of **The Hungarian Reformed Church District in Transcarpathia** at Balazser from 16 to 28 July. Back in May 2004 Revs Uel Marrs and John Kirkpatrick made an exploratory visit further to the East of Ukraine with a view to establishing relationships between PCI and **The Evangelical Reformed Church of Ukraine** (ERCU). This is a church seeking to rebuild after communism and increasingly conscious of its strategic location for the evangelism of Ukraine and neighbouring former Eastern bloc countries. Various possibilities for mutual encouragement in mission were discussed and at present we are supporting 'The Right Way' project in the development of a Christian Rehabilitation Centre for addicts.

40. Contact between our church and **The Evangelical Reformed Church (ERC) in Poland** was first made in 1983 and then renewed in 2001. It was hoped that the Bishop, Rev Marek Izdebski, would attend our General Assembly in 2004; however, illness prevented him doing so. We look forward to welcoming Rev Marek Izdebski to our General Assembly this year (2005). This visit to Ireland will be a time of orientation for him and of mutual learning for both churches.

41. The ERC is one of the organisers of an international youth camp to be held in Lithuania in August 2005. They have invited our church to participate in this camp and it is planned that four young people will travel to Biraz, Lithuania to represent PCI.

42. The Bible translation work of **Church Growth – Croatia and Bosnia** is supported by PCI. This work is progressing steadily and it is hoped that the Old Testament will be translated into Bosnian by 2008 and the whole Bible by 2011.

MIDDLE EAST

43. The Middle East peace process has been stagnating for some time but has recently begun to move slowly forward. Lebanon is an important part of the Middle East peace equation and it is hoped that these recent peace overtures will not be threatened by the rising tension in that country. It is also hoped that Lebanon, which experienced 16 years of war from 1975, will remain stable. There are many issues to consider as we seek to serve in this part of the world and we continue to seek God's way forward for our involvement in mission in the Middle East.

44. In February 2003 a consultation was held in Beirut with **The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon** (NESSL), the Church of Scotland, the United Reformed Church and PCI. The purpose of the consultation was to increase our awareness of and to encourage the local churches there. A follow-up consultation was held in Edinburgh from 31 October to 3 November 2004. Two days prior to the conference, two delegates from NESSL came to Ireland to see something of PCI. We have found that we have much in common with this isolated minority church and trust that the building of a relationship with them will help our understanding of their situation and be an

encouragement to them. We also realise that Lebanon is a strategic doorway to the Middle East.

AFRICA

45. HIV/AIDS, drought, corruption, war, international debt and overwhelming poverty still continue to be the harsh realities of life for the majority of people living in Africa. Over the recent months world attention has largely focused on the Tsunami disaster in Asia and the almost unbelievable human suffering that occurred in a matter of minutes. In the aftermath, however, we must not forget the ongoing, daily struggle for life and survival that takes place for millions of people in Africa.

46. Our partner churches continue to work faithfully in proclaiming the gospel and extending the Kingdom. Our missionary personnel faithfully serve our church through all the difficulties and challenges of overseas mission. As a church we must continue to seek to pray for and support our partners and our personnel.

47. In **Kenya, The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)**, under new leadership, has worked hard over the past year to reduce debt largely through a process of decentralisation. Ministers are no longer paid centrally but by their presbytery. There are exciting challenges to be faced by the church and by the leadership with over 300 new pastors needing to be trained over the next 10 years in order to keep up with church growth.

48. One exciting new avenue of partnership with PCEA that is being pursued at the present time is the placement of Rev Edwin Kibathi in London to plant a congregation amongst Kenyan expatriates. PCEA will provide the personnel and a proportion of finance, PCI will provide financial and pastoral support, and The United Reformed Church will engage to provide practical support for the church plant at the local level. This is a new venture that encourages reciprocity in mission with our partner church and has great potential benefits for the extension of the Kingdom of God.

49. Our missionary personnel continue to work in a wide variety of settings throughout Kenya engaged in rural development, the distribution of Christian literature, and Sunday School teacher training. People's lives and hearts are being transformed through their dedicated work.

50. Democratic elections were held in **Malawi** in May 2004 although international observers stated that they could not be regarded as free and fair, as there was widespread suspicion of vote rigging. A new coalition government of national unity was formed under Dr Bingu Wa Muthalika and despite difficulties there were signs of a growing understanding of democracy and political maturity with people voting in large numbers for the candidate of their choice despite intimidation.

51. The Livingstonia Synod of **The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP)** also held elections with Rev M Mezuwa Banda elected as Moderator, Rev Howard Matiya Nkhoma as General Secretary and Rev Maurice Munthali to the role of Deputy General Secretary. Rev HM Nkhoma is currently in Scotland participating in the Church of Scotland Faithshare Programme.

52. PCI personnel continue to be involved in teaching in schools and colleges, chaplaincy work, theological education, rural development and nursing. The challenges of working in Malawi are great with high levels of poverty and HIV/AIDS. The loss of Dr Donald Brownlie who passed away on 29 August 2004 was deeply felt by the Board after so many years of service to the church and the people of Africa, especially at The David Gordon Memorial Hospital.

53. In a number of areas we provide annual grants in order to encourage theological education and Christian discipleship. The CCAP continues to provide theological training for its ministers at the United Theological College, Zomba and the Intensive Theological Programme at Ekwendeni. Theological Education by Extension in Malawi (TEEM), now under new leadership, has recently produced a strategic plan through until 2008. We continue to seek to encourage the Student Christian Organisation in Malawi (SCOM) as it faces up to the challenge of maintaining and encouraging its groups, especially in outlying areas.

54. The Darfur region of **Sudan** hit the news headlines over the past year with deplorable scenes of genocide and suffering brought about by the Khartoum Government and the Jangaweed militia. Through the generous giving of our people to the Moderator's letter of Appeal last year we were able to send £390,290 to Tearfund and Christian Aid to help ease the plight of those who suffered.

55. The problems in Darfur are only part of the mosaic of suffering that encompasses the whole of Southern Sudan. After many years of work and negotiation a comprehensive peace agreement between the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the Government of Sudan was finally signed on 9 January of this year. The signing of an agreement is one thing, but implementation is another entirely, and the international community needs to follow this process closely, working hard for progress.

56. Uel Marrs and Nigel Eves were able to meet with the leadership team of **The Presbyterian Church of Sudan (Akobo Administration)** (PCOS/A) on a visit to Lokichoggio on the Kenya/Sudan border in August 2004. Reflecting on this visit, it was noted that the needs of PCOS were probably greater, in material terms, than any of our other partners. Rev Peter Riak, General Secretary commented, "to see our people would make you weep. You look at their bodies and you see skeletons but you look at their faces and you see they are redeemed." These are undoubtedly people who need our support, prayers and ongoing commitment to partnership in mission.

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

57. Prof Bill Addley recently visited **Brazil** on behalf of the Overseas Board and, as well as visiting Recife and **The Presbyterian Church in Brazil** (IPB) congregation of Casa Caiada, Olinda where Naomi Keefe will be working, he was also able to meet with the IPB Inter-Church Relations Committee in Sao Paolo to discuss the development of our partnership in general.

58. As well as genocide in Darfur, Sudan and the Tsunami disaster in Asia, this year saw Hurricane Ivan wreak havoc on **Jamaica and the Cayman Islands**. Rev Dr Maitland Evans, General Secretary of **The United Church in**

Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, wrote describing the damage and the urgent needs arising. Our church responded with £28,000 from the World Development Committee and a further £38,000 in donations from congregations and individuals. The rehabilitation and rebuilding of churches is progressing steadily. The United Church is one of a number of our partners keen to pursue reciprocity in mission and the Board is exploring how to take this further.

WORLD DEVELOPMENT

59. **Annual Appeal:** The World Development Appeal for 2004 was entitled **Horizons of Hope** and focused on Tearfund and Christian Aid-supported projects in Cambodia, Ethiopia and Rwanda. Appropriately, the World Development Appeal takes place in Advent and Christmas, when we look forward to and celebrate the coming of Jesus, the One who preaches good news to the poor, proclaims freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind and release for the oppressed—the year of the Lord’s favour which inaugurates a new horizon of hope for us and our world. In the period from October 2004 until mid-March 2005, £575,000 was contributed to the Appeal, of which £200,000 has been disbursed to Tearfund and £200,000 to Christian Aid. The Committee sincerely thanks the wider church for its continued and increasing support for the work of world development.

60. **Looking Forward:** The Committee has decided to continue the **Horizons of Hope** campaign for a second year in order to focus on underlying development issues in the Tsunami affected region, the challenge of development in post-conflict contexts and how authentic development tackles issues that perpetuate global poverty.

61. **Looking Back:** In order to inform people of how money from last year’s AIDS Matters Appeal was spent in addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS on development, Tearfund produced a short video of one of the projects supported by the appeal. This was sent to all ministers and Presbytery World Development agents.

62. **Emergency Relief:** In the course of the year, the Moderator lent his support to two church-wide appeals in response to the humanitarian disasters in Darfur, Sudan and in the Indian Ocean region following the devastation of the Tsunami. By mid-March, £396,000 had been contributed to the Sudan Appeal, and £1,710,000 to the Tsunami Appeal. The Sudan Appeal has been disbursed equally between Tearfund and Christian Aid. The Tsunami Appeal has been disbursed one third each to Tearfund, Christian Aid and Overseas Board partner churches. The Committee thanks the church for its compassion and generosity. In addition, the Committee allocated £28,000 to the Overseas Board, to be forwarded to the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands to assist with the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan.

63. **Tsunami and Beyond Special Event:** The Committee fully endorse the Moderator’s **‘Overwhelmed: Tsunami and Beyond’** event, which will take place on Thursday 19 May 2005. The purpose of the event is four-fold: to thank a church-wide audience for their generosity; to hear from Tearfund, Christian Aid and Overseas Board partner churches about how resources are being deployed; to provide an arena for education about the Make Poverty History

campaign; and to stress that development issues are central to the missionary calling of the Church of Jesus Christ.

64. **Make Poverty History:** It is shocking and surely an affront to the God of life that each week poverty kills a comparable number of people to the Tsunami: a weekly silent Tsunami. In light of this reminder of the effects of poverty on the world's poorest, most vulnerable people, the Committee supports the 'Make Poverty History' campaign and encourages the wider church to become involved in it. One of the central aims of the campaign is to secure trade justice so that the world's poor can better become agents in their own development. The overall purpose is to address the underlying issues which perpetuate the scandal of global poverty. Related to this, it may be noted that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) conference in Accra, Ghana, last year reminded Christians that all of the resources entrusted to us should properly be used for the well being of people and not simply for profit. Poverty is a matter of discipleship and spirituality.

MISSION EDUCATION

65. The challenge for our denomination, and for us as one of its mission boards, is how do (should) we encourage individuals and congregations (the local mission unit) to become more fully engaged in God's mission to the world; locally, nationally and globally.

66. Whilst mission education is important, it is not enough. People need to get beyond 'knowing about mission' to being 'involved in mission'. That is why in the Board's review process we have identified **mission engagement** as one of our key priorities for the future.

67. In thinking how we might encourage greater involvement in mission overseas, we have found it useful to consider four levels: The Individual, The Congregation, The Presbytery, and The Church as a whole; and to realise that our members fall into at least one of three broad categories: Leaders, Enthusiasts or The Uninvolved.

68. **Leaders:** are those who have been elected or officially appointed and include ministers and elders; leaders involved with children and youth; PWA and YWG office bearers; men's fellowship, young adults and home group leaders; congregational and presbytery mission agents; to mention just a few.

69. It is our view that many leaders need and would benefit from –

- Help in catching the vision for and priority of mission, and in developing mission policies and strategic priorities for specific mission foci.
- Training of trainers, who will be equipped to help presbytery and congregational leaders develop an enthusiasm for and greater involvement in integral mission at home and overseas.
- Presbytery based training programmes for congregational mission agents and members of congregational mission committees.
- Overseas 'accompaniment programmes' allowing interested persons to join, where appropriate, Board visits to PCI personnel and/or mission partners, so as to gain 'hands on' experience and knowledge of another culture and to see and understand the opportunities and challenges in mission in that context.

- Key ‘mission education’ resources aimed at helping them fulfil their key leadership role in relation to mission ‘involvement’ overseas.
- Training and facilitation for congregational teams and individuals as they prepare for and engage short-term in mission activities overseas.

70. Enthusiastic, proactive leadership is seen as key to galvanising congregations into action. To ensure greater interest in and passion for worldwide mission, we believe students for the ministry should have greater exposure to and direct ‘hands on’ experience in a wide spectrum of mission contexts, both at home and overseas.

71. **Enthusiasts:** are those who are already committed and involved. Some are leaders but many are not; and sadly some leaders are not necessarily enthusiasts. Enthusiasts can typically be found amongst intercessors; donors; overseas mission team members; former missionaries now home or retired; attendees at mission rallies and conferences; members of the Overseas Board and the other mission boards of our church; supporters of independent mission agencies; families and close friends of missionaries.

72. Enthusiasts look for and expect –

- Regular, detailed and up-to-date information on specific situations and people; they want to know what’s happening; what the needs are; what to pray for; how they can help, etc.
- Opportunities to be involved through praying, giving or ‘going’, or a combination of all three.
- Means of establishing links or partnerships with churches or missions overseas.
- Greater opportunities to spend more time with and learn from returned missionary personnel. (This may mean developing a different deputation model for the future.)
- Opportunities to share and exchange their own mission stories and experiences more widely; to be encouraged as they learn more about how God is working in different ways in different places.

73. Enthusiasts enthuse! Enthusiasm is infectious; it rubs off easily! The challenge is to find ways and means to enable more enthusiasts to pass on their vision and enthusiasm to others.

74. **The Uninvolved:** Members fall into this group for a variety of reasons which include: indifference; apathy; ignorance; busyness; reluctance to become involved for fear of the cost; prejudiced or racist attitudes; a lack of vision for mission; disillusionment; and, for some, because they lack a personal ‘faith relationship’ with Jesus Christ.

75. What do they need? Primarily to be challenged and helped by congregational leaders and those mission enthusiasts who are closest to them. This group of people is not a priority for the mission education focus of the Overseas Board; although we recognise that appropriately targeted communications or educational materials can be an effective means of arousing mission interest amongst some at least. But the real work of persuading ‘the uninvolved’ to become engaged in mission is likely to take time and therefore needs patient input from local people who understand and know them best.

76. The Board’s Education Committee has had an interesting year as it has sought to think ‘outside the box’ regarding our future focus and needs in

global mission awareness and engagement, particularly in the light of the emerging outcomes of the overall review process. It's been an exciting and stimulating process and, although there is much work still to be done, a number of key foci are already beginning to emerge:

- Developing leadership is a key priority.
- Enthusiasts need to be used more.
- The Board needs to be asking at all levels within our church: "What can we do for you?"
- Strong person to person relationships are vital to building meaningful and lasting mission partnerships.
- Our members have mission stories to tell that need to be shared more widely within our church.
- We need training manuals and guidelines on a variety of topics related to engaging in mission overseas.
- We need effective communications tools and adequate resources to do the job properly.

77. We ask for prayer for continued guidance as we seek to take the process forward and begin to develop priorities and plans for improving the global mission awareness and involvement throughout our church.

78. Whilst the review process has occupied much of our time over the past year or more, we wish to pay tribute to those who have continued to assist the ongoing work of mission education and involvement throughout our church. It is particularly encouraging to see a number of **presbyteries** regularly organising their own global mission events; and some are now involved in running their own overseas mission teams, which is benefiting members of smaller congregations who might otherwise not have an opportunity to be involved in this way. It has been good too to observe a greater awareness in some presbyteries of the need to organise appropriate training for congregational leaders.

79. It cannot be overemphasised how important it is for **congregational leaders** to understand the key role they have in stimulating and developing an ongoing interest and involvement in global mission; and for the need to emphasise that mission engagement is for all ages and both genders. We are heartened by the increasing number of congregations where this is clearly happening and commend them for their commitment, enthusiasm and imaginative ways in which they are engaging with the task of mission around the world.

80. We extend sincere thanks to all those who in the past year have so willing and enthusiastically engaged in **deputation** speaking on behalf of the Board. The information, insights and challenges they have shared have undoubtedly contributed significantly to the understanding and commitment of our members to the work of mission around the world. We are grateful to members of staff in both the Overseas and PWA offices who handle the administration of deputation bookings with efficiency and diligence.

81. Whilst the pattern of holding seven **Presbytery Mission Tours** each year is continuing, our report last year noted that "mission tours are perhaps no longer as useful as they once were" and suggested that "a re-think is required." This remains our view. With 'mission engagement' being one of our key

priorities for the future we anticipate the development of 'other ways' to inform and encourage our members at congregational and presbytery level.

82. The weekly **Overseas Prayerline** service, designed for use with the annual Points for Prayer handbook, continues to be an extremely effective aid to regular, focused prayer support for the work and needs of our missionaries and overseas mission partners. It is now being sent to over 1,200 e-mails addresses each week; is available from the PCI web site; and a small number of telephone callers avail of a shortened 'recorded' version each week. We commend this key resource to all in our church and thank those who use it faithfully week by week.

83. **'Latitudes of Love'** was the theme for the Board's annual celebration of global mission, held in Church House on Tuesday, 26 October 2004. Attendance was good with the Assembly Hall almost full. Praise and worship was led by a team from Wellington Street, Ballymena and, along with the Moderator and the Overseas Secretary, those taking part included Stephen Cowan (Kenya), Rev Stephen Ter (Sudan), Barry McCroskery and Rev Elsyie Niap (Indonesia), Nigel Craig (Ministerial Student), Pavel Paluchnik (Czech Republic) and members of the Ballycarry Malawi Team 2004. The offering went to support the work of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan.

PERSONNEL, VISITS AND VISITORS

84. Dr Donald Brownlie, who served in Malawi from 1969-1980 and from 1999-2003, passed away on 29 August 2004.

85. We give thanks to God and record our appreciation for the faithful witness and service of Donald and Una Brownlie (Malawi 1999-2004); David and Cheryl Adair (India 2000-2004); Norman and Joan Duncan (India 1998-2004); Maurice and Helen Kennedy (Malawi 2002-2004); Dibbie McCaughan (Malawi 2000-2004); Alison Lesingiran (Kenya 2001-2004); Rosi White (Malawi 2002-2004); Brian Wilson (India 1996-2004); Mabel Colson (Brazil 1990-2004); Elizabeth Matthews (India 1998-2004); Rodney and Denise Cameron (France 1998-2005).

86. We give praise and thanks to God for the faithful witness and service of all our missionaries during the past year. As they continue to serve in many and varied settings, we rejoice with them for the times when they see fruitfulness for their labours for the sake of Christ and His Kingdom. We make every effort to stand alongside those who persevere in the face of difficulties, frustrations, insecurity and opposition to the proclamation of the gospel. We thank them all for their commitment to their calling to serve in cross-cultural contexts outside Ireland – See Appendix A.

87. We have been delighted to have the following bursars studying in Belfast over the past academic year:

- Miss Sharon John, from India studying for a Post Graduate Diploma/Master of Arts degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at the University of Ulster Coleraine.
- Miss Nora Pinter, from Hungary, studying as a post-graduate student at Union Theological College for one year.
- Mr Pavel Paluchnik, from the Czech Republic, studying as a post-graduate student at Union Theological College for one year.

- Rev Binnie Mwakasungula, from Malawi, who studied at Union Theological College for the year 2003-04, studying for a further year for a Masters degree in Theology.
- Rev Stephen Ter, from Sudan, studying for a MTh/Diploma at the College of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh for one year.
- Rev Kachepa Mughogho, from Malawi, studying for a Masters Degree in Theology at the University of Glasgow for one year.
- Miss Salome Malongo, from Malawi, studying for a Masters Degree in Water Management at Cranfield University, in Bedfordshire, England for one year.
- Mr Robertson Gondwe, from Malawi, continuing his studies for a postgraduate Diploma and MSc in Health Services & Hospital Management at South Bank University in London.

88. In the past year the following visits were made to attend consultations and conferences called by our partner churches, and to offer pastoral support and encouragement to our missionary personnel:

- Mrs Maureen Patterson to Poland in April 2004
- Miss Helen Johnston to India and Nepal in May 2004
- Rev Uel Marrs and Rev John Kirkpatrick to Ukraine in May 2004
- Miss Helen Johnston and Rev John Kirkpatrick to Czech Republic in June 2004
- Miss Helen Johnston and Mrs Margaret Myers to Hungary and Romania in June 2004
- Mr Barry and Mrs Anthea Harrison to Spain in August 2004
- Rev Uel Marrs and Mr Nigel Eves to Kenya in August 2004
- Mrs Maureen Patterson to France in September 2004
- Miss Helen Johnston and Dr Moreen Gordon to Malawi and Johannesburg in October 2004
- Rev Uel Marrs to Pakistan in November 2004
- Miss Helen Johnston to Czech Republic in February 2005
- Mrs Maureen Patterson to Geneva in February 2005
- Miss Helen Johnston to Spain in March 2005

89. During the year eight new missionaries were appointed to serve for both short and long term periods, in Brazil (1), Indonesia (1), Malawi (3), Kenya (2), Nepal (1) – See Appendix A. We thank God for these new missionaries and would encourage people to pray and support them as they and their families settle into their locations.

90. In the past year one individual served as a volunteer for three months in Malawi. As part of their theological training two students, from Union Theological College, completed Summer Placements in a cross cultural situation. During July 2004 Nigel Craig, with his wife Antonia, completed his ten week placement in Oradea, Romania and in August 2004 Ken Nelson, with his wife Marlene, completed his ten week placement with the Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi. During the summer two teams visited Szilagyecseh and Algyogy in Romania while two team members travelled on to Transcarpathia in Ukraine.

91. During the year we were delighted to receive the following visitors from our partner churches:-

- Mr Moses Mguntha, from the Livingstonia Synod of the CCAP in Malawi, in October 2004
- Max & Edygláucia Fonseca da Silva, from the Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil, in January 2005
- Rebeccah Muriguh, from the PCEA in Kenya, as part of her ongoing study programme, in February 2005
- Chrissie Nyirongo, an Umanyano woman's worker from the Livingstonia Synod of the CCAP in Malawi, in February 2005
- Mr Mabvuto Lupwayi, from the Livingstonia Synod of the CCAP in Malawi, in March 2005

THE HOME BASE

92. Once again, we convey our thanks to our team of **executive and administrative staff** who in handling a very heavy workload, have carried out their responsibilities with the utmost efficiency and enthusiasm. Presently the executive staff includes an Overseas Secretary, a Mission Education Officer (Asia Secretary) and a Personnel Officer (Overseas). The administrative staff is comprised of a Senior Administrative Officer, two Senior Secretaries - one with special responsibilities for financial affairs and the other for mission education. There is also a part-time Secretary, and at the time of writing we are seeking to appoint a new Junior Secretary/Receptionist.

93. The Overseas Board is very grateful for the ongoing support of the **Presbyterian Women's Association** whose office bearers and Executive Committee members continue to contribute faithfully to the work of the Overseas Board. In 2004 the Annual Grant made by PWA to the work of the Board was £245,000. We commend the PWA for their enthusiasm and commitment to the work of our church in overseas mission, and thank the members of the Association for their prayerful and practical support for our overseas personnel.

94. Aside from the full-time staff in the Overseas Office, many members of the Board willingly sacrifice of their time, energy and gifts to serve on the Board's three Assembly Committees or four Board Committees. A special word of thanks is extended to the Review Team and its Core Group for their unflinching endeavours in the past year and a half. We are grateful to all who, on behalf of the Board over the past year, have attended consultations with partner churches, visited missionaries in their country of service, and spoken in congregations of our church about the work overseas.

95. The last year has seen the introduction and/or further development of a number of components of our **Pastoral Care Model** for all mission personnel serving with the Overseas Board:-

- Introduction of psychological assessment for all candidates wishing to serve for more than one year with the Board. (Previously psychological assessment was only completed for those wishing to serve in Nepal).
- Revision and introduction of an internal and external interview for the debriefing process. A paper titled 'Debriefing' with recommendations was approved at the Overseas Board meeting held in October 2004.
- Introduction of personal security training for all personnel wishing to serve with the Board. This training was also offered to congregations

who were supporting teams or individuals in a cross-cultural situation outside of Ireland.

- Research and exploratory visits, to meet with partner church representatives and to discuss issues of pastoral care for two new areas of service, were conducted in two different countries on two continents.

96. We continue to be encouraged by the ongoing commitment by our members to support the work of mission in a variety of ways. We record our thanks to individuals, congregations and PWA branches that have very faithfully provided financial support through the United Appeal, and we appreciate all the United Appeal Board does to ensure that the target of honour for the total appeal is reached each year.

97. The Overseas Board counts it not only a responsibility but also a privilege to be able to channel funds from the 'extra mile' giving of individuals, congregations and PWA Branches who, having met their United Appeal targets, committed themselves to a wide range of partner church projects. Not least, we express our appreciation to those who organised and contributed to:

98. **The Presbyterian Women's Association's Birthday Thank Offering** 2003/04 which raised a total of £50,929, including £15,000 for the support of the publication programme of the Christian Literature Association of Malawi (CLAIM) and £25,000 for MEGAVOICE, the small computer device that allows people to listen to the Word of God in their own language. The Birthday Thank Offering Project for 2004/05 is raising funds for the extensive refurbishment of the Overseas Board missionary residences. Although funds are still being collected, this work has been able to move ahead quickly and is almost completed.

99. **The Young Women's Groups'** 2003/04 project has raised a total of £11,000 in support of deacon and deaconess students studying at the Karoli Gaspar Reformed University Teacher Training College, Hungary. In 2004/05 the Young Women's Group's Home Project was to share with the PWA in the refurbishment work on the Overseas Board's missionary residences. Their overseas project was focused on the support of student nurses and also the Safe Motherhood Programme at Ekwendeni Hospital, Malawi.

100. **The Youth and Children's project** for 2003/04 entitled 'Lookin' Up' raised the excellent sum of £101,864 and in the overseas context has contributed funds towards a literacy programme in the Zombe region of Kenya, as well as helping street children to hear about Jesus through the Big Green Bag project run by Scripture Gift Mission. The 2004/05 project seeks to help the Christian Church in Sumba to develop its ministry in the areas of health, Sunday school and youth.

101. The Junior Boys' Brigade Appeal 2003/04 raised £15,000 to help provide much-needed educational equipment and facilities for young people in the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, and a further £7,000 for BB International Extension. The Junior Boys' Brigade Appeal launched for 2004/05 is entitled, 'Get Well Soon' and will support the work of five Presbyterian Hospitals in Malawi.

102. The Overseas Board ended 2004 with a surplus of £113,284 on its current account, compared with the accumulated surplus of £106,630 at the end of 2003. We are once again indebted to the Board's Honorary Treasurer, Mr

Mervyn Whittle, for his ongoing commitment to monitoring income and expenditure, and finalising budgets and accounts. We also express our thanks to the staff of the Finance Office for their support and guidance.

103. Our membership of Global Connections enables us to keep abreast of new thinking and initiatives in world mission. In the past year we have been represented at a number of their forums and conferences examining the future of the Church and mission agencies in world mission. Additionally we continue to attend as observers, forums of the Churches' Commission On Mission (CCOM). As members of the British and Irish Association of Mission Studies (BIAMS) we are provided with further opportunities to reflect upon mission.

104. In conclusion, we give thanks and praise to God for guiding and sustaining the Board over this past year as we have sought to glorify God through providing servant leadership for our church as it engages in overseas mission.

APPENDIX A

In the report most of the names of missionaries have not been mentioned but their names and spheres of service are listed below and are to be taken together with this report.

BRAZIL

James & Heather Cochrane	1996	IPIB National Mission in Cruzeta and Natal – on home assignment
*Naomi Keefe	2000/2004	Outreach programme, IPB, Casa Caiada

CHINA

One missionary

INDIA

Linda Jackson	1996	Woodstock School, Mussoorie
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INDONESIA

Mervyn McCullagh	1998	Educational and Community Development, GKS/STIE Sumba
*Barry McCroskery	2004	International Partner Relations & Youth Ministry, GMT Timor

JAMAICA

Malcolm & Joan Scott	2000	Discovery Bay Charge of the United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands – on unpaid leave
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KENYA

Stephen & Angelina Cowan	1985/9	Outreach & Development Work, PCEA Tuum
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Deborah Ford	1996	Presbyterian College, Kikuyu – on home assignment
Naomi Martin	1991	Children’s Ministry, PCEA Kambui
Derek & Linda Roulston	1998	Outreach & Development work, PCEA, Galana
Paul & Anne Bailie	1998	Presbyterian College and Alliance Boys’ High School – on final home assignment
Andrew & Clerah Clenaghan	1999	Outreach & Development work, PCEA, Zombe
Gary & Mary Reid	2000	Outreach & Development Work, PCEA, Narok

MALAWI

Margaret Young	1995	St Luke’s Hospital, Malosa
Diane Cusick	1995	Women’s Ministry, Zomba Theological College
Clare McIntyre	1997	Karonga Girls’ Secondary School – on home assignment/study leave
Stephen & Ruth McCracken	1999	Zomba Theological College
John & Rosemary Hanson	1999	Chaplain, CCAP - Blantyre Synod
Shirley Stronge	2002	Ekwendeni Nursing School
David & Maggie Steele	2002	Parish Ministry/Chaplain, CCAP Livingstonia Synod
Maureen Stevenson	2002	David Gordon Memorial Hospital, Livingstonia
Michelle Evans	2003	Bandawe Girls’ Secondary School – on mid term break
Andrew & Debbie Soye	2003	CCAP - Blantyre Synod Projects Office
*Robin & Helen Quinn	2004	Lay Training Centre, Ekwendeni

ROMANIA

Csaba & Iona Veres	2001/1993	Youth and Children’s Ministry, Cluj
Richard Lynas	2002	Bonus Pastor Foundation, Cluj.

FRANCE

Gordon & Sandra Campbell	1989	Free Faculty of Reformed Theology, Aix-en-Provence
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GREAT BRITAIN

Christopher & Nivedita Macwan	1989	Ministry among Asians in Wembley, London
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Short term missionaries serving for a minimum of two years, are supported in overseas locations. Their names and spheres of service are as follows -

JAMAICA

Heather Lennox 2002 Cornwall Area Council of the United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands

KENYA

Norman & Pauline Kennedy 2000 Christian Literature, in co-operation with Africa Inland Mission

MALAWI

*Alistair McCracken 2004 Henry Henderson Institute Secondary School

CZECH REPUBLIC

Susan Clarke 1999 Women's Ministry, Prague

SPAIN

Derek & Jane French 2000 Evangelism & Christian Training, IEE, Valencia

Volunteers in Mission serve for a minimum of six months and for up to two years. Their names and spheres of service are as follows -

KENYA

*Paul & Elizabeth Davis 2004 Outreach & Development Work, PCEA Tuum

NEPAL

*Jenny Fell 2005 Kathmandu International Study Centre, UMN

Candidate for long-term service:

NEPAL

Mark Smyth Tutorial Teaching with UMN

*Appointed 2004/2005

APPENDIX B**'Mission in the Melting Pot'****Final Report of the Overseas Board's Review Team to the General Assembly, 2005**

In 2003 the General Assembly requested the Overseas Board "to conduct a review of its vision, mission and strategy", reporting to the General Assembly of

2004 with a strategic plan to the year 2010. (Overseas Board Report, Resolution 2, page 166).

At last year's General Assembly an Interim Report was received, detailing the progress to that point in the review process. The Review Team was encouraged to continue its work and to bring a Final Report to this year's Assembly.

I. THE PROCESS

The Review Team

The Review Team and attendant Working Groups have continued to meet regularly through the year. The passion that sparked so much early debate and discussion has sustained the Team through many long hours. Fortnightly meetings for prayer have under-girded and, we trust, inspired the process.

Consultation

However, we have also been very aware that we cannot and must not 'go it alone'. Since its beginning, the Review Team has sought to find the balance between 'giving a lead' and encouraging the wider church to own and develop the vision for overseas mission. Effective consultation and communication has thus been a vital part of the process as well as a goal of the Review.

Meetings at Presbytery level through Tours or by invitation have allowed discussion to continue on the many issues the Review Team was facing and the Team is grateful for the constructive input from so many.

'Prayerline' carried some of the major events and challenges facing the Review Team throughout the process. The Presbyterian Herald helpfully carried an article outlining the developing shape of the priorities the Team saw emerging. A series in 'Wider World' has helped illustrate the wider context in which we engage in mission in the 21stC.

As **Strategic Priorities** for the Board began to become clear these were tested through the Board's meetings and particularly at its two-day Residential Conference in January 2005. An extra-ordinary Board meeting took place in April to allow this Report to come forward to the General Assembly. The critical response of so many has been invaluable in helping the Team sharpen its focus and clarify its thinking and reporting.

A further meeting with John Truscott, a Christian Management Consultant, again allowed the Team to evaluate the progress made and the tasks still before them.

Throughout the process, our relationships with our partners overseas, with other boards of our church and with PCI personnel serving in other mission agencies have acted as an invaluable stimulus and check to our thinking. We are committed to such ongoing dialogue and discussion for our mutual benefit in mission.

Answering our Ten Questions

At the outset, the Review Team set itself a series of 'Ten Questions to Address', outlining the main areas to be covered in the Review and ensuring a thorough and structured process.

Questions 1-3: Vision, Purpose, and Values

Last year's Interim Report outlined this series and dealt with the first three questions in some detail, setting out the vision and purpose which we had identified for the PCI in mission overseas, as well as the values, or distinctive characteristics, which will guide us in mission.

During the past year further reflection and consultation has led the Review Team to considerably refine these vision, purpose and values statements. The final draft is included in the substance of this report.

Much of the Team's energy in the early part of this past session has been spent on Questions 4 and 5 in our process.

Question 4: 'The story so far'

This addressed internal and external analysis, encompassing:

- *PCI's distinctive contribution in the history of mission*

(Who are we as a church? What are our strengths and weaknesses in mission? What place have we held in the past? What is our current way of doing things? What is our 'personality' in world mission? How do others perceive us? Is what we are what we should be?)

- *The world/environment around us*

(What are the overall global trends? What is happening in the Church in the world today, not least among our own partners? What are the unmet needs and opportunities, bearing in mind what other people are doing, and what are we in PCI able, and called, to do?)

The background study involved in answering question 4 has acted as an invaluable catalyst in determining the distinctive role PCI should have in mission overseas today. Many challenging discussion papers have been written, and we hope to adapt them in the near future to provide a useful resource for congregational learning and development in mission.

Working through the analyses of question 4 served as a springboard for answering questions 5 and 6, so determining the Board's strategy for the future:

Question 5: What might God do through us? (Visions):

'In the light of this past record, and present reality, what then might the Lord want to do through us today?'

Question 6: Strategies

Last year's Interim Report also began to clarify the strategic role of the Overseas Board as it serves our church in mission. Much more work has been done in this area of strategy.

The fruit of our labour on questions 5 and 6 comes together in the substance of the Report in the section entitled 'Strategic Priorities'. This section sets out our 'mini-visions' for the future, and the means by which we intend to fulfil them.

Working Group on Theology of Mission

In tandem with the wider Review Process, a Working Group on Theology of Mission was appointed to consider a number of key issues reflecting the challenges and changes in mission today. Topics covered include:

- *What is Mission?*
- *The Church in Mission*
- *Mission in the Reformed Tradition*
- *Integral Mission*
- *Contemporary Evangelical Missiology*
- *Theology of Development*
- *Hermeneutics*
- *Ecumenism and Mission*
- *The Church and the Para-Church*
- *Spiritual Warfare and Mission*
- *What of other Faiths?*
- *'To the Jew First'*
- *Eschatology and Mission*
- *The Suffering and Persecuted Church and Mission*
- *Present and Future Challenges in Mission.*

The findings of this Group have served as a filter and a corrective to the wider review process, ensuring that a Biblical focus has been maintained throughout.

Again these papers are available from the Overseas Office and we hope to use some of the research in educational and study material which will be provided in appropriate form for members of our congregations.

The Review Team records its thanks to all who have produced papers and given many hours to study, reflection and discussion. We are especially grateful for the input of members of the World Development Committee who have been regular participants at meetings of the Review Team and its Working Groups. The General Assembly has valued the great service rendered to the church through the work of this committee over many years, and as its integration under the Overseas Board continues we look forward to further fruitful cooperation.

Frequently Asked Questions

A number of 'Frequently Asked Questions' have cropped up in the process. Some of these are reflected in the body of this report, others are being carried forward by Working Groups seeking to imagine what a new board might look like and how it might operate, should the Assembly endorse this report. Particular areas of debate include:

- **Partnerships:** developing real mutuality and accountability; what happens when partnerships are unsatisfactory? exploring partnerships with other agencies and societies; should we ever 'go it alone'?
- **Priorities:** what place should we give to evangelism and church planting? With limited resources and personnel, is it right to seek new outreach initiatives? Should we focus on fewer areas in greater depth, or act purely as a channel for other agencies and societies? Who should do development, and how should it be done?

- **Personnel:** should we not focus on supporting suitable nationals, rather than sending PCI missionaries overseas? Why are our personnel spread so thinly? Why does Africa have over half our personnel? What support structures are we developing for the future? What about the many PCI members serving with other agencies?
- **Education:** how might we help congregations develop a greater sense of stewardship of mission? What about helping ministers/young people in their vision? Isn't there more to mission education than 'talks by returned missionaries'? How might we integrate 'home' and 'overseas' mission more effectively? What about the many immigrant communities in our midst?

This short sample of questions shows the clear thinking of many of our leaders, congregations and enthusiasts. **Thank you for asking!** Our goal is that no question will be unanswered, and that the collective wisdom the Board receives will enable it to press on in mission.

II. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE REVIEW

Through the Review Team's discussions and consultations to date, the clear conviction has emerged that **mission is not just one of the Church's activities but is fundamental to its very existence.**

This brings us to the substance of the Review, which fulfils the General Assembly's directive to review the Overseas Board's Vision, Mission (Purpose) and Strategy with a strategic plan to the year 2010:

The Vision, Purpose, Values and Strategic Priorities of the Board of Mission Overseas

Context

1. The Mission Statement of the 1992 General Assembly declares, "The PCI exists ... to love and honour God... and to enable her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world."
2. Mission overseas is part of this wider mission of the Church to all peoples throughout the world.
3. The Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities has re-affirmed the Church's essential missionary nature and calling, identifying the congregation as the primary local mission unit of the Church.
4. Alongside other central Boards and Agencies, the Overseas Board exists primarily to encourage, facilitate and resource the local congregation in mission and ministry and to enable the coordination and delivery of mission and ministry which would be beyond the ability of the local congregation. It seeks to oversee and guide our denomination towards a more appropriate and effective involvement in mission overseas through constant review, evaluation and development.
5. To date, the Board has been known as 'The Overseas Board'. However, for the following reasons a change in name to '**The Board of Mission Overseas**' may be appropriate:

- (i) While everything our church does is missional, this Board's particular priority is mission. In the light of the growing 'overseas' involvement of other committees of our church, eg the Global Concerns and the Church Relations Committees, the Board's defining missionary focus must be clearly distinguished and stated.
- (ii) The Board's particular remit is to review and develop PCI's involvement in mission in the overseas context.
- (iii) Following the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities' recommendation to the General Assembly 2003 that the World Development Committee come under the oversight of the Overseas Board, "which is accepted throughout our denomination as being our board of world mission" and "recognising that development issues are clearly part of mission", the Board acknowledges with appreciation the new insights and dimensions which this cooperation has already brought to our mission thinking and service.

6. While the Board's particular focus, and the context of the following vision statement, is therefore mission in the overseas context, it is affirmed that the mission of our church is one. The Board welcomes moves towards greater coordination and collaboration, and seeks to work ever more closely together with other boards and agencies so that our church may more effectively fulfil its part in God's mission to our world.

The Ten Questions we were addressing were designed to help us come up with a clear understanding of the Vision and Purpose for our church in mission:

Our Vision

To serve a mission-hearted Church:

- in step with the God of mission
- re-awakened to the missionary nature of God's Word
- placing mission at the heart of all it is and all it does
- from the end of the pew to the ends of the earth

Our Purpose

To proclaim Christ and His universal reign:

- educating our church in God's purpose for His world
- enthusing our members to witness to Christ world-wide
- enabling all to share their lives and gifts across cultures

Explanatory Notes:

a mission-hearted church: While theologically the mission of our church is one, following the remit of the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities for our Board we understand 'mission' to refer to the *overseas context* in this statement.

Our primary focus is on our own church, PCI, as it sends and receives in mission. Recognising that PCI is also a particular church of the visible universal Church of Jesus Christ, we seek also, indirectly and directly, to encourage the Church worldwide in mission.

Since the Church originates according to the Father's plan in the mission of the Son and Spirit, mission activity flows from the very nature of the Church.

The Church's essential nature is as a community sent out into the world. It is by going outside itself that the Church is itself and comes to itself. Mission is not just one of its activities, but is at the heart of all its activities.

We further recognise that this is God's mission, in which He graciously invites us to participate, and that our mission is of no value unless it is in submission to His leading and control. Our vision is that God will use the whole of our church, at personal, congregational, presbyterial, board, and denominational level. In line with emerging new perspectives on the congregation as God's missionary people in a local context, as reflected by our own Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities, we emphasise the local congregation as the primary agent of mission, but affirm the missionary calling and responsibility at every level of our church's life.

to serve: through defending, promoting, and upholding the vital responsibility, calling and privilege of mission within and beyond the PCI; through guiding and facilitating the PCI in its missionary witness to the world; and through representing and acting on behalf of the PCI in those areas of responsibility which a central board is best able to manage and oversee.

In the 21st Century this servant role must become increasingly versatile. Traditionally, the Board has been viewed as the 'sending and receiving agency' of PCI, with the wider church engaged in a support role which has focused on financial giving and prayer. However, nowadays more and more congregations are actively involved in 'mission direct' through twinning, sending and receiving individuals and all-age congregational teams, and engaging in a broad range of projects. As a result the Board sees the need not only to serve the Church in 'sending and receiving' but also in a broader support role that provides consultancy and partnership for congregations with a developing sense of responsible stewardship in mission. We seek under God to create, encourage and enliven 'a heart for mission' at all levels within our denomination.

to proclaim Christ: we are convicted by the urgent need for evangelism, especially in view of the millions who have never heard the Gospel, or who need to hear it again. We affirm the importance of evangelism and discipleship as the one task within mission which the Church alone is qualified and authorised to do. Yet while evangelism is at the heart of mission, it is not all we are called to in Christ's name. We recognise that Biblical mission is integral; that witness to Christ is a seamless unity of word and deed.

His universal reign: God's rule and authority at work in this world. Again we use this term to acknowledge that this is God's mission, for His sole glory. While people are our primary focus, God's reign must also be declared and demonstrated in every aspect of our world and to all principalities and powers. We long for His sovereignty to be willingly acknowledged amongst all peoples and all societies, and to be seen in the whole of life and creation. Recognising that God's reign extends beyond the Church, we do not simply look for the building of a particular denomination or the establishment of a presence geographically.

educating, enthusing and enabling: through prayer, information, sending, receiving and supporting; and through the Board's guiding, advising, and facilitating our congregations as they engage directly in mission and as they

support PCI members serving in the overseas context with our own denomination and with other Christian agencies and societies.

to witness to Christ: To witness is to point beyond ourselves to Who Jesus is and what He has done, and to share our personal encounter with Him through our words and our deeds, through our unity and love, and through our conduct in society. We recognise also that a Biblical understanding of witness involves a readiness for suffering and sacrifice.

lives and gifts: We affirm that mission is not just a matter of a specific job to be done; it is a sharing of what we are in Christ, as much as what we do for Christ. At the same time, we recognise that both churches and individuals have specific gifts, insights and experiences to contribute to God's mission. 'Gifts' include people, ideas, and experience as well as finance.

across cultures: In today's increasingly diverse yet interconnected world, we recognise the need for Christians to bridge social, generational, and economic gaps as well as crossing racial and geographical boundaries in mission. We recognise that our Christian witness and service is more effective when believers unite together across cultures, learning from one another's insights, emphases and experiences within the global Body of Christ.

Our Values

When we ask in what distinctive ways we go about our purpose, we are asking about the 'values' or 'guiding principles' of our Board that govern its life and mission. These values answer the question "How?", focusing not on the outcomes or the activities but on the methods. In everything, we seek to embody the following values:

God-Centred

We humbly recognise that the mission we participate in is God's mission, and not 'ours', and that we engage in global mission solely in response to, and as a result of, God's grace.

We recognise further that 'God's mission' is exemplified for us in the sending of His Son. We affirm the importance of a Christological pattern for mission: incarnational, self-giving, and costly. In all that we are and do we acknowledge our dependence on His Spirit, Who inspires us, guides us, encourages us, empowers us and compels us into mission.

Our first priorities in mission, therefore, are worship and prayer. In accordance with our Confession of Faith, we seek at all times to submit to the authority of Scripture as mediated through the Spirit. In everything, we seek to be God-glorifying, Christ-centred and Spirit-led.

People-Focused

If the Greatest Commandment is to love God, the second is like it: to love our neighbours as ourselves. Jesus called on individuals everywhere to "Come, follow me". His last commission to His friends was "Go and make disciples of all nations". The mission of God in which we share is a mission focused on *people*.

Our desire is that all people should know of the redeeming love of God lavished upon us through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus, and have an opportunity to respond to that love in repentance and faith. Recognising that the mission of Jesus was to seek and save the lost, we affirm the importance of evangelism as the one mission activity which the Church alone has the right and ability to do. In a world of competing truth-claims, we uphold Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Saviour. Recognising that the saving work of Christ is an ongoing process in the life of the believer, we emphasise the importance of teaching and discipleship and costly commitment.

We recognise further that a people-focused mission entails serving the whole *person* – physical, emotional, intellectual as well as spiritual needs. We also recognise that individuals live within *communities* and *environments* which are in need of the transforming power of the Gospel.

Following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, we therefore affirm the importance of *integral mission*. All that we are and all that we do reflects our love of Christ and humankind and our desire to bear witness to Him, that others may be led to love and serve Him.

From the example of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, it is also our conviction that God reaches people (mostly) through people. We consider direct, personal missional encounter to be crucial, and prioritise the development of personal contacts, friendships and partnerships across cultures.

We also seek to provide the highest standards of training, support and care for all in mission. We affirm that God has placed the treasure of His Gospel in clay jars and acknowledge the risks and limitations of human vulnerability as well as the potential for spiritual transformation.

Church-Based

Mission is not just one ‘task’ among many that the Church does, but part of the Church’s very nature. We affirm that global mission is the calling and responsibility of *the whole Church*, and that *the local church* is the primary unit for the Church’s mission in that place.

We remember also that the PCI is one small part of the universal Church, with gifts to give and receive within the global Body of Christ. In a rapidly changing world, we need to join together to discern opportunities and pool resources. We recognise that partnership is in itself an effective witness to a fragmented world. We therefore commit ourselves to building up mission partnerships for mutual encouragement, challenge, witness and ministry. We particularly acknowledge the mission needs of our own land and the need to learn from others, especially from the churches of the Southern Hemisphere which now play a strategic role in world mission. We consider receiving and learning in this way to be as important to us as sending.

We therefore seek to share the vision, skills and resources to enable the wider church to participate in mission at all levels. In line with PCI’s historical practice, we place a special emphasis on establishing and encouraging church-to-church partnerships. We recognise also that many members of PCI serve with other mission agencies and societies, and seek to affirm their service and expertise. We are already in partnership with Tearfund and Christian Aid in development work, and we are committed to creative conversations with other

agencies and societies which also seek to serve the local church in mission, and to the development of creative new partnerships, especially for new areas of mission. At home, we aim to see every member of PCI enlightened, enthused and enabled to fulfil the role in global mission which is appropriate to their circumstances, calling and gifting.

Forward-Thinking

Recognising that God takes the initiative in His mission, we also acknowledge our own responsibility for proactive planning. We seek the discernment to recognise and creatively respond to new God-given opportunities, developing, as necessary, new spheres and methods of service. Conscious of the contextual nature of mission, we seek in every situation to proclaim and demonstrate the good news in a relevant and transforming manner.

Our Strategic Priorities

Through the process of reflection and consultation four Strategic Priorities have emerged. While there is no specific hierarchy among these four heads, the Team has placed Mission Engagement at the start, as it is felt that it under-girds all that follows, and is an essential part of each of the other three Priorities.

Mission Engagement

Mission is the calling of the whole Church as the Body of Christ, and not just the work of 'the missionary'. We aim to develop the missional identity and responsibility of all our members and to enable a more appropriate and effective involvement in mission through:

- on-going research and review
- creative and flexible thinking
- the development of a mutual learning environment with our partners
- proactive engagement with other boards and agencies
- the training of ministers, leaders and other mission facilitators
- the integration of children and young people into this work

At every level, we seek to:

- proclaim and communicate the Biblical mandate for mission
- provide appropriate information on mission needs and opportunities
- encourage hands-on involvement
- offer relevant advice, support and training
- develop tools for study and reflection

Outreach Initiatives

Central to mission is the call to make disciples, especially amongst those who have never heard the Gospel. *Asia* and *Europe* are areas of particular (though not exclusive) strategic concern. Building on existing relationships, we seek to explore and engage in the following areas of opportunity:

- church-planting amongst unreached peoples, particularly within the continent of Asia.
- the re-evangelisation of post-Christian Europe
- Scripture translation, distribution, and literacy work

- creative new ways of doing mission, especially at the ‘micro-level’

Compassionate Ministries

Our vision is that all peoples might have fullness of life in Christ.

We want to see our church share God’s creative and just purposes and actively demonstrate the compassion of Christ for all He has made, by:

- defending the image of God in all people
- upholding the integrity of creation
- meeting human needs and working for justice
- empowering communities, families and peoples
- standing alongside the Suffering and Persecuted Church

We seek to fulfil this vision by various means including:

- long-term development solutions
- crisis intervention
- health, educational and restorative ministries
- a holistic response to the AIDS pandemic
- education and advocacy

Leadership Development

We want to see PCI rejoicing in the growth and vitality of our partner churches, and sharing with them in the challenges such growth brings.

We seek to share in leadership development through:

- the strategic placement of PCI personnel
- the support of training programmes which equip indigenous leaders
- a sharing of resources and ideas which strengthen local vision for mission

III. EMERGING CHALLENGES AND CHANGES:

1. The Partnership Model of Mission

The Board has been engaged in mission during this past generation through partnerships. The Strategic Priorities which we have identified necessitate that we re-evaluate our current partnership model and consider what kind of partnerships we may wish to become involved with in the future. The Review Team has begun to do this and is seeking to establish a set of clearly-defined criteria, including the following:

- The partnership must serve mission
- It must be consistent with our priorities
- There must be shared/compatible mission strategies
- The partnership must be consistent with our nature as a small, denominational mission agency
- Both partners must be open to negotiation and change
- There must be ‘partnership potential’: we must be able to see ourselves ‘going places’ in the partnership.

2. The Board and its Structures

A new set of Priorities for the Board may also necessitate changes in the structure of the Board within PCI. Our present Assembly Committees reflect past models of relationship and stewardship of mission. The present Committees arose out of particular Mission Agencies which operated under the auspices of PCI before the Overseas Board was formed. Area Committees allowed us to deal with people in specific places where we had historical, cultural and church ties and affinities.

However, the world has since shrunk. Travel, communication, changing migration patterns (whether forced or not): all these bring us unique experiences and opportunities, and form the new environment in which we share in mission today.

Recognising that our new Strategic Priorities may be better served by changed structures, a **Resources Working Group** has been set up to address the key issue of implementation of our vision. It will deal with matters such as finance, staffing, and changes to the present committee structure.

In particular, it is hoped that new Assembly Committees which are more clearly focused on our Strategic Priorities will allow the Board to take decisions, carry forward clear plans to achieve clear objectives, and provide accountability to the Assembly and our congregations. A number of **Working Groups** are currently developing detailed remits for these Priority areas, defining short and long-term objectives and criteria for evaluation of these objectives.

It hardly needs to be said that any new structure must not lose sight of our present commitments and relationships, and how they are maintained at present. It must be expected that any changes will bring only advantage to our church's mission.

At the same time, the Review Team is deeply aware that change brings pain, and is concerned that a properly managed transition takes place. Consultation, again, will be key.

IV. WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

As this Report is being written, (March 2005) a number of meetings are still taking place. From now to the Assembly, our focus will be on the last four of the Ten Questions which have directed our Review process:

7. **Resources:** What resources do we have and need?
8. **Aims:** Where do we plan to be in a year's time from the end of the Review?
9. **Goals and Objectives:** What are the stepping-stones towards this point which will keep us on track in out-working the plan?
10. **Evaluation:** Where might we get it wrong? Or indeed, where might we have gone wrong in this whole process?

While this is the Overseas Board Review Team's Final Report, we believe that such questions will stimulate and challenge us whatever strategies and structures we adopt, and so there is a sense in which they will always be before us. Our 'formal' Review has taken two years, yet we have been made increasingly aware that constant review and self-critical analysis is necessary to help us serve the Lord and His Church in better ways.

Perhaps one lesson before all others has been learnt in this Review: that *we are called to humble service*. The Board acknowledges its privilege in continuing the finest traditions within PCI of engaging in mission overseas.

The Overseas Board is indebted to all who have submitted questions, comments and papers, and to all who have 'prayed us through'. The Board thanks the Review Team for unstinting hard work, and for the constant reminder 'to keep the main thing the main thing'.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly approve the Vision, Purpose, Values and Strategic Priorities for the Overseas Board through to 2010 as outlined in Appendix B of the Report.
3. That the General Assembly direct the Overseas Board, in implementing the findings of the Mission Review, to give particular attention to its structure, membership, finance and staffing.
4. That the General Assembly encourage the Board to develop and strengthen its links with persecuted minority Christian communities in Asia, particularly through our existing mission partners in India, Indonesia, Nepal and Pakistan, offering practical help where appropriate and encouraging prayerful support for them throughout the membership of our church.
5. That the General Assembly encourage the Overseas Board, at this time when the Church is losing influence in Europe, to work alongside partner churches in Europe to prioritise the development of godly church leaders, and to explore opportunities for outreach not least amongst marginalised and immigrant communities.
6. That the General Assembly, recognising Lebanon as a strategic doorway to the Middle East and part of the Middle East peace equation, request the Overseas Board to continue building relationships with the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon.
7. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the signing of the peace agreement between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A, urge the International community to ensure that the protocols are implemented, and encourage our church to support the PCOS as it develops its mission strategy for peacetime.
8. That the General Assembly give thanks for new opportunities of service alongside the Presbyterian Church in Brazil (IPB), and affirm its ongoing commitment to the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, particularly as it proceeds with rehabilitation work in the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan.
9. That the General Assembly give thanks for and encourage the continued generous support of the World Development Appeal, and on this the 25th anniversary of the constitution of the World Development Committee as an official committee of the General Assembly, commend all those who as conveners, committee members and Presbytery Agents have worked to alleviate global poverty and its underlying causes, raise awareness of development issues and stress their importance for Christian discipleship.

10. In this year of humanitarian disaster in the Darfur region of Sudan and the Tsunami devastation across the Indian Ocean, that the General Assembly recognise in glad thanksgiving the generosity of members of our church to the Sudan and Tsunami Appeals respectively as Christian expressions of God's compassion, and commend Christian Aid, Tearfund and our partner churches for their efforts in meeting both the immediate and longer term needs of those affected and their communities.

11. That the General Assembly endorse and support the Make Poverty History campaign and agree that our church joins the Make Poverty History coalition.

12. That the General Assembly encourage the Overseas Board to develop 'mission engagement' strategies, and provide appropriate mission education resources, that will enable congregational leaders to enthuse more members to be actively and effectively engaged in the work of mission overseas.

13. That the General Assembly thank all those who continue to assist the ongoing work of mission education throughout our church, commend those individuals, congregations and presbyteries who are taking active steps to encourage greater involvement in overseas mission service, and ask each congregation to prayerfully reflect upon their past and current commitment in this regard, giving serious consideration to how they will develop their mission engagement in the overseas context.

14. That the General Assembly recognise the steps being taken by the Overseas Board to develop its Pastoral Care Model for the benefit of all its mission personnel.

15. 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:

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Anent Pars 61(c), 97(c), 115(1), (2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 61(c), 97(c), 115(1), (2) of the Code the words "Overseas Board" be deleted and the words "Board of Mission Overseas" be substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 202(5), (6); 205(6), (7)(b); 212(7), (8)(b), (9); 268(4)(b); 279; 290(1), (2)(twice), (3)(twice), (4)(twice); 291(1), (2), (3); 292; 293; 308 (8); 331(2)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 202(5), (6); 205(6), (7)(b); 212(7), (8)(b), (9); 268(4)(b); 279; 290(1), (2)(twice), (3)(twice), (4)(twice); 291(1), (2), (3); 292; 293; 308(8); 331(2)(b) of the Code the words "Overseas Board" be deleted and the words "Board of Mission Overseas" be substituted in their place.

S JOHN DIXON

BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Rev Dr G CONNOR

Secretary: Rev JH ROBINSON

1. The lessening of religious influences in Ireland, North and South, gives us opportunities and challenges as a church along with other Christians on this island. Many of the millions who inhabit our island do not attend any service of worship on a regular basis with fewer taking opportunities to become acquainted with the gospel.

2. Yet with the decrease of religious practice on our island, there are also opportunities to present the gospel and distinguish it from the mere empty forms of religion which so many have discarded. The release from “religious shackles” as some would see it, has given rise to a greater openness to new world views being discussed in public places, work centres, homes etc. We have an opportunity to present the gospel to an increasing number of unchurched people, a gospel that is fresh and new to them.

3. Alongside this is the growing awareness in our church that we can no longer afford to be in “maintenance” mode, we must be a people in mission. Sadly, for some, this has come as a result of falling numbers and ageing congregations which has driven us to begin to think about mission, but hopefully for an increasing number mission has come back to the forefront of our Christian communities because God is calling us to obey him and exercise living faith in what might appear to be spiritually an increasingly “cold place” for evangelical believers.

4. This year the Board of Mission in Ireland (BMI) has spent a lot of its time in three areas, which the report reflects.

- (i) Working Structures: We have put in place the working structures of the Board as agreed at the last Assembly. We are thankful to so many gifted people who are willing to serve our church within these.
- (ii) Strategy for Mission: We have been asked to give lead responsibility, along with the other mission boards of our church, to develop a strategy for mission in Ireland for the foreseeable future. We have consulted with other board and presbytery representatives, the result is the strategy document and resolutions attached to this report. We see this as a skeleton, which if the Assembly approves will be fleshed out more fully over the next twelve months. By June 2006 we hope to present to the Assembly a more detailed report along with resolutions and any required changes to the Code that develop the strategy. We hope the Assembly will take time to debate the strategy document and help us shape the future direction of our mission on this island.
- (iii) Congregational Life: We are firmly convinced that the local congregations are the basic units for mission. The five panels under the direction of the Committee on Congregational Life are now up and running. We thank those who have willingly agreed to serve and look

forward to these offering an essential service to the vibrancy and effectiveness of many of our congregations.

5. The Board thanks all those who are working in the field in its name or indirectly through its grants – Deaconesses, Home Mission Ministers, Irish Mission Workers, Urban Mission Workers and others. We ask the Assembly to continue to pray for all those in the front line of mission. We are indebted also to our administrative and personnel support staff, for their efficient help in supporting those in the front line.

6. A particular thanks to Rev Harold Boyce for his hard work as Director of Evangelism. Congregations who have availed of his services have appreciated his enthusiasm for evangelism, his wisdom in guiding ministers, kirk sessions and congregations to look at the variety of approaches, his quick wit and transparent grace. We thank him for all of this and more, wish him a good retirement and are delighted that he continues to be involved in the life of the Board as Convener of our Committee on Congregational Life.

7. We warmly welcome Rev David Montgomery (Director for Congregational Life) and Mr Robin Fairburn (Executive Secretary for Education and Promotion) and commend them to the prayers and support of the Assembly together with Rev David Temple (Director for Personnel) in his new role under the Board's auspices.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mrs Irene Young reports:

1. The aim of the Committee is to facilitate the implementation of the Board's Strategy for Mission in Ireland.

2. The Committee has been acting on behalf of the Board on personnel matters relating to Board staff, including Deaconesses, Irish Mission Workers and Home Mission Ministers.

3. The Committee has been reviewing Job Descriptions and Application Procedures, and it is preparing guidelines for Study and Sabbatical leave.

4. The Committee is considering Line Management and Accountability in conjunction with the personnel and the corresponding Ministers.

5. The Director for Personnel, in his pastoral role, has been meeting with Irish Mission Workers, Home Mission Ministers and some of our Urban Mission Personnel.

PWA HOME DEPARTMENT

Mrs Zoe Valley (Central President) reports:

1. PWA works in association with the Board of Mission in Ireland "to provide recruitment, training, organisation and support of Deaconesses in the various areas of Church life and interest". Twenty-two Deaconesses currently serve within the Presbyterian Church together with two students in Training at Union College and three students completing their Probationary Year.

Personnel

2. On 25 April, 2004 Mrs Ruth Henry was inducted by East Belfast Presbytery to serve as a Deaconess in the congregation of Belvoir.
3. Mrs Carol O'Hara (nee Cathcart) was granted permission to work part-time as from 1 January, 2005.
4. Mrs Elizabeth Matthews, formerly a Deaconess and a Missionary in India was accepted to return to Deaconess work.
5. Mrs Jenny Robinson has accepted a call to serve as a Deaconess in Ballyholme Congregation. Her service of induction will be on Sunday 10 April, 2005.

Deaconesses In Training

6. For their Probationary year three Deaconesses in Training, Mrs Amanda Cooper, Miss Michelle McAuley and Miss Margaret Robertson are placed in the Congregations of Portrush, Legacurry and Ballylinney respectively.
7. For their Probationary year Deaconesses in Training, Miss Julie Peake and Miss Jo Martin, will be placed in the Congregations of Waringstown and First Saintfield respectively.
8. We continue to pray for God to call new students for Deaconess training.

Finance

9. PWA Executive Committee was pleased to decide to give the Board of Mission in Ireland an annual grant from 2006 towards the costs of the training and deployment of Deaconesses. The amount will be agreed each year by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Finance Committee of the Board. This decision was taken in the light of the increasing costs. The Executive Committee seeks prayerful and financial support of its members to enable more Deaconesses to be trained.
10. We continue to be thankful for those who give generously through PWA and the Deaconess Training Fund to meet the ongoing costs of training and supporting Deaconesses.

In House Training

11. Three Seminars on Listening Skills were held on 14, 21 and 28 May, 2004 for serving Deaconesses.

Hungarian Deacon/Deaconess Placement Scheme

12. The Board is pleased to continue its partnership with the Teacher Training College of the Karoli Gaspar Reformed University and to receive some of its students for training in congregational work.
13. Miss Diana Halasz, Miss Beata Bolskor and Miss Angelika Biro were placed in the Congregations of First Rathfriland, Ballydown and Katesbridge and First Comber respectively. We record thanks to these Congregations for providing such valuable training opportunities and especially to the members of the Congregations who hosted the students during their placement.

14. Mrs Margaret Myers visited Hungary in June 2004. Dr Levante Fruttis from the Teacher Training College visited N Ireland in November 2004.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr Douglas Cowan reports:

1. This Committee began to function in October 2004.
2. Our main task to date has been to study the accounts of the former Home Board, Board of Evangelism and the Public Worship Committee and these have been consolidated into one statement for 2004.
3. In consultation with the BMI Property Committee we have agreed arrangements for financial and management control for ongoing and emergency repairs of BMI properties. We have agreed new forms for applications for building and urban mission grants. Congregations and presbyteries will be required to show how these projects will help to advance the mission vision of the congregation. As the project develops, congregations and presbyteries will be asked to monitor financial and mission progress in line with the original application.
4. From 1 January 2006 BMI will be responsible for the payment of salaries and training costs for deaconesses. PWA will give an annual block grant towards this cost.
5. The Committee is in the early stages of exploring possible new sources of finance for the Board. These options include trusts, charities and government grants. This issue is being explored in consultation with the United Appeal Board.

PRESBYTERIAN MUTUAL SOCIETY LIMITED

Rev Sidlow McFarland (Chairman) reports:

1. The Directors are pleased to report that the Society has continued to grow with net investment of £46 million pounds during this financial year bringing the total assets to £130 million pounds.
2. Interest rates have moved upwards during the year and consequently a dividend of 5.75% has been declared on all shareholdings for the financial year ended 31 March 2005. The total dividend amounted to £6.5 million, which was distributed to 6,700 shareholders.
3. The Society continues to support congregations by providing loans for the construction and refurbishment of church property at a preferential rate of interest. 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.
4. We conclude with our thanks to God for all that He has enabled us to do over the past year and pray for His continued blessing in the future.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Mr Brian Knox reports:

1. Since its formation in October, 2004, the Property Committee has held numerous meetings acting in consort with the Finance Committee in relation to properties, including Home Mission Congregations and Church Extension Charges, for which the Board of Mission in Ireland is responsible. The Committee has benefited from the varying experiences of its members, who have gelled together quickly and efficiently to undertake the many property tasks presented to them.

2. The following is a summary of the work of the Committee since the 2004 General Assembly:

Belfast Area

New Mossley

3. The work of the Church, under the guidance of the Rev Ian McDonald, continues to progress through positive leadership and outreach.

4. Various maintenance and upgrading works required have been carried out, including replacement windows to Manse and conversion of the Church boiler to Phoenix Gas. The congregation have made appropriate donations towards the financing of these works.

Taughmonagh

5. The leadership of the Rev Robert Love continues to be appreciated by all within Taughmonagh Community.

6. Discussions have been ongoing between various Committees and Boards regarding the way forward for Taughmonagh in view of the numerous essential maintenance/upgrading works which would need to be carried out in the foreseeable future. Upon clarification of strategy of South Belfast Presbytery and following further discussions with Board of Mission in Ireland, the way forward for Taughmonagh in relation to carrying out maintenance/upgrading works or provision of a more compact and manageable new building on the site, will, in due course, be more clearly defined. It is anticipated that such decisions will be taken in the near future with appropriate works being carried out within the next year.

Coleraine

Ballysally

7. Under the Rev John Coulter's positive leadership, congregational life has shown encouraging developments and Coleraine Presbytery continue to support the congregation.

8. Due to vandalism problems which have been experienced over recent years and due to lack of adequate storage facilities, together with consideration in respect of requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, proposals are

being considered for upgrading and extension works to be carried out. Certain essential updating of electrical equipment, etc is also being considered.

Londonderry

Strathfoyle

9. The site previously occupied by the Church building has been sold back to NIHE. The Rev J McGregor, as Stated Supply, conducts worship in the Church of Ireland building on a three weekly rota with the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church.

Carrickfergus

10. Land Registry mapping problems are presently being resolved with a view to having the Marshallstown Road site auctioned. The former Church Extension Committee in 2004, following discussions with Presbytery, agreed that the site should be auctioned and that the finance raised should be earmarked for future Church Extension work.

Dublin

Maynooth

11. Committee representatives have attended various meetings regarding the developing Ministry of the Rev Dr Keith McCrory and have agreed, in principle, to support as appropriate, the exciting proposals for Maynooth.

General

12. Representatives from the Property Committee have also had productive, helpful meetings/discussions with local Church representatives in respect of St Columba's, Lisburn; St Patrick's, Waterford; Moville, Donegal; Greenbank, Donegal; Ballynasloe Church; Mountmellick Church; Tullamore Manse; Nuns Island Manse, Galway; Mullingar; Alt Church; Letterkenny; Carrickmacross; Irvingetown Church; Kells; Howth, and other Manse and Church properties. In many of these cases, responses are awaited from the respective churches in order to enable the Property Committee to give ongoing assistance.

URBAN MISSION PANEL

Rev Wilfred Orr reports:

'Pushing at Open Doors'

1. The Panel has found it encouraging throughout the year to push at open doors! It first found the Board of Mission in Ireland with a ready welcome on transfer from the 'ownership' of the Union Commission. Representation from the Commission is retained on the Panel. As directed by last year's Assembly, it took steps towards the practical implementation of the suggestions outlined in Annual Reports 2004 p 68 par 4.

2. A number of ministers already working in urban mission situations have agreed to serve as mentors to those who might be newly appointed under the scheme.

3. The Panel also found both the Faculty of Union College and the Board of Studies and Christian Training willing and anxious to set up training modules. An element of this training would become part of the general preparation of ministers, but more specialist training would be available for those called specifically to this work, both ministers and lay people as appropriate.

4. Agreement in principle has been given by CMF to support financially the appointment of one or two 'Interim Moderators' as described in our last report. At the time of writing, consideration is being given to the terms and conditions which would apply in the appointment of 'Interim Moderators.'

5. Currently, objective guidelines are being prepared by the Panel to help identify those congregations or areas in which mission might be undertaken most effectively by the scheme proposed.

6. Draft legislation has been prepared so that the scheme is given shape and substance in the life of the Church. It mirrors very closely the legislation which already governs Home Mission, with some modifications where necessary. This draft can be seen as Appendix A.

7. The Panel thus far has been preparing the scheme. If asked by BMI and agreed by the Assembly, members of the current Panel would be willing to carry their planning into practice as outlined under par 4 (a) Reports 2004 p 68.

8. A year when the Panel has found willing and eager partners in other agencies of the Assembly speaks well of the spirit of the Church.

NIGHTLIGHT

Mr John Luke, Director of Nightlight, reports:

1. September 30 2005 sees the 10th Anniversary of PCI Nightlight and the occasion will be marked by a Praise and Worship Celebration in the Assembly Hall. This street outreach work continues in the entertainment areas of Belfast with Mr John Luke as Director. A team of 32 volunteers, working on rota, take the good news of Christ into the Golden Mile and Odyssey areas on Thursday night from 8 pm to 11 pm and Friday and Saturday nights from 11pm through to 3, 4 or even 5 am.

2. The volunteer team are committed Christians of all ages and from a wide range of backgrounds who have a burden for the work of NIGHTLIGHT and who have experienced clear direction from God to become actively involved. New team members go through an application, vetting and interview process and then receive "on the job" training. The team is constantly changing as individual's personal circumstances alter and it is always encouraging to welcome new people on board.

3. NIGHTLIGHT is based at the Kinghan Church in Botanic Avenue where team members can meet for prayer before and after the work on the streets. It also provides somewhere to bring anyone in need of help and counseling. A regular Saturday and Sunday morning (12 am to 3 am) Tea Bar

takes place on the footpath outside the church and this has become a great contact point.

4. Recent years have seen the establishment of Nightlight teams in Magherafelt, Newcastle, Newtownards, Bangor and in Belfast with Fisherwick and Fitzroy Presbyterian Churches. These teams are overseen and supported at a local level and have been a great encouragement to all involved in PCI Nightlight.

5. Mr Luke continues to receive numerous invitations to speak to congregations and this reflects on the high level of support and interest shown by the church in general. In March 2003, Miss Linzie Stewart was appointed as Development Officer, concentrating on team development and contact follow-up with the volunteer team in the Golden Mile area. Mrs Catherine Dalzell continues as Part-time Resource Worker and in that role she has been able to produce Prayer Letters, Information Packs and Leaflets and other resource material, as well as coordinating deputation.

6. The Nightlight Executive Committee in consultation with Mr Luke oversees the work of NIGHTLIGHT.

DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM

Final Report of The Director of Evangelism, the Rev Harold Boyce

1. Since the last General Assembly and until my retirement on 31 January 2005, I have continued to encourage and guide congregations, Kirk Sessions and ministers in the work of sharing the gospel. The changing emphasis, away from “special event evangelism” and towards “congregational life evangelism”, is slowly being taken up across the church. Increasingly congregations are using courses like “Christianity Explained” as part of their regular outreach and members are being provided with training in personal witness so that the opportunities that occur where they live, work and relax are not missed. I am grateful to all those who have used my services and thereby made the past five years so enjoyable. I particularly want to thank my secretary, Mandy Higgins, and the other staff in the Board of Mission office. As a church we still haven’t grasped the nettle of motivating those congregations who regard evangelism either as an optional extra or simply “not their thing” but I pray God’s blessing on the ongoing work of the Committee on Congregational Life and on the new Director, David Montgomery.

HOME AND IRISH MISSION COMMITTEE

1. The experience of this past year for the Home and Irish Mission Committee has been a challenging and exciting one. In 2004 the General Assembly in establishing the Committee gave it a particular remit for strategy. The Report “Towards a Strategy for Mission in Ireland” is the outcome of much work carried out under the direction of the Committee. However, we recognise human limitations for as the Report states we are convinced “that only to the extent that His Church resolutely obeys His word and humbly keeps in step with

His spirit will it be an effective agency for God's outreaching to His world." So it is with humility that we present the result of our deliberations, along with a renewed request for prayer that God's Spirit be poured out afresh upon our land.

2. From the outset, we have recognised the need for church-wide consultation. We acknowledge the debt we owe to representatives of other Boards and Agencies who have contributed significantly to this process. We commit ourselves to consult widely during the incoming year, as we attempt to bring proposals to the next Assembly regarding the outworking of the agreed principles and priorities.

3. The Committee has a particular responsibility to motivate and resource different types of development in mission and to identify areas of potential new development.

4. **Maynooth:** Our "church plant" in Maynooth, the first such enterprise in living memory, under the leadership of Rev Dr Keith McCrory continues to develop with growing numbers gathering each Sunday in a local school. Looking to the future, discussions are taking place about partnering the local Community Group in providing a purpose-built community and leisure facility with the church at its heart. While firm decisions and commitments about this are a long way off, the Committee is enthusiastic to explore this way of serving and reaching a community that we might have regarded as unreachable a generation ago.

5. **Howth and Malahide:** The congregations of Howth and Malahide have also experienced significant growth. The Malahide church is often filled to capacity and the area holds highest priority in the considerations of the Presbytery's Dublin Area Strategy for Mission Committee. In the light of this, the Board is minded at an appropriate time to take the necessary steps to complement the staffing.

6. These and other possible new developments bring with them a range of challenges as well as much joy and excitement. A feature of growth has been the influx of migrant workers and asylum seekers, many of whom bring with them a strong personal faith, while others find it within the setting of our congregations, where the welcome is warm, the worship sincere and the Scriptures sensitively explained and applied.

7. It also needs to be noted that the experience is not always one of growth - congregations struggle with limited resources and our personnel face discouragement, frustration and sometimes a sense of isolation. While, for the sake of mission, property must be considered, the focus of our work is on people - Home Mission and Irish personnel and their families, members of local congregations and those whom they seek to reach. The Committee encourage prayer for all who are involved, including the Rev John Rushton from the Church of Scotland, who has been inducted as minister of Carlow.

ALTERNATING MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

Rev JH Robinson reports:

1. Representatives of the Board, together with representatives of the Church Relations Committee, continue to meet with our Methodist counterparts to oversee the Alternating Ministries Scheme. At the request of the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster, a thorough review of the Scheme is currently underway and it is anticipated that a report and recommendations will be presented to the 2006 Assembly.

2. One Alternating Scheme, however, that of Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford, while in certain respects having proved mutually beneficial since its inception in June 1977, is not viewed as the best arrangement for moving forward in mission and service today. Discussions locally and at the Alternating Ministries Committee have concluded that this Alternating Scheme should cease on 30 June 2005, with Gorey becoming integrated within the Wicklow Circuit of the Methodist Church in Ireland and Enniscorthy and Wexford, subject to the approval of the Union Commission, becoming a joint Home Mission charge under the care of the Presbytery of Dublin & Munster. Steps will be taken to ensure that the positive aspects of the recent inter-denominational ties will find expression in the future arrangements.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE

1. The aim of the Committee is to provide resources and encouragement to congregations as they seek to develop their corporate life in the areas of worship, discipleship, fellowship, mission and ministry. These areas correspond exactly to those covered by Presbyteries in the new Consultation process. The Committee operates through five panels, each tasked with developing our remit in one of these areas. The initial work of the Committee has involved beginning to create a list of resources (books, courses, web sites etc) to help local churches plan progress. In addition we are in process of producing a short series of Bible Study/discussion guides for use in midweek meetings, home groups or as the basis for a series of sermons. Ministers might like to plan to use this resource in the early part of 2006 by which time it will be available. It is important that members of our churches be encouraged to work through the issues for themselves rather than just to follow the minister/elders unthinkingly. The Committee is anxious to learn of anything new that may be happening, especially if it could be a useful pattern for others. Any of the following five panel conveners will be glad to hear of any innovative approaches to the five areas: Gordon Best (worship), Brian Savage (discipleship), Ivan Patterson (fellowship), John Parkes (mission) and Denis Bannerman (ministry). The Committee congratulates David Montgomery on his appointment as our new Director of Congregational Life and looks forward to working with him.

HAROLD BOYCE, Convener

EDUCATION AND PROMOTION COMMITTEE

1. The Committee for Education and Promotion came into being after the General Assembly in 2004. It met for the first time in September to start to consider how to raise the profile of mission in Ireland throughout the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

2. In February the Committee was pleased to welcome Mr Robin Fairbairn as Executive Secretary for Education and Promotion, a two year fixed term post agreed by the General Assembly in 2004.

3. Together with its new Secretary the Committee is looking forward to providing the means through which the Board and its Committees can engage with local congregations and is seeking new and innovative ways of giving support and encouragement to all PCI members as they become more actively involved in mission in their own areas.

CHRISTIAN IRISHMAN

The Christian Irishman is the 'Magazine for Mission', endeavouring to inform and enthuse people about Mission.

It is the official publication of the Board of Mission in Ireland and continues to enjoy a wide readership throughout Ireland and beyond.

David Temple was editor for 16 years and the Board wish to thank him and acknowledge his work as editor over these years. With the reorganisation of the Board and David's new role as BMI Director for Personnel, Robin Fairbairn was appointed as Executive Secretary for BMI and became Editor in April.

We wish to thank all who contribute articles to the Christian Irishman and sincerely thank all the congregational agents who faithfully distribute the magazine.

CHERRY POYNTON, Convener

SHANKILL ROAD MISSION

1. The Shankill Road Mission Committee has had two meetings since its inception at the General Assembly 2004. These have been largely introductory as the Committee settles into the Board of Mission in Ireland.

2. A position paper outlining possible avenues of outreach in the Shankill area should provide material and scope for focusing and defining the role of Shankill Road Mission in the 21st century as part of the Board's larger strategy for Ireland.

Rev WMcB Campbell writes:

3. At the General Assembly in June 1998 Rev Joe Dallas, Senior Minister of Whiteabbey congregation, was appointed Convener of Shankill Road Commission, having already served for two years as a member.

4. Mr Dallas brought to that role a wealth of experience and wisdom in the ways and practices of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. His relaxed style

of leadership and telling points in discussion were invaluable over his years as Convener of the Commission.

5. At the General Assembly in June 2004 Mr Dallas was appointed Convener of the Shankill Road Mission Committee to provide continuity and support as the Committee found its place within the Board of Mission in Ireland. This he has done with his usual quiet efficiency and good humour. As he concludes his work as Convener we would wish him continued good health to enjoy his retirement.

JOE DALLAS, Convener

APPENDIX A

URBAN MISSION CONGREGATIONS PROPOSALS

1. Urban Mission Congregations are those which have been accepted as such by the Board of Mission in Ireland, with the following being generally eligible:

Congregations, the majority of whose members live within the parish bounds, in urban contexts marked by social deprivation, and which, in the opinion of the Board, by reason of their track-record of mission and service to their community, current vision for same and financial exigencies, require additional resources.

2. A congregation seeking designation as an Urban Mission Congregation shall obtain the approval of the Presbytery and the Union Commission before applying to the Board, and shall:

- (a) be deemed by the Presbytery to be located in an urban mission context within its bounds, and have the strong support of Presbytery for its application;
- (b) satisfy the Union Commission that its local resources are insufficient to sustain and/or develop its programmes of mission and service;
- (c) satisfy the Board of Mission in Ireland, in respect of its recent history of, and vision for, mission and service to its local community. Priority shall be given to those congregations demonstrating greatest vision/flexibility.

3. The mission, service and resources of Urban Mission Congregations shall be reviewed at least every five years by the Board of Mission in Ireland, in consultation with the Presbytery and Union Commission.

4. Where an Urban Mission Congregation, following review, is deemed by the Board of Mission in Ireland, in consultation with the Union Commission and the Presbytery, so to have developed as to be self-supporting, it will usually be re-designated to normal congregational status and in such circumstances will not be required to repay funding previously received.

5. Where an Urban Mission Congregation, following review, is deemed by the Board of Mission in Ireland, in consultation with the Union Commission and the Presbytery, to have lost its capacity or vision for mission and service to its local community, the Board shall normally withdraw its status as an Urban

Mission Congregation and withhold all further resources, though the congregation will not be required to repay funding previously received.

6. An Urban Mission Congregation shall retain the right to terminate its connection with the Board of Mission in Ireland, in which case the Board shall normally require that a proportion of grants paid to the congregation from Board funds over the previous five years shall be repaid.

7. The Board of Mission in Ireland, in consultation with the Union Commission and Presbytery, shall have the right to initiate a mission project or plant a new congregation within the parish bounds of an Urban Mission Congregation or former Urban Mission Congregation.

8. Congregations in distinctly urban contexts but which do not have a significant proportion of their membership living within their parish bounds, will not normally

- (i) be eligible for designation as Urban Mission Congregations, or
 - (ii) be eligible for other central grants or funding, or
 - (iii) in the event of a vacancy, be given Leave to Call.
- (a) Such congregations may be amalgamated or ported by resolution of the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Union Commission, in consultation with the Board of Mission in Ireland, the Presbytery or Presbyteries immediately concerned and with the congregations. Such amalgamation or porting, while requiring that careful consideration be given to the opinions and aspirations of the congregations, shall not require their approval or consent.
 - (b) A proportion of the assets of such congregations, as determined by the Union Commission, shall, subject to the trusts relating thereto, be put at the disposal of the Board of Mission in Ireland, to be used, where expedient, for new ventures in mission and service in the areas vacated by the congregations, or for other projects as the Board shall determine in consultation with the relevant Presbytery or Presbyteries.

9. Ministers in Urban Mission Congregations shall normally reside within the parish bounds, and where a manse or residence is provided for a minister in an Urban Mission Congregation, the minister shall reside in the manse or residence on the same terms as if he had received the call of a congregation according to rules; and the minister's obligation so to reside is owed to the trustees of the manse or residence on behalf of the Board.

10. Urban Mission Congregations shall make such contributions to the central funds of the Church as the Union Commission shall decide; and the remuneration (including expenses, housing and any other allowances) of those so serving shall be determined also by that Commission, who shall allocate appropriate contributions among the various funds of the Church.

11. The method of appointment, terms of service, rights, privileges and responsibilities and supervision of Ministers in Urban Mission Congregations shall be as that for those serving under Home Mission, see Par 301.

APPENDIX B

TOWARDS A STRATEGY FOR MISSION IN IRELAND

1. "...go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..." (Matthew 28:19-20).

With these words ringing in their ears, the first followers of Jesus and the 21st century followers of the same Jesus take up the privilege and responsibility of not keeping the Good News to themselves. Accepting his Commission, they bear witness to him across the fence to a neighbour and across every frontier to the remotest corners of the earth.

The truth is, however, that our command and compulsion to proclaim Christ lie deeper than the Great Commission. As Robert E Speer expressed it as far back as 1910, "the last command of Christ is not the deep and final ground of the Church's missionary duty [for] if these particular words had never been spoken by him, or if, having been spoken, they had not been preserved, the missionary duty of the Church would not be in the least affected. The supreme arguments for missions are not found in any specific words. It is in the very being and character of God that the deepest ground of the missionary enterprise is to be found.(1)" So, with Douglas Webster, "we begin, then, where mission begins, with God."(2)

2. Our considerations of strategy have therefore been based on the following fundamental convictions:

- (a) That God was, is and always will be One, "whose will it is that all should find salvation and come to know the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).
- (b) That God always has and always will use his Church as the chief human agency of his mission to the ends of the world and to the end of time.
- (c) That only to the extent that his Church resolutely obeys His word and humbly keeps in step with his Spirit will it be an effective agency for God's outreaching to His world.
- (d) That human strategies, however thoughtfully and prayerfully conceived, are inevitably myopic and liable to be mistaken. God alone is all-seeing and "no-one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11)
- (e) That human strategies are not effective because of insightful analyses or time-honoured methods or novel approaches but only to the extent that they merge with what God is already doing and is about to do.
- (f) That mission at least means being sent to be, do and say all and only what the Father, Son and Holy Spirit call us to be, do and say.

(1) Speer, Robert E, *Christianity and the Nations*, New York: Revell, 1910, pp 17-18
 (2) Webster, Douglas, *Unchanging Mission – Biblical and Contemporary*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965, p 1

- (g) That mission is not about what we do for God, but what he sovereignly and graciously does through us. Our words of personal witness, however well chosen, will cause no-one to repent; our service, however selflessly undertaken, will not affect a change of heart; our programmes and presentations, however scriptural and relevant, will bring no-one into the Kingdom. Salvation is of God from beginning to end. He, and He alone, turns lives around and transforms them.

3. Having found our confidence renewed in our God who hasn't and won't stop working in His world, drawing a people to Himself, we narrowed our scope to ask, what does this eternally-loving, always-missioning God have in mind for Ireland in our day? And what part might we play in the realisation of His saving purposes for Ireland in our generation?

We continue to be persuaded:

- (a) That "Ireland today is going through a period of unprecedented change - the Republic, vibrant, economically booming, but its life increasingly post-Catholic and pluralist; the North, politically uncertain, still struggling to live with difference, its Protestant heritage fading fast. In this "new" Ireland the church is called to confront growing secularism, increasing social problems and widespread indifference with the Good News of Jesus Christ which alone can transform human life."⁽³⁾

- (b) That today's new Ireland presents "an exciting challenge which calls for prayer, commitment and love, with more biblical ministries, conservative and radical in teaching and application, and alive with the power of the Spirit".⁽²⁾

4. From these convictions, there follow some corollaries in devising and proposing a strategy. We must do so:

- (a) With constant reference to the mind of God revealed in scripture, as he will not contradict himself or be pleased to use and honour any strategy that does not aim to glorify Him and Him alone.
- (b) With an appropriate humility and provisionality, openly acknowledging that we lay before the Church prayerful convictions not empirical certainties. We all "see but a poor reflection as in a mirror" (1 Corinthians 13:12).
- (c) Nevertheless with a sense of Call that comes close to certainty and that causes the heart to stir and the mind to race, persuaded that this new day of opportunity calls for an imaginative and courageous response – a new way of doing and being the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. We must step out of the boat.

Vibrant Communities of Christ Serving And Transforming Ireland

5. Having met, prayed and discussed at length as a Steering Group (including representatives of the Board of Social Witness, the Youth and

(3) BMI Report to General Assembly, 2001

(4) Ibid

Children's Ministry Board and the Union Commission), as a whole Board and in the context of a Day Conference (including Presbytery representatives), we find ourselves drawn to and excited by the vision of God, by his Spirit, creating "vibrant communities of Christ serving and transforming Ireland"

6. This clarifies the WHO of mission in and to Ireland.

Under God, vibrant communities of Christ are the base units of mission. "Vibrant" literally means vibrating, trembling or shaking – a reaction to the voice of God (Psalm 29:8), the Spirit of God (John 3:8). "Vibrant" implies "having life". It implies activity, health, growth, change and development. It is the opposite of sterile, stagnant, motionless, unchanging or decaying. Vibrant also implies variety. In God's living world there is mind-boggling variety. So vibrant communities of Christ will not be identical. There are no clones in God's Kingdom.

7. Within our denomination, these communities of Christ will often be local congregations meeting in clearly recognisable church buildings, but we envisage different models alongside and beyond the familiar congregational one – cells meeting in homes; groups gathering for worship in schools or community centres.

8. Such vibrant communities though necessarily varied will however share some common features and priorities:

- (a) Those presently outside will take precedence over those inside, leading to an emphasis on going out, and welcoming, "including", jargon-free worship and Biblical preaching that connects.
- (b) People will take precedence over "plant". Few (if any) have been reached by impressive buildings. Most are reached through contact with impressive Christ-like lives.
- (c) Teams will take the place of solo artistes. In some vibrant communities this will entail a staff of more than one; in all vibrant communities many members will be found ministering, having discovered and deployed their God-given gifts in the service of one another and the community.
- (d) Leadership will be truly corporate and courageous, with all leaders – but particularly ordained leaders – committed to discovering God's distinct purpose for their vibrant community and to sharing that understanding with the members.

9. This strategic vision also clarifies the HOW and WHAT of mission in and to Ireland (... serving and transforming...).

Resembling the Christ of the upper room, vibrant communities are marked by humble service to their locality, and not as a means to some greater end, but simply and sincerely serving as Christ did. This will be characterised by:

- "hands-on" involvement in community groups, and in church and non-church organisations that promote care and welfare, especially of the most vulnerable and least socially-respectable in society.

Responding to the Christ of the Mount of Olives, vibrant communities are marked by prayerful yearning for empowerment by the Spirit, faithful engagement with the surrounding needs and lively expectancy that Christ will extend his Kingdom, thereby witnessing the transformation of individuals, households and neighbourhoods. This will be characterised by:

- a heart-felt desire to see individuals, families and the local community become what God intended;
 - an attitude of prayerful dependency, recognising that God alone can change lives and relationships and tear down the walls that separate and segregate;
 - a confidence that God in 21st century Ireland, and in the locality in which he has placed us, “is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:20).
10. The priorities of vibrant communities engaged in serving and transforming will include:
- (a) Going out to be with people where they are. (Not expecting them in the first instance to come in.) This will include where people are physically or geographically, spiritually, culturally and socially.
 - (b) Proclaiming God’s Good News with sensitivity, courage and confidence outside as well as inside the walls of the local church.
 - (c) Going out aware that other Christians of like-mind and motivation are also going out, and where possible co-operating rather than competing.
11. This strategic vision also clarifies the WHERE of mission in and to Ireland (...serving and transforming Ireland).

It is to the whole of our island home. West as well as East; South as well as North. And if the strategic vision is ever to become more than wishful thinking, we will have to grasp urgently the opportunities of:

- the new day that has dawned in large parts of our island;
- the new mission field surrounding churches that give little evidence of being vibrant or of serving and transforming.

And if we are serious about seizing these new opportunities, then inevitably for the sake of the gospel, we will have to prune our resources “here” in order to plant “there”, especially in areas of perceived “openness” and of social exclusion and economic deprivation.

Consequences for Structures and Resources

12. The outworking of this strategic vision has far-reaching consequences for local “communities of Christ” and for central structures and for how we use our resources. These include:

- (a) A preparedness to be flexible, while remaining coherent and consistent. Structures must be the servants of mission, not the inhibitors of it. One size will not fit all;
- (b) An insistence that resources – human and financial – follow priorities. We need to work with care and determination towards putting most resources to where the need and opportunity are greatest. Grasping new opportunities will entail grappling with hard choices;
- (c) A reaffirmation and a studied outworking of the principle of the strong supporting the weak. This will include financial support, as at present, but should be expanded to include leadership and membership. That is, we should seek to create in those with many resources a mindset and intentionality not to build bigger but to reach out and replicate;

just as we should inculcate in those with fewer resources a mindset for working with others collaboratively rather than competitively.

13. These principles and priorities, thoughtfully and courageously applied and outworked at local and denominational level could, we believe, bring significantly closer the day when we can look South, West, North and East and see “vibrant communities of Christ serving and transforming Ireland”. And to the extent that we witness this, it will be to His glory and His glory alone.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Urban Mission Panel

2. That the proposals in respect of ‘Urban Mission Congregations’ (Appendix A) be implemented immediately, and for a period of two years, before any changes are made to the Code.

Director of Evangelism

3. That the General Assembly note the retirement of the Rev Harold Boyce as Director of Evangelism from 31 January 2005, and that he be thanked for his services.

Strategy for Mission in Ireland (Appendix B)

4. That the General Assembly embrace the vision of “vibrant communities of Christ serving and transforming Ireland”.

5. That the principles and priorities for “vibrant communities of Christ” (Par 8) be affirmed and adopted.

6. That the principles and priorities for “serving and transforming” (Par 10) be affirmed and adopted.

7. That the principles and priorities for central structures and resources (Par 12) be affirmed and adopted.

8. That the Board of Mission in Ireland, in consultation with other appropriate ‘mission’ Boards and the Union Commission, bring to the General Assembly of 2006 proposals, including necessary changes to the Code, regarding the outworking of the agreed principles and priorities.

New Appointment

9. That the General Assembly welcome the Rev David Montgomery as Director for Congregational Life and Mr Robin Fairbairn as Executive Secretary for Education and Promotion and pray God’s blessing on their endeavours.

Shankill Road Mission Committee

10. That the resignation of the Rev JS Dallas as Convener of The Shankill Road Mission Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and the Rev Dr I Hart be appointed in his place.

Presbyterian Mutual Society

11. That the General Assembly congratulate the Directors of the Society on its continuing success and encourage congregations and individuals to avail of its lending facilities.

Alternating Ministries Committee

12. That the following be appointed to the Alternating Ministries Committee: Conveners of the Board of Mission in Ireland and Home & Irish Mission Committee, Deputy Clerk, Mrs C Poynton, Rev SG Anketell.

13. 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 in Belfast on the 6th day of June, 2005.

The Memorial of the Interim Kirk Session of New Mossley Church Extension Charge Respectfully Showeth:

That the Church Extension Charge of New Mossley was begun on 30th November, 1980.

That God has prospered and sustained the work through many difficult days and there are now 88 families claiming connection and 50 communicant members.

That the work of the Sunday Club, Bible Class, Girls' Brigade, Youth Clubs, PWA and Bowler's Fellowship is staffed by members of the Church.

That there is a great need for a strong Christian witness in New Mossley.

That the Specified Sources income for 2004 was £19,257 and that the second phase of the building programme was completed in September, 1983.

That it would be very much more beneficial to the people of New Mossley to have their own Kirk Session and that there are among the membership those who are well qualified for the work of the eldership.

That the established congregation would still require financial assistance for the maintenance of the Ministry and intends, with the support of the Presbytery of North Belfast, to seek appropriate status under the Board of Mission in Ireland.

Memorialists, therefore, pray your Venerable Assembly to authorise the Presbytery of North Belfast to establish the Charge of New Mossley as a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, under that name, on a convenient date after 30th June, 2005, and to place them in the Synod of Ulster.

And Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Adopted by the Interim Kirk Session at its meeting on 28 February, 2005

IK McDONALD, Moderator
R DOGGART, Clerk

Licensed by the Presbytery of North Belfast, meeting at Duncairn & St Enoch's on Tuesday, 1 March, 2005 and transmitted to the Synod of Belfast with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

IVAN NEISH, Moderator
COLIN MORRISON, Clerk

Transmitted by the Synod of Belfast, meeting at Stormont on 8 March, 2005, with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

ROBERT HARKNESS, Moderator
ALISTAIR R BILL, Clerk

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Central President: Mrs ZOE VALLELY
Executive Secretary: Mrs MARGARET MYERS

Theme for the year: GOING FOR GOLD

(This report should be read in conjunction with the reports of the Board of Mission in Ireland and the Overseas Board).

1. Going for Gold has been our theme for this past year. This has been a challenging theme for all our members, encouraging them to leave their lives completely in God's hands and to run with endurance the race that God has set before them. (Hebrews 12 v 1).

2. The Executive Committee, which is responsible for progressing the work of the Association, met on eight occasions throughout the year.

3. The Executive Committee records sincere thanks to Mrs Margaret Myers, PWA Executive Secretary, and to the Office Staff, Miss Margaret Young, Mrs Eleanor Thompson and Miss Naomi Campbell for the way in which they fulfilled their responsibilities.

4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2004/5

Office Bearers:

Central President:	Mrs Zoe Vallely (Carrickfergus)
Home Vice-President:	Mrs Maureen Weir (Templepatrick)
Overseas Vice-President:	Mrs Sheila Fell (Derry and Strabane)
Treasurer:	Mrs Doreen McMullen (South Belfast)

Committee Members:

Mrs Marie Catherine (Ards)	Mrs Valerie Stewart (Foyle)
Mrs Eileen Greenlee (Armagh)	Mrs Lynn Murray (Iveagh)
Mrs Rosemary Cowan (E Belfast)	Mrs Nan Bradford (Monaghan)
Mrs Helen Murdock (N Belfast)	Mrs Joan Hanna (Newry)
Mrs Lorna Brown (Ballymena)	Mrs Jean Donald (Omagh)
Mrs Elizabeth Smyth (Coleraine)	Mrs Barbara Thompson (Route)
Mrs Georgina Hunter (Donegal)	Mrs Sandra Fleck (Tyrone)
Miss Zena McAllister (Down)	Mrs Valerie Newell (Ex Officio)
Mrs Hilary Jess (Dromore)	Mrs Linda Thompson (YWG Ex Officio)
Mrs Pat Colvin (Dublin & Muster)	Mrs Anthea Harrison (Editor Ex Officio)
	Mrs Margaret Myers (Ex-Officio)

5. New Members of Executive Committee 2005/6

Mrs Dorothy Marshall (N Belfast)	Mrs Violet Millar (Foyle)
Mrs Jean Clarke (S Belfast)	Mrs Anne Harbinson (Iveagh)

Mrs Phyllis Spence (Dromore)

6. Office Bearers to be installed at Annual Meeting on 5 May, 2005

CENTRAL PRESIDENT:	Mrs Sheila Fell (Derry & Strabane)
OVERSEAS VICE-PRESIDENT:	Mrs Joan Hanna (Newry)
TREASURER:	Miss Zena McAllister (Down)

Events 2004/5

7. The Annual Prayer Meeting was held on 8 April, 2004 in the Chapel, Church House. Prayers were led by Mrs Jane McClure.

8. The Annual Meetings were held on 6 May, 2004 in the Assembly Hall. Guest Speakers were James and Helen Cochrane and Naomi Keefe.

9. Prior to Executive Committee in September, 2004 the Right Rev Dr Ken Newell, Moderator of the General Assembly, conducted a Communion Service.

10. PWA Executive and General Committee Annual Conference was held on Saturday 11 September, 2004 in Stormont Presbyterian Church. The Speaker was Mrs Alison McCaughan.

11. The Deaconess Carol Service was held on Friday 10 Decemebr, 2004 in the Kinghan Church.

12. General Committee met on Thursday 3 February, 2005 in the Minor Hall, Church House.

13. PWA Executive Committee met on three occasions: 3 June, 4 October and 13 January to discuss The Way Ahead.

South Belfast Friendship House

14. PWA Executive Committee records grateful thanks to Mrs Eunice Moore for her continued faithful service and commitment to the work of South Belfast Friendship House.

15. PWA Executive Committee welcomes Mrs Menita Cheesman to help Mrs Moore in the work of SBFH.

16. PWA Executive Committee thanks Miss Lynne Ferguson, Assistant Chaplain of Derryvolgie Hall, and the group of Student volunteers who give of their time and talents at South Belfast Friendship House.

17. PWA Executive Committee welcomes the partnership with the Board of Social Witness which now accepts responsibility for the employment and support of the Staff and Volunteers placed in South Belfast Friendship House and similar facilities.

Home Personnel

18. PWA Executive Committee records with grateful thanks the support and advice given during the year by the Clerk of the General Assembly, Rev Dr Donald Watts and the Deputy Clerk and Executive Director of the Board of Mission in Ireland, Rev Harry Robinson.

Overseas Personnel and Visits

19. PWA Executive Committee records thanks to Rev Uel Marrs, Secretary to the Overseas Board, for his support and advice.

20. The PWA Executive Secretary, Mrs Margaret Myers, visited Hungary and Romania 16 – 24 June, 2004.

Finance

21. The PWA Executive Committee acknowledges the faithfulness of individual PWA Members which enables PWA to meet its financial commitments.

22. PWA supports in part twenty two Deaconesses serving in Congregations, the Community and the Hospitals.

23. PWA supports fully two Deaconesses in training at Union College.

24. PWA supports fully three Deaconesses during their Probationary year.

25. PWA Executive Committee seeks prayerful and financial support of its members to enable more Deaconesses to be trained.

26. PWA Executive Committee was pleased to give a grant of £245,000 to the Overseas Board.

Birthday Thank Offering Fund

27. The total amount for CLAIM/MEGAVOICE/CORKEY HOUSE was £50,929.

28. To date, 21 March 2005, the Birthday Thank Offering (2004/5) for the Refurbishment of Missionary Accommodation is £19,290. The Account closes December, 2005.

Bequests

29. PWA Executive Committee acknowledges with thanks the following bequests:

Miss Sarah Jayne McWilliams	\$100
Mrs Mary Park	£300
Miss Elizabeth Jane Simpson	£5000
Miss Thelma Mitchell 1/4 residue of her will (not yet finalised)	
Miss Gertrude Cullen	£6,887

Wider World

30. Wider World has had another very successful year and PWA Executive Committee records sincere thanks to the Editor, Mrs Anthea Harrison, the Editorial Committee and to all who have contributed to the Magazine and its promotion.

31. PWA Executive Committee records thanks to Mrs Valerie Stewart who compiles the Children's Page.

32. Printed quarterly copies of the Magazine are sent to partner Churches on all five continents.

33. Selected extracts from Wider World continue to be available on audio tape for those who are blind, partially sighted or who have difficulty holding a magazine.

Young Women's Groups

34. The 2004/5 theme Going for Gold was shared by YWG and PWA.

35. The YWG Rally was held on 22 April, 2004 in 1st Larne Presbyterian Church. The Guest Speaker was Mr Lindsay Conway, Director of Social Service.

36. Cheques were handed over to Mrs Helen Murdock for South Belfast Friendship House and to the Rev Uel Marrs, Secretary of the Overseas Board, for Training of disadvantaged students during their four years of Diaconate Training at Fenche Training College of Karoli Gaspar Reformed University.

37. Office Bearers 2004/5

Chairman	Mrs Linda Thompson
Secretary	Mrs Carol Wilson
Treasurer	Mrs Gwen Wakefield
Newsletter Editor	Mrs Linda Thompson

38. The YWG Home Project for 2004/5, in conjunction with PWA, will provide funds for Refurbishment of Missionary Accommodation in Belfast.

39. The YWG Overseas Project for 2004/5 will support

- (a) A Safe Motherhood Programme and
- (b) Student Nurse Training in Ekwendeni Hospital.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev R VALLELY
Secretary: Mr L Conway, OBE

The Power of Love

1. The long history of the Church is a story of the power of Christian love and the huge influence in society which came from that power. The message of Jesus Christ and the mark of the early Church was to Love God and Love One Another. It was this neighbourly love and care which made it difficult for the Roman Emperors to wipe out the early Church by persecution. Such love prompted in AD313 the Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan which marked his own support for the Christian faith. This neighbourly love and care is still the mark and the mandate of His Church.

2. In the Board we continue to demonstrate Christ's love believing that love does change everything. We seek to touch the lives of people who have fallen into careless ways through, for example, addiction or who are casualties through age or a dysfunctional society. There are many needs and we only scratch the surface but as part of a wide Church family we care enough to prove the power of Christ's love. We appreciate the support, encouragement and prayers of many throughout the Church.

Expansion

3. The past year has seen us expanding our work with new responsibilities and projects. We welcome to our Board the Forces' Committee and the Chaplains' Committee and trust that they and those whom they minister to in Chaplaincy are finding a home in our Board.

4. The Office has added the checking of all new youth leaders through PECS. Our Director has spearheaded the training of members in Church Protection. The "Taking Care" publication has been an enormous task of writing, editing and incorporating new legislation on Child Protection.

5. During the year the Board became responsible for the Bush Café/Chaplaincy at Queen's University where the premises at Elmwood Avenue are in the process of renovation and refurbishment. There are also building projects at Sunnyside Residential Home in Bangor and Willow Brook Learning Disabled Centre in Coleraine. Various congregations have made approaches about possible residential projects. All this alongside the ongoing work prove a Board that is busy.

Staff

6. Expansion has added to the workload of our administration. They continue to cope admirably, still offering a ready welcome to all visitors to the Church House office.

7. The Board thanks the Director, Mr Lindsay Conway, the Residential Services Manager, Mrs Linda Wray, the Administration supervised by Mrs Ellen Wilmont and all who serve the Board in the office and throughout our

Units. We also appreciate the support and advice of the General Secretary, Rev Dr Donald Watts, the Head of Personnel, Mrs Eileen McClenaghan, the Financial Secretary, Mr Clive Knox, the Buildings Manager, Mr Harry Orr and their respective members of staff.

Conveners and Committees

8. As we seek approval of a new structure for the Board's work it will mean saying farewell to some Conveners and Committee Members while retaining others in a new or redefined role. The Board expresses thanks to the faithful team of Conveners and Committee Members. It is our hope that a new structure will encourage a better attendance at Board and Committee meetings.

New Structures

9. As we embarked on the process of restructuring, the Board was conscious that we needed to relate to the world we now work in, the world of social care. The church so often translates this into terms that obscure the real work that we do in the whole area of social witness, social evangelism, social outreach or simply the caring church. Alan Shannon, Permanent Secretary in the Department of Social Development (NI), said in a recent publication - Acting in Good Faith – Churches Change and Regeneration - "Faith-based community development, at best, seeks to strengthen the capacity of people to be active through their parish or neighbourhood groups, organisations and networks". The General Assembly of 1921 received a report "A Programme for Social Reform", which advocated raising the school leaving age, facilities for juvenile recreation, maternity benefits, sponsored employment schemes, child welfare centres and a drastic change in the Poor Law. Sixty four years later (1985) the General Assembly agreed to the appointment of an Adviser to the Board of Social Witness, launching the church into the whole arena of church based social work. The same year, churches were encouraged to seek opportunities to become involved in social and community work for the benefit of their own localities. It also called on congregations and agencies of the church to use all available opportunities to raise the level of their care and compassion. We are ever conscious that we are building on our Biblical foundation and command of the Gospel. To that end we must change and adapt accordingly.

10. The Church of the 21st century must relate to those issues that impact on a society that bears little or no resemblance to the church that met to discuss the 1921 report, although much of the subject matter rings true. The church in those intervening years was critical that it was slow to translate recommendations into some form of action. Any new structures must give clear indications of what we do, make referrals and inquiries easier and relate better to potential funders and supporters. There must be enough flexibility to enable the Board to respond to new issues or emergency situations.

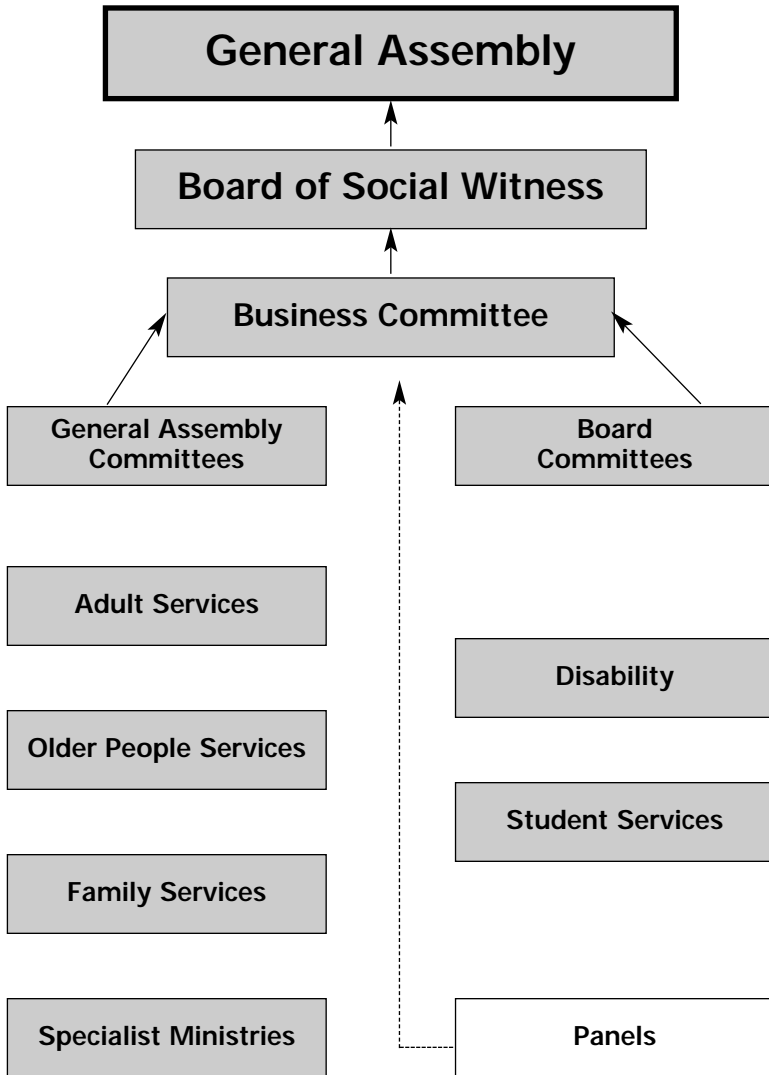
11. The Board, its Conveners and staff have spent time working through different models, acknowledging in the early part of the process that we had too many committees. We reported last year that our initial submission to the Ad hoc Committee on Priorities acted as a catalyst, resulting in the Board taking the opportunity to look at its total operation.

12. Eight Assembly Committees and five Board Committees made up the total operation of the Board's work. Many of the Committees were in the name of the facility giving no indication of what the Committee was responsible for. The Board of Social Witness has a very wide brief, ranging from work with children to elderly people. In voluntary sector terms we are somewhat unique in the scope of programmes we offer. In solving this problem we decided to follow some of the programme of care titles as used by Health and Social Services.

13. The restructuring of our Board is ongoing and will require considerable work over the next year. The Board finds itself at a very important crossroads, ever mindful that we are "Showing the love of Christ through service in the church and community."

14. The Board at its February meeting agreed that the following new structure should be placed before the General Assembly. The overarching principle is that there will be a local and specific management structure for each department or facility and a Business Committee that will co-ordinate the day to day operation. It is anticipated that this Business Committee will be made up of Conveners of Committees and other specialists as required.

Draft Structure:



Board of Social Witness Review

15. The whole debate revolving round the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities has resulted in the Board having a close look at every facet of our work. The work continues to expand and develop, yet some of our processes and procedures have not caught up with the expansion of our work. We need to create a structure that will reflect the very professional service we provide. Government has set high standards for us to follow; if we are not being inspected, we are being audited or validated.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES

Adult Services	Older People Services	Family Services	Specialist Ministries
<p>Carlisle House</p> <p>Gray's Court</p> <p>Thompson House</p>	<p><i><u>Residential</u></i> Adelaide Ard Cluan Corkey River Sunnyside York</p> <p><i><u>Nursing</u></i> Harold McCauley</p> <p><i><u>Sheltered</u></i> St Andrew Bungalows Tritonville Close</p>	<p>Child Protection (Work with families)</p> <p>PCI Counselling</p> <p>South Belfast Friendship House (PWA)</p>	<p>Chaplains</p> <p>Forces</p> <p>Kinghan Mission</p> <p>Drug Education</p> <p>PCI Enterprises</p>

16. Our Review must look at every part of our operation:

- Funding.
- Sustainability.
- Purchasing.
- Staffing.
- Training.
- Publications.
- Relationship with other agencies.
- Partnerships.
- Promotion of the work of the Board.

The Oxygen of Christian Service

17. Boxing Day is normally the day we recover from the Christmas excesses, but no Boxing Day will ever be the same again. The horror of the Tsunami Disaster unfolded before our very eyes, the first reports greatly under estimating the size of the disaster – 10,000 then 50,000 and really they stopped counting at 300,000. Pictures of individuals, houses, villages and towns being washed away like driftwood. Many more 100's of thousands are now left homeless and thousands of children orphaned. Already the reporting of the world's biggest disaster has been dropped from our daily news bulletins.

18. Then we had the story of Oksana the Ukrainian girl who had her legs amputated after sleeping rough for only a few days. We were all shocked that this could happen on our front door – in 2005.

19. These two tragedies resulted in such a movement of good will, one that had the world leaders and governments responding and the other, in complete contrast, responding to the needs of one individual, witnessing in a manner we had never seen before. Witnessing happens at so many levels, people quietly helping someone on a regular basis, encouragement of a friend or family member. In Matthew 6 v 3 we find these instructions "But when you help the needy person, do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know about it". Witnessing should be the oxygen of our Christian service.

Church Periodicals

20. The Board thanks the Editors and Staff of our Church Publications who provide us with the opportunity to highlight our work on the printed page. These include the regular Social Witness column in the Presbyterian Herald and various articles, pictures and items in the Herald, the PWA's Wider World and the Christian Irishman. We thank the Press Officer, Mr Stephen Lynas, and the staff of the Communications Department for their support and advice.

Funding

21. Total income for the year 2004 was derived from the following sources:

Income from services	£4,266,000
United Appeal	198,000
Donations and Bequests	73,000
Grants	28,000
Other	<u>356,000</u>
Total Income	<u>£4,921,000</u>

Total expenditure for the year 2004 was as shown below:

Older People	£3,446,000
Addiction and Education Services	459,000
Work with Offenders	341,000
Student Accommodation	247,000
Unemployed People	2,000
Deaf Community	84,000
Learning Disabled	150,000
PCI Counselling	15,000
Publications	3,000
Chaplains	46,000
Management Costs	<u>201,000</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>£4,994,000</u>

Minister in Recognised Service – (Called by the Board of Social Witness under Code Par 281.3)

Rev Douglas Baker, Mediation Network Northern Ireland, reports:

1. My main involvement is as co-leader of Partners in Transformation, a joint initiative of Mediation Northern Ireland and The Irish School of Ecumenics. The aim of this project is to “enhance, nurture, and support the capacity of churches and faith communities in their calling to be peace builders and agents of transformation.”

2. Much of our time is spent facilitating dialogue amongst leaders within and between various denominations on the ways churches relate to the wider community around them and, in particular, the contribution churches may be able to make to a peaceful shared future. During 2004-05 this has particularly involved cluster groups of Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic clergy in the two Dioceses of Dromore.

3. I continue to act as a consultant to the Church of Ireland Hard Gospel Project which seeks to challenge the Church of Ireland to make a contribution to healing divisions and building more open and inclusive communities by devising ways of enabling the whole church to deal positively with differences that they find difficult in both church and society; examining current policies and practices in both central institutions and parish communities in order to bring about a coherent and concerted institutional focus on dealing positively with difference; and making dealing positively with difference a priority in understanding ministry and allocating time and resources. In particular I have been assisting in the development of programme objectives and job descriptions as they prepare to employ four staff members to work in this initiative. The Hard Gospel Project is an initiative which PCI and other denominations will want to observe and from which we will undoubtedly learn much that may be useful.

4. Mr Joe Campbell, Assistant Director of Mediation Northern Ireland, and I continue to serve on the Conciliation Panel and assist, in a limited way, with supervision of casework with congregations and presbyteries.

5. Finally, I have continued to serve as Convener of the PCI Peace and Peacemaking Committee.

CHILD PROTECTION MONITORING COMMITTEE

1. It has been another very busy year for the Committee. The area of child protection is a very dynamic one and more and more is being required of paid and voluntary agencies working with children.

2. Taking Care, the third edition of the Child Protection Guidelines, was officially launched in January 2005 by the Moderator in Dublin and Belfast. The Guidelines have now been distributed to all Presbyteries. Thanks are due to the members of the Committee, to Lindsay Conway and the staff in the office who spent a lot of time in the preparation and distribution of the manuals.

3. The Office is dealing with a lot of enquiries, especially about PECS checking. All new volunteers are now checked from 1st January 2005. This brings us into line with the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church. The responsibility for checking is no longer with the Youth Office which has done a sterling job over the past number of years. Our thanks to Lois especially for all her help in the transfer process.

4. The bar continues to be raised in the area of checks, and legislation introduced in April 2005 seems to extend the requirement to volunteers and people should not be employed in a post until the check has been cleared. As there is currently a delay of six to eight weeks to receive clearance this change in policy will have big implications for our youth work. We continue to seek clarification from the government on this matter.

5. The Republic of Ireland has agreed to introduce a vetting procedure, but as yet no scheme has been launched. The Committee welcomes this important development.

6. Training is a vital part of the implementation of the Guidelines and we recognise that there is more work to be done on this. Lindsay Conway has been working on an updated training presentation on PowerPoint which he has road tested over the past year.

7. In recent months we have met with representatives of the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church and independent organisations to draw up a common protocol for churches and their working arrangements with independent organisations which use their halls – ie Scouts, Crusaders, Guides, St John's Ambulance etc.

8. The purpose of the document is twofold: for the Churches to agree common minimum standards of good practice in dealing with children and young people; to agree a common protocol for dealing with external organisations which regularly use church premises. The protocol clarifies the expectations and responsibilities of both the Churches and the organisations in the appointment of leaders, and aims to prevent unnecessary duplication and communication breakdown in the event of an incident occurring.

9. The protocol is included in these Reports for the approval of the General Assembly.

10. The Policies and Procedures for dealing with complaints of sexual abuse/harassment were passed by the General Assembly in 2004. Since that time further legal advice has necessitated a change in the Policy and Procedures for dealing with complaints of Sexual Harassment.

11. The Policy on Sexual Harassment now provides for an informal procedure for dealing with complaints, in addition to the formal procedure detailed in the Policy. The relevant amended section of the Policy is included below. The remainder of the Policy outlining the formal procedure is unchanged.

Section 3: Procedures For Dealing With Complaints

A. Discovery

(i) Receiving Complaints

The Beginning: A Complaint is Made

1. Complaints of sexual harassment may arise in different ways depending on the nature of the complaint.

2. Sexual harassment may not be as serious as sexual abuse, but it is still a serious matter. It can be a criminal offence. Advice may be taken from the Clerk of the General Assembly or the Co-ordinator as a decision is reached whether to institute an informal or a formal investigation, or a formal referral to the statutory authorities. A confidential record is kept of the decision made and the reasons for the decision.

3. If a referral to the statutory authorities is made the additional guidance in this policy may be helpful in addressing the pastoral and other issues raised with the individuals/churches concerned.

4. When a complaint/suspicion involves a minister or a person in higher leadership in a church (eg an elder, deaconess, youth worker) complaints should be directed to the Clerk of Kirk Session and the Clerk of Presbytery. The Clerk of Presbytery should initially inform his or her Moderator, and the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Co-ordinator. Where the Moderator or Clerk of Presbytery is implicated, the person receiving the complaint will contact the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Co-ordinator directly. Any person who receives a complaint of sexual harassment must direct it to the appropriate channel immediately.

5. Initially a determination is made as to the seriousness of the complaint and whether the matter should be dealt with informally by the Moderator and Clerk, or formally through a Commission of the appropriate court. * If the matter is dealt with informally, the Moderator and Clerk should speak to the person complained against and a written record of the meeting will be held by the Clerk.

***Special Note**

The decision to progress the matter informally or formally should normally rest with the complainant. The informal procedure is appropriate where the person making the complaint simply wants the behaviour to stop, where the harassment is not serious or where it has not been repeated. The formal complaints procedure is appropriate if the complainant prefers this, if the harassment continues or if the alleged harassment is considered sufficiently

serious to warrant formal proceedings. The remainder of this policy deals with the formal procedure.

6. Another issue to be determined is whether the matter is of a criminal or non-criminal nature. The persons receiving the complaint should take advice from the Advisory Panel and the Police/Garda. If it is a Police/Garda matter the complaint shall be referred to the statutory authorities immediately, and the Church will not conduct any further investigation until criminal proceedings are finished.

NAL CAMERON, Convener

Inter-Church Child Protection Group

(The Church of Ireland, The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, The Methodist Church in Ireland)

A Common Protocol for Churches relating to Independent Organisations working with children and young people.

INTRODUCTION

The Context

The Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland (hereafter referred to as the Churches) each have their own Child Protection Guidelines. It is considered helpful if these Guidelines substantially agree with each other in respect of minimum standards of good practice in dealing with children and young people. As each set of Church Guidelines is based upon either Getting it Right and Our Duty to Care (N Ireland) or Children First and Child Protection for the Youth Work Sector (Rep of Ireland), we believe that they do substantially agree in their policy and procedures while allowing for flexibility of practice depending on the individual Church's structure of government and administration.

It is recognised that it would also be helpful if the Churches agreed a common protocol for dealing with external organisations which regularly use church premises. This document seeks to clarify the expectations and responsibilities of both the churches and the independent organisations, especially in the areas of child protection policy, appointment of leaders, information sharing and reporting of concerns that may arise within an organisation.

Definitions

An independent organisation is a group that while not operated by the church, nonetheless uses church premises. Such organisations may be specifically youth organisations, or may be organisations which occasionally work with children eg St John Ambulance.

The organisation may have an outside headquarters and a separate method for the appointment of leaders e.g. Scouts, Crusaders, Guides. Although some of

the leaders may attend the local host church they are not appointed by the church and are not directly responsible to the church.

There are also youth organisations which are operated by local churches, but which also have outside headquarters, such as BB and GB. The leaders are appointed or approved by the church but with a measure of involvement and training by the outside headquarters. The principles and the criteria below are also relevant to this type of organisation, and normally will be met by the organisation. However if this is not the case the requirements stated below will apply.

1. GENERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1.1 In all our practice the Churches and organisations agree that the welfare and safety of children is the paramount consideration.

1.2 It is recognised that churches and organisations are interdependent and it is therefore vital that constructive working relationships are developed and maintained.

1.3 If an organisation using church premises is operated independently of the local church, while the church will not be responsible for the appointment of leaders or general running of the organisation, it is recognised that the Church still has some interest in the organisation being run to an acceptable standard. The Church has a responsibility for what happens on Church property and the Church will give formal permission for the organisation/unit to use the premises. It is recognised that even if an organisation is independent of the church, the public's perception may be that it is still a church organisation.

1.4 If a church has concerns that certain practices breach child protection guidelines, such concerns should be raised with the organisation leader and/or the headquarters of the organisation. If the concerns are not satisfactorily dealt with the host church may withdraw permission for use of the premises by that organisation.

1.5 While the church is not to be responsible for the appointment of leaders to an independent organisation it is good practice for the Kirk Session/Parish Panel/ Church Council to be informed annually (September) of the names of the leaders in writing.

1.6 This protocol should be reviewed on an annual basis at a meeting of Inter-Church Child Protection Group and representatives of independent organisations, in the light of any revision of church or organisation policies.

2. AGREED CRITERIA

The churches suggest that the following criteria be agreed with independent organisations using church premises, e.g. Scouts, Guides, Crusaders, Christian Endeavour and other groups.

It is the duty of the organisation to ensure that the premises are suitable and appropriate for planned activities. The organisation will also seek to ensure that activities will be carried out safely. Any safety concerns regarding the premises will be notified by the organisation leader to the appropriate person within the church as soon as possible.

2.1 The organisation will confirm to the local church that it has adopted and consistently implements a child protection policy which accords with the standard of Getting it Right and Our Duty to Care (NI) or Children First and Child Protection for the Youth Sector (RI). A copy of the organisation's policy will be supplied to the Kirk Session/Parish Panel/Church Council or written verification that the policy is accepted by the church at central level.

2.2 The local church will supply to the organisation leader the names and contact details of the church officials responsible for the premises. The organisation will supply to the Kirk Session/Parish Panel/Church Council the names and contact details of all the leaders following appointment and confirm that new appointees have been (NI) subject to a PECS check or (RI) have been vetted where possible, and they have been found suitable to work with children.

2.3 The organisation will ensure that leaders and helpers in the organisation receive appropriate child protection training and are aware of the organisation's reporting procedures.

2.4 If a report has been made by the organisation of a child protection concern, suspicion or allegation through its procedures, the person(s) responsible for child protection in the local church should be informed in confidence that a report has been made.

2.5 The organisation will supply written confirmation from the insurer that adequate insurance cover is in place for the organisation's activities, or written verification that the insurance policy of the organisation is accepted by the Church at central level.

2.6 Form of Approval (sample below) will be signed by the leader of the organisation/unit and a church representative confirming that the conditions have been met. It is appropriate for this to be completed annually or at least every three years depending upon church requirements.

3. BOYS' BRIGADE (NI/RI) AND GIRLS' BRIGADE (NI)

These are organisations which are operated by the local church but also have a separate external headquarters. Thus, there is a measure of independent input to these organisations and the following is suggested as good practice to avoid unnecessary duplication and communication breakdown.

3.1 Appointments of leaders are made and approved by the local church and leaders are accountable to the local church.

3.2 For BB it is necessary to complete both the BB Appointment Form and the church's Application Form.

3.3 For GB the church's Application Form only is completed.

3.4 The BB/GB should use the church's procedure for reporting concerns.

3.5 The BB/GB should submit a list of its officers/helpers and contact details to the Kirk Session/Parish Panel/Church Council each September.

3.6 The church will confirm in writing to the BB/GB that the appointment procedure (including PECS check) has been completed, before any new appointee is approved for BB/GB registration and training.

3.7 The church will provide appropriate child protection training for new appointees.

3.8 All leaders must sign a declaration that they will uphold the church's Child Protection policy.

Sample Form of Approval for Independent Organisations wishing to use Church Premises

Name of church _____

Name of organisation _____

Name of person in charge of organisation _____

Tel No _____ Mobile No _____

Time and place of organisation's meeting _____

CONDITIONS

1. The organisation confirms that it has adopted and implements a child protection policy which accords with the standard of either Getting it Right and Our Duty to Care (N Ireland) or Children First and Child Protection for the Youth Sector (Rep of Ireland). A copy of the organisation's policy is now produced or written verification that the policy is accepted by the Church at central level.

2. The local church will supply to the organisation leader the names and contact details of the church officials responsible for the premises and for child protection. The organisation will supply annually (September) to the Kirk Session/Parish Panel/Church Council the names and contact details of all leaders and following appointment confirm that new leaders have been (NI) subject to a PECS check or (RI) have been vetted where possible, and they have been found suitable to work with children.

3. The organisation will ensure that leaders/helpers in the organisation will receive appropriate child protection training and are aware of the reporting procedures.

4. If a report is made by the organisation of a child protection concern through its procedures, the person responsible for child protection in the local church should be informed in confidence that a report has been made.

5. The organisation confirms that adequate insurance cover is in place for its activities or written verification that the insurance policy is accepted by the Church at central level.

6. The organisation will seek to ensure that activities will be carried out safely. Any safety concerns regarding the premises will be notified by the organisation leader to the appropriate person within the church as soon as possible.

We confirm that the church and the organisation agree to the above conditions.

SIGNED _____ (ORGANISATION LEADER)

DATE _____

PLEASE TICK AS APPLICABLE

The church grants the above organisation use of the premises. ?
OR

The church grants the above organisation use of the premises in accordance with the attached agreement.

SIGNED _____
(CLERK OF SESSION/SECRETARY OF THE SELECT VESTRY/SECRETARY OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL)

DATE _____

SOCIAL WITNESS AND SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. The work of Dolebusters, the social witness outreach of the congregations of Abbey and Adelaide Road in Dublin, continues to develop. The new Citizen's Information Centre at Adelaide Road has seen the numbers of people using its services climb steadily throughout the year. The weekly clinics provided by the Free Legal Aid Centre, Money Advice and Budgeting Service, Threshold, the housing charity, and AIM, the family mediation service, have been well used, particularly the Free Legal Aid which now has two solicitors attending a fully booked clinic every week. Staff numbers have had to increase to cope with demand and currently stand at 40 for the two centres.

2. The link which Dolebusters established with Dublin South Supported Employment has also proved effective. DSSE provides a job coaching service for people with disabilities who are seeking employment. The aim of the service is to place people with disability in employment of their choice, based on the person's strengths, interests and capabilities, and to provide ongoing support as they settle into their new position. This initiative has enabled Dolebusters to place disabled clients in suitable employment and also to employ some disabled people within the Dolebusters organisation.

3. The Committee's plans to set up a Child Contact Centre, based on the model established by Knock Presbyterian Church in East Belfast, have stalled. The Committee recognises the fact that the success of a project of this nature will, to a large extent, depend very much on the calibre of the person managing it. Having investigated various avenues of finding and funding such a person during the past year without success we are currently at an impasse. However, we will continue to seek God's guidance in this matter and would very much appreciate prayer that a suitable person might be provided to head up this much needed service.

4. The Committee thanks the members of the Board and the General Assembly for their continued interest in, and prayerful support for its work in the Republic.

D BOYD, Convener

THOMPSON HOUSE

1. On 20 April 2004 in Fortwilliam Park Presbyterian Church (kindly granted) Thompson House celebrated its 20th Anniversary.
2. We were encouraged with the number who responded to the invitation.
3. Current residents attended the celebration, with past residents and staff also in attendance. Probation, Social Services and PSNI sent representatives. A former resident sent a report detailing how Thompson House had affected his life; he is now a teacher and a deacon in the Church of the Nazarene.
4. The format of the celebration was a presentation of life in Thompson House; the key speaker was the Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Ivan McKay. Some of the members of staff and the Management Committee contributed during the service, along with catering staff at the hostel making an excellent lunch.
5. In 1980 when I was Chaplain of Crumlin Road Prison and the Young Offenders' Centre I was often asked if such work was difficult and stressful. After 20 years as Chairman of the Management Committee of Thompson House I think I can truthfully say that the Director and staff in Thompson House would have a more stressful job than that of Prison Chaplain.
6. The residents are from very wide backgrounds mostly coming from prison or other institutions. Many come from very disturbed home backgrounds which has largely influenced their lives. Hence their spiritual dimension is very limited and their contact with church non existent.
7. House Rules and standards exist to help with the rehabilitation of each resident. Individuals may find these difficult to comply with, but adequate time is given for them to settle.
8. We are blessed with staff who are patient, long suffering and sensitive, very much fruits of the Spirit. It is essential in the climate of human rights and good practice that a balanced approach is afforded to all those coming through our doors.
9. Over 5 years ago Brian Marshall, then an Elder from Glengormley (a retired school teacher) started a practical Art Class. He took over the Bible Class and continues to do an excellent job. He is in touch with some of the past residents. At present he is helping an ex resident as he is joining a Church in his local area.
10. Recently I visited an ex resident. Although these men do not make a Christian profession they are fitting into society and coping with life.
11. Thompson House is bearing an influence for God and good among a very needy section of our society. I would appeal for the prayers of our Church for the work of Thompson House, its residents, staff and volunteers.

JC BUICK, MBE, Chairperson

COMMITTEE ON LEARNING DISABILITY

1. The Willow Brook project in Coleraine, providing supported housing for nine people with learning disability, continues to be an important ministry of

the church. The project manager, Mrs Ann Campbell, and her staff are to be commended for their dedicated and tireless work of caring for the daily needs of the tenants.

2. One of the most encouraging aspects of Willow Brook is the way in which members of the local churches have become involved with the lives of the tenants. The Friends of Willow Brook are often to be seen visiting the tenants and regularly taking them out for meals or on outings to the theatre, shopping or bowling. They have a very important input into the centre's spiritual life, conducting weekly devotions, as well as organising services for tenants and their relatives at Christmas, Easter and Harvest. In addition to all of this they have been a valuable source of fund-raising to provide for those little extras that add so much to the life of Willow Brook. We are greatly indebted to Rev Robert McMullan and his team for their loving and caring ministry to Willow Brook.

3. The project is set to undergo some changes in the adjoining property which has now been acquired by our partners, Oaklee Housing Association, with a view to building a small housing scheme for those with a physical disability.

4. The Willow Brook Project has undoubtedly identified the need for such supported housing and consideration is presently being given to the possibility of a similar project on a site at Mallusk.

5. The Committee continues to work on other aspects of the church's ministry to the learning disabled. An introductory leaflet for ministers and church leaders is being circulated as a step towards the production of a more detailed guide for this ministry. And discussions have taken place with the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry on the possibility of the provision of a special needs summer camp.

6. Aaron House is a long-standing project in Dundonald, caring for people with more profound learning disabilities. We can report steady progress in the discussions aimed at the Board of Social Witness assuming responsibility for this work.

7. Our Committee is constantly reminded of the prayerful and practical support that we receive from many individuals and congregations throughout our church. We are thankful for this and ask for continuing prayers and support for this ministry.

WJ WARING, Convener

ADDICTION AND EDUCATION SERVICES COMMITTEE

1. The Addiction and Education Services Committee continues to offer information and instruction with regard to the increasing areas of Addiction. The problem of addiction, in some form, is on the increase: addiction to alcohol, drugs, solvents, gambling, pornography, sex, food, television, the list is endless.

2. As a Church we continue to support and thank the PSNI for their unyielding fight against drugs and acknowledge their tireless efforts in securing the seizure of large quantities of illegal drugs. In conjunction with HOPE UK the

Board can provide helpful and informative literature for use with church groups, and the volunteers remain available for speaking engagements.

3. The talk of Gambling Bill changes in the UK raises further the seriousness of gambling activity. Already many suffer the terrible consequences of squandering hard earned income on a wide range of gambling activities and outlets. The increased presence of slot machines in public places, access to internet gambling, along with the availability of Lottery and multiple scratch cards make this a very serious issue.

4. Gambling exploits the poor. In the year 2000 there were more problem gamblers among persons earning less than £15,000 compared with those earning £31,000 or above. Sadly too many see having a flutter as a means of increasing income – the opposite usually results. Gambling can lead to addiction and is often related to crime as a person will often steal to pay for their habit. Young people, vulnerable to the lure of gambling, need to be informed and warned of the dangers of getting into gambling. Many forms of ‘soft gambling’ are available to under 18’s. Those who become hooked on gambling are in the ‘danger zone’ of family trouble and personal degradation. Gambling is a major factor in absenteeism, poor work levels, stress, anxiety, suicide, financial problems etc.

5. The Committee is pleased to have a leaflet, soon to be available, warning of the dangers of gambling and reminders of how the scripture encourages us to work honestly for all that we have. It is hoped that this leaflet along with other literature on addiction issues will prove to be a helpful resource to church leaders in the training and informative programmes within our churches.

6. The Committee would also applaud the increasing movement for ‘smoke free’ public places. The risks that flow from passive smoking are alarming, along with the general discomfort felt by non smokers when in an atmosphere filled with smoke. We would encourage our church membership to get behind all campaigns towards no smoking policies in public places.

7. In commending a life that is healthy and free from addictive influences we would of course direct hearts and minds to the one who is able to keep our hearts pure. Jesus reminded his listeners that it is not what goes into the body that makes it impure but what comes out. If we are careful to cleanse the inside then the outside will be clean also. Such cleansing is only possible with the blood of Jesus Christ; he alone is able to make and keep our hearts pure.

Carlisle House

8. The Director and staff at Carlisle House have continued to offer a very valuable service to people wishing to deal with their addiction problems. The effectiveness of their work has been evident again throughout 2004. Referrals to the programme, many of them self referrals, remain high and indeed increased over previous years.

9. The work is complex and challenging, with many people still presenting with dual addictions. The staff team have not only shown outstanding resilience and professional competence, but continued to do so while creating an ethos of Christ like compassion and respect for each individual. The high quality of the work and the effectiveness of the programme has been noted and

commented on by The Registration and Inspection Unit who carried out an inspection of Carlisle House during 2004. They paid tribute to the Christian value base and environment where people with addictions receive hope, self-worth and the enabling to break destructive patterns of behaviour.

Gray's Court

10. Gray's Court continues to offer a valuable move-on facility for those leaving Carlisle House, providing needed support for people at a very vulnerable time in their lives.

11. All tenants over the past two years have successfully moved on to other accommodation, paid employment, voluntary work or training. There have been no relapses.

12. Although this shows evidence of much very good work, an area of concern has been the difficulty in recruiting and keeping staff in this facility. This remains a challenge.

A BEATTIE, T WILSON, Co-Conveners

CHAPLAINS' COMMITTEE

1. At the General Assembly in June 2004 the Chaplains' Committee moved from being under the General Board to being under the care of the Board of Social Witness.

2. The Committee is responsible for the oversight of the full-time and part-time Chaplains both in hospitals and in prisons, together with a responsibility for forwarding recommendations with regard to appointments to the Hospital Trusts or the Prison Service.

3. The Church was represented at the 8th Consultation of the European Network of Healthcare Chaplaincy, meeting in Dublin in September 2004.

4. Arising out of a conference for chaplains held in May 2004, copies of the document 'Guidelines for Presbyteries in the nomination of Hospital Chaplains', together with a 'Model Job Description' were prepared by the Committee and have been duly forwarded to Clerks of Presbyteries.

5. Through the retirement of ministers, or on account of some involved in Chaplaincy work moving to other congregations, some resignations have occurred and Presbyteries have co-operated in nominating replacements.

6. The Committee continues to wrestle with the difficulties created by the change of circumstances with regard to Chaplaincy services in Maghaberry prison. Whereas such services were provided in the past by a full-time Chaplain, a change in government policy with regard to this situation has meant that a full-time position is no longer available. It is hoped that a solution to this problem may be found in the near future.

7. The Committee records its congratulations to Rev Dr J C Buick, MBE on his receipt from the Prison Authorities of a Long Service Medal for his work as a prison chaplain.

8. The Committee again records its thanks to all those who work in the front-line ministry of Prison and Hospital Chaplaincy and commends them to the prayers and support of the Church.

J GORDON, Convener

FORCES' COMMITTEE

1. The Forces Committee continues in its role of providing a point of contact and pastoral care for chaplains, and keeping the life and witness of the chaplains in the minds and prayers of the church. We are ever conscious that so many men and women continue to be on active service, mindful that we need to keep their families and loved ones also in our prayers.

2. The following ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland are serving as regular chaplains:

- Rev Terry Maze, OBE (Royal Navy) reaches the end of 25 years of service in June 2005. During that time he has served with distinction, currently being the Principal Chaplain CSFC, and being awarded an OBE in the New Years Honours list;
- Rev David Edgar (Royal Air Force) is at RAF Lyneham;
- Rev Jonny Wylie (Royal Air Force) is at RAF Brize Norton;
- Rev Norman McDowell (Army) is at Pirbright;
- Rev Philip Patterson (Army) is serving with the Army Training Regiment, Bassingbourn;
- Rev Dr Paul Swinn (Army) is at Dalton Barracks, Aningdon.

The following report was received on 5 March from Rev Jonny Wylie, Basrah Air Station, Iraq.

3. It has been another fascinating year for me as a Chaplain in the Royal Air Force. I have continued my ministry at RAF Brize Norton, a large and thriving base in Oxfordshire. It has also been my first full year as a married man with my wife from Hillsborough Presbyterian taking the daunting step of marrying me and then moving over to England. Andrea has now settled in well to life in the RAF but maintains her own active career as a doctor in Cheltenham.

4. Worship on the base has taken an interesting turn with much closer relationships developing with the local clergy in the local town of Carterton and Brize Norton village. This has helped the integration of our former largely civilian Sunday congregation back into the local community, allowing the Chaplaincy team to concentrate on RAF personnel during the week and on overseas detachments. As a member of a team of Chaplains, sharing the workload with a Church of England and a Roman Catholic Chaplain has been a fascinating experience. Certainly our style of worship and vision for Chaplaincy on the base is not always the same, but we have an exciting mix which all combines for the benefit of all personnel. I have continued to develop ideas based on the Church of Scotland model of a 'Church without Walls' which I think is highly appropriate for the sort of transient population found on a RAF station. As a result, our focus has been on the one hand fellowship with a growing number of Christians who we are finding around the station, and on the

other hand outreach to the huge numbers of unchurched through special events, small groups, alpha and one-to-one contact.

5. RAF Brize Norton has been under the microscope now for some time, with all personnel going to the gulf leaving from here and sadly all the repatriations of our dead comrades taking place here. It has been a busy year for all personnel, culminating in a huge involvement in the Tsunami relief effort – perhaps the side of the Forces which shows us at our best. Planes from RAF Brize Norton flew aid to Sri Lanka and Indonesia and responded with great speed and professionalism.

6. The end of 2004 for myself was certainly a bit different and another new experience in ministry. I am currently writing this report from the deserts of Iraq where I have been based since the end of December. I have been detached as the RAF Chaplain in Iraq, based at Basrah Air Station until May 2005. The past couple of months have been a wonderful experience with many highs and a few lows. Morale is high here amongst the airmen who are doing a wonderful job in very difficult conditions – out here few get much in the way of time off so it is truly an exhausting tour. Whatever my own views on the war there is no doubt now in my mind that we are doing an essential job of security to provide an environment whereby tangible changes of infrastructure can be made to change the lives of the people of Iraq. Clearly the vast majority of local people in Basrah are grateful for our presence.

7. I have been fortunate to have many wonderful experiences in my time here, from meeting and conversing with local Imams who were journeying on the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, to flying over Baghdad in a helicopter watching the chaos below. The Imams were fascinating to talk to and our discussions ranged from religious differences and similarities to their thoughts on the presence of foreign troops in Iraq and even a brief comparison of the size of our congregations! Further north in Iraq is a very different prospect to the south of the country and my experiences in Baghdad and other locations were a little more hair-raising. The dangers of working in Iraq were tragically confirmed by the crash of a Hercules with the sad loss of ten lives in February. It was a harrowing time for all involved and was a sad reality check for everyone working out here. As a Chaplain my own role then took on a new and deeper significance as colleagues struggled with their grief while carrying on the necessary job at hand. The repatriation ceremony from here in Basrah back to the UK was an emotional occasion, but a very dignified send off for our friends and comrades.

8. Working as a Chaplain out here in Iraq has really strengthened my belief in my own call from God to this job. There is a very real need for ministers of religion, ambassadors of Christ, to be involved with men and women who are working in the most difficult of circumstances. Working with those who have little or no understanding of God or Jesus is a real privilege – even more so when they come to me with very real questions of faith. Out in the desert many often have more time to think of the important questions of life and it has been exciting for me as a Presbyterian minister to be here to address those needs. Leading an Alpha course in the desert has certainly been a new experience, but the response has taken me aback completely – God's Spirit is working in a mighty way!

9. I thank you all for your continued prayers – they are being answered in ways you would hardly believe! I ask that these prayers will continue for all who are in the armed forces, particularly those overseas and away from family. I hope to be back in time for the General Assembly this year and would be delighted to meet with anyone who wants to know more of the work we are involved in as Chaplains. Thank-you once more for your continued support, Rev Jonny Wylie.

10. In November 2004 the Moderator of the General Assembly visited Amport House, Hampshire, where he had the opportunity of meeting with all PCI Chaplains. They are to be commended on their enthusiasm and adaptability while serving in a secular and rapidly changing environment. A further visit by the Moderator to the Royal Navy at Portsmouth is planned for May 2005.

11. There are four Territorial Army Chaplains serving in Northern Ireland:

- Rev Principal Patton Taylor, Co-ordinating Chaplain
- Rev David Latimer
- Rev Stephan van Os
- Rev Isaac Thompson

12. We are grateful to those organisations who support the Christian witness of the chaplains: The Sandes Homes; the Officers' Christian Union; the Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association; the Naval, Military and Air Force Bible Society. Members of these organisations are available to speak at midweek meetings.

13. Each year the support of the church is sought for The Royal British Legion, The Royal Air Force 'Wings Appeal', and the Royal Irish/UDR Benevolent Fund. In the past congregations have supported these with generosity, and we trust that this will continue.

P CAMPBELL, Convener

KINGHAN MISSION COMMITTEE

1. Selective 'deafness' is something that affects us all. It often gives us the excuse to avoid doing something or other.

2. Selective hearing is a luxury that the Deaf Community does not enjoy. For them exclusion and isolation is not some temporary choice to be made – for them it is a permanent fact of life. The sounds, the music, the laughter, the conversations we all take for granted are denied to those who are Profoundly Deaf, and within the Deaf Community there can be an understandable sense of anger and frustration at a hearing world that does not give them the dignity and respect they deserve.

3. For 148 years the Kinghan Mission has been immersed in the needs of Deaf people within Northern Ireland. While its base has always been in Belfast, there is a keen sense that we need to bring 'Church' out to the people rather than waiting for them to come to us. Using 'Total Communication' i.e. Sign Language, lip reading, a loop system, and PowerPoint, we try to bring deaf people into the centre of a worshipping community. We are developing closer

links with the other churches for the Deaf that exist within Belfast, and looking to centres outside Belfast for some meetings.

4. Rev Simon Henning is continuing to find his feet (or should that be his hands!) within the Deaf Community and seeks to provide both Spiritual and practical help to all Deaf people, regardless of Denomination or church connection.

5. Mrs Anne Rodgers, the Lay Assistant, continues to work tirelessly and is a vital and integral part of the work in the congregation. The connection between Kinghan and the Deaf in Moldova, which Anne was instrumental in setting up, continues and the congregation's desire to think of others outside their own borders is very encouraging.

7. There are many within congregations in the wider church whose hearing has deteriorated over the years. Efforts have been made to encourage congregations to provide the best possible listening environment, so that each individual can join in worship meaningfully. Advice and support is available.

8. The Committee is indebted to all who support the work of the Kinghan Mission, either through prayer or financial donations. The generosity of the United Appeal is crucial to the running of the Mission's work and its continuing commitment is greatly appreciated.

9. In what can often be difficult and demanding work, we ask that the wider Church would remember all those connected with the Kinghan Church in prayer. "For God so loved the Deaf and hearing worlds, that He sent His only Son..."

JEAN McCLUNE, Convener

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY COMMITTEE

1. The Marriage and Family Committee under whose guidance the Counselling Service is provided by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, decided to change the name of the service (formerly known as "The Marriage and Relationship Counselling Service") to "PCI Counselling".

2. This was agreed as the most suitable name for the service which has expanded over the years from the original Marriage Counselling Care to a much broader spectrum of counselling. Many issues are dealt with, including adultery, sexual, physical, verbal and emotional abuse, depression, sexual orientation, debt and relationship problems.

3. The service has continued to grow throughout the year and the eight counsellors are well trained in many aspects of counselling.

4. Counselling takes place in many venues - in Church House, the Kairos Centre in Knock Presbyterian Church, High Kirk in Ballymena, Ballywillan Church in Portrush, Ballynahinch Presbyterian Church, Scarva Street Presbyterian Church, Banbridge and McCracken Memorial Church, Belfast. Supervision and training also takes place in McCracken Memorial. The Marriage & Family Committee is very grateful to all who lend their premises so generously through the year. This wide area of venues ensures that clients do not

have to travel too far from home, yet anonymity and confidentiality is essential as far as is possible.

5. Two new supervisors were appointed last August as Christian Guidelines, who had provided supervision for seven years, moved their Headquarters to Bangor and were unable to continue supervision. Mrs Sheila Giffen and Mrs Lynn Farr, both experienced counsellors and supervisors commenced in the autumn and having two supervisors ensures constant cover for the counsellors.

6. The Committee encourages ministers and others working within the Church to encourage members to seek counselling if it is felt it would be beneficial. Counselling is open to everyone aged 16 and up. Provided at the earliest opportunity, counselling hopefully provides a greater degree of success.

7. The Committee appreciates the hard work, dedication, time and professionalism of all the volunteer Counsellors who willingly devote themselves to this very important area of Christian service.

8. The Remarriage Panel continues to support ministers and couples, seeing on average five couples monthly. The Committee appreciates the willing work of the Panellists.

9. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the growing problems of child prostitution in Northern Ireland. A Resolution was passed by the Board and consequently a letter was sent to the Minister of Health who in her reply appreciated the concern of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and was grateful for its support. A new guide for parents would soon be published by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety.

10. Thanks are extended to Mrs Stephanie Windrum and the Board Staff for their work and support.

ROSEMARY SIMPSON, Convener

PRESBYTERIAN RESIDENTIAL TRUST COMMITTEE

1. The Trust gives thanks to Almighty God for His guiding hand and blessing upon its work over the past year. We are deeply conscious of our calling under the Lord to provide care for elderly members of our church and society. It is the aim of the Trust to provide care within a Christian ethos, that our homes will be places where residents will experience Christian fellowship in addition to their basic personal requirements. We thank God that this is frequently commented upon by those who visit our homes and we know that consideration of the spiritual care we provide can be a deciding factor when prospective residents and their families make a choice. We view all of this as a practical expression of Christ's love within the Kingdom of God, an opportunity for the church of Christ to reach out to the elderly and infirm in a very real way.

2. The Trust's homes are strictly regulated by the Registration and Inspection Unit who make frequent, often unannounced, visits to our facilities. It is always pleasing to note that the reports which follow such visits speak highly of the standard of care practised in our homes and regularly contain

favourable comments from residents and their families on the care and attention being received. This is due entirely to the staff in all of our homes, their faithfulness, dedication and diligence creates a solid foundation upon which to build a caring facility. We are deeply indebted to every member of our staff; they are professional carers who deal efficiently and sympathetically with the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of our residents. We are grateful that the staff shortage situation which created pressures in the past within the homes has eased a little, with job opportunities beginning to attract greater interest from applicants. Our ongoing training schemes also ensure that staff are kept fully up-to-date with, and equipped for, the continuing demands of residential and nursing care.

3. We have been keeping our wages policy under review in recent years and the changes which were made have been well received. This has helped to ease difficulties in recruiting and keeping staff although we continue to experience problems in certain key areas resulting in costs being higher than we would like.

4. The Church House office staff continue to provide a central administrative support for our facilities. Our Residential Services Manager, Mrs Linda Wray, leads the management team and we are indebted to it for the day-to-day professionalism which ensures the efficient running of our homes.

5. We reported last year on the occupancy of the new Corkey House in North Belfast in January 2004. It has been a busy year for everyone connected with Corkey as they have worked up to the full occupancy which they now enjoy. A lengthy waiting list is indicative of the popularity of Corkey House and the care received within it.

6. Our latest new-build project, Sunnyside House in Bangor, has a projected completion date in August 2005 with occupancy planned for October. This is a further exciting development for the Trust in conjunction with Fold Housing Association and represents our commitment to continuing care for the elderly. We are delighted that the Presbyterian Women's Association has again included our new home as a beneficiary of its Birthday Thank Offering. The Trust does appreciate this continuing support following on from the generosity shown in the fitting out of the contemplation room at Corkey.

7. We continue to consider the possible replacement of Ard Cluan in Londonderry and York House in Portrush. The purchase of property adjacent to Harold McCauley House in Omagh has presented us with development potential. We are also pursuing an alternative use for Denearth House at Mallusk with upgrading of the adjacent St Andrew Bungalows. In addition, we have been investigating sites in Larne and Lurgan for possible future development.

8. The review of the structure and operation of the Board of Social Witness proposes an Older People Services Committee which will effectively be the Presbyterian Residential Trust Committee under a new name. A significant change however is one which the Trust has been seeking for some time. Under the new structure each house committee will be directly represented on the new elderly services committee. In the interests of best practice, this will enable a better flow of information between the committee and our facilities and ensure that the homes are directly involved in decision-making at a central level.

9. A further change in government regulations brought a regional Registration and Inspection Unit into being on 1 April 2005. This will standardise the requirements which were formerly practised by the various Health and Social Services Trusts. Compliance with the new regulations will also mean, amongst other things, a change in the way in which monthly visits are conducted in the homes by us as a Trust. It is anticipated that this will impact on the role of house committees.

10. The financial position of the Trust continues to cause concern within the Committee. Our revenue account for 2004 shows a substantial deficit on our operation. This was due mainly to less than full occupancy in some homes as a result of staffing levels, high agency staff costs and the maintenance of older buildings. We are, as already stated, a church organisation who are seeking to provide care in a Christian environment but one which is constrained by government fiscal policy on care for the elderly. This is a ministry of our church which inevitably attracts a premium and the wider church has to be made aware of that. In our present position we are drawing annually upon reserves and these are not inexhaustible. We believe that the Church wants and needs this ministry to continue, if it is to do so effectively then commitment is required from the church.

J NOBLE, Convener

SOCIAL ISSUES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. The Committee continues to provide resources for the wider church on a range of social issues and to respond to issues as they arise.

2. Living in the West we lose sight of how much we are driven by the desire to have, to spend and to get more things, new things! Even a cursory glance tells us that the Church is little different from the rest of society, if at all. How are we to think about 'Having, getting and spending?' We are glad to present to the Assembly the latest in the list of Challenging Issues Bible Studies – "Having, getting, spending." This can be used individually, to fuel thought for a sermon (or two) or in small groups, mid-weeks etc.

3. Leaflets on Cloning, Euthanasia, the Retention of Body parts and Contraception have been added to the Board website and copies can be obtained from the Board office.

4. The Committee is consulting with the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry with regard to updating the 'Loving in the Real World' resource for teenagers on sexuality.

5. Lindsay Conway has reported on meetings held under the auspices of the Office of First & Deputy First Minister. In the light of the ceasefire this group plan to provide resources for Church workers with regard to Trauma in relation to sudden death, infant death and suicide.

6. The Committee is assisting the Board plans to produce a DVD relating to the wide range of Social Witness within our Church and highlighting some of the 'good practice' presently going on.

7. Other issues currently under discussion include: the smacking of children in response to the 'Children are Unbeatable' campaign; how the Church

might respond to issues such as Transsexuality and potential gay marriage which have featured in recent legislation such as the Gender Recognition Bill, the Civil Partnerships Bill and the recent consultation by the Office of the First & Deputy First Minister into Gender Equality in Northern Ireland.

RA LIDDLE, Convener

PRESBYTERIAN WAR MEMORIAL HOSTEL

1. Derryvolgie Hall in South Belfast continues to provide a home for eighty-eight young people, mainly students, in a community where there is excellent friendship, fellowship and fun, and a varied and exciting programme of events for all. Worship and teaching sessions continue each week together with other study and social evenings. Outreach events include Night Life on a Thursday evening when some forty young people go out and share their faith between 12 midnight and 3.00 am, a project dealing with social justice issues of the gospel including fair trade in the University area, and an involvement with senior citizens in Sandy Row in association with Friendship House.

2. The Committee continues to be grateful to Rev Steve Stockman and all his staff and volunteers without whose dedication, commitment and enthusiasm it would be impossible to provide the Christian atmosphere and influence for all at Derryvolgie and beyond.

3. During the summer Steve Stockman and Lynn Ferguson organised and led three separate teams of students to work with Habitat for Humanity in Capetown, South Africa, for an eight week period. The trip was mentally and physically exhausting, but was successful at every level, way beyond the imaginings of the leadership. Not only were nine homes built and several others worked on, but time was also spent looking at reconciliation, including meeting with members of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There was also time to be involved with a couple of Christian Aid development projects including their AIDS community, Walo Nani, and to visit Fair Trade development sites. The whole experience made a huge impression on all the students who were involved and planning has already commenced for another visit to Capetown in 2006.

4. Derryvolgie Hall is now over 10 years old and whilst there has been an ongoing programme of maintenance and redecoration, it is now anticipated that around £30,000 will be spent in the summer in upgrading and improving the inside of the buildings as required.

5. This past year the Committee has concentrated on the development of the Chaplaincy Centre in Elmwood Avenue in association with the University Education Committee. This is a most exciting project which will provide one of the best Chaplaincy Centres anywhere and will include not only a large café/restaurant and drop-in centre on the ground floor, but also offices and counselling rooms for staff and students, a conference centre for up to eight people, a small library/quiet room and a centre for student study. The total cost of this development will be in the region of £1.1 million, fully funded from the War Memorial Hostel Trust. Work on site commenced in January 2005, is progressing satisfactorily and is anticipated to be complete in September 2005.

JH MARTIN, Convener

OLD AGE FUND, WOMEN'S FUND AND INDIGENT LADIES' FUND

1. The Directors report that, during the last financial year which ended 31st December 2004, 107 beneficiaries (34 in the Old Age Fund, 55 in the Women's Fund and 18 in the Indigent Ladies' Fund) received grants.

2. The Changes in beneficiaries during the year is as follows:

Beneficiaries	Old Receiving Quarterly Grant	Old Age Fund	Presbyterian Women's Fund	Indigent Ladies Fund	TOTAL
At 1 January 2004	29		49	15	93
New Grants Provided	4		4	3	11
Deaths	(3)		(4)	-	(7)
	(2)		(2)	(3)	(7)
As at 31 December 2003	28		47	15	90
Beneficiaries receiving one-off Donations	1		2	-	3
Deaths and Grants no longer Required (as above)	5		6	3	14
No of Beneficiaries receiving Assistance during the year	34		55	18	107

3. The total distribution of the Funds in Grants, Donations and Gifts was £81,014 (£24,269 from the Old Age Fund, £42,685 from the Women's Fund and £14,060 from the Indigent Ladies' Fund).

4. An annual grant of £680, paid quarterly, was sent to Beneficiaries during the year (2003: £640).

5. A 'Special Gift' of £170 (2003: £160) was sent to every beneficiary prior to Christmas.

6. 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.

7. The Directors assure that Church that all monies that come to the Funds are carefully and wisely spent.

8. 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.

9. 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.

WPH ERSKINE, Honorary Secretary

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the proposals in relation to new structures for the Board of Social Witness be accepted.
3. That the General Assembly approve and adopt the Common Protocol for churches relating to Independent Organisations working with children and young people.
4. That the Assembly commend the use of the 'Having, getting, spending' – Challenging Issues Bible Study guide.
5. That the customary grant made by the Social Issues and Resources Committee, up to a total of £3,000, be met from the Incidental Fund.
6. That the Board of Social Witness, with its associated working committees for the ensuring year, be appointed in accordance with Par 281 of the Code as follows:-

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 281(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 281(2) of the Code a new sub-paragraph (i) be added: "concern itself with all aspects of Child Protection and Good Safe Practice relating to the work with children and young people attending the Church and organisations; revise its guidelines on a regular basis and promote appropriate training".

R VALLELY

BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Convener: Rev EDWARD J HYNDMAN

Director: Miss ROSALIND STIRLING

Deputy Director: Rev IAN T McKEE

1. The Board of Youth and Children's Ministry has been working very hard to amalgamate the work of the Youth Board and the Church Education Committee. This has involved many practical challenges and the staff have adjusted to new working arrangements and new areas of work with enthusiasm and dedication.

2. The year has also seen the beginning of strategic planning for the years ahead. This thinking has its root in the Great Commission and the need to build disciples from the earliest ages, sustaining and encouraging them as they grow up to be fully devoted disciples in adulthood. It has also brought to centre stage the need to view congregational life as a whole, and the role of the family as critical.

3. In the year ahead, the Board will be seeking to encourage and help congregations work out their own disciple building ministry with their children and young people.

4. The Board commends and encourages Sunday School teachers, organisational leaders, volunteers and full time workers whose dedication is the heartbeat of our denomination's ministry to children and young people. May we all accept joyfully the opportunities we have to pray for them and encourage them.

5. The Board recognises that the key spiritual leaders for children and young people are their parents/guardians, and warmly thank them for their support. As a Board we will endeavour to find ways to help and encourage them in their vital role.

6. The Board is grateful for the work of its staff in the Youth and Children's department: Roz Stirling (Director) and Rev Ian McKee (Deputy Director) in their oversight of the Board's work; and Miss Lois McIlrath, Mrs Helen Bruce, Mrs Claire Child, Mrs Janet Maxwell, Mrs Valerie Moore, Miss Pamela Patton, Mrs Donna Thompson and Mrs Marianne Trueman as they carry out the administrative functions of the Board. The dedication and enthusiasm they bring to their work is deeply appreciated.

7. The Board wishes to thank Graeme Thompson who continues in his role as Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland to bring support and training to many congregations. The Board is in the process of appointing a Children's Development Officer. We encourage Kirk Sessions and congregations to make use of the training and resources these two members of staff offer.

8. Mr David Smith, Preparing Youth for Peace Programme Officer, has completed his term with us and now leaves to become Regional Volunteers'

Manager for Tear Fund. The Board expresses its sincere thanks to David for his dedicated and skilled service. During his 3½ years with the Board, he established a discipleship programme that has impacted the lives of many young people in our denomination. We pray God's blessing for him in his future work.

9. The Board wishes to thank Mr Lawrence Walker for his work as Centres' Director and for all his support to the Centres Panel which will report under the General Board. We extend our thanks and appreciation to Mrs Gillian Brownlow (Guysmere), Mrs Pam Huddy (Rostrevor) and Mr Kenny Morrison (Lucan) for their work in facilitating the ministry of the centres.

10. The Board thanks Mr Richard Houston for his role as Youth and Support Worker for the Donegal and Monaghan Presbyteries. Richard's skill and dedication in his job, which involved travelling many miles along rural roads, is deeply appreciated by the Board and especially the ministers, young people and leaders of the Presbyteries of Donegal and Monaghan.

11. The Board wishes to thank all those who supported the Youth and Children's Project. The magnificent sum of £101,864 was raised for the Lookin' Up Project 2003/2004. The Board would wish to thank all Sunday School & Youth Groups who worked so hard to raise this money. Next year's Youth and Children's Project, 2005/2006, in partnership with Scripture Union, focuses on the purchase and refurbishment of two centres for children & young people - one in Russia and the other in the Ukraine. The Board commends this Project to the Church.

12. The Board is indebted to the Church for the finance received through the United Appeal allocation. The Board deeply appreciates the effort required by congregations to meet their targets permitting its work to continue. The Board seeks to use this financial assistance with great prudence.

RECOGNISED MINISTRIES

Rev David Bruce, Regional Secretary of Scripture Union in Britain and Ireland with the Former Soviet Republics reports:

1. The ministry of Scripture Union in these islands and beyond is encouraging and challenging.

2. The encouragements include the growth of ministry in Ireland (North and South) and in Great Britain. Ministry to children, young people and families remains core to the work of the movement. Many tens of thousands of children are part of SU-supported schools ministry in Britain and Ireland, and the same is true for missions, holidays and church-based programmes.

3. The new SU Sunday School material 'Light' has had a successful launch and initial feedback after nearly one year of use shows that the materials have been well received.

4. The challenges include the significant changes in the way that children and young people acquire and retain information in the light of screen-based rather than paper based reading. Traditional printed Bible Reading Guides continue to sell well, but there has been a gradual decline compared with fifteen years ago. We are looking at inventing a new kind of written product designed for the screen rather than printed paper.

5. Changes in child-protection legislation are welcome as they should make corporate activities safer for children – but these changes significantly increase the administrative workload for each of the four home movements, and in two cases have required the employment of new dedicated personnel.

6. The SU movements in Russia and Ukraine are very grateful to the Presbyterian Church Youth and Children's Board for agreeing to support their campsite developments as the Youth and Children's Project for 2005/2006. These developments will enable thousands of children to encounter Christ in a safe environment for years to come.

Rev George McClelland, National Director of the Boys' Brigade, Northern Ireland, reports:

1. The work of the Boys' Brigade is making a difference in many boys' lives. It has been great to hear the stories of boys coming to faith in their Company situations. My work is to oversee the day to day ongoing work of our 321 Companies. They are divided into 13 Battalions throughout the Province. During the past year I have been trying to grasp the extent of work that we endeavour to carry out, both within the scene of the local church and then the wider implications of the work in the community and indeed the province. I continue to work closely with Mr Winston Frew, Training Officer for Northern Ireland. We maintain our close connection to the UK/World aspect of Boys' Brigade and that means travelling to meetings across the water.

2. We had a stand at the Christian Resources Exhibition in the King's Hall, Belfast in February. I was greatly encouraged about how many of our volunteer staff are taking this mission work of the Church very seriously indeed. On behalf of the Northern Ireland Region I want to thank them for the commitment shown throughout the past year. Through our programme and our relationship building with our young people we are seeing in many places young folk not only coming to faith, but growing in their faith and giving leadership back to the Church and the Boys' Brigade. Please continue to pray and support the Boys' Brigade.

Rev John Peacock, Youth Project Officer for Youthlink: NI, reports:

1. Youth Link continues to work out its vision of working together with Churches to develop excellence in youth work and to promote peace and reconciliation in our divided society. We strive to do this by working in partnership with the Church Youth Departments to ensure that those involved in youth work and ministry, peace building and reconciliation have the skills and training to carry out their roles effectively and have access to local, national and international networks where information, resources and support can be shared. Youth Link seeks to be aware of the changing needs of the Churches with regard to youth ministry, peace building and reconciliation whilst providing a prophetic voice to the Churches and the wider community.

2. My particular role within the Youth Link team is to work with the Churches to provide opportunities for young people of different traditions and cultural backgrounds to develop mutual understanding, tolerance, acceptance

and respect and to be active contributors to peace building and reconciliation. With God's help and direction, we seek to do this in a variety of ways:

- By establishing programmes for young people in peace building;
- By delivering citizenship programmes for young adults;
- By offering seminars at events such as Summer Madness;
- By running accredited training in community relations work;
- By facilitating conflict transformation programmes;
- By supporting the delivery and development of church peace building initiatives.

Rev David Stanfield, Training and Development Officer for Youth Link: NI, reports:

1. Youth Link exists to serve the four largest denominations in Ireland through supporting and encouraging the development of youth ministry in local congregations. It has been encouraging during the five years that I have been working with Youth Link to see the reputation of the Christian youth work training offered through the organisation grow both nationally and internationally. My role in the organisation is to work primarily with the Youth departments of the three largest Protestant denominations in the provision of training and support in ways that they deem appropriate.

2. During the last 12 months this has been expressed through speaking engagements at major events, namely the National Youth Leaders' Convention, Summer Madness and Autumn Soul. I assisted in the training of ordinands for the Church of Ireland at their college in Dublin. I co-ordinated one of the evenings and lectured on both of the Youth Ministry Certificate evening Courses offered at Union Theological College (UTC). I am currently co-ordinating and lecturing on the new modules in Youth Ministry developed through the Institute of Theology at QUB and delivered via a partnership between UTC and the Belfast Bible College (BBC). Additionally I am delivering a module in Youth Ministry at BBC on their College course that also provides NIOCN accreditation at levels 2 and 3. During the year I supported various year teams by providing training and also participated in a number of full-time youth worker retreats. Finally I have been supporting David Smith and the continuing development of the PYP programme as chair of the Board's Reconciliation Working Group.

3. Through Youth Link I am delighted to be able to play a small part in the development of new training that is Christian in its ethos, theological in its underpinning and professional in the assessment of the competence and skills required to enable those whom we entrust with the faith development of our young people to be more adequately equipped for the task. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement over the past year.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

1. Much of the work of this Committee involves well established practices inherited from various parts of the Youth Board. This now needs to be

built upon as we look to incorporate ministry opportunities for children as part of the new Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.

Work inherited from the Youth Board:

Summer Outreach Teams

2. Teams this year are being sent to Newry, Carlow, Lucan, Castlereagh, Lowe Memorial, Lisnabreen, Conlig, Tobermore, Kilcooley, Letterkenny, Woodvale, Mountjoy and Ballycastle. Interest from young people wishing to serve on these teams remains high despite the fact that many organisations are competing for young people's service in similar ways. We continue to strive to promote our work so suggestions are always welcome.

Year Team and Volunteers

3. The annual Year Team is now well established with young people of a high calibre applying to serve, although the number of applications has dropped in some years. The current team has three members Jamie Doey, Christine McClelland and Matthew Robinson with placements in Garnerville, 1st and 2nd Islandmagee and Ballyloughan. Placements for next year are already being sought and the selection process for the next team will be commencing soon.

4. The work of one year volunteers is developing annually and is creating increased interest especially from the number of congregations interested in acquiring such volunteers. Opportunities for volunteering for work overseas are also being investigated. Such volunteers are therefore constantly being sought.

Camps

5. The ever popular residential camps continue this year with Surf the Rock Camp, Guysmere Boys' Adventure Camp, Guysmere Girls' Camp, Creative Arts Camp, Adventure Camp and the new Tech Camp. This new camp contains "things techie" so that it can be seen that "God Employs Electronic Know-how"! Discussions are already under way with the Board of Social Witness to investigate the possibility of a camp for those with special needs.

Overseas Teams

6. This year plans are under way for teams to work in Brazil and Romania. A team planned for Singapore has had to be withdrawn due to lack of interest, despite considerable interest being displayed at the earlier stages.

7. Discussions are continuing regarding future years. Consideration is being given to becoming involved with specific projects, possibly involving going back for two or three years. Closer working relationships with the Overseas Board personnel are also being sought and we are confident of this developing.

Concorde Fund

8. This trust fund continues to be managed according to the terms of the trust. It aims to provide a small travel grant to Presbyterians doing short term missionary service organised by themselves.

9. Tribute must be paid to the dedication of the Director, Deputy Director, office staff and working group chairpersons as they fulfil the tasks assigned to them, often going the extra mile to ensure the ministry continues at the highest standard.

10. The introduction of the new regulations regarding the use of PECS now means that the majority of those serving on teams and leading camps will have to go through the system. This will mean that applications for service must be processed at least three months prior to the team or camp to allow the procedures to be followed (ie no late applications!)

Incorporation of Children's Ministry Opportunities:

11. Children's ministry is a specific new development of the Board. In order to begin to examine the possibilities ahead, an ad hoc sub-committee has been set up and ideas are currently being discussed. It is hoped to begin preparations for the development of a workshop on 'how to better integrate children into the life and work of the local congregation'. This may be further developed into a road show to be used at Presbytery level or a video/DVD produced to be used at congregational level.

12. In all discussions it is aimed to ensure the facilitation of youth and children's ministry at congregational level rather than directly ministering at central level.

DESI PAUL, Convener

MINISTRY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. The Committee has spent time this year considering our role within the new structures of the Board and overseeing the work of already existing working groups which fall within its remit. We are grateful for the hard work of the various working groups and give thanks to God for his help as we make our contribution to the wider ministry of the Board and the Church.

The Website

2. The Website working group has met regularly over the year under the convenership of the Deputy Director and has been working hard at integrating the new facet of children's work into what is already a well established website at www.pciyouth.org. Radical changes have now taken place which we believe will greatly enhance the potential of this wonderful resource for the Church. The Board's Web Site is renamed www.pciyac.org (i.e. incorporating youth and children – 'yac' in the name), and totally redesigned. This is to be the parent site of our Board for the specific use of Youth and Children's leaders. Our current site www.pciyouth.org is retained and redesigned for the specific use of young people who will find it to be much more focused on their interests and needs. A

further site www.pcichildren.org will serve a similar function being a site for children – but this site will not be functioning for some time yet. The Board's official email address, in line with the above changes, will now be yac@presbyterianireland.org though all other Youth and Children's Board email addresses currently in use will continue to operate.

The Youth and Children's Project

3. The *Helping Hands* Project 2004/2005, for work in Sumba has been generously supported by the Church, and has been greatly assisted by the availability of a very professionally produced DVD and Project Pack. Next year's Project (2005/2006), in cooperation with Scripture Union, will enable the purchase and renovation of two properties, one in Murmansk near St Petersburg in Russia, and one in Vorzel in the Ukraine. Both centres will be used to host Holiday Bible Clubs in a safe environment for street children, and provide many other opportunities for ministry to and with children and young people. A Project Pack and DVD will be provided for every congregation – available in time for the September (or in some cases October) Presbytery meetings.

Youth and Children's Workers

4. The Board continues to provide support for those in fulltime youth work within our congregations by arranging training days and retreats throughout the year. Graeme Thompson, who is particularly involved in this support work, also provides churches with vital information and support in the task of considering whether or not a youth worker is appropriate for a given situation. While the employment issues surrounding youth workers and other employed staff are now covered by the Peninsula organisation there is still a vital role for the Board to play in assisting congregations to identify the specific ministry needs in each situation. The Board's extended remit suggests that we also need to be on hand to provide support for congregations who are looking for children's workers and for those workers when they are appointed.

Youth Centres

5. Over the year the Youth Centres' Review Panel, under the auspices of the General Board, has been considering the future use of our three centres at Guysmere, Rostrevor and Lucan. The Panel has concluded that Lucan and Guysmere should be sold and a new multi-purpose centre built at Rostrevor. This new centre will serve the whole church and no longer be simply a Youth Centre. The process would be staged over the next couple of years to allow full consultation to take place and work to be carried out, so that we have a first class facility to meet the needs of our denomination in the 21st Century. The panel will bring the recommendations for approval by the General Assembly in June.

Preparing Youth for Peace

6. The work of the Programme Officer and Working Group in training facilitators to run the course continues with 90 people having been trained as facilitators. David Smith and the team have worked hard in promoting the course

and in training people to run it, fully deserving the sincere thanks of the Board. Discussions with the Ballymena Presbytery regarding the course have been ongoing – the Board having made a formal response to a document received from the Presbytery. The PYP Programme is currently undergoing appraisal and revision where appropriate.

Resources Review Working Group

7. It is recognised that with the growing number of resources available to those working with both children and young people there is a need for reliable information about such resources. The website already provides for the possibility of such reviews to reach a target audience quickly and a working group has been set up under this Committee to source and review new resources and post such reviews on the website on a regular basis.

GRAEME KENNEDY, Convener

TRAINING COMMITTEE

1. The Committee thanks God for his guidance and blessing on the Committee and the working groups during a period of change in the structure of the Board. The Committee also thanks God for new vision and the implementation of set goals.

Certificates in Youth Ministry

2. The **Youth Ministry Certificate Courses** have again been run at Union College. This year, however, the course has been offered on Monday and Tuesday nights to cater for the level of demand. A residential weekend has again been central to the implementation of the course. The Advanced Certificate Course has not been offered this year and at present it is anticipated that a new commencement date will be deferred.

3. The **Children's Ministry Course** ran at Union College from September to November 2004 and was once again a great success. A further course to be located at Kilfennan in the early spring of 2005 had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. The next course is scheduled to be held at Union Theological College in the autumn, 2005.

Development of Youth Ministry Modules as part of BTh Degree at Union College

4. Two modules have been facilitated this year at Union Theological College. The Modules have been well attended and well received. These will be repeated in the next academic year. It is hoped that more modules will be permitted and facilitated in the future.

Development of Youth Ministry Degree through Oxford Brookes

5. Arrangements are progressing well for a Youth Ministry Degree. It is a BA Honours Degree in Youth and Community work and Applied Theology, professionally endorsed by JNC, validated and awarded by Oxford Brookes

University and run by the Centre for Youth Ministry under their Director, the Rev David Howell. Positive meetings have taken place with the relevant theological institutions including Union Theological College and the denominational youth departments have also given their backing to this degree course. It is anticipated that the degree would commence in September 2006 with advertising taking place during 2005. Developments are ongoing.

National Youth Leaders Convention

6. Two conventions have now taken place, working alongside the Church of Ireland and Methodist denominations. In June 2004 the Critical Concerns Courses were held in Dublin and Belfast and the Keynote Speaker was Mark DeVries, Nashville, USA. This was the first time that a Critical Concerns programme was held in Dublin and was a very successful development. The Big Seminar Event was held in Belfast and was attended by 160 people. A major review is currently taking place and during this review period there will be no NYLC event in June 2005.

'Building Blocks' Conferences

7. The two conferences, held on Saturday 27 November 2004 at St Patrick's College of Education, Drumcondra, Dublin and on Saturday 4 December 2004 at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown, were a great success. Three hundred people attended at each venue. Nick Harding was the keynote speaker at both events. This year's conferences will take place on Saturday 12 November 2005 in Dublin and on Saturday 19 November at Jordanstown at the same venues. The keynote speaker will be Wendy Strachan, a children's ministry specialist working for SU International.

Youth Link

8. Youth Link continues to support and complement the work of the Youth and Children's Ministry Board and we are grateful to its representatives for their input into our working groups and Committee.

CRAIG MAWHINNEY, Convener

MINISTRY EVENTS COMMITTEE

1. The Ministry Events Committee continues to oversee the major events of the Youth and Children's Ministry Board. The Fun Day takes place in May. Two Youth Nights take place at the end of the General Assembly each year. The Bible Conference Route 66 (for ages 17+) is held in August and the MAD weekend in October. We look forward with great expectation to what our God will do through these events in the coming year.

Fun Day

2. The Fun Day was not held in 2004 due to insurance problems, but will take place on Saturday 14 May 2005 at the Ulster Folk and Transport

Museum, Cultra. This event hosts the largest gathering of Presbyterians – regularly between 8,000 and 10,000 attend, and therefore it requires considerable planning and effort in order to take place each year. Two hundred volunteers are needed to staff the event.

Youth Night

3. The Youth Nights still gathers thousands of Presbyterian young people from every part of Ireland – North and South, for fellowship and to hear the life changing message of the gospel. This year the speaker will be Graeme Thompson, Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland. The Youth Night dates are 10 and 11 June 2005.

Route 66

4. The Bible conference held at Loughery College continues to fulfil its remit to provide high quality and relevant Biblical teaching for our young people. The conference aims to cross the whole terrain of scripture over a three-year period, providing a thorough base for Bible understanding. This year, as has been the practice in previous conferences, we are tapping into Biblical knowledge from far and near. The dates for the Conference are 25-29 August 2005.

MAD

5. The purpose of the MAD weekend remains the same, to create a format of a youth weekend for youth groups to attend, so removing the organisation from leaders and allowing them to work on relationships and evangelism with their own young people. After seven years the event continues to be oversubscribed each year. Through the keynote speaker we present an evangelistic message with numbers of young people coming to a living faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The dates of the weekend are 28-30 October 2005.

Future Events

6. There is great enthusiasm as the children's and youth elements of the Board's ministry work well together. We are continuing to explore new ventures and events for children. The Committee are also looking at the possibility of holding more regional events.

JONATHAN MOXEN, Convener

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The Research and Education Committee of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry was formed by the 2004 General Assembly. Whilst valuable pieces of research have been done over the years by both the former Youth Board and by the Church Education Committee, a committee of this kind has previously not existed in either Board.

2. The Committee has been spending considerable time in defining its now enlarged remit. The Church Education Committee had agreed to undertake a survey concerning the current state of and possibilities for children's ministry in our denomination. This work will now be undertaken by this Committee.

3. Other areas of possible research have been identified. The committee will endeavour at an early stage to prioritise the actual focus of the research and seek professional assistance in the delivery of the work.

HEATHER LYLE, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That a grant of £6500 be paid to Youth Link NI from the Incidental Fund.
3. That the General Assembly approve the use of the Youth and Children's Project 2005-6 to support the further development of Scripture Union's centres near Murmansk, St Petersburg, Russia and Vorzel, Ukraine.
4. That the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, with its associated working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed as follows:

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Convener: Rev ROBERT HERRON

Secretary: Rev STANLEY STEWART

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has a long tradition in providing and supporting the education of young people. While the spiritual education afforded by Congregations is now no longer part of the remit of the Board of Education, the Board continues to promote and support the provision of statutory education services that aim to meet the challenges and needs of children and young people in the whole island of Ireland. The Board of Education, through its two Assembly Committees of State Education and University Education, seeks to lobby government, consult and work with the other transferor Churches (Church of Ireland & Methodist) in the Transferors' Representative Council (TRC), and the other partners and providers in primary, secondary and third level institutions in both jurisdictions.

2. The leadership of the Board and Committees has seen some changes in the past year and has been in the hands of Rev Robert Herron (Board Convener), Rev Stanley Stewart (Board Secretary), Mr Jim Caves (Convener, State Education) and Rev Robert Buick (Convener, University Education).

3. While time has been spent reviewing Board and Committee procedures with a view to improving communication, transparency and collective responsibility, the bulk of the work has been responding to consultative papers or the actions of other educational partners, and thinking through the future shape of the ministry provided in university chaplaincy.

STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NORTHERN IRELAND

Funding

1. The dominant theme of most conversations about education provision is the sharing out of resources to a shrinking number of pupils in a greatly fragmented system. The funding crisis in services to schools that has been created by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland has caused anxiety among members and employees of the Education and Library Boards, school governors, teachers and parents. The impact of the introduction of Common Funding Formula has yet to be felt at local level but it is already clear that many schools will be put in the difficult position of receiving a reduced budget. Some secondary schools are reporting that they will not be able to provide the same ranges of courses they have offered in the past and small schools, especially those showing a decline in pupil numbers, are not confident about their future existence.

Future Post-primary Arrangements

2. The implementation of the recommendations of the Costello Report is not proceeding as quickly as might have been expected. As a result the expected emergence of local solutions has not yet been forthcoming. The Presbyterian Church is represented on the Strategic Implementation Group through the Transferors' Representative Council (TRC). The Strategic Group is charged with deliberation on the various recommendations of Costello and with formulating advice to the Department on how they might best be implemented in the interests of all pupils. A significant product of the group has been the publication by the Department of the Consultation Paper on Admissions Criteria, and the TRC will be preparing a joint response. This is, of course, an open consultation exercise and all interested parties, especially parents, are encouraged to make a response by the date of 30 June 2005.

Religious Education Curriculum Review

3. The Draft syllabus is with the Department of Education having been recommended by the four main Churches. A full 'equality impact assessment' is to be conducted by the Department; every attempt has been made to make the core curriculum all-inclusive and in view of the current legislation protecting Religious Education and the rights of the Churches no serious problem is anticipated. The agreement of the four Churches to seek the assistance of the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment to produce guidance materials for teachers delivering the curriculum in a thematic way with other curricular areas is particularly welcome.

Ethos of the Controlled Sector

4. An ethos document has been produced by the Transferors' Representative Council. The launch and release of the document is planned to coincide with the reconstitution of the Area Boards and School Boards of Governors later in the year. A concerted effort will be made to train and equip Transferors to take their responsibilities seriously and use their influence effectively.

Stranmillis University College

5. Changes in the legal status and governance arrangements of the Management Board of Stranmillis University College have been proposed. Assurances have been given that the representation on this Board would not change.

Thanks

6. The Church at large is indebted to the many people employed in and working to support all levels of schools including nursery, primary, special and secondary. All are to be congratulated in providing such a high quality service despite the many pressures and obstacles which present almost daily.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Primary Schools

Rev Nancy Cubitt, Director of Primary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:

1. The Conference for the Board of Management Patrons' Representatives held in May 2004 in Donegal was of great benefit to all who attended. Representatives from the Executive Level of the Department of Education and Science and the Regional Office from Sligo attended. These representatives presented excellent informative talks and simply making contact with them was of great value.

2. A new Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 has been enacted since 1 September 2004. Over 80 Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENO's) have been employed in both the Primary and Secondary sectors with organisers in each county. It is hoped that eventually there will be help for children with disability in all schools. This will take time to implement properly but it is good that government is making these provisions.

3. The Church of Ireland Education Office has alerted schools that they must have a "defined characteristic spirit" or clear statement of the founding purpose of the school, particularly the religious and ethical purpose. The Employment Equality Act 1998 allows employers of educational, medical and religious establishments to openly choose employees who are in sympathy with their ethos and not be accused of discrimination.

Secondary Education Committee

Mr Brian Duffy, Director of Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:

1. The Secondary Education Committee (SEC) is a body comprising representatives from the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Religious Society of Friends. The Committee derives its authority from a resolution passed by the sponsoring Churches in 1965.

2. The functions of the SEC are twofold. Firstly, to distribute a Block Grant provided by the Department of Education and Science (DE&S) to families, where at least one parent is a member of a reformed Church and who need assistance to send their children to Protestant secondary schools. Secondly, it also seeks to represent the interest of the member Churches in the post-primary education system. The Committee operates as a limited company thus allowing both the corporate body and the liability of individual members to be appropriately insured.

3. The membership of SEC is: *Church of Ireland* Rt Rev WP Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross (Chairman), Rev Canon RJEFB Black, Mrs JM Bruton, Mrs L Clarke, Mr G Jephson, Rev Canon J Merrick, Mrs P O'Malley and Ms EE Oldham; *Presbyterian Church*: Mr B Duffy and Rev CM Hunter;

Methodist Church Rev N Fallows and Dr JW Harris; *Religious Society of Friends*: Mr R Johnson and Professor B Murdoch.

4. The Rev Vanessa Wyse-Jackson who had given much appreciated service as a member of the Committee resigned on ceasing to be the Secretary to the Methodist Board of Education and the Committee welcomed her successor Rev Noel Fallows.

5. Mr Brian Duffy has completed his term as vice-chairman and the appointee for the next three years is Dr JW Harris.

6. The Committee records its appreciation of the commitment and service to parents and schools of the Administrator Mr David Wynne and his assistant Mrs Bridie McCauley.

Block Grant Scheme

7. Enrolments in the twenty-one fee charging schools totalled 9250 (9172 in previous year). This figure does not include the five comprehensive schools. In the school year 2003/04 the audited accounts showed the totals received from the Department of Education & Science was €5,120,481 (€4,917,619); the grant in aid of fees totalled €4,736,574 (€4,573,929) and capitation adjustment grant €351,907 (€343,434). The cost of administering the SEC scheme was €126,709 (€149,554). There is a small grant to assist the running of the office but it is necessary to utilise interest from the grant received to provide a further subvention for these costs.

8. The following numbers of grants were awarded in respect of the 2004/05 school year: 1493 day grants, 1091 boarding grants, 2584 in total.

9. The Committee agreed to increase grants for the school year 2005/06 on a scale from: boarding €1,140 - €4,500 (€1,140 - €4,050) and day €480 - €1,710 (€480 - €1,620). An increase in certain allowances was also agreed in relation to the reckoning of assessments. This resulted in improved access to grants for a number of families.

10. The Administrator, Mr Wynne, attended a number of open days at the request of schools and took the opportunity to discuss issues with individual parents. He also made contact with each school to discuss the functioning of the grant scheme. This ensures that schools have every opportunity to draw attention to the difficulties of any individual family.

11. In recent years there has been a delay in the payment of the block grant by the Department of Education & Science. It is understood that this results from the delay in payments to the Department itself from the Department of Finance. There is an inevitable knock-on effect with payments not being made to schools until the very end of term. This delay is regretted.

Capitation Adjustment Grant

12. This grant has been paid directly to schools for disbursement according to the school's discretion to support those families who are necessitous. The Committee resolved that the grant in future would be paid directly to schools based on the proportion of grant in aid of fees being paid to schools in a particular year and that the schools should continue to disperse the grant to aid those families who come within the ambit of the SEC grant scheme.

Standardised School Year

13. The development of a standardised school year with a calendar of holiday breaks set out for the next five years has had an impact on those schools which provide a six day teaching week. These are boarding schools whose enrolments include a number of pupils from families currently located overseas. The holiday breaks particularly at Christmas hold significant difficulties for travel and the Committee regrets that Minister Dempsey did not find it possible to grant a derogation to the small number of schools involved to adjust their holiday breaks.

School Building Programme

14. The former Minister for Education & Science, Mr Noel Dempsey TD, had in 2003 and 2004 issued a school building programme which indicated the status of building applications in respect of each school. This was a useful programme in that schools could anticipate the likely date when such building application would move to actual construction. The current Minister, Ms Mary Hanafin TD, has moved away from this transparent programme to issuing a piecemeal indication of progress. She has felt it helpful to indicate those schools progressing to construction at the beginning of 2005 and indicated that subsequent announcements will follow as projects complete. It is noted that no schools in the sector have been given permission to progress applications for extension or replacement. The deteriorating condition of a number of comprehensive and voluntary secondary schools has been adverted to in previous reports. Regrettably there has been no significant progress in relation to these very necessary projects and pupils and staff are working in inadequate conditions and this is affecting the delivery of education. Voluntary secondary schools have in some cases, of necessity, had to increase fees because of the urgent need to upgrade buildings.

Bursars' Conference

15. The Administrator arranged a conference for bursars in second level schools and this was a useful exercise updating bursars in relation to the grant scheme, providing bursars the opportunity to exchange expertise and providing an introduction to an accounting package which might be of assistance to schools.

School Chaplains

16. The estimates for the Department of Education & Science for the Year 2005 did not allow for any funding for the proposed pilot scheme for school chaplains in voluntary secondary schools. A number of schools continue to fund the provision of a chaplain from within school resources. The work of chaplains is extremely valuable not only in the religious education area but in the pastoral care of pupils and staff. It is understood that a position paper on chaplaincy is also being prepared in relation to the community and comprehensive sector by the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools. This paper will provide additional insights into the role of chaplain and will give rise to some discussion when it is circulated.

Boards of Management

17. The Committee noted a report of a meeting of the Secretary with the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI) in relation to the progress of boards of management in second level schools. This meeting clarified a number of issues for the ASTI and the reiteration of the understanding of the ethos of schools in the sector was appreciated. There had been no significant response to a proposal to holding a seminar on the structure of boards of management but schools could utilise the services of a trained facilitator.

Whole School Evaluation

18. The revision of the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) procedure was noted by the Committee and together with the Church of Ireland Board of Education a response to proposed changes was made. The DE&S was pressed to respond promptly to those shortcomings in the areas of resource and staffing identified during the procedure. The Committee expressed considerable concern that the evaluation process would be undermined by the publication of WSE reports as a result of a judgement in the courts. It was likely that the publication of such reports would threaten the openness by which the participants would approach evaluation in any school.

School Chaplaincy in the Royal & Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe

19. The work of Rev Patricia McBride as school chaplain came to an end in the autumn of 2004 when she received a Call and returned to parish ministry in the Congregations of Scarva and Loughbrickland. Her pioneering work as school chaplain in Co. Donegal has received worthy praise from her employers. She has been described as 'someone who brought happiness wherever she went' and her sterling work in carving out a role for chaplaincy and contributing effectively to the holistic development of her students has left a solid foundation for her successor the Rev Stanley Stewart. Consequent on appointment as School Chaplain, Stanley is unable to continue as Secretary to the Board of Education. In a short time Stanley has made a significant contribution to the work of the Board. We thank him for his diligence and wish him well in his new appointment.

JIM CAVES, Convener

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The University Education Committee continues to focus on improving the delivery of chaplaincy services to all those working and studying in institutions of third level education throughout the island of Ireland. Our chaplains also provide a valuable reformed Christian contribution to the debate within such institutions on current ethical and moral issues. The Committee values the interest of Presbyteries and Congregations in addressing the future development of this important area of work and witness.

Dublin Joint Methodist/Presbyterian Chaplaincy Scheme

2. In the Dublin area the Joint Methodist/Presbyterian Chaplaincy Scheme which has been in operation since 2001 is under substantive review. It is hoped that a joint approach to Chaplaincy will continue in some form. The institutions of third level education are enthusiastic in their desire to involve the Churches in the provision of services to their staff and students, but the financial and human resources available to fulfil these demands are limited. Currently full time chaplaincy services in the Dublin area are provided by Rev Katherine Meyer at Trinity College, Rev Stephen Skuce at University College Dublin, Mr Baird Lewis at Dublin Institute of Technology and Rev William McLaren at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Despite several attempts to find a suitable candidate to take on the part time chaplaincy duties at Dublin City University, this post remains vacant. Rev Frank Sellar provides part time chaplaincy duties at the Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines.

Development of the Bush Chaplaincy Centre at Queens University

3. In the Belfast area, the work of chaplaincy at Queens is undergoing radical change as redevelopment and extension of the Bush Chaplaincy Centre is currently taking place. This project is funded by the War Memorial Hostel Committee with whom the University Education Committee has an excellent working relationship. The Bush has been closed to facilitate the building work and it is hoped that it will reopen in the new premises by September 2005. During this work chaplaincy activities are concentrated at Derryvolgie Halls of Residence. Rev Steve Stockman, Chaplain in Residence, is assisted by Miss Lynn Ferguson.

Resignation of Chaplain at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown Campus

4. Rev Dr William Crawley resigned as Presbyterian Chaplain at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown, at the end of 2004. The Committee records its thanks to William for his contribution and wishes him well in his new appointment at the BBC. The Committee is currently reviewing the chaplaincy provision at Jordanstown. None of the other Churches has a full time Chaplain at Jordanstown and the Committee is considering the possibility of a link with a local Congregation.

University of Ulster, Coleraine and Magee Campuses

5. Rev John Coulter and Rev Joe McCormick are part time Chaplains at the University of Ulster Coleraine and Magee campuses respectively. The Committee also recognises the effort of many other Ministers who contribute to the care and support of staff and students at those institutions where there is no 'official' Presbyterian Chaplain.

Student Fees

6. The Government is intending to press ahead with their proposal to introduce Variable Deferred Fees in Higher Education. The increased financial hardship resulting from this system will have far reaching implications for those wishing to gain a university education in the future.

Chaplains' Reports

Queen's University

Rev Steve Stockman reports:

1. The One Chaplaincy in two locations continued to work successfully until Christmas when the Bush was knocked down to begin the rebuilding project. We continue to try and reach as wide a Queens community as possible from Derryvolgie Hall.

2. Chaplain In Residence, Rev Steve Stockman, and Assistant Chaplain, Lynn Ferguson, continue to service the University with teaching and pastoral care as well as inspiring mission on a variety of levels. They are ably supported by Mark Drennan a resident volunteer and Carol McMahon the administrator.

3. Events have again been well attended. We have had some 50-60 at our Bible Study and worship events and 25 at our Prayer Meeting which has been the "success" of the year in terms of finding a time and a prayerful desire among students. Steve has been teaching a course that takes students through the main Bible themes in two years including creation, fall, covenant, law, prophets and the birth, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus. Many other spiritual and social events have been run including an in house weekend and a weeklet away to Castlewellan Castle.

University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus

Rev John Coulter reports:

1. As part-time Chaplain at Coleraine I spend one day per week (Wednesday) on campus seeking to provide pastoral support to students and staff and sharing the good news about Jesus when opportunities arise.

2. During this year there has been a steady stream of students of various backgrounds dropping into the Chaplaincy office, some may be struggling with particular problems, while others just want to introduce themselves or have a chat.

3. Each Wednesday morning at 8.30am I meet with some Christian Union (CU) members for a time of prayer and then join them for breakfast. This has been a great opportunity to develop relationships with some of the young people and to support them in their various roles in CU.

4. We have continued the joint service project between the CU and my own Congregation in Ballysally. About fifteen students have helped us to provide a Homework Club for the children of Ballysally. This is a great opportunity for students to widen their experience and to share in ministry in a front line mission situation.

5. This year the Chaplaincy Team, in cooperation with the university Chaplains Council, has been developing a new initiative to help support members of staff. In Coleraine we provided a buffet lunch for staff and invited Rev Gary Haire from Christian Guidelines to speak about stress. His two talks under the title "All Stressed up And No Where To Go" were heard by about fifty members of staff and provided an excellent opportunity to develop links with

them. We used the same format for a reflection on Christmas for staff and are planning to look at a number of other issues later in the year.

University of Ulster, Magee Campus

Rev Joe McCormick reports:

1. Chaplaincy facilities continue to be made available to the few Presbyterian students at Magee.
2. Good relationships with the student welfare representatives have resulted in a number of common worship occasions.
3. The support of the staff at Magee is much appreciated.

Trinity College, Dublin

Rev Katherine Meyer reports:

1. In 2004 the Trinity College Chaplains continued to develop our core ministries of hospitality in the name of Jesus Christ to students and staff of all backgrounds, and of ensuring that rich and varied forms of Christian worship and prayer are made available to the College community on a regular basis, along with appropriate pastoral care.
2. In the life of the College Chapel, three events stood out in 2004. In January we welcomed a diverse group of students and staff to In Sync, an evening of jazz and poetry in celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In the spring, in conjunction with the Trinity College 2004 Women's Centenary celebrations, we welcomed an international series of women preachers from the Reformed, Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions to the College Chapel. And in December, the Clerk of the General Assembly, Dr Donald Watts, and Mrs Fiona Watts were our special guests at the Service of Lessons and Carols for Advent.
3. Our open coffee room, weekly lunches, themed walking tours, and informal evening events continue to provide lively contexts in which to meet students - and indeed to engage in conversations of some theological depth more often than might be imagined!
4. The Chapel Choir traveled to Belfast for a weekend in December, and sang on Sunday morning in Fortwilliam Park Presbyterian Church. A day trip to Cashel in November finished with evening prayer in Roscrea, where we were joined by friends from the Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches.
5. I have continued my involvement in the Mental Health Steering Group, and I was invited to give a workshop on pastoral care at the National Symposium on Student Mental Health hosted by Trinity College in November. I also represented the College at a regional health board consultation on suicide.
6. I assist as needed with preaching and the celebration of the sacraments in Christ Church Rathgar, and was invited to preach at both St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, and at the Church of Ireland Theological College in 2004. I am also an active member of the Race Relations Panel, and represent the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster on the Churches' Asylum Network.

7. As always, I remain grateful for the prayers and support of members of Assembly, and indeed of the students and staff of Trinity College Dublin, as I continue in this important and rewarding ministry.

Church of Ireland Teacher Training College, Rathmines

Rev Frank Sellar reports:

1. As Chaplain responsible for Presbyterian students at the Church of Ireland College of Education in Rathmines, Dublin, I have opportunity to meet and encourage students who are training to be Primary School teachers in the Republic. This college is part of Trinity, but on a separate campus.

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Rev William McLaren reports:

1. As Chaplain I am responsible for worship in College including Morning Prayers, the annual Christmas Carol Service, the Anatomy Dept. Memorial Service for those who have donated their bodies to the Medical School, and other occasional acts of worship. By maintaining contact with Dublin Ministers of all denominations I am able to act as a link between the college and the city, providing students and staff with information and contact details of local Churches.

2. A weekly "Friendship Lunch" of soup and sandwiches is well attended by students of many nationalities and provides the opportunity for informal discussion between those of different disciplines, medicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy and nursing as well as post graduate students.

3. At the suggestion of the students I make weekly visits to Beaumont Hospital, where I host the "Chaplain's Coffee Break" which is also well attended and provides students in the clinical years with the opportunity to reflect on their experience. From time to time I visit the other teaching hospitals associated with the College.

4. In partnership with Habitat for Humanity it is hoped to take a team of students and staff to Uganda in August 2005 to work with local volunteers in constructing simple, decent, affordable housing for people in need. This is a new initiative for RCSI and we are currently fund raising for the project.

5. I am president of the RCSI Film Society while other clubs and societies as varied as the Christian Union and the Rugby Club continue to welcome the interest of the Chaplain. I sit on the RCSI Student Affairs Committee and the Cultural Affairs Committee. I represent the Presbyterian Church on the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS).

6. It is a great joy and a real privilege to minister in Third Level Education, especially in an institution as diverse as RCSI and I thank friends and colleagues throughout the Church for their prayerful support.

University College, Dublin*Rev Stephen Skuce reports:*

1. The UCD Presbyterian/Methodist Chaplaincy continues to seek to address the social and spiritual needs of students. Most time is spent in the Law Faculty where I am the Student Advisor. In addition to this role, time is spent encouraging the leaders of the Christian Union, meeting individually with students and staff and supporting various Christian initiatives on campus. In June 2005 a team of eighteen UCD students will work in Zambia for three weeks with Habitat for Humanity.

Dublin Institute of Technology (Rathmines Campus)*Mr Baird Lewis reports:*

1. As the Methodist/Presbyterian chaplain on the DIT campus, I continue to provide a full-time pastoral presence to students and staff by planning, participating, or presiding in: new student inductions; reflective prayer/liturgy such as Autumn Awakening Event, Carol and Advent Service, Remembrance Liturgy, Lenten Reflection; ongoing pastoral care/counselling in the area of bereavements and loss, relationship issues, growth and developmental issues; as a full member of Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) Chaplaincy team addressing issues in our service as well as in the wider DIT; Chaplains Network Ireland at 3rd Level; occasional local Methodist service of worship with student involvement and managing monthly updates of the DIT Chaplaincy Website.

2. I would also welcome opportunities to speak on chaplaincy in Dublin Presbyterian Churches.

ROBERT BUICK, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly thank all those who have served as Transferor Representatives on Education and Library Boards and School Boards of Governors during the term of office which ends on 30 June 2005.
3. That the General Assembly note the recent concerns expressed by members of Education and Library Boards regarding the resourcing of educational services in Northern Ireland.
4. 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 AND CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Convener: Rev G MOORE

1. The Board of Studies and Christian Training had another interesting and worthwhile year setting our minds to the task of establishing priorities for our work. To this end we held a well attended Board day conference in the autumn of 2004.

2. The Board has set itself the following four priorities:

- Development of every member ministry training;
- Revision of ministerial training in light of relevant consultations;
- The revision and development of the Ministerial Development programme;
- Provision of training for Additional Pastoral Personnel.

3. Rev Ronnie Hetherington has settled well into the post of Director of Ministerial Studies. He has developed good relationships with the students and staff in Union College. As from this Assembly he will be taking responsibility for the administration of the Ministerial Development programme.

4. We are happy to report again this year that we have seen yet another significant increase in the number of undergraduates who choose Union College for their course in theology. We believe that this is a most valuable opportunity to teach the Christian faith at this level, and we believe it will prove a wise investment in helping to train future teachers, and Church leaders, and hopefully in helping some to hear God's call to the ordained ministry.

5. The Magee Institute of Christian Training has had another worthwhile year running a variety of courses which appeal to a wide variety of Church members. This year in particular the Director has sought to respond to the Assembly's remit from 2004 regarding "Every Member Ministry". We are in the process of producing a "Discipleship" course and hope in the near future to recruit facilitators to help with its delivery.

6. The Committee set up by the Board to review legislation on Assistants and Associates was invited by the General Assembly last year to pursue further the possibility of a new category of "Associate and Successor" and to report to the 2005 General Assembly (2004 GA Minutes, p 31). Unfortunately, it has not been possible to adhere to this timescale and so the Board undertakes to present a report to the 2006 General Assembly.

7. The Board is pleased to report that the number of ministry students is on the increase, and that both the Board and the Faculty are constantly reviewing all aspects of the ministry course to make it more relevant to the needs of ministry in the 21st century.

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Convener, the Rev Prof W P Addley, writes:

The past year has witnessed a small increase in the number of grants given to Ministers. The total amount of funding allocated under the scheme rose from £17,433 in 2003 to £22,652 in 2004. While this growth is encouraging, only about 1 in 4 Ministers apply for funding through the scheme for either In-Service Training or Sabbatical Study.

As there are sufficient funds in reserve at present to meet future sabbatical requests, it is recommended that the annual assessment remain at 0.25p per £ of stipend.

The Committee is currently drawing up plans for a review of the MDP scheme and hopes to bring a fuller report to the Assembly in 2006.

The Committee is exploring the possibility of extending the scope of the MDP scheme to include employees of Boards (eg, deaconesses, university chaplains) who are currently excluded from applying for funding. A resolution may be brought to the Assembly through daily minutes.

ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE

The Rev Dr DJ Watts reports that:

1. The Assignment Committee this year was asked to assign 12 students and 2 Ministers received from other Churches. At the time of writing all but one of these assignments has been agreed.

STUDENTS' BURSARY FUND COMMITTEE

The Rev Stewart Mackay reports that:

1. The Students' Bursary Fund Committee continues to administer the Church's financial provision for students for the ordained ministry and their families.

2. Due to the increasing numbers of students over the past few years our total income continues to rise and was £505,798 for 2004. Our expenditure was £310,636; the large difference between these figures being due to a deficit balance from the previous year and a number of applicants who were not accepted or who deferred the commencement of their studies for another year.

3. We continue to be thankful for the generosity of the members of our Church, who support the Fund by giving to the United Appeal Fund and by their offerings at services of licensing, ordination and installation. We would urge Presbytery Clerks and Conveners of Vacancy Commissions and Elders' Ordinations to ensure that full use is made of our new literature (which includes a bookmark and a Gift Aid donation envelope) at such services, preferably with them being given out to the Congregation on the Sunday before the service.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL STUDIES

1. The Committee met three times during the year.

2. Through the new Director of Ministerial Studies(DMS), the Rev Ronnie Hetherington, 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 & Christian Training. The Committee commends the DMS to the Church for prayerful support.

3. In the academic year 2004/2005 there were 37 students under the care of Presbyteries (37 in 2003/2004, 30 in 2002/2003, 25 in 2001/2002, 22 in 2000/2001), as listed in the appended Schedule.

4. One student was granted permission to study at Universities/Colleges other than Union, namely Regent, Vancouver. The Committee also noted with regret the withdrawal of 2 applicants and 2 students.

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 Dr W D Patton, BSSc, BD

Homiletics, Public Worship and Pastoral Work - The Rev Dr D C Irwin, MA, BD.

6. The Committee discussed the General Assembly's resolution regarding consultation with applicants' Home Ministers (2004 GA Minutes, p 31). The recommendation of the Committee, subsequently adopted by the Board, was that no additional consultation with the Minister of an applicant's Congregation be undertaken within the selection process.

7. The Committee considered the issue of Ministry course requirements for those with dyslexia. As a result, the Board decided that language requirements for accepted candidates with dyslexia (or related conditions) should be evaluated on an "ad hoc" basis by the Committee on Ministerial Studies as the situations arise.

Study In A Missionary Partnership

Rev Dr Ian Hart reports:

8. Students who are studying for the ordained ministry of our Church at Union College are encouraged to spend one of the 3 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 stimulating and enlightening experience. For example, overseas Churches are often struggling with very different issues from those we are concerned with in 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), in Singapore (Trinity Theological College) and in Lebanon (Near East School of Theology, Beirut).

Pre-Theological Schools & Interviews

9. The Pre-Theological Summer School and Phase I Interview was held in Union College from 22-25 June, 2004. The interviewing Panel comprised: Revs Drew Abernethy, Helen Boyd, Fred Bradley, Jim Campbell, Rob Craig, Nancy Cubitt, Jim Gordon, Liz Hughes, John Hutchinson, David Knox, Hastings McIntyre, Adrian McLernon, Brian McMillan, Ian McNie, Colin Morrison, Roy Patton, David Porter, William Sinclair, Ivor Smith, David Thompson; Mrs Helen Murdock, Mrs Mary Robinson; Messrs Norman Chambers, Henry Plester, Mervyn Whittle, together with the Very Rev Dr Godfrey Brown (Chairman), Rev Ronnie Hetherington (Coordinator), Rev Stephen Moore (Secretary) and Dr Joan McQuoid BA CPsychol (Vocational Consultant acting as advisor to the Panel).

10. 21 candidates were in attendance and completed the normal aspects of the interviewing process. 15 are being recommended to the General Assembly this year, together with 3 candidates from previous years whose Applicants' Courses had been extended.

11. The 2005 Pre-Theological Mini School and Single Phase Interview was held in Union College from 21-23 March and 4 April. The Interviewing Panel comprised: Revs Robert Beggs, Robert Bell, Gordon Best, Maynard Cathcart, William Henry, Robert Lockhart, Dr Gary Millar, Adrian Moffett, Dr Andrew Rodgers, Dr John Ross, Brian Savage; Mr Henry Plester, Mrs Mary Robinson, Ms Ann Taylor, Mrs Jayne Wright, together with the Rev George Moore (Chairman), Rev Ronnie Hetherington (Coordinator), Rev Stephen Moore (Secretary) and Dr Joan McQuoid BA CPsychol (Vocational Consultant acting as advisor to the Panel).

12. 13 candidates were in attendance and completed the normal aspects of the interviewing process. 9 are being recommended to the General Assembly this year.

STEPHEN P MOORE, Convener

APPENDIX

SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS

ARDS	Nigel D Craig	Union
	Colin I Dickson	Union
	W J Ivan Thompson	Union
ARMAGH	Ronnie S Agnew	-
	Andrew McConnell	Union
	John D Montgomery	Union
BALLYMENA	Kenneth Nelson	Union
	Mark E Donald	Union
	T Philip McCullough	Union
NORTH BELFAST	Rod Mulholland	Union
	William G Hamilton	Union
	D Mark Shaw	Union
SOUTH BELFAST	David McCarthy	Union
	Stephen Robinson	-

EAST BELFAST	David Clawson	Union
	Alastair J Dunlop	Union
	Martin D McNeely	Union
	Mark J Welsh	Union
	Scott A Woodburn	Union
CARRICKFERGUS	J Martin Gracey	Union
	Richard S J McIlhatton	Union
	Heather M Rendell	Union
COLERAINE	P Martin Baxter	Regent
	David S Brownlow	Union
	J Emerson McDowell	Union
	William Montgomery	Union
DERRY & STRABANE DOWN	Nigel J E Reid	Union
	Mark R Catney	-
DROMORE	Leslie A Patterson	Union
	Michael R J Anderson	Union
	Colin McKibbin	-
DUBLIN & MUNSTER	Andy Carroll	Union
	Gareth McFadden	Union
IVEAGH	T Neil Bingham	-
OMAGH	Philip L McKelvey	Union
ROUTE	Glenn A Chestnutt	-
TYRONE	Adrian T S McAlister	-

COLLEGE AND MAGEE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Rev David Brice writes:

1. I thank the Principal, Rev Prof Patton Taylor and the Christian Training Director, Dr Desi Alexander, for their valuable input to this, my first report on behalf of the College and Magee Management Committee which continues to oversee the running of Union Theological College and the Magee Fund.

2. We were glad to welcome Rev Ronnie Hetherington as Director of Ministerial Studies. Rev Prof Bill Addley is on six month sabbatical. We continue to keep staffing needs under review and anticipate a future need for a further staff member as the work of Christian Training expands. Through the Board of Studies and Christian Training we are consulting with the relevant Assembly Boards on this.

3. Mr David Clements, who has been our honorary treasurer for 16 years, has decided to retire from this post. We thank him for his strong commitment to the College and the immeasurable contribution he has made. We thank the Finance Office of Church House for their help in transferring to their accounting scheme.

4. The number of full-time degree students has increased again in the year 2004/05 (despite an increase in the UCAS grade requirements). They are as follows:

Ministry students & Deaconesses	35
Other full-time under-graduates	101
Other full-time post-graduates	22
Part-time undergraduates and A-level course	64
Part-time post-graduates	45
Youth & Children's Ministry courses	83
Magee course enrolments	247
Overseas	3

In all of this we are seeking to promote and make available theological education of a high standard and of a practical relevance; to enable theological research; and to facilitate the provision of Christian training at every level.

5. Christian Training seeks to support Congregations and individuals by providing a range of courses and resource materials. During 2004 there were 696 participants registered for courses, an increase of almost 200 on the previous year. In part, this growth was due to the introduction of the "From Pew to Pulpit" course which was held in a number of Presbyteries, attracting about 120 participants. We currently have another three-evening course under production, with plans for others to follow. While there is still much to be done by way of developing distance learning courses for use at Congregational level, the provision of different types of short courses at Union College and elsewhere continues to meet a growing demand for quality training that is both practical and spiritual. In addition to overseeing and delivering these activities, the Director of Christian Training, Dr Desi Alexander, has also spoken at elders' conferences and other events. Details of Magee activities are available at www.union.ac.uk/magee.

6. The 2004 General Assembly passed a resolution encouraging the College towards courses and resources for those seeking to develop every-member ministry at Congregational level. We are working on a plan which will enable us to bring a whole range of courses out into Congregations and to produce relevant resources for use at local or Presbytery level. Our plan is essentially to train volunteer trainers, who will be able to be pro-active in offering courses in their own locality.

7. An increase in training courses and student numbers in general has led to pressure on existing accommodation; plans to utilise the Principal's House are at an early stage. We received much appreciated gifts of furnishings of the College Chapel during the year. It is hoped to make the College Chapel fully wheel chair accessible in the near future. Demand for places in the College residence continues to be high. We are hoping to build on the Christian community ethos in the residence and to work closely with the Derryvolgie Halls. Ministers are encouraged to recommend the College residence to young people coming up to study at Queen's (or elsewhere in Belfast). Discussions are on-going, internally and with the Bursary Fund as to the best way to support Ministerial students living in the Gibson Chambers.

8. The College Library continues to add to its collection (often by gifts of personal libraries); work continues on cataloguing. There will come a time in the not so distant future when shelving space will run out.

9. Our partnership with Edgehill College continues. We welcome their new Principal, Rev Dr Richard Clutterbuck and new Director of Ministry, Rev Dr Heather Morris. We wish Principal Dennis Cooke well on his retirement and we wish Rev Donald Kerr well in his new sphere of ministry.

10. The Management Committee records its appreciation of the dedicated work of the staff under its care in their varied spheres– Christian Training, Church History, Library, Ministerial Studies, College Administration, New Testament, Old Testament, Practical Theology, Systematic Theology. All are seeking to work together in the challenging task of theological education and Christian training.

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCING CHRISTIANS FOR MINISTRY

1. The first area that occupied the Committee's time was carrying out the 2004 General Assembly's request to provide training material to enable Congregations to train people in 'every member ministry'. In preparing this material, the Committee enlisted the expertise of Evangelical Ministries. Dr Desi Alexander, the Director of Christian Training, and Raymond Magowan of Evangelical Ministries have produced a resource called *Prepared to Serve*. It is hoped that between 6 and 10 pairs of facilitators will be trained during the autumn, and that *Prepared to Serve* will be available for general use from January 2006.

2. The second area that the Committee was working on was the revision / rewrite of material for training new elders. Due to illness in the Convener's family, this project has not progressed as quickly as was first envisaged. It is still hoped to have the material available for January 2006.

3. Once again the Committee is in debt to Dr Desi Alexander for all his encouragement, invaluable help and practical advice.

RODGER CROOKS, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly note the Priorities which the Board of Studies and Christian Training have adopted.
3. That the General Assembly set the annual assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme at 0.25p per £ of stipend.
4. That the General Assembly note with gratitude to God the continued increase in numbers of those making application for ordained ministry, and encourage Ministers and Kirk Sessions to identify suitably-gifted members so that this increase may be sustained.

5. That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Board of Studies and Christian Training, be accepted as students for the Ordained Ministry and placed under the care of their Presbyteries:

Colin G Anderson	Helen's Bay	Ards
Janice M Browne	St John's, N'breda	East Belfast
Thomas Bruce	Kells	Ballymena
William J A Buchanan	Raloo	Carrickfergus
W Edwin Chestnutt	Brookside	Ballymena
Grant R Connor	1st Carrickfergus	Carrickfergus
Martyn C Cowan	Railway Street	Dromore
Mary E Deatherage	Drum	Monaghan
H Clarke Deering	1st Monaghan	Monaghan
Graeme P Fowles	Fitzroy	South Belfast
William Harkness	Strean	Ards
Colin W A Jones	Wellington Street	Ballymena
Dario F Leal	Fitzroy	South Belfast
Edel M McClean	Fisherwick	South Belfast
Roger G McElnea	Middletown	Armagh
David J McIlwaine	Richview	South Belfast
Jonathan A McKay	Woodlands	Carrickfergus
Raymond McKibbin	Maze	Dromore
Andrew D Mullan	Drumreagh & Dromore	Route
John B Mullan	Drumreagh & Dromore	Route
Robert N Orr	Tartaraghan	Armagh
Mark F Russell	1st Carrickfergus	Carrickfergus
Karen M Simpson	McCracken Memorial	South Belfast
Peter Turton	1st Antrim	Templepatrick
Ben J Walker	Orangefield	East Belfast
Alan C Wilson	Hamilton Road	Ards

6. That the following grants be paid from the Incidental Fund:

The expense of the Mini School & Interview	£1,350
The expense of the Pre-Term College Retreat	£3,250
The expense of the Applicants' Study Day	£320
The expense of the Phase II Interviews	£130
The expense of Licentiate Courses	£1,030
The expense of meetings for students and spouses	£550
The expense of honoraria for Extern Examiners	£300
Teaching in Communication Skills for students outside Ireland	£100
TOTAL	£7,030

8. That the Board of Studies and Christian Training, together with the appropriate working Committees be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 285 of the Code, as follows:

COMMITTEE FOR RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES

1. The ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland continues to be attractive to Ministers from overseas and the Committee has been busy dealing with a high number of applicants and enquirers. This year a total of eleven interviews have been held or are scheduled; the equivalent figure last year was eight. The report on those interviews which have not been held at time of writing will be included in a supplementary report to be included with Daily Minutes.

2. One of the Ministers who was interviewed by the panel died suddenly before his name could be brought to the Committee.

Rev John Ruston

3. Mr Ruston is a Minister of the Church of Scotland, the Committee interviewed him and exercised its authority to declare him eligible for call.

Rev Gareth Stewart

4. Mr Stewart is at present the Minister of John White Memorial Congregational Church, Belfast. The Committee supports the prayer of his Memorial.

Rev Craig Munro Wilson

5. The Committee also supports the Memorial of Mr Wilson, a minister of the United Free Church of Scotland.

6. The Committee did not approve the applications of two other Ministers who were interviewed.

Rev Sean Warwick Smart

7. Mr Smart is Zimbabwean by birth but holds Irish citizenship and is a Minister of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. Arrangements to interview Mr Smart have been made and an additional resolution will be brought to the General Assembly.

Rev William Hiram Higgins

8. Mr Higgins is a native of Belfast who came to faith in South Africa and became a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. Arrangements have been made to interview Mr Higgins and a report will be brought to the General Assembly.

Rev Robert L Dalberth

9. Mr Dalberth is a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in America, arrangements have been made to interview him and a report will be brought to the General Assembly.

Rev Colin Russell Gordon

10. Mr Gordon is a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and is a chaplain in the RNZN. Arrangements have been made to interview him and a resolution will be brought to the General Assembly.

Mr Jeffrey Lehman

11. Mr Lehman's memorial to be received as a Licentiate will be transmitted to the General Assembly. He is at present a Licentiate of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India. Arrangements have been made to interview him and a report will be brought.

12. The number of unresolved applications at the time when the Reports go for printing and the variety of ways in which these applications have to be treated has persuaded the Committee that it should present to the General Assembly the following proposed changes for the reception of Ministers and Licentiates.

Proposed Reception Procedure

13. Ministers and Licentiates of other branches of the Christian Church must apply to the Convener of the Committee for the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates on the Committee's form by 15 December.

14. Applicants will be interviewed in January, with report to the February meeting of the Committee and recommendation to the February meeting of the Board which will approve or reject the applications.

15. A list of those Ministers and Licentiates who have been approved by the Board will be presented to the General Assembly and received as Ministers subject to paragraph 16.

16. A Minister or Licentiate who has been received in this way will not be eligible for call to congregations until he/she has completed the studies and assistantship required by the Board of Studies and Christian Training (if any).

17. A successful applicant who has not begun his/her required course of study and/or assistantship by 1 October in the year following his/her reception by the General Assembly will normally cease to be eligible.

18. In cases where the reception of a Minister is being sought to facilitate the work of a Board of the General Assembly or where a vacancy commission seeks to place a Minister of another denomination on a list for hearing, the Committee may make special interview arrangements and the Board of Studies and Christian Training shall have power to issue or to refer the matter to the General Assembly.

19. Ministers and Licentiates whose applications are rejected by the Board of Studies and Christian Training may appeal by memorial to the General Assembly.

20. The proposals in paragraphs 13 to 17 replace the present complicated system by a single pathway for all applicants no matter where they are coming from. The change in application date will allow enough time to examine applications properly and for PECS checks to be made. The proposals will end the anomaly by which the Committee reports directly to the General Assembly. In future a list of applicants who have been approved by the Board will be

printed as part of the Board's report. If it is thought necessary, the conditions attached to the approval can also be printed.

21. Paragraph 17, if adopted, will end the unlimited time given to approved applicants at present to come to Ireland; a feature which has caused actual and potential problems recently.

22. Paragraph 18 is designed to deal with situations where the initiative for a Minister to come from abroad arises in a Congregation or Board. We have no desire to restrict the choice available in such circumstances.

23. Paragraph 19 formally recognises the final authority of the General Assembly.

24. Taken together, it is the Committee's view that the proposed system will benefit all concerned, the Church, the applicants and the Committee. Resolutions are attached to test the mind of the Assembly on the principle of these changes and, if approved, to seek permission to begin operating the new system immediately.

25. The Committee has made a number of changes in the application form which it uses and intends to submit the names of all applicants from within the UK and Republic of Ireland for checking by PECS.

R BRIAN SAVAGE, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly approve the reception process outlined in paragraphs 13 to 19 and the preparation of overtures to amend the relevant paragraphs of the Code.
3. That the General Assembly authorise the Committee for the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates to operate the process outlined in paragraphs 13 to 19 for future applicants.

MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet at Belfast on 6th day of June, 2005.

The Memorial of the Reverend Hiram Higgins Respectfully Showeth:

That he is 53 years of age; that he was born in Belfast and baptised in the Congregation of Alexandra, North Belfast, in 1950; that he was educated at Dunlambert Secondary School and entered a career in Engineering; that he moved with his family to South Africa in 1982.

That, while there, in 1988 he became aware of his need of salvation and was converted to Christ; that he was a member of St Pauls Presbyterian Church in South Africa and from an early stage in his Christian experience had a heart for ministry, and was involved in various ministries including, amongst others, outreach to addicts and prostitutes in Johannesburg.

That in 1994 he heard, more specifically, the call to ministry of word and sacrament with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches; that in 1998 he was appointed by the Presbytery of Thekwini to Eshowe Presbyterian Church, Kwazulu Natal, as a

probationer with special dispensation to carry out baptism and communion, being ordained on 1 February, 2003; that he has, amongst his other duties, developed a significant ministry amongst those suffering from AIDS in the area surrounding Eshowe, setting up a trust fund to assist in education and agricultural self-reliance; that he is a Minister in good and regular standing with his church body; that he is in full accord with the Doctrinal Standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland;

That he holds the degree of Bachelor of Theology from the University of Zululand; that he has paid several visits back to Ireland in recent years and has spoken in several Presbyterian Congregations; that he is desirous of being accepted as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

That he applied to the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates; that, if accepted, he will undertake any additional studies required by the Board of Studies and Christian Training.

Memorialist therefore prays your Venerable Assembly to receive him as a Minister without Charge and to place him under the care of the Presbytery of North Belfast.

And Memorialist, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

W HIRAM HIGGINS

Dated the sixth day of December, 2004

Licensed by the Presbytery of North Belfast, meeting at Duncairn and St Enoch's on 7 December, 2004, and transmitted simpliciter to the Synod of Belfast.

TD GRIBBEN, Moderator
COLIN MORRISON, Clerk

Transmitted simpliciter by the Synod of Belfast, meeting at Stormont on 8 March, 2005.

ROBERT HARKNESS, Moderator
ALISTAIR R BILL, Clerk

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet at Belfast on the 6th day of June, 2005.

The Memorial of Mr Jeff Lehman Respectfully Showeth:

That he is 37 years of age; that he was born in Tarrytown, New York, United States of America; that he is married with three children; that he is in good health; that he graduated with a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in 1997; that he was licensed by Nav Jeevan Presbytery, Reformed Presbyterian Church of India, in 2004; that since January 2001 he has been working with World Harvest Mission, seconded to teach in Woodstock School; that he shares his work between the School and Kellogg Memorial Church in Mussoorie; that his church work includes preaching, Adult Sunday School and pastoral responsibilities; that in school he is responsible for weekly Assemblies and Religious Education classes.

That he has served in church and mission work since University, and believes the time has come for him and his family to return to his wife's roots in Northern Ireland and there seek opportunities for Christian ministry.

That he has a connection with Orangefield Presbyterian Church where his wife was a communicant member before marriage.

That he applied to the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates, desirous of being accepted as a Licentiate of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and if accepted he will undertake any additional studies required by the Board of Studies and Christian Training.

Memorialist therefore prays your Venerable Assembly to receive him as a Licentiate for the Christian Ministry and place him under the care of the East Belfast Presbytery.

And Memorialist, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

JEFF LEHMAN

Dated this twenty-eighth day of February, 2005

Licensed by the Presbytery of East Belfast, meeting at Knock on Tuesday, 1 March and transmitted to the Synod of Belfast with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

ALISTAIR R BILL, Moderator

DOUGLAS C COWAN, Clerk

Transmitted simpliciter by the Synod of Belfast, meeting at Stormont on 8 March, 2005.

ROBERT HARKNESS, Moderator

ALISTAIR R BILL, Clerk

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet at Belfast on the 6th day of June, 2005.

The Memorial of the Reverend Gareth William David Stewart Respectfully Showeth:

That he is 30 years of age, will be 31 years in April, 2005; that he was born in Belfast on the 4th April, 1974, that he is in good health and he grew up in the Congregational Church associated with the Church at Connsbrook Avenue. That he is married with no family and is a Minister in good standing with the Congregational Union; that he is in full accord with the Doctrinal Standards of the Presbyterian Church and his reformed opinion comes through personal belief and study.

That he was educated at Methodist College, Belfast, where he gained 3 GCE 'A' level passes and 10 GCSE 'O' level passes;

That he attended the following Universities and Colleges gaining Academic Distinction in the following earned degrees –

University of Sheffield 1998-2000, MA Degree in 'Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies'.

University of Sheffield 1995-1998, BA Degree with Honours, 2nd Class, 2nd Division in Biblical Theology.

Queen's University, Belfast 1992-1995, Diploma in Christian Ministry with merit.

Queen's University, Belfast 1992-1995, Bachelor of Arts Degree with Honours, Second Class, First Division in Scholastic Philosophy and Philosophy;

That through Distance learning he gained the following degrees –

European Theological Seminary 2001-2002, Doctor of Philosophy Degree with the thesis 'A Reformed Exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians'

European Theological Seminary 2001-2002, Doctor of Philosophy Degree with the thesis 'The Apostles in the Contemporary Church';

That he has relevant work experience through outreach teams at Bethel Christian Church, Tallaght, Dublin 1996-1997; that he conducted Missions in the Bible Christian Centre, Bangor, Bodmin Pentecostal Church, Cornwall in March/April 1998; that he engaged in a Summer Pastorate at Castlereagh Christian Centre, Orby Drive, Belfast;

That he has wide work experience in secular employment with Stewarts Supermarkets from 1991 to 1995;

That he was called as Minister to the John White Memorial Congregational Church, Tennant Street, Shankill Road, Belfast 13 and was ordained by the Congregational Church and installed as Pastor at this Church where he has remained since 2000;

That he has held responsible positions as School Prefect; Secretary to the Christian Union; the Congregational Union Home Missions Honorary Secretary 2001-2003, as well as Student Representative positions;

That he is currently enrolled in the University of Wales, Bangor, studying part-time for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Nineteenth Century Pneumatology;

That he is desirous of being accepted as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland with a Call to Parish Ministry;

That he applied to the Committee on Reception of Ministers and Licentiates, has been interviewed by the Presbytery of Belfast South and if accepted will undertake any additional studies required by the Board of Studies and Christian Training.

Memorialist therefore prays your Venerable Assembly to receive him as a Minister without Charge and place him under the care of the Presbytery of Belfast South.

And Memorialist, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

GARETH WILLIAM DAVID STEWART

Dated the twenty-fourth day of November, 2004

Licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast South at its meeting in Malone on 24th November, 2004, and transmitted with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

JOHN A BRAITHWAITE, Moderator

R TREVOR ANDERSON, Clerk

Transmitted simpliciter by the Synod of Belfast, meeting by Commission at Richview on 25th February, 2005.

RON SAVAGE, Moderator

A BILL, Clerk

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.

AJ RANKIN, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

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 PERSONNEL

Convener: Mr JOHN MILLAR, OBE

1. The Board came into being at the 2004 General Assembly to replace the former Boards of Finance and Administration and Ministry and Pensions.

2. Despite the large area of responsibility and complexity, the new Board has settled quickly and effectively into its work and is grateful to the Board Chairman, Conveners and Board and Committee members for making this happen.

3. The Board appreciates the work of the staff involved in the Board's business and acknowledges that the effectiveness of the Board and its Committees is, to a large extent, due to their expertise and dedication.

4. The matters reported in 2004 relating to Value Added Tax have been resolved and Fisherwick Management Services Limited has ceased its operations and will be wound up.

5. The Finance, Legal and IT Committee set up a Panel, which included a representative of the Trustees of the Church, to invite tenders from and carry out interviews of prospective auditors. The Panel, Committee and Board recommend that Ernst & Young continue as auditors.

Ernst & Young will also assist in carrying out the Risk Assessment for the central Church which the General Assembly has requested for the 2006 Assembly.

6. The Board has issued guidance as to the procedures for Presbyteries and Congregations to indemnify officers and members of decision-making bodies and offered a facility for appropriate insurance cover. At this stage we have no record of how many have put indemnities in place.

7. A Panel of the Finance, Legal and IT Committee is currently reviewing the Statistical Return and is examining accounting systems that will enable congregations to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities'.

The Government has recently published a 'Consultation on the Review of Charities Administration and Legislation in Northern Ireland in 2005'. This indicates that there will be a Charities' Register for Northern Ireland and sets out proposals re accounting etc. The Board has responded to the proposals.

8. The Finance, Legal and IT Committee is in discussion with the Inland Revenue regarding the format for the reporting of Ministerial Expenses and Benefits in Kind. It is likely that this will lead to additional information being required from congregations.

9. As agreed at the 2004 General Assembly, the General Board was authorised to act in relation to proposed changes in assessments and contributions for the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978). In February, 2005, the General Board agreed that the assessment on congregations for the Scheme in 2005 be increased from 20.75p in the £ of stipend to 22.5p. It also agreed that

Ministers' contributions to the Scheme be increased from 5% of Scheme Salary to 6% with effect from 1 April, 2005.

10. The Board accepted a recommendation from its Pensions and Assessments Committee that the definition of pensionable income in the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) should be amended to remove income from endowments, bequests and farm income. A resolution to this effect is appended to this report. The matter has been discussed with representatives of Union Commission.

11. The Pensions and Assessments Committee has been reviewing the operation of the Tyrone Memorial. Initial findings indicate that there has been no narrowing in the gap between the incomes of the highest and lowest stipends. However, the Board believes that a further examination should be carried out when the 2004 figures are available and proposes to report further to the 2006 General Assembly.

The Board accepted the Committee's recommendation that increases under the Tyrone Memorial in the case of joint charges be based on total stipend for all charges. A resolution to this effect is appended.

12. During the year, the Board approved a change to the Rules of the Staff Pension Scheme to permit an actuarial reduction in benefits payable to those who decided to retire between the ages of 60 and 65.

13. A new leaflet has been prepared giving details of the procedures and terms relating to assistance from the Retired Ministers' House Fund.

14. The Personnel Committee has appointed Consultants to propose new Job Evaluation, Staff Performance and Development Schemes.

15. In light of the issues surrounding pension provision, the Board considers that the time is appropriate for a review of all existing pension provision, benefits, costs etc and a resolution is appended asking the General Assembly to request the Board to carry out this review and make recommendations for the future.

16. The Board is required, by Par 286 of the Code, to oversee the finances of the Church, including the control of assets and funds, and, in discharging this role, believes that it should review the procedures and practices adopted by Boards and Agencies of the Church in matters relating to properties with which they are involved. A resolution to this effect is appended.

17. Despite the increased assessment relating to the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978), the Board's proposals, if approved, will reduce the overall burden of assessments on congregations by 2.75p in the £ of stipend.

ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS' COMMITTEE

1. At the General Assembly in June 2004, it was agreed that the Church House complex should be sold and that a suitable alternative site and accommodation be acquired. This decision has inevitably affected the ongoing management of the Assembly Buildings' Committee, leading to a year of consolidation with a minimum of new initiatives.

2. The rentals generated from the shopping mall and the other offices continue to operate at a small profit and the Committee has been pleased to note

the continuing interest in the hire of the Assembly Hall and other associated rooms. A meeting with tenants, held in early September, was very positive and all present appreciated the opportunity to meet representatives of the Committee and to discuss the way forward in the promotion of the shopping mall.

3. During the year reports were received related to disability legislation, health and safety matters and the occurrence of asbestos in the building. Minor repairs and upgrading were completed as required, but there were no matters that caused major concern. Any further problems related to external stonework were restricted to a small internal courtyard and were repaired as required.

4. BTW Shiells (formerly Lambert, Smith, Hampton) who had acted as managing agents for the building for many years, tendered their resignation in December 2004. The firm of DTZ McCombe Pierce which had been appointed by the General Board as agents for the sale of Church House, were approached and a short term contract has been negotiated with them for the ongoing management of the shopping mall and other offices.

5. Following discussions with Customs and Excise it has been agreed to transfer the invoicing of service charge expenditure relating to Church House and Assembly Buildings to the Assembly Buildings Committee and to wind up Fisherwick Management Services Ltd who previously carried out this role. This was necessary to regularise the VAT treatment of service charges. No retrospective action was taken by Customs & Excise in this matter but as the Committee is not able to recover VAT on expenditure it has resulted in an increase service charge. It has therefore been agreed that the Committee would make a contribution in 2005 to the service charge budget in order to cushion the impact of this increase on the tenants.

6. Due to the changes in management agents, the updating of several leases and the preparation of all documentation for the pending sale of the building, there has been a substantial increase in the workload of the staff involved and the Committee appreciates their efforts in this regard.

HUBERT MARTIN, Convener

FINANCE, LEGAL AND IT COMMITTEE

1. **General Expenses** – General Expenses for the year ended 31 December 2004 were in line with budget and considered to be satisfactory.

The approved Budget for the year ended 31 December 2005 reflects an increase of about 10% compared to 2004. This is well above an inflationary increase of 3.5% and arises due to Job Evaluation adjustments, incremental increases and the cost of a full complement of staff.

2. **Auditors** – During the year the annual audit was put out to tender as agreed at the last General Assembly. Following the tender process it was agreed to recommend the reappointment of Ernst & Young LLP on terms consistent with prior year audits. It was noted that significant cost reductions could be made if the Church accounts were prepared and audited on a consolidated SORP basis. This will be considered for the 31 December 2005 audit.

3. **Statistics** – see appended Tables

4. **Statistics Form and Statement of Recommended Practice** – A sub-committee was set up during the year to review the statistics form to reflect the requirements of those who use the statistics and the Statement of Recommended Practice on Charity Accounting. This exercise will be completed before the 2006 General Assembly.

The Government is currently consulting on the regulation of charities in Northern Ireland. It is likely that this will result in legislation bringing charities in Northern Ireland into line with charities in Great Britain. This may result in significant accounting and regulatory changes for congregations.

5. **Risk Assessment** – The Committee has responsibility to report to the General Assembly by June 2006 on material risks which may have an impact on the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Ernst & Young LLP will facilitate this process in the second half of 2005.

6. **Bank Overdrafts** - The Committee recommended that overdraft facilities be offered to the Irish Mission to purchase houses for their workers. Interest will be charged at base rate.

7. **VAT** – Negotiations with Customs and Excise in relation to both the need to register the Church for VAT and Fisherwick Management Services Limited are complete. The outcome was considered to be satisfactory and no further money needs to be set aside for past VAT underpayments.

8. **Indemnity for Board and Committee Members** – Detailed instructions were sent out to Presbyteries and congregations during the year.

9. **Insurance** – A sub-committee has been set up to co-ordinate the insurance needs of the Church and to liaise with the Church's insurance brokers.

10. **Booklet on Wills** – The booklet on wills has finally been completed and we hope will be used by many congregations.

11. **IT** – The IT strategy is developing well and key objectives set are being met.

12. The Committee continues to work on a number of other tax, finance, legal and IT matters.

MICHAEL FITCH, Convener

PENSIONS AND ASSESSMENTS COMMITTEE

1. The principal issues addressed by the Committee were those emerging from the Actuarial Revaluation of the Ministers' Pension Scheme 1978 (MPS) at 31 December, 2003, and a Review of the operation of the Tyrone Memorial.

Actuarial Revaluation of the Ministers' Pension Scheme 1978 (MPS)

2. The MPS Revaluation results showed that, owing to the combined effect of falls in the value of our investments and increased life expectancy resulting in pensions being paid for a longer period, the fund had a deficit of £8.9 million.

3. In order for this deficit to be repaid over the next 16 years, which is the average remaining service of active Scheme members, the Committee made

the following recommendations which were accepted by the General Board in February 2005.

- (a) Congregational assessment be increased to 22.5p in the £ of Stipend.
- (b) Ministers' contributions rise from 5% to 6%.
- (c) Funding for discretionary increases to MPS Pensions be discontinued. (Pensioners will continue to receive increases to Retired Ministers' Fund Pension, together with statutory increase to certain elements of MPS pension.)

Other issues emerging from MPS.

4. Under MPS, contributions are payable, both by the Minister as a percentage of his total remuneration and by the congregation, as an assessment based on stipend. It has been apparent for some time that an anomaly exists, whereby the payment of congregational pension contributions where a Minister has substantial 'other income' (eg endowment, bequest, farm income etc), is subsidised by those congregations where the Minister does not enjoy such 'other income'. This is inequitable.

5. It was agreed to recommend to the Board that procedures be put in place to amend the definition of pensionable income to exclude 'local income' such as endowment, bequest, farm income etc. This would also mean that where a Minister receives an augmented grant, it would no longer be reduced by taking 'local income' into account. Augmented ministers would therefore benefit from 'local bequests' as is the case with Ministers above minimum stipend.

6. It is recognised that, in certain situations, special arrangements have been made with Union Commission and that care must be taken to ensure that, in these circumstances, Ministers are not disadvantaged.

Review of the operation of the Tyrone Memorial

7. The Committee considered the operation of the Tyrone Memorial, bearing in mind the original objectives.

8. In 2003, 332 Northern Ireland congregations out of 387 applied the Tyrone Memorial figures to stipend. (86.5%). Of the 52 Northern Ireland congregations who exceeded the Tyrone Memorial Figure 30 were in the lower 2 bands, 15 in the middle band and 7 in the upper 2 bands. In 2004, 335 congregations out of 373 applied the Tyrone Memorial figures to stipend. (90%). Of the 38 congregations who exceeded the Tyrone Memorial Figure 18 were in the lower 2 bands, 19 in the middle 2 bands and 1 in the upper 2 bands.

9. The increases in excess of the Tyrone Memorial Figure were mostly at the lower end, which should have had the effect of narrowing the 'earnings gap' thus contributing to the objective. The average stipend paid to the highest paid Ministers, however, during the years 2003 and 2004, when compared to the average Ministerial Minimum indicates that the gap has narrowed only very modestly in cash terms.

10. The percentage of specified sources being paid as stipend in 2002 and 2003 shows a reduction in 14 presbyteries and an increase in 7. The figures also demonstrate that, in smaller congregations, stipend is increasing at a faster rate

than specified sources leaving fewer resources available for other expenditure. This is contrary to the objectives of the Tyrone Memorial.

11. The Committee agreed that it would be preferable not to draw conclusions until the 2004 statistics are available.

Problems identified

12. **Unions.** In a union situation the Minister receives, in each congregation, the percentage increase relevant to the Stipend in that congregation, rather than the increase which would apply to the joint income. This means that he or she would receive an increase greater than that of a colleague on the same income in a single congregation. This is inequitable. The Committee therefore recommended that a resolution be submitted, to the General Assembly, to ensure that increases awarded, in union situations, are by reference to total Stipend.

13. **Small congregations.** Because the higher levels of increase are awarded to those on the lowest incomes there may be an adverse effect on congregational resources in small congregations. Where smaller congregations are finding this to be the case, they should apply to Union Commission for a review.

14. **Ministers in the Republic of Ireland.** The current situation is that we are using a system of 'Euro Minimum' stipends, increased annually by price inflation in ROI. Because congregations pay stipend on a figure which increases at Tyrone rates, whilst the minimum increases at ROI inflation, the effect is that congregations pay more and CMF less, if the Tyrone Memorial increase exceeds inflation. This is a complex issue requiring further consideration.

15. 'Euro Minimum' stipend has increased at ROI inflation, whilst in Northern Ireland the minimum increased, in 2003 and 2004, at above UK inflation levels.

Central Ministry Fund

16. At the end of 2004, the CMF had a retained balance of £2,854,950, an increase of £ 25,636 on 2003.

17. The basic Ministerial Minimum for 2005 has been increased by 3.2% to £19,100, (€29,780) rising to £ 21,965 (€34,247) after 30 years service.

18. The proposed rate of assessment for 2005 is 16p per £1 of stipend, a reduction from 17p in 2004 and 21p in 2003.

19. The following increases were set by the Board, under the Tyrone Memorial Scheme:

£0 – 21,275	3.2%
£21,276 – 25,000	2.5%
£25,001 – 30,000	2.0%
£30,001 – 35,000	1.5%
£35,001 – 40,000	1.0%
£40,001 and over	0.0%

20. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2005:

	2005	2004
(a) Ministerial Minimum	£19,100	£18,500
After 5 years service	£19,578	£18,962
After 10 years service	£20,055	£19,425
After 15 years service	£20,533	£19,888
After 20 years service	£21,010	£20,350
After 25 years service	£21,488	£20,812
After 30 years service	£21,965	£21,275
(b) Family Grants 2005	N Ireland	Rep of Ireland
Birth to 10 years	£285	€845
11 to 15 years	£430	€1,335
16 years and over		
-at School	£650	€2,465
-at University	£2,165	€4,100

Bands for joint incomes

Reduction £1 for every £5 £22,200 - £29,865 €33,885 – €45,575
Reduction £2 for every £5 £29,865+ €45,575+

- (c) The grant in respect of any child who is 16 years + falling into category (b) and who is in receipt of a maintenance or training grant shall be reduced by £1 every £1 by which such grant or other sponsorship or scholarship exceeds £1000.
- (d) The amount a minister may earn, apart from congregational work, without the augmented grant being affected, shall be £3,848 under Par 316(2)(d)(i) of the Code or £2,050 under Par 316(2)(d)(ii). The maximum under the above paragraphs shall be £3,848.
- (e) Bequests: A Minister may receive up to £1,150 per annum from bequests received during his/her ministry without grants being affected.
- (f) Retired ministers with pre 1978 service will receive a special grant of £15 per month. Code Par 315(5)
- (g) That in reckoning augmentation for 2005, the CMF 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).
- (h) Euro differential: The Committee continues to keep the Cost of Living in the Republic under review.

Widows of Ministers Fund.

21. At the end of 2004, the WMF had a retained balance of £605,647 an increase of £ 113,378 on 2003.

22. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2005:

- (a) That the assessment for 2005 remains at 7.75P per £1 of stipend.
- (b) That the maximum Widows Pension be £ 5,253.
- (c) That widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension receive a maximum of £ 5,253 plus £475.

- (d) That widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension or PWFA receive a maximum of £ 5,253 plus £500.
- (e) That widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension or PWFA receive a maximum of £ 5,253 plus £4,139 (2005/2006 not yet announced by Government).

Presbyterian Widows Fund Association

23. All ministers join this Association at ordination. The annual membership subscription is 1.25% of the Ministerial Minimum for active ministers and is 0.2% for retired ministers. An additional 0.1% is charged to ministers not under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Membership provides an annuity to widows, which is currently £1,164.

Retired Ministers' Fund

24. At the end of 2004, the RMF had a retained balance of £1,185,104 an increase of £ 21,732 on 2003.

25. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2005:

- (a) That the assessment for 2005 be 9.5p per £1 of stipend a reduction from 11p in 2004.
- (b) That Basic Retirement Allowance be a maximum of £9,550.
- (c) That Supplemental Grant for those living in the Republic of Ireland with no State Pension is currently £6,617 married, £4,139 single. (Rates for 2005/06 not yet announced by Government).

Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)

26. The Trustees' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2004, are included in the published accounts.

27. Since the last Assembly, the following were granted leave to retire, at or over age 65, by Presbyteries:

Revs Harold Boyce (Director of Evangelism), Robert Ernest Boggs (Downpatrick), John Mann (Ballina, Killala, Ballymote), Samuel James Campbell (Cooke Centenary) and Thomas Stanley Lindsay (First Garvagh).

28. Unanimous approval was given to the Rev William John Henning McKee (Newtownstewart & Gortin) and the Rev William Thomas John Richardson (Hillhall) to seek the permission of the 2005 General Assembly to retire on or after their 64th birthdays in February 2006 and December 2006 respectively.

29. The Trustees did not award any discretionary increase for pensions in payment, accrued pre 1997, in excess of the Guaranteed Minimum Pension. This is likely to remain the case whilst the scheme is in actuarial deficit.

Ministers' Prolonged Disability Fund

30. At the end of 2004, the fund had a retained balance of £556,838, an increase of £206,507 on 2003. The Committee feels that this is the level of funds necessary to underpin potential future grants.

31. The following recommendation was approved by the Board for 2005:

That the assessment for 2005 be 0.75 p per £1 of stipend - a reduction from 2p in 2004 and 4p in 2003.

32. The first application for benefit has been received and, following independent assessment of the supporting medical evidence, has been approved by the Board.

33. The current maximum level of benefit is £9,660 per annum. In addition, pension contributions to MPS are paid by the fund until the beneficiary returns to work or attains his or her normal retirement age.

The Staff Pension Scheme.

34. The Trustees' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2003, are included in the published accounts.

35. The current funding rate is 25.85% of salaries (20.85% Employer, 5% employee.) This is the funding rate recommended by the scheme actuary to redress the funding deficit identified at the triennial valuation at 1 January 2003. (Reports 2004, p315 par 5).

36. An anomaly has been revealed which provides that whilst members of the scheme can elect for early retirement, subject to an actuarial reduction in pension, between the ages of 50 and 60, they cannot elect for early retirement on this basis between 60 and 65. The employer may, at discretion, permit early retirement between 60 and 65 with no actuarial reduction. Because of the present position of scheme assets, however, such arrangements are likely to be viewed as unaffordable. Procedures have therefore been set in motion to extend the right to elect for early retirement, subject to an actuarial reduction in pension, to apply to those aged 60 to 65.

Incidental Fund

37. At the end of 2004, the incidental fund had a retained balance of £102,120 a decrease of £6,852 on 2003.

38. The Committee reviewed applications for funding and recommends that the following grants be allocated in 2005.

Business Board – Arrangements Committee	£14,000
General Board:	
Church Relations	£42,450
Peace and Peacemaking	£5,000
Church and Society	£11,500
Conciliation Panel	£1,000
General work of the Board	£8,500
Social Witness Board	£19,000
Youth & Children's Ministry Board	£6,500
PCI Holiday	£2,000
Communications Board:	
Historical Society	£14,700
Architecture	£1,500
Board of Studies and Christian Training	£7,030
Youth Centres Review Panel	£34,000
TOTAL	£167,180

39. The following recommendation was approved by the Board for 2005:
That the assessment for 2005 be 4.75p per £1 of stipend, a reduction from 5.5p in 2004.

The Ministerial Development Fund

40. At the end of 2004, the Ministerial Development Fund had a retained balance of £375,029 an increase of £13,151 on 2003. Responsibility for recommending the assessments for this fund lies with the Board of Studies and Christian Training.

DOUGLAS CROWE, Convener

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

1. Although the Committee only met twice during the year, this fact belies the volume of work carried out in the various working groups. Significant progress has been made on a range of issues.

Personnel Matters

2. The existing job evaluation scheme has been in use for over 15 years and presents difficulties when confronted with the current range of posts within PCI. As a result, it was decided to appoint independent consultants to work alongside PCI and produce job evaluation and staff performance and development schemes. After a competitive tendering exercise, BDO Stoy Hayward was appointed and new schemes are anticipated to be agreed in the latter half of the year.

3. A decision was taken at the General Assembly 2004 to employ Peninsula Business Services to provide personnel advice to Congregations and Presbyteries. This service is now in place with a high degree of satisfaction being recorded among users. An employer's handbook is expected to be in the hands of Congregations by the date of the General Assembly.

4. Following the Nomination Board resolution at the General Assembly 2004, the recruitment and employment of executive staff by PCI was reviewed. The subsequent report was deemed to apply to all staff groups and not just executive staff. The main recommendations of the report are:

- the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to be cited as the employer in all employment documentation;
- the current Employing Agency arrangements to be discontinued and the Boards, as delegated by the General Assembly, to become the appointing bodies for all posts, with the exception of the Clerk of the Assembly, Deputy Clerk, Theological Professors and College Principal, who will continue to be directly appointed by the Assembly via a selection panel appointed by the General Board;
- the size of recruitment panels to vary from 3 or 4 for administrative/secretarial staff, no more than 6 for executive staff and no more than 8 for senior executive staff;

- all panel members to be provided with training in fair employment practices;
- the Personnel Department to manage the process and be in attendance at all panel meetings, in an advisory capacity for executive appointments and with full voting rights for administrative/secretarial appointments;
- all employment related documentation to continue to be signed off by the Head of Personnel, or other designated person, on behalf of PCI.

5. Involvement in the consultation process continues in respect of equality legislation. The joint approach by the four main churches is proving very worthwhile and meetings have been held with the Office of the First Minister Deputy First Minister and the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Retired Ministers' House Fund

6. The accounts for 2004 show available funds of £306,533. These are all earmarked for previously agreed loans and equity sharing arrangements not yet drawn down. This situation precludes any significant additional lending. A time limit on the acceptance of advances offered is being considered.

7. Legal proceedings have been instigated to release the proceeds of the very generous bequest from the late Miss Jane Megaw for the work of the Fund.

DAVID LAMB, Convener

TABLE ONE

PERSONS AND AGENCIES

	2003	2004	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	211	209		2
Ministers in Active Duty	394	388		6
Retired Missionaries	6	9	3	
Missionaries in Active Duty	77	59		18
Total Ministers and Missionaries	688	665		23
Licensures	5	10	5	
Congregations	552	548		4
Total Families	111,890	111,161		729
Persons of All Ages	273,305	270,648		2,657
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	91,445	90,713		732
Baptisms	1,973	1,852		121
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	1,892	1,946	54	
Communicants	113,513	113,781	268	
Attended at Least One Communion during year	72,098	71,198		900
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	7,072	7,058		14
Number on Rolls in Sunday Schools and Bible Classes	30,257	29,389		868

TABLE TWO
CONGREGATIONAL INCOME

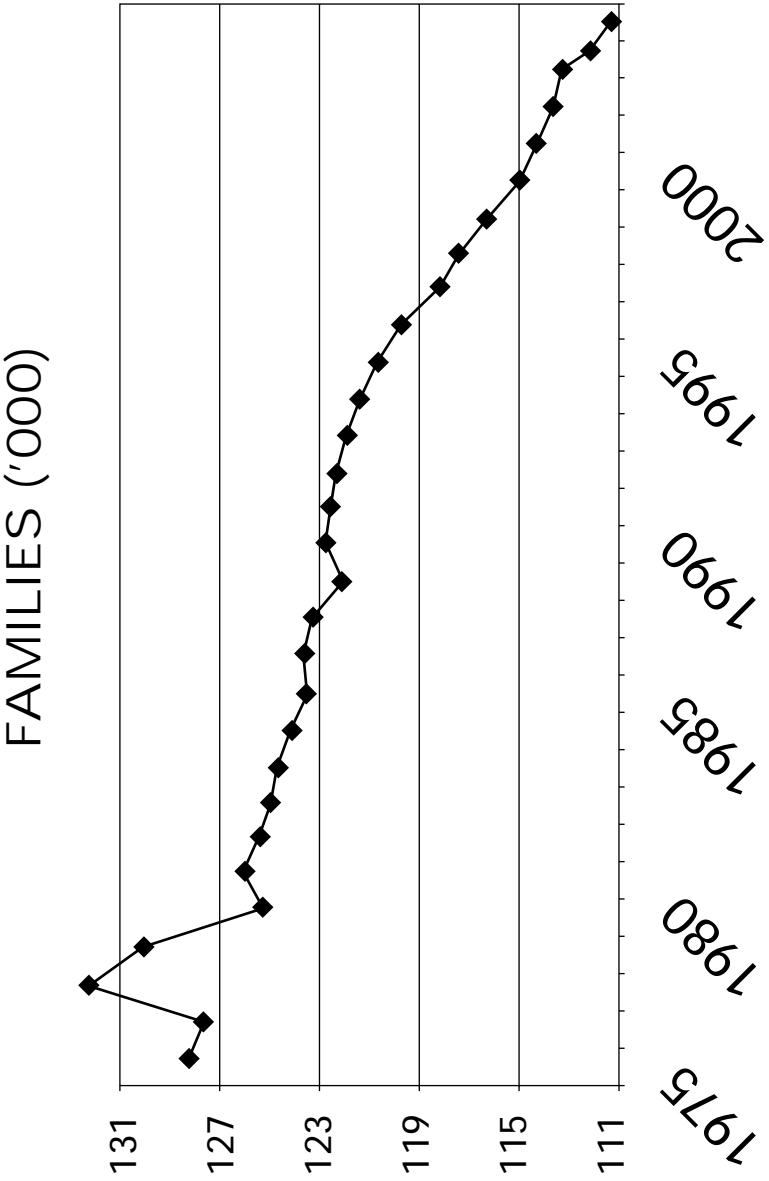
	2003		2004		% Difference		R. of I.
	£	€	£	€	N.I.		
Specified Sources	25,511,342	2,168,278	26,364,984	2,326,134	3.3%+	7.3%+	
Building Fund etc.	12,464,327	1,033,717	14,706,342	1,316,885	18.0%+	27.4%+	
“For Others”	6,064,516	431,216	6,438,266	539,801	8.2%+	25.2%+	
Raised from other sources	4,758,147	961,132	4,239,395	1,092,619	10.9%+	13.7%+	
Bequests etc.	8,065,153	578,810	8,424,199	198,889	4.5%+	65.6%+	
Total Receipts	56,863,486	5,173,154	60,173,186	5,474,329	5.86%+	5.8%+	
Total Receipts Less							
Bequests etc.	48,798,333	4,594,344	51,748,987	5,275,440	6.0%+	14.8%+	
Bequests	1,487,256	81,013	1,722,476	65,967	15.8%+	18.6%—	

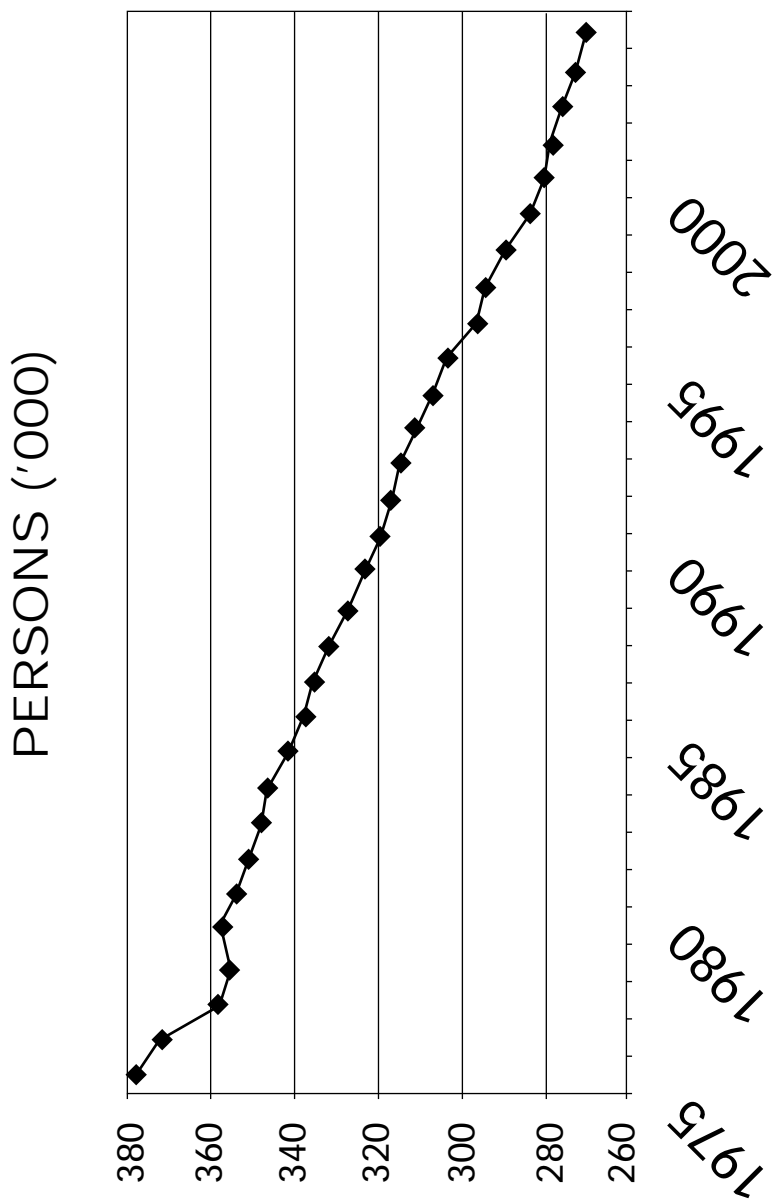
TABLE THREE
CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE

	2003		2004		% Difference N.I.	R. of I.
	£	€	£	€		
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	13,515,011	1,086,993	14,001,590	1,132,787	3.6%+	4.2%+
Payments under Assembly Assessments	4,991,910	413,450	5,159,986	455,529	3.4%+	10.2%+
Building, Repairs, etc.	16,426,195	1,293,698	17,273,097	985,014	5.2%+	23.9%—
United Appeal Schemes	2,955,410	171,618	3,039,697	195,646	2.9%+	14.0%+
Supplementary Schemes						
Other Religious and Charitable Objects	4,008,076	389,446	4,673,785	464,204	16.6%+	19.2%+
General Expenses	7,804,583	954,825	7,968,858	999,335	2.1%+	4.7%+
Total Payments	49,701,185	4,310,030	52,117,013	4,232,516	4.9%+	1.8%—

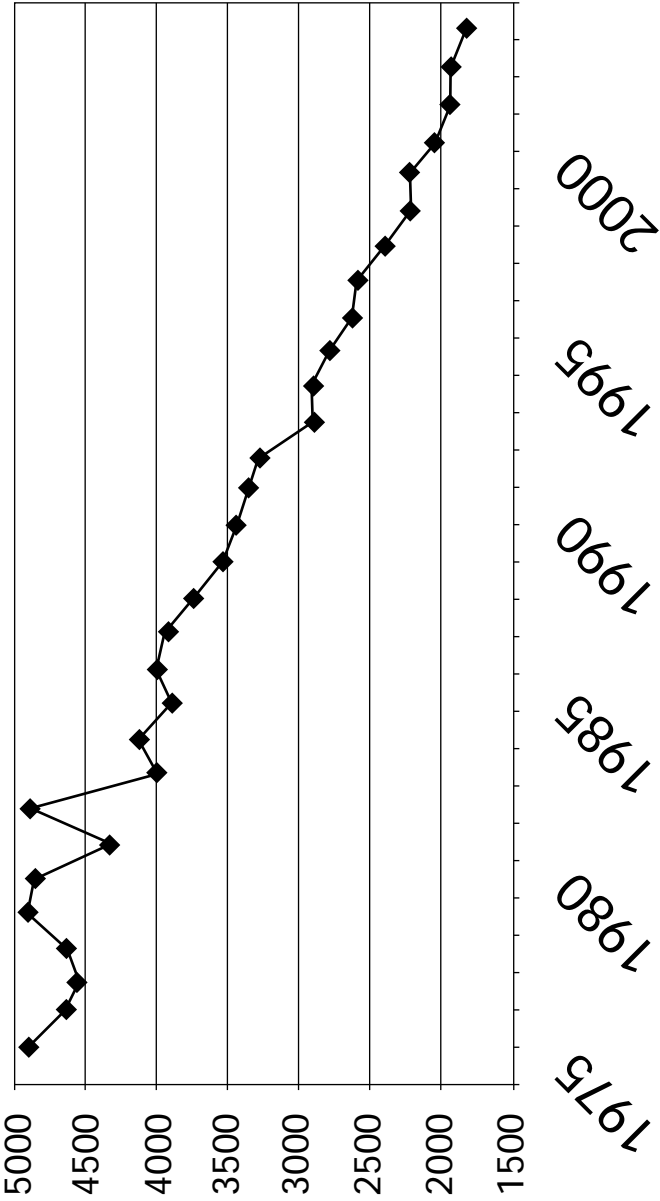
TABLE FOUR
CONGREGATIONAL BALANCES

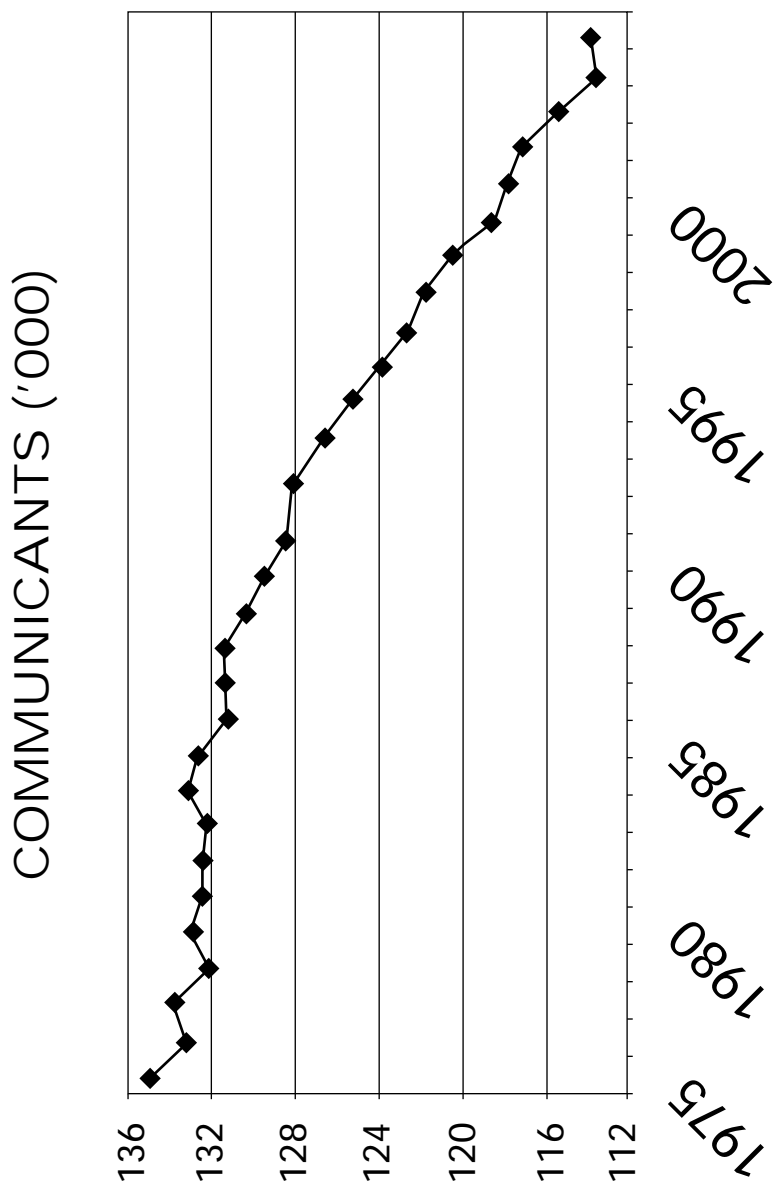
	Closing 2003		Opening 2004		Closing 2004		% Difference N.I.	R. of I.
	£	€	£	€	£	€		
Credits	28,595,310	3,332,479	28,952,810	3,220,267	29,503,411	4,152,626	1.9%+	29.0%+
Debits	2,937,393	71,011	2,890,243	90,679	3,854,512	116,780	33.4%+	28.8%+
Net Credits	25,657,917	3,261,468	26,062,567	3,129,588	25,648,899	4,035,846	1.6%—	29.0%+





BAPTISMS





APPENDIX

Sterling Salary Scales of Executive and Administrative staff in post on 1 January 2005 (inclusive of a discretionary 3.5% increase applied as from 1 January 2005 following the annual review).

EXECUTIVE POSTS**Scale 1 (£19,627 - £23,487)**

Payroll & Assessment Manager
Programme Officer (Preparing Youth for Peace)
Secretary for Education & Promotion

Scale 2 (£22,281 - £26,982)

Director of Nightlight
Financial Manager
Assistant Residential Services Manager
Finance & Office Manager
Project Manager, Willowbrook
Youth Centres Director
Buildings Manager & Safety Officer
Youth Development Officer

Scale 3 (£25,036 - £30,705)

Director of Evangelism
Executive Secretary, PWA
Education in Mission Officer
Personnel Officer (Overseas)
Minister & Superintendent, Kinghan Mission
Deputy Director of Youth & Children's Ministry
Secretary to Board of Education (part-time)
IT Development & Support Manager
Director for Personnel (BMI) – Currently protected as Scale 4

Scale 4 (£27,683 - £34,805)

Residential Services Manager
Head of Personnel
Senior Financial Accountant
University Chaplain (QUB)

Scale 5 (£29,667 - £36,338)

Information Officer
Director of Christian Training
Director of Youth & Children's Ministry

Scale 6 (£33,043 - £40,450)

Deputy General Secretary
Executive Secretary, Overseas Board
Director of Social Service

Scale 7 (£37,610 - £48,632)

General Secretary
Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS**Scale 1 (£10,791- £12,598)**

Junior Secretary
Telephonist/Receptionist
Clerical Officer
Handyperson

Scale 2 (£11,677 - £13,643)

Caretaker, Youth Centre
Clerical Officer
Secretary
Telephonist/Receptionist
Resident Warden, Youth Centre
Financial Assistant

Scale 3 (£13,212 - £15,415)

Senior Secretary
Deputy Building Manager
Wages Clerk
Senior Clerical Officer
Payroll & Clerical Assistant
Graphic Designer

Scale 4 (£15,089 - £17,510)

Personal Secretary
Administrative Assistant
Assistant to the Information Officer
Departmental Secretary

Scale 5 (£16,592 - £19,291)

Production Manager
Assistant Accountant
Co-ordinator PCI Year Team & Volunteers
Financial Assistant
Personal Assistant

Scale 5 (enhanced) (£18,415 - £21,178)

Senior Administrative Officer
Personal Secretary & Office Supervisor
Personnel Officer

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That Ernst & Young LLP be appointed as auditors for all the Committees, Boards, Trusts, Commissions and Agencies of the General Assembly for the year 2005.
3. That Retired Ministers with pre 1978 service be paid, in the current year, a special grant, Code Par 315(5), of £15 per month from the Central Ministry Fund.
4. That, under the provisions of Code Par. 223 (3), Rev Dr WJH McKee (Newtownstewart & Gortin) and Rev WTJ Richardson (Hillhall) be given permission to retire on or after their 64th birthdays and that their pension be in accordance with the Code and the Rules of the Scheme.
5. That the definition of Scheme Salary in the Rules of the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) be amended to exclude endowment, bequest and farm income from 1st January, 2006.
6. That the level of increases under the Tyrone Memorial, in the case of joint charges, be based on total stipend for all charges rather than the level of increase being based on the stipend paid by each congregation.
7. That the rate of assessment for the Incidental Fund for 2005 be 4.75p in the £ of stipend.
8. That the rate of assessment for the Central Ministry Fund for 2005 be 16p in the £ of stipend.
9. That the rate of assessment for the Retired Ministers' Fund for 2005 be 9.5p in the £ of stipend.
10. That the rate of assessment for the Widows of Ministers' Fund for 2005 be 7.75p in the £ of stipend.
11. That the rate of assessment for the Ministers' Prolonged Disability Fund for 2005 be 0.75p in the £ of stipend for Ministers, Licentiates and College Professors and of Basic Ministerial Minimum for Ministers who are Missionaries.
12. That the General Assembly request the Board to carry out a review of the existing Pension Schemes of the Church and make recommendations on future pension provision.
13. That the General Assembly request the Board to carry out a review of the procedures and practices adopted by the Boards and Agencies of the Church in matters relating to properties with which they are involved and to report on these, to the General Assembly in 2006, with recommendations as to what improvements or changes, if any, should be made.
14. That the recommendations in the report on staff recruitment be approved.
15. That the Board of Finance and Personnel, with its associated working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed as follows:

OVERTURE ON THE BOOKS**Anent Par 111(6) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that the present wording of sub-paragraph 111(6) of the Code be deleted and substituted by:

“No alterations to the rules governing the Central Ministry Fund, the Retired Ministers’ Fund, the Widows of Ministers’ Fund or the 1978 Ministers’ Pension Scheme shall be made unless notice proposing the making of the rules has been on the minutes of the proceedings of the Assembly for twelve months”.

J LESLIE CASEMENT

UNITED APPEAL BOARD

Convener: Mr HAL STEWART, FCA
Secretary: THE CLERK

1. The Board wishes to express its thanks to all Congregations who supported the United Appeal in the year 2004.

2. We regret to report that the Appeal for 2004 was £55,825 under target when the accounts were prepared for that year. However we received a further £64,734 in 2004 in respect of the previous year. In addition up to the time of writing this report a further £104,824 has been received as late payments for the year 2004. This is a worrying reversal in the improving trend that had been taking place over a number of years. We would again impress on treasurers the need to insure that all contributions are received by the Financial Secretary's Office in good time to be included in the accounts of the target year.

3. The Board was pleased to be able to pay in full the proposed allocation of grants for the year 2004.

4. The Board sees its role as that of augmenting the income of all agencies approved by the General Assembly for United Appeal support to assist them in carrying forward the priorities of the Church. In this regard the Finance Committee of the Board meets with representatives of those agencies and examines their accounts and budgets. On occasions the budgets indicate that the planned work can be carried out without augmentation for the year under review and therefore no grant is recommended for that year. Where circumstances change the agencies are invited to amend their budget the following year and as a result the recommended grant for the subsequent year is increased to take account of the changed circumstances. The Board therefore feels that it does support all the approved agencies even though in some years no augmentation is required.

5. This year we have not recommended grants to the Youth Centres pending the outcome of the report of the Centres Review Panel, but again augmentation grants will be available when the priorities of the Church have been agreed.

6. The requests from agencies for grants in respect of the year 2006 showed a modest increase in total over the year 2005. We are adding in to the target a small contingency amount for possible expenditure not yet approved and we are releasing a further £100,000 from reserves. The net effect of these adjustments is a target for the year 2006, as set out in Schedules 111 and 1V, of £3,081,000 which is an increase of 1.82% over the previous year.

7. We are continuing the process of taking greater account of Specified Sources of Income in the setting of Presbytery targets and for 2006 40% of the Target will be set in this way leaving 60% still based on Contributing Families. By the year 2007 we will have reached our target of a 50/50 basis. We would commend this basis to Presbyteries when setting congregational targets.

8. The payment of grants to agencies on a timely basis has only been possible as a result of the build up of the capital of the Board. Ideally we would

like to be able to release part of this fund over a period of years to reduce the target set each year. We appreciate the efforts so far by some Congregations to forward monies on a timely basis. However a large proportion of the target monies is received after the end of November and some too late to be included in the accounts for 2004. We would again encourage Congregations to forward all monies received as soon as practicable.

9. The new Appraisals Committee of the Board, which is augmented by representatives of the Union Commission, Incidental Fund and Board of Finance and Personnel, met on a number of occasions during the year and considered applications in respect of capital expenditure and new staffing, some of which were approved and others deferred for further information.

10. We continued this past year to have problems in ensuring that "The United Appeal Briefing" was available on time. This has been to some extent due to shortage of staff in the Communications Department. We are hopeful that future issues will be available each year at the beginning of March and September.

SCHEDULE I

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2003	Specified Sources 2003 £	United Appeal 2005 £
Ards.....	9,699	2,716,083	315,990
Armagh.....	4,088	1,296,093	138,272
Ballymena.....	7,839	2,501,009	265,672
Belfast North.....	6,404	1,632,838	203,242
Belfast South.....	3,631	1,260,402	126,486
Belfast East.....	8,326	2,516,001	277,457
Carrickfergus.....	5,880	1,448,517	184,907
Coleraine.....	4,561	1,476,397	155,291
Derry & Strabane.....	3,621	995,441	117,346
Donegal.....	1,282	374,173	42,277
Down.....	4,741	1,171,351	149,204
Dromore.....	5,200	1,591,357	173,958
Dublin & Munster.....	1,211	708,999	51,889
Foyle.....	2,952	702,134	91,988
Iveagh.....	3,672	1,170,061	124,399
Monaghan.....	988	312,451	33,391
Newry.....	2,699	897,117	92,683
Omagh.....	2,530	739,118	83,456
Route.....	3,643	983,309	117,448
Templepatrick.....	4,564	1,265,362	148,265
Tyrone.....	3,911	1,242,764	132,379
	91,442	27,000,977	3,026,000

70% of the allocation for 2005 has been based on contributing families and 30% on Specified Sources. Specified Sources for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2003 of 1.44615.

SCHEDULE II

	Requested 2005 £	Proposed Grant 2005 £
Home Mission	265,000	265,000
Irish Mission.....	380,000	380,000
Evangelism & Divine Healing	37,000	37,000
Education Board.....	160,000	150,000
Students Bursary Fund	321,000	321,000
Youth Board	376,000	376,000
Rostrevor Centre.....	9,000	1,000
Guysmere Centre	10,000	2,000
Lucan Centre	15,000	0
Social Witness Board	140,000	140,000
Social Issues & Resources Committee....	5,000	5,000
ADE Committee	1,000	1,000
Thompson House.....	2,500	1,000
Carlisle House	0	0
Residential Trust.....	5,000	1,000
Kinghan Mission	65,000	65,000
Marriage & Family Project	1,000	1,000
Shankill Road Mission	0	0
Overseas Board.....	975,000	975,000
Department of Communications	220,000	174,000
Union Theological College	275,000	210,000
Chaplains Committee	21,000	21,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,283,500	3,126,000
Allocation from reserves		(100,000)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,283,500	3,026,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>

SCHEDULE III

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2004	Specified Sources 2004 £	United Appeal 2006 £
Ards.....	9,513	2,772,485	316,120
Armagh.....	4,012	1,330,063	140,411
Ballymena.....	7,810	2,556,108	271,873
Belfast North.....	6,448	1,646,649	204,013
Belfast South.....	3,443	1,240,210	124,853
Belfast East.....	8,150	2,653,474	283,095
Carrickfergus.....	5,892	1,506,101	186,485
Coleraine.....	4,509	1,552,244	160,337
Derry & Strabane.....	3,508	1,037,162	117,224
Donegal.....	1,270	394,284	43,268
Down.....	4,646	1,216,368	148,317
Dromore.....	5,208	1,673,460	179,926
Dublin & Munster.....	1,300	745,530	59,368
Foyle.....	2,999	733,708	93,470
Iveagh.....	3,794	1,190,117	129,797
Monaghan.....	988	314,130	33,987
Newry.....	2,701	959,436	97,351
Omagh.....	2,533	769,100	85,534
Route.....	3,639	1,037,824	119,923
Templepatrick.....	4,517	1,351,486	151,647
Tyrone.....	3,833	1,267,449	134,001
	90,713	27,947,388	3,081,000

60% of the allocation for 2006 has been based on contributing families and 40% on Specified Sources. Specified Sources for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2004 of 1.47.

SCHEDULE IV

	Requested 2006 £	Proposed Grant 2006 £
Home Mission	350,000	350,000
Irish Mission	450,000	450,000
Congregational Life	60,000	60,000
Education Board	100,000	80,000
Students Bursary Fund	225,000	220,000
Youth and Children's Board	376,000	376,000
Rostrevor Centre	5,000	0
Guysmere Centre	5,000	0
Social Witness Board	140,000	125,000
Social Issues & Resources Committee.....	5,000	4,000
ADE Committee	5,000	2,500
Thompson House	2,500	0
Carlisle House	1,000	0
Residential Trust	20,000	0
Kinghan Mission	30,000	25,000
Marriage & Family Project	5,000	5,000
Overseas Board	1,023,000	975,000
Department of Communications	185,000	180,000
Union Theological College	262,500	217,500
Chaplains Committee	41,000	41,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,291,000	3,111,000
Contingencies		70,000
Allocation from reserves	(100,000)	(100,000)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,191,000	3,081,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the report be received
2. That the United Appeal for 2006 be as set out in Schedules III and IV.
3. That the United Appeal Board for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 287 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 287(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 287(1) of the Code the words “four persons nominated by each Synod” be deleted and the words “one person nominated by each Presbytery” be substituted in their place and that the words “mission, fund or other scheme” be deleted and the words “Board or Committee” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 287(3)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 287(3)(a) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place: “the accounts of the previous year or an estimate thereof, together with the revised budget for the current year and the budget for the succeeding financial year, shall be submitted to the Board on behalf of the relevant Boards and Committees before 1 March each year. The Board may also request that longer term projections be prepared where appropriate.”

Anent Par 287(3)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 287(3)(b) of the Code after the word “justify” the words “taking into account the General Assembly’s guidelines on Priorities” be inserted.

Anent Par 287(3)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 287(3)(c) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place: “on the basis of the budgets submitted and approved, the Board shall prepare a United Appeal for the following financial year, for submission to the General Assembly in June of the current year”.

Anent Par 287(4)(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 287(4)(d) of the Code the words “one quarter of their allocation each year in quarterly instalments” be deleted and the words “all United Appeal contributions received, as soon as practicable” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 287(4)(e) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 287(4)(e) of the Code the words “mission, fund or scheme” be deleted and the words “Board or Committee” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 287(4)(f) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 287(4)(f) of the Code the word “mission” be deleted and the word “Board” substituted in its place.

MH STEWART

TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Hon Secretary: Rev Dr DONALD J WATTS

Financial Secretary: Mr CLIVE KNOX

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 7 April, 2005.

2. The Report of the Executive Committee and the Statement of audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2004 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

The Lindsay Memorial Fund

Trust Funds

3. Moved by Mr RW Alcorn, 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 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 WC Henderson and Mr A Speer, 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 2004 of the Getty Trust, Union Theological College and The War Memorial Hostel and had accepted these for inclusion in the volume of Accounts to be submitted to the General Assembly. On the proposal of Mr J Millar, OBE, seconded by Mr W Ervin, this report was received.

5. Three retiring members of the Executive Committee were re-appointed for a further three years, these being Mr W Ervin, Mr D Bell, CB and Rev WJ Orr.

6. Mr D Bell, CB, and Mr W Cosgrove were nominated members of the General Assembly, according to the provision of the Code Par 97 (h) (iii).

7. The Trustees record with regret the death of Mr A L Jamieson, who had served as a Trustee since 1983, on 4 January, 2005 and Rev James McAllister, OBE, who had served as a Trustee since 1985, on 13 March, 2005.

Trust Funds

A summary Account of the various Trust Funds is included in the Book of Accounts 2004. The following Trust Funds are distributed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Trustees.

8. **Mrs A M Davidson Trust:** The total income for 2004 available for distribution is £6,882.30. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Union Theological College	£3,000.00
Church House Repairs	£2,882.30
Youth/Sunday School	<u>£1,000.00</u>
	<u>£6,882.30</u>

9. **Sir Wm V McCleery Estate:** The total income for 2004 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%

10. **Estate of Miss Irene Scott:** The total income for 2004 available for distribution is £7,444.98. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Board of Social Witness	£3,444.98
Church House Repairs	<u>£4,000.00</u>
	<u>£7,444.98</u>

11. **Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown:** The total income for 2004 available for distribution is £4,777.92. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Church House Repairs	£2,777.92
Thompson House	<u>£2,000.00</u>
	<u>£4,777.92</u>

12. **Estate of Mr Victor Morrow:** The total income for 2004 available for distribution is £1,557.36. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Union Theological College	£778.68
Church House Repairs	<u>£778.68</u>
	<u>£1,557.36</u>

GENERAL INVESTMENT FUND

13. Declaration of Dividend	15.4.04	15.10.04
Number of shares qualifying	4,839,157	4,836,640
	£	£
Income from investment for distribution and income tax recoverable less administrative charge and Investment Advisers' Fees	508,553	651,626
Dividend per share	12.00p	15.00p

In the year 2004 £73,870 was transferred from the Dividend Equalisation Reserve and the balance on the Dividend Equalisation Reserve at 31 December, 2004 is £589,430.

14. The combined annual Dividend of 27.00p per share is to be compared with 29.30p per share for 2003; 28.5p for 2002; 28.00 for 2001; 28.00 for 2000; 27.00 for 1999; 25.00 for 1998; 23.50 for 1997; 22.00 for 1996; 21.50 for 1995.

15. Valuation	15.4.04	15.10.04
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	25,550,080	26,096,405
Cash on Deposit	1,505,997	1,448,081
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	663,300	589,430
Property and Ground Rents	2,385,000	2,385,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£30,104,377	£30,518,916
	<hr/>	<hr/>
No of Shares Issued	4,850,546	4,834,025
Share Value	£6.2064	£6.3134

General Investment Fund

16. The advisers to the fund are NCL Smith & Williamson, the owners of Cunningham Coates. The Executive Committee of Trustees meet with the Investment Advisers to review investment performance on a regular basis. During 2004 there was a change in management of the Company. The Trustees have met with the new management team and are keeping the appointment of Investment Managers under review. The Dividend Equalisation Reserve exceeds the permitted levels under Rule 21 (3) of the General Investment Fund Scheme. The Trustees therefore, in accordance with the rules have not made any transfer to the reserve during the year.

The Trustees requested a valuation of the properties in the General Investment Fund at 31 December, 2004. The valuation indicated an increase from £2,385,000 to £2,500,000 and this has been included in the accounts of the General Investment Fund.

Crescent Church Loan Fund

17. A request for a loan of £25,000 was received and approved during 2004. Interest is currently charged on loans at bank base rate on the average balance outstanding over the term of the loan.

Getty Bequest

18. The allocation of grants out of the income of the Trust Estate of John Getty for the year ending 31 December, 2004 was as follows:

Overseas – Foreign	2,600
Overseas – Jewish	1,400
Home Mission	3,400
Belfast City Mission	2,600
TOTAL	£10,000

Familybooks Limited

19. The Company is being wound up and clearance sought from the relevant tax authorities. In accordance with the resolution approved at the June 2003 General Assembly the Trustees will “retain and invest the nett proceeds of the sales of Familybooks for a period of ten years against the contingency that the Church may decide at a future date to re-establish a Presbyterian bookshop”.

Fisherwick Management Services Limited

20. This Company was responsible for administering the service charges in the Assembly Buildings. Following discussions with Customs and Excise the Company ceased trading from 1 January, 2005 and the administration of the service charges will be undertaken by the Assembly Buildings Committee.

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 recommendation regarding the Victor Morrow Trust be adopted.
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, Revs Dr D J Watts, W D F Marshall, R J A Bell, W J Orr; Mr Wilson Ervin, CBE, Sir Eric McDowell, Mr David Bell, CB, Mr A T Ross, Mr John Millar, OBE, Mr J I Bill, OBE.

2004 ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Co-Conveners: Revs IF SMITH, JH ROBINSON

1. Under its working title, “Get a Life”, and committed to encouraging a process rather than organising an event, the Committee finalised the plans for an Assembly Conference from 9 – 12 August 2004 and enabled follow-up at congregational level of the issues raised.

2. The Committee is grateful to God for the number of delegates who attended the conference (900 plus), the warm sense of fellowship, the inspiring worship and thought-provoking contributions of the keynote speakers, Prof D A Carson and the Rev Martin Allen.

3. Both the volume and the content of the feedback from delegates encouraged the Committee to believe that, under God, important insights and encouragements had been gained by many, who were committed to outworking them locally.

4. The feedback also indicated that many were convinced of the benefit to our denomination of a Residential Assembly or Assembly Conference every few years and a resolution is appended to gain the Assembly’s perspective on this.

5. Aware that the Conference was organised only so as to open up consideration of the themes of meaningful worship, authentic fellowship and effective witness, the Committee commissioned follow-up visual and bible-study materials for use at congregational level.

6. In order to affirm “small wins” in the areas of worship, fellowship and witness and to encourage congregations to attempt further steps, a series of regional rallies was organised for May 2005.

7. The Committee thanks the Rev Martin and Mrs Ann Allen, the Rev Marc Bircham and the Rev Alan Reid (Church of Scotland) for accepting the invitation to address these rallies, bringing practical insights and biblical encouragement to the participants.

8. To the extent that many congregations have taken stock of their present effectiveness in the areas of worship, fellowship and witness and that some have taken small steps forward, while others have been affirmed in steps previously taken, the Committee is grateful to God for His leading and enabling.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That consideration be given to holding an Assembly Conference in, 2009; that the financial surplus from “Get a Life” be retained for this purpose; and that the General Board be instructed to report, with recommendations and costings, to the 2006 Assembly.

3. That the Assembly Conference Committee be thanked for its services and discharged.

HYMNAL COMMITTEE

Convener: Rev WTJ RICHARDSON

1. Who of those present will ever forget the Official Launch of the Irish Presbyterian Hymnbook in the Waterfront Hall on Saturday, 18 September, 2004? The exuberant praise, led so ably by the Knock singers, the award winning singers from Waringstown Primary School and Harry Morrow's orchestra, coupled with the vivid introductions to the various sections within the hymnbook and, of course the Moderator's address, all contributed towards a truly momentous occasion in the history of our denomination. Many complementary expressions and congratulations to those involved in compiling the hymnbook and organizing the Official Launch have been received.

2. In addition to this Official Launch, twelve Regional Launches have to date been held. These have been well attended and contributed greatly in making our membership throughout the island aware of the scope of the new hymnbook and its suitability to be the Official Hymnbook of our denomination.

3. Members of Assembly will be aware that the hymnbook is produced in three editions. That is, Music, Words Only and Large Print. At the time of writing this report – mid March – the first print in all three editions has been sold out. This is a source of great encouragement to all involved in the production of the hymnbook. It speaks well for its popularity and augurs well for its future. The second print should be available in the month of May. Naturally in an undertaking of such magnitude several errors, thankfully mostly minor, have been discovered. These will be corrected in the second print.

4. Regarding the CD-ROM, the publishers, SCM Canterbury Press Ltd, have given an undertaking that it will be available within the year of the Official Launch. A sub-committee from within the Hymnal Committee has been appointed to liaise with the publisher and to ensure that the Hymnbook in this electronic format will be best suited to the needs of our congregations.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Hymnal Committee be re-appointed for one further year as follows:

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