

Item 1 – BUSINESS BOARD – Supplementary Report

1. The Presbytery of South Belfast has proposed that under The Code, Par 226, the Rev Robert J Greer be enrolled as minister-emeritus of Richview. A resolution is appended.
2. The Presbytery of North Belfast has proposed that under The Code, Par 226, the Rev John N Seawright be enrolled as minister-emeritus of Abbey, Monkstown. A resolution is appended.
3. The Business Board recognises there is business to be discussed at the Assembly in which some members may have personal and specific interest. It asks that good practice be observed so that any member wishing to speak to a resolution which may affect them personally, or a close family member, should state that interest before speaking. The Board also believes that the issue of members speaking and voting on matters where there may be some personal benefit needs to be considered in more detail. It is suggested that the panel considering the impact of charity legislation may be an appropriate forum for such discussion. A resolution is appended to test the mind of the Assembly.

The Church of Ireland General Synod (2014)

The Very Rev Dr Roy A Patton reports:

1. The General Synod of the Church of Ireland met in Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin from 8-10 May 2014. I was joined by Mrs Cherry Poynton, an elder in Blackrock Congregation. We were graciously welcomed and enjoyed warm hospitality.
2. In his Presidential address, the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh, focused on ‘Freely you have received, freely give’ speaking of the Church “as an organism that is characterised by its giving nature; its people who are characterised by being giving people”.
3. Archbishop Clarke also stressed that ‘All life is a gift of God; it is never a commodity’. He said: “...one of the aspects of modern culture I most fear is that we have turned all human life into a commodity. The very beginnings of life and the end of life on earth are a gift, never to be treated as anything less”. The Archbishop questioned society’s priorities. In particular, to poverty, food banks and in the funding for hospice provision. He also encouraged people to consider fostering children in need, urging church members to consider being blood

donors and to sign up as organ donors, “as an opportunity for giving to others” (FAB’s ‘Flesh and Blood programme).

4. The Archbishop went on to say: “I make an appeal to a wider audience and ask those who have been entrusted with political leadership to tell us what future they are setting out for our children and grandchildren. It surely cannot simply be ‘more of the same’ that we wish to offer to future generations?”

5. The agenda for the Synod was full and, as is to be expected, it considered reports of the work of the various boards and committees, reporting on a wide variety of issues ranging from minimum pricing for alcohol, blood and organ donation and to education.

6. The Synod called for a tax increase of about 33 per cent on off-licence sales of alcohol throughout this island as well as calling on the governors of the **Church of Ireland College of Education** to ensure that “the religious ethos and values of the Church of Ireland . . . are promoted and legally safeguarded”. Discussions about the move to a new campus at St Patrick’s in Drumcondra, Dublin are on-going. The Synod also was informed that, after several challenging years, the longer term outlook for Church finances is now more stable. However, the Synod was strongly challenged to review its management of property and assets, disposing of some, where appropriate, to the glory of God and for the benefit of the whole church.

7. The Synod also received an Interim Report of the Committee on Human Sexuality in the Context of Christian Belief.

8. History was made when the Synod agreed on the interchangeability of ministry with the **Methodist Church in Ireland**. It means that, while both Churches remain distinct, interchangeability of their ministries can now take place.

9. An ordained minister of either Church may now come under the discipline and oversight of the other when it comes to exercising ministry. Equivalent legislation has already been approved by the Methodist Church in Ireland. Both Churches also now agree that a Methodist president (who is elected and holds office for a year) is recognised as an ‘episcopal minister’, as are all previous holders of the office. In future, Church of Ireland bishops will take part in the installation ceremony of a Methodist President, and vice versa for the installation of a Church of Ireland Bishop.

10. Following a vote, both the Archbishop of Armagh and the Methodist President spoke of the historic nature of the moment and the Synod gave a standing ovation.

11. Next year the Synod meets in Armagh. It was felt by many that meeting in Dublin was expensive and congested. Hence, it was agreed that the Synod should meet in Armagh until a suitable venue becomes available.

The Church of Scotland General Assembly (2014)

The Right Rev Dr Rob Craig reports:

1. I attended the Church of Scotland Assembly in the Assembly Buildings, Edinburgh, from 16th – 23rd May 2014, with my Chaplain Rev John Hanna, and Will Doran, my Clerk of Session from Kilfennan. Accompanied by our wives, as a delegation we were warmly received and enjoyed typical Scottish hospitality throughout a busy week.

2. The week opened with favourable weather allowing all to enjoy a Royal Reception hosted by the Earl of Wessex and the Countess of Wessex in the Palace of Holyroodhouse, at which the royal couple received the Keys to the City, as the Queen's representatives at the Assembly.

3. His Grace was then received at the opening Session of the Assembly on the Saturday Morning, amid significant pomp and royal protocol. His address to the Assembly was very uplifting, reflecting as he did on the relationship between Church and Community (timely as the Assembly met in this year of the Scottish Referendum on Independence) and making several allusions to his own personal faith which inspired all there.

4. The evening Session on Saturday allowed the outgoing Moderator, Rev Lorna Hood to reflect on a busy and challenging year as she travelled widely for the Kirk. Much was positive, though one experience on a visit to Skye did expose some of the theological strains that exist within the broad church that is the Kirk.

5. Sunday dawned breezy but fair, and all ecumenical delegates, from the churches in the UK and Ireland and overseas guests from many churches around the globe joined with the congregation for the Assembly Procession and Service of Divine Worship in St Giles Cathedral. As humble Irish Presbyterians we found it a 'high church' experience, though in keeping with the High Kirk in Edinburgh. The life and vitality of the Kirk was truly on show in Princes St Gardens all through Sunday afternoon when representatives from all the Councils of the Kirk and many local congregations joined in 'Heart and Soul', a celebration of the work and witness of the church today. All seemed in good

heart and it left a good impression of much good work going on at congregational and local community level.

6. The formal business week of the Assembly started on Monday and continued before largely packed houses. We were impressed with the strong note of thanksgiving and praise led on occasions by a Precentor, and raised by hundreds of strong voices seeking to express the commitment to unity that the Moderator, the Rt Rev John Chalmers, had called for as they faced vexing questions together.

7. The Ministries Council led the discussion on the state of the church and its ministry, reflecting on the projected shortfall of some 200 Ministers of the word and sacrament in the near future. It was a sobering debate.

8. Yet on Tuesday the Council on Mission and Discipleship brought a report with a different tone, focussing on the positives with many creative ventures being encouraged, and the development of what the Council calls a 'Fresh Expressions' project being driven forward with the appointment of a former Irish Presbyterian Rev D J McCarthy as its Development Worker.

9. We were impressed with the use of Statistics for Mission which shows the Kirk is seeking to be realistic in knowing its community and its calling in the midst of that community. The World Mission Council report was a highlight of the week well delivered and warmly received, and richly interwoven with contributions from delegates from many Overseas situations.

10. The formal session of the Assembly then adjourned to allow a wonderful and passionate debate, termed *a respectful dialogue* by the Moderator, on the question of Scottish Independence. No vote was taken as the church has chosen to be neutral in the matter, but the Kirk committed itself to continue to encourage the same kind of facilitated debate at local level in the run up to September 18th vote, and to help with the challenging onward journey whatever is decided on that day.

11. Which brought the Assembly to Wednesday, a real parson's egg! The Social Care Council report, in a short period of time, could hardly do justice to the remarkable and varied work done by the Kirk and its members in reaching out to the poor and marginalised in society.

12. The greater part of the day's business was take up with the two much anticipated reports of the Theological Forum and the Legal Questions Committee. They had been charged to look at the strength and validity of the 'mixed economy' compromise that had been brought before the 2013 Assembly with a clear end in view:

To affirm the Church's historic and current doctrine and practice in relation to human sexuality; nonetheless permit those Kirk sessions who wish to depart from that doctrine and practice to do so

13. The debates were well-managed and well-mannered. But that did not hide the clear differences that exist within the Kirk on these matters. There was a lot of pain and deep emotion, hard questions and difficult choices. The commitment to 'unity of the church' won out over 'uniformity of doctrine' as the Kirk continues on the journey and trajectory it has chosen.

14. Thursday's Council on Church and Society promised to be a bit quieter, though again questions about Scripture and Interpretation raised their head. What it means to be 'reformed and always in need of reformation' is a large issue for our Mother church across the Irish Sea.

15. The many evening receptions and functions ensured the convivial and warm atmosphere of Assembly continued as new and old friendships were made and refreshed. It was a special delight as Moderator to meet with exiles from this side of the water settled in the life of the Kirk. Also, to bring PCI's prayerful concerns to our sisters and brothers in the Church of Scotland at this time.

DONALD J WATTS

Additional Resolutions

2a. That the Rev Robert J Greer be enrolled as minister-emeritus of Richview with immediate effect.

2b. That the Rev John N Seawright be enrolled as minister-emeritus of Abbey, Monkstown, with immediate effect.

3a. That the Panel considering the impact of charity legislation be asked to also consider the question of members speaking and voting on matters where there may be personal interest.

DONALD J WATTS

Item 4 – SPUD – Additional Resolution

1a. That the General Assembly request congregations to nominate a SPUD representative, who will actively encourage youth participation in their local church and in the wider denomination.

DONALD J WATTS

Item 5 – Corresponding Members and Delegates**Delete**

Rev Nigel Uden (United Reformed Church); John Yor Nyiker Deng (Presbyterian Church of South Sudan); Rev Dr Maqsood Kamil (Presbyterian Church of Pakistan); Rev Alfredo Abad (Iglesia Evangelica Espaniol).

DONALD J WATTS

Item 8 – BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN’S MINISTRY**Additional Resolution (SPUD)**

3a. That the General Assembly encourage congregations to appoint an elder to oversee the pastoral care of young adults within their congregation who are finishing second or third level education; offering support and guidance during the key transitions to university or full time employment.

DONALD J WATTS

Item 14 – BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS – Supplementary Report**‘Developing a co-ordinated strategy for future partnership and personnel engagement’****Introduction**

1. Over the past year the BMO Steering Committee (SC) sought to follow up on BMO’s General Assembly Report 2013, by undertaking a review of specific areas of BMO’s work. In doing so SC held two meetings on 28 August and 10 December 2013 respectively, and a Day Away on 7 January 2014. As part of the review SC sought to develop a

co-ordinated strategy for future partnership and personnel engagement as required by Resolution 3 of BMO's General Assembly Report 2013. The resulting report and resolutions were presented, discussed, and agreed at the Board Meeting held on 30 April 2014.

2. In undertaking this task it was again underlined that it is God's mission and we seek to co-operate with him. In doing so prayer has a vital role to play in providing the wisdom and courage needed when seeking God's purposes for PCI in global mission through partnership, in placing mission personnel, and in allocating resources.

3. At this point the strategy set out below is aspirational, and if the General Assembly is supportive of its direction, the strategy would be further developed to include a more detailed implementation plan.

Background

4. BMO is not a mission agency working alongside PCI, but rather PCI engaging in global mission through its own denominational mission board, advising and implementing the decisions of the General Assembly, with presbyteries commissioning and congregations supporting the mission personnel sent out.

5. Traditionally, when compared with overseas mission agencies and societies, denominational mission boards usually engage in a wider range of activities and have a broader geographical focus in working with partner churches and agencies around the world. Over the years the challenge facing PCI has been to actively engage in global mission as a missionary church, not simply as a supporter of the independent agencies and societies.

6. From 1840, over the first one hundred years of the General Assembly's engagement in global mission, PCI commissioned hundreds of missionaries to serve in seven countries, India, China, Syria, Germany, Spain, Austria, and Italy, not forgetting the smaller number of Presbyterian Ministers who travelled from Ireland to British Colonies in South Africa, Canada, Australia and New Zealand to pastor the settlers who emigrated from Ireland at that time.

7. After the Second World War, PCI's global involvement expanded significantly and in the sixty years from 1950 PCI initiated relationships with churches and agencies in more than thirty countries, and commissioned missionaries to serve in sixteen of them: Malawi, Nepal, Jamaica, Kenya, Singapore, England, Israel/Palestine, Indonesia,

Pakistan, Brazil, Lebanon, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Central Asia, and Ukraine.

8. BMO's many partnerships are normally referred to as mission partnerships, to distinguish them from relationships that might be described as confessional, arising from interaction through European and global ecumenical institutions, and furthered through the Church Relations Committee of the General Board.

9. Traditionally, BMO has initiated official mission partnerships at the church leadership level, engaging in correspondence and discussion as to the direction a partnership might take, and the sending of mission personnel. Partnership looks different at different levels of church life, and while it is one thing for BMO to initiate partnerships, if the relationship is going to be fruitful in mission it is important that Presbyteries and congregations catch the vision to share in the partnership, through 'serving as senders', prayer, hosting visitors from overseas, engaging in projects, sending teams and developing twinning relationships. To this extent partnership is to be encouraged at every level of church life, with BMO seeking to provide best practice guidelines.

10. BMO's General Assembly Reports in 2008, 'Together in Mission' paragraphs 1 – 10 and in 2009 'The Global Christian Family' paragraphs 1-12, focused on BMO's understanding of the 'why' and 'how' of partnership and should be read in conjunction with this report which is looking more closely at the 'where' and 'who' of partnership.

Identifying Strategic Partnerships

11. Historically PCI have sought to have a geographical spread of partners, and this was articulated well in the Coleraine Declaration in 1990, "mission is to be pursued amongst all the people of Ireland and the peoples of the European Community and the whole world: those with whom we feel comfortable, those from whom we feel alienated and those who are in any way distant from us in culture and faith."

12. While it is good and characteristic of a denominational mission board that there is a spread of partnerships, there is a danger that in trying to sustain too many, the result is shallow relationships and very little achieved! As BMO looks to the future, the challenge is to be able to embrace PCI's global family of partnerships whilst giving fresh focus to a selected number over the period 2015 - 2020, with a view to

following through more effectively on the operational side having agreed priorities in mission.

13. With this in mind, BMO have looked afresh at PCI's identity as a church, sought to articulate priorities in global mission that are brought to discussion and negotiation in partnerships, considered drivers in mission today, and set out criteria for both partnering and the sending of mission personnel for 2015 and beyond.

Considering PCI's identity and capacity

14. Rather than simply being reactive, attempting to respond positively to every opportunity and invitation received to partner in mission, SC saw the value in looking again at PCI's distinctive journey and personality as a denomination. Being aware of PCI's identity provides a clearer picture of what might be shared in global mission.

15. What foundational values, characteristics, good policies and achievements do we bring to global mission today? Much could be explored and said in this regard, however SC noted that Presbyterians place a high value on:

- Accepting the Bible as the supreme rule of faith and order
- Reformed orthodoxy as set out in the Westminster Confession of Faith
- Historically, bringing a courageous, adventurous, pioneering spirit and a settler mentality
- Intellectual, rational inquiry and providing a solid education for those in church leadership
- Historically being a dissenting church, independent of State control, instead seeing Christ as King
- Being a denomination that has been impacted by revival
- The importance of calling and election
- Emphasising order and control, avoiding emotional excess
- A long tradition of emigration, the first steps in foreign mission being to provide pastoral support to expatriates in the colonies

16. At the same time, however, it was observed that Presbyterians tend to be suspicious if not fearful of those who differ, and carry a measure of self-preoccupation and self-reliance, if not a sense of our own rightness!

Considering our Context - Key drivers in global mission today

17. Having reconsidered PCI's identity, SC recognised the need for further analysis and discussion of significant drivers emerging in and shaping nations and cultures today, and therefore influencing mission as well. Acknowledging that it is God's mission, and He is the primary driver at work in the world today by his Holy Spirit, the following were identified as some other key drivers that should have a bearing on PCI's priorities:

- The unreached- the least evangelised world
- Discipling for transformation – holistic engagement
- Poverty – health, education, environment
- Globalisation
- The secularisation of the West
- The state of the Church in the West
- Conflict and persecution
- Migration – refugees, urbanisation
- Global youth culture
- 'Mission direct' - ordinary people's owning and participating in global mission

Prioritising PCI's mission activities

18. In establishing the following priorities, it is important to work towards clearly defined goals for each, and then to be intentional with regard to implementation of clear, core tasks as we work together with partners.

19. In the 2005 review of the Board's work, four core priority areas were identified: Outreach Initiatives, Leadership Development, Compassionate Ministries and Mission Engagement. When it comes to developing a co-ordinated strategy for partnership and personnel, SC looked primarily at the Outreach Initiatives and Leadership Development as the two priority areas that involve BMO's commissioning of mission personnel to work with church partners, united missions and theological institutions.

20. This review did **not** encompass a number of other 'non-personnel sending' priorities as follows:

- The work of the World Development Committee, partnering with Christian Aid and Tearfund to respond to humanitarian crises and engage in sustainable development (Compassionate Ministries Priority)

- The work of the Mission Involvement Committee, highlighting the importance of having stories to share with the wider church of what God is doing around the world, as well as envisioning and advising mission facilitators for global mission involvement. (Mission Involvement Priority)
- That aspect of the work of the Outreach Ministries Committee that focuses on Scripture translation, publication, distribution and communication, partnering with the Specialist Service Agencies (Outreach Initiatives Priority)

21. The focus was placed on reviewing BMO's outreach and leadership development work, with the following priorities coming to the fore:

- Making disciples especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel
- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders
- Building capacity for sustainable development
- Being a voice for the marginalised and underprivileged, especially women and children
- Standing alongside the suffering and persecuted Church
- Peace-building in a manner that is of mutual benefit
- Strategic health and education ministries

22. Setting out these seven priority areas gives a measure of clarification, yet there remains some concern that seven may still be too many to address effectively.

Clarifying our criteria for partnership

23. The following criteria have been identified as a potential sieve or filter through which existing partnerships could be evaluated and new opportunities to partner in mission could be processed as and when they are presented to or sought out by BMO. These partnerships may be with other church denominations, united or independent mission agencies, or theological institutions. In all relationships BMO seek to retain a sense of family, acknowledging that within families, relationships will ebb and flow with time. The aim of these criteria is not to reduce the number of partners, but rather to serve as a tool for partnership review and to sharpen focus:

- What do PCI and any partner believe God is saying to them?
- Is there potential for good communication through common language, technology, visits, and consultations?
- Does the partner share PCI's Reformed tradition, belonging to the World Communion of Reformed Churches?

- Are there elements of diversity and difference that are likely to feed positively into the partnership?
- What other international partners does the partner already have, either through multilateral or bilateral relations?
- Are there shared vision and priorities in mission so that the partnership could be said to be ‘going places’?
- Are there shared values of being honest, available, committed, patient, versatile, open to negotiation and change, in partnership?
- Has consideration been given to capacity for mission engagement, both the partner’s and PCI’s, as a small denominational agency?
- Is the commitment to partnership simply to share in a short-term project or to invest time in building a long-term relationship?
- What is the likelihood of reciprocity and avoiding dependency?
- Are there opportunities for the sharing of resources, including personnel, finance, and expertise?
- Are there possibilities for developing ongoing congregational and presbyterial mission involvement?
- Are there members of the partner church already living, working and witnessing in Ireland?

Partnership Profile 2015 - 2020

24. The 2005 Review highlighted the importance of focusing on the re-evangelisation of post-Christian Europe, and of encouraging partners in reaching the unreached, particularly within the continent of Asia.

25. The following 22 partnerships covering 18 countries are proposed for focus over the period 2015-2020. The priorities for personnel and/or projects that are highlighted are a reflection of current areas of engagement but subject to ongoing discussion with the partners, and will lead on to the development of a partner by partner plan of action:

Europe

Hungarian Reformed Church (in Hungary and Romania)

- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders
- Strategic health and education ministries

Spanish Evangelical Church

- Making disciples especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel

Grupos Biblios Unidos, Spain

- Making disciples especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel

The Christian Presbyterian Church of Portugal

- Making disciples especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel

Coram Deo, Italy

- Making disciples especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel

Faculté Jean Calvin, France

- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders

Asia

National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon

- Standing alongside the suffering and persecuted Church
- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders

The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

- Standing alongside the suffering and persecuted Church
- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders

Forman Christian College, Lahore, Pakistan

- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders

United Bible Training Centre, Pakistan

- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders

The Church of North India

- Standing alongside the suffering and persecuted Church
- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders

The Evangelical Christian Church of Halmahera, Indonesia

- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders

The Evangelical Christian Church of Timor, Indonesia

- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders
- Strategic health and education ministries

The Christian Church of Sumba, Indonesia

- Building capacity for sustainable development

The United Mission to Nepal

- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders
- Building capacity for sustainable development
- Being a voice for the marginalised and underprivileged, especially women and children
- Peace-building in a manner that is of mutual benefit

Central Asia

- Peace-building in a manner that is of mutual benefit
- Strategic health and education ministries

East & Central Africa

The Presbyterian Church of South Sudan

- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders
- Peace-building in a manner that is of mutual benefit
- Strategic health and education ministries

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa

- Making disciples especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel
- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders
- Building capacity for sustainable development

The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian

- Making disciples especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel

- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders
- Strategic health and education ministries

Scripture Union Malawi

- Making disciples especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel

Theological Education by Extension Malawi

- Support of training programmes and provision of scholarships to equip Christian leaders

Caribbean and Latin America

The Presbyterian Church of Brazil

- Making disciples especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel
- Being a voice for the marginalised and underprivileged, especially women and children

PCI Mission Personnel

26. BMO welcome inquiries from PCI members wishing to explore a sense of call to missionary service. Those inquiring are normally asked to complete a Preliminary Inquiry Form, prior to an initial informal conversation with BMO staff. For some this may lead ultimately to being appointed for overseas service, for others it is about gaining advice in furthering preparation for cross-cultural mission or being referred to another mission agency who may offer alternative opportunities. BMO trusts that all who meet with its staff in this regard will feel supported in finding their way forward in global mission engagement.

27. BMO currently operate with three categories of service:

- Ignite – service up to one year
- Involve – service of more than one and up to two years
- Integrate – service of more than two years

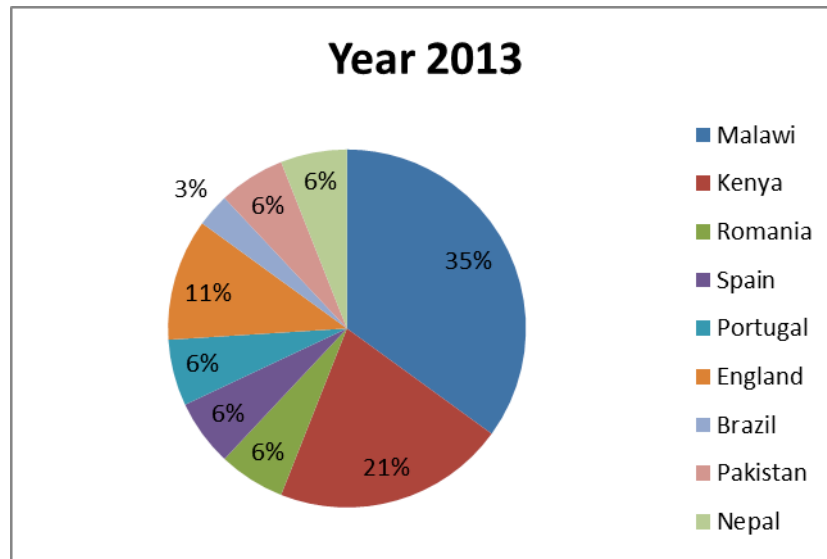
28. It is proposed that the first category be renamed ‘Inspire’. Up until now the ‘Ignite’ category targets those seeking to ‘test the water’ in global mission, primarily younger people. By renaming it as the ‘Inspire’ category, it would also be targeting older and retired people with specific gifts and experience to offer in overseas service. The aim, therefore, would be to work with both younger folk seeking primarily to be inspired for further global engagement, as

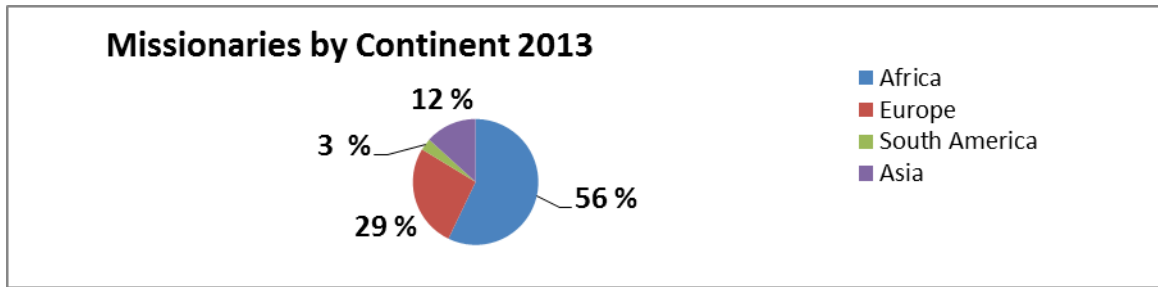
well as those who, through maturity, gifting and experience, might have opportunity to inspire others.

29. As at 31 December 2013, BMO had 34 personnel serving under the Involve or Integrate categories. These cover nine of the eighteen countries (eleven of the twenty-two partnerships) highlighted earlier in the report for special focus after 2014.

Year 2013

Country	Number of Missionaries	%
Malawi	12	35
Kenya	7	21
Romania	2	6
Spain	2	6
Portugal	2	6
England	4	11
Brazil	1	3
Pakistan	2	6
Nepal	2	6
Total	34	100

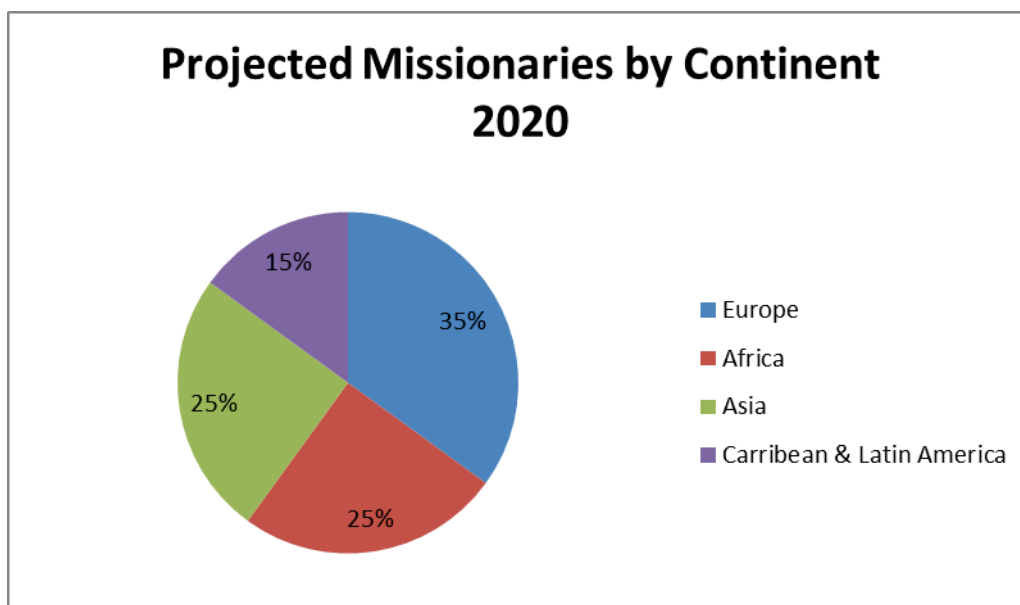




30. Year by year, BMO aims to prayerfully discern the number of mission personnel that can be sustained, both in terms of the financial commitment involved, and the capacity within the Overseas Office to provide an effective support base. By the end of 2014, it is anticipated that this figure will be 37 in eleven countries, with two missionaries resigning and five being commissioned in the course of 2014.

31. Much could be said as to the factors that have led to the current spread of PCI mission personnel around the world. SC are of the view that BMO, as a denominational mission board, should aim to have a broad but more strategic geographical spread of personnel bearing in mind agreed priorities, and should be more intentional in the allocation of personnel. This, in turn, may help to reduce the isolation experienced by some of BMO's mission personnel, and may ultimately lend itself to operating in teams in some locations.

32. The diagram that follows is an aspirational spread looking towards 2020. It places fresh emphasis on working with partners to reach out in the European context, especially Western Europe, where it is relatively straightforward to move around, work, and learn language. Furthermore, many of the major cities of the continent are multi-cultural places of global importance. In the UK and Ireland context, it is also hoped to continue discussion with partner churches and the Board of Mission in Ireland, with a view to furthering outreach amongst diaspora communities on our doorstep. It is not intended to focus exclusively on Europe, with historical and long-standing partnerships in mission in other continents continuing to be deeply valued and developed.



33. Whatever projection is agreed, where it is desired to have increased involvement in a region, this will only be achieved by actively developing partnerships and advertising opportunities for service as and when they arise. In those areas where more limited involvement is envisaged, it is not intended to cut short the assignments of existing personnel, but to give careful consideration to making only the more strategic appointments.

Regional Liaison Personnel and Teams

34. It is proposed to introduce the idea of Regional Liaison Personnel, with one person being designated to this role in each of the main regions where BMO is partnering. Where there were sufficient personnel in a country or region, the Regional Liaison would serve as a team leader, living and working in the region, such that in addition to undertaking a specific role with one of BMO's partners in the region, a portion of their time would be given to providing a level of pastoral care for other mission personnel in the region, and co-ordinating their coming together for occasional retreats. In addition, the Regional Liaison would provide the Overseas Office with information and news articles arising from the region that would be of particular interest to the church at home, ensuring hospitality for visitors, putting in place 'on the ground' arrangements for visiting PCI teams, and orientating partner church visitors prior to their coming to Ireland.

35. It is proposed that early on in the next five year period, this concept of having a Regional Liaison would be piloted, considering the costs and benefits. Advice would be taken from other mission agencies who have experience of operating in this way. Both existing mission personnel and new applications would be considered. The aim would be to make appointments to this role for partnerships and teams in the regions of Europe and East/Central Africa. Thereafter, depending on the spread of mission personnel, similar appointments

would be considered for Asia and the Caribbean & Latin America. Should there be no new sources of income, it is envisaged that these appointments be made with no more than an inflationary increase to the budget in the year in question.

36. BMO need to be strategic in sharing resources with partners, especially in the sending of mission personnel. There is significant investment involved in sending personnel to work with partners around the world and BMO seeks to be good stewards of the funding required. It is therefore important that any roles taken up meet clearly established and agreed criteria that reflect the priorities and values of the Board.

37. All new applications for overseas mission service should be assessed using the following criteria:

38. With reference to *BMO's current priorities* in global mission, does the mission personnel role provide for or contribute to:

- Training programmes for the development of godly church leaders engaged in strategic missional roles in the church's life?
- Evangelism, spiritual formation and the making of disciples?
- Peace-building that will be of mutual benefit?
- Strategic prevention of ill-health, especially HIV/AIDS?
- Capacity building for sustainable development transforming the lives of the poorest people?
- Standing with and advocacy on behalf of those suffering injustice or persecution?
- Strategic education, especially of women and children?

39. Is the role reflective of *BMO's values or guiding principles* in mission in terms of being:

God-centred:

- Is there an assurance that God has been at work in highlighting and asking PCI to fill this role?
- Does the role involve actively, regularly, pointing people to Jesus Christ?

People-focused:

- Does the role involve direct, personal, missional encounter?
- Does the role require holistic/integral missional engagement?
- What are the potential risks attached to the role?
- Does the role provide an opportunity for the 'training of trainers' or capacity building?
- Does the role require a commitment to the learning of a language and culture?

- Does the role require an investment in training, orientation and preparation that is justifiable given the nature of the role?
- Will BMO and/or the partner be able to provide and maintain the highest standard of selection, training, orientation, leadership, communication, on-field integration and supervision, support and care for the person in the role?

Church-based:

- Does the role engage in what only PCI can do, or at least do what we do well!
- Will the role strengthen a partner church in her mission and the relationship with PCI?
- Does the role reflect one or more points of overlap in PCI and her partner's priorities such that there is ownership by all concerned?
- Does the role contribute to reciprocity in mission through special ministry in Ireland, and to what extent is it in line with BMI's strategy in this regard?
- Does the role contribute to evangelism or church-planting in Western Europe?
- Does the role demonstrate and provide long-term commitment from PCI to the partner?

Forward-thinking:

- Does the role fit with BMO's strategic plan for missional engagement, including the desired spread of personnel around the world?
- Is the role a creative new way of engaging in mission or a sphere of service?
- Has a reviewable long-term/short-term timeframe been set for the role?
- What are the implications for the office staff-mission personnel ratio?

40. While each application for missionary service may not 'tick all the boxes' outlined above, there should be evidence of a degree of compatibility under each of the listed headings.

41. In its discussion, SC noted that missionary retention involves a complex web of factors, including agency size, education of personnel, selection procedures, organisational values, leadership, communication and on-field supervision. In particular, SC have underlined the importance of personnel needing to be fully representative of PCI (orientation and selection), knowing our vision, values, and priorities, and suiting our partners agenda. There is a need to avoid areas of non-strategic engagement especially where there is evidence of dependency. SC agreed the importance of factoring in an exit strategy, having an agreed projection from the time of appointment as to how long someone will serve overseas.

CHERYL A MEBAN

Resolutions:

1a. That the General Assembly give thanks for the family of churches, agencies and institutions that PCI has been privileged to partner alongside since 1840, while encouraging sharper focus on those partnerships and priorities identified in the report for the period 2015 – 2020.

1b. That the General Assembly give thanks for all the PCI mission personnel currently serving in a wide range of activities and locations, and encourage ongoing strategic placement of personnel that facilitates the development of regional teams.

CHERYL A MEBAN

Item 15 – BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING**Addition to Resolution 2**

Add: Philip Poots Hillhall Dromore

JNI McNEELY

Item 18 – GENERAL BOARD – Supplementary Report**Memorial Record**

The Very Rev Dr W Donald Patton reports:

The Rev William James Johnstone MA, BD, Minister Emeritus of Craigyhill, Larne, in the Presbytery of Carrickfergus, died on 1 April 2014 in the 68th year of his age and the 43rd year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 17 August 1945 to William Johnstone, a farmer, and Mary, his wife, née Manning. His home congregation was Greenisland where he was raised under the ministry of the Rev Andrew Orr coming to personal faith in Christ during his teens. He was educated at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution and, responding to the call of God to the Christian ministry, he attended Magee University College, Londonderry, from 1965 and Trinity College, Dublin, graduating BA and MA in 1969. He studied theology at the Assembly's College, Belfast, graduating with a BD from the Queen's University, Belfast. He was licensed on the 20 June 1971 by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and assigned as Assistant to the Rev Dr Victor Lynas in the Congregation of Gardenmore, Larne, where he was ordained by the same Presbytery on 9 January 1972 and served there from September

1972 until March 1974. On 14 March 1974 Mr Johnstone was installed in the united charge of Castlewellan and Leitrim in County Down by the Presbytery of Iveagh, where he exercised an expository pulpit ministry and was an attentive pastor to his people. Then in 1983 he accepted a call from the congregation of Craigyhill, Larne, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus on 2 February 1983. This charge had begun as a church extension work in 1956 in the large housing development of Craigyhill and was gathered and built up by the dedicated and evangelistic ministries of his predecessors, the immediate one being the Rev Jackson Buick who had taken up a full-time post as a Chaplain to the Crumlin Road prison. Mr Johnstone gave himself enthusiastically to his preaching and pastoral work. He had a heart for the Lord and a heart for people. His outgoing personality, ready sense of humour and easy conversational gift won him an opening in many a home and a hearing for his witness to the saving grace of Christ. He was well respected in the wider community and was closely involved with it in various ways. In the wider church Mr Johnstone served as Convener of the Christian Training Committee of the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training (1993-1999) and as Clerk of the Presbytery of Carrickfergus (1999-2007). He retired on 1 September 2009 after twenty-six years of diligent ministry in Larne. The final year and a half of his life was dogged by ill health which he bore with dignity and courage, being an example of Christian grace and faith to the last. Throughout his long ministry he was loyally supported and encouraged by his wife Nancy, née Irwin, whom he married on 1 July 1971. They had three children, Emma, Grace and Ruth. We assure them of our prayers in their loss and, with them, we give thanks for the life and ministry of our friend and colleague who fixed his eyes upon Jesus and ran the race marked out for him with perseverance in hope of the glory promised in the Gospel to the people of God.

Rev Dr Charles Presho, BA,MA, BD, MLitt, PhD, died on 18 April 2014 in the 96th year of his age and the 68th year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 5 February 1919 one of three children, (he had two sisters, Jean and Daisy) to William John Presho, a merchant grocer, and his wife Agnes, née Stewart. Sadly his father died when he was aged two years. Following primary education he went to Methodist College, Belfast, and proceeded to tertiary studies at Magee University College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, 1938 to 1941, graduating BA with great credit in the classics and in Hebrew. It was at this time that he was offered the opportunity to follow a professional football career but his mother dissuaded him from that course. He went on to study theology at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Hall, Belfast, in preparation for entering the ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. On completing his studies in 1943 he was licensed by the Eastern Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on 13 June 1944 and was ordained and installed as minister of Loughbrickland Reformed Congregation in March 1945. He also taught classics at Banbridge Academy where the Very

Rev Dr Howard Cromie remembers him as his Classical Greek teacher and a confidant with whom he shared his thoughts of entering the Christian ministry. During this period Dr Presho met Eileen Rhoda Elizabeth Cochrane whom he married in 1946. They had two sons, Richard Alexander Neville, and Ian Nicholson, who died in 1999 after a long illness. In 1947 Dr Presho moved to Glasgow, where he was installed in Nicholson Street Reformed Presbyterian congregation on 21st January 1947. He returned to Northern Ireland in 1958, securing the post of Divinity Master at Sullivan Upper School, Holywood, County Down. He was a much respected teacher appreciated for his academic ability, knowledge and humanity. He gave support and leadership to the school's Scripture Union, encouraging young people in Christian faith and discipleship, and influencing many young men who later became ministers of our Church. He continued his interest in sport and acted as a rugby referee. He and his wife, Rhoda, opened their home to many of these young people once a month on Sunday evenings. He continued his academic studies to which the list of his degrees bears eloquent testimony, gaining his MA and MLitt from Trinity College, Dublin, and his PhD from the Queen's University, Belfast. Having changed his convictions about church music and liturgy he was received into the Presbyterian Church in Ireland by the General Assembly in June 1962 and placed under the care of the Presbytery of Belfast. He and his family worshipped in the congregation of High Street, Holywood, where he served as an elder. He resigned his post in Sullivan Upper School in June 1975 to take up the position of Executive Director of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland and was formally inducted in the role by the Presbytery of Ards on the 2 December 1975. He travelled widely promoting the work of the Society and interest in, and understanding of, the Bible. Dr Presho's enthusiasm for his subject was infectious, stimulating and informing his hearers. For some years in the 1990s he wrote an occasional column in the *Presbyterian Herald* under the title of 'Bible Digest', explaining the background to a variety of Bible passages. He had earlier published a study of St Paul's letter to the Ephesians, called *God's Poem: a Devotional Meditation on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (1945). Dr Presho retired on 5 February 1984 and for a time assisted in Knock Presbyterian Church. We extend our sympathy and prayers to his wife Rhoda, son Neville and wider family circle, thanking God for the life and service of our brother who fought the good fight of faith and who has joined that great cloud of witnesses whose example inspires new generations in the service of Jesus, Lord and Saviour.

Assembly Appointment

Following interview the General Board nominate the Rev Thomas James Stothers for appointment as Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and Deputy General Secretary.

Structures Review Panel

Correction

Page 30 of the Structures Review Panel booklet. Amend figures under “Current Boards” to read as follows:

- General Board (168) Presbytery Reps 76 (45%) Others 92 (55%)
- Overall (706) Presbytery Reps 361 (51%) Others 345 (49%)
- GRAND TOTAL – 930

Church and Society Committee

Appendix A

DEALING WITH THE PAST

Paper submitted to the Haass Commission by the Church and Society Committee.

PREAMBLE

A. We deeply appreciate the invitation and opportunity to offer a more worked out suggestion for dealing with the past that we were able to offer at our meeting last month. We believe that this paper contains some new thinking that has not been in the public arena, and offer it to you for consideration.

B. The background to our suggestions is as follows:

(i) As the largest Protestant denomination in Northern Ireland, many thousands of the people who were killed and injured are within the ambit of our congregations at local parish level, so we feel that we have a good understanding of much of the pain and trauma inflicted over the years.

(ii) You will appreciate that as a Christian church, our views are framed by our best understanding of the breadth and depth of Christian and Biblical teaching. But we are conscious of the political imperatives, and so have tried to frame our submission in language that commends itself in the public square.

(iii) We ourselves, as a consequence of our Christian calling, are committed to working tirelessly for the welfare of the whole community to help face the past and shape the future. Given the pain and trauma within our whole community, we believe that some new attitudes and ideas need to be politically and publicly discussed and promoted in an equally tireless way. Central to this discussion is the necessary role of forgiveness, justice, grace, remorse, compassion, healing, faith and repentance as well as empathy and reconciliation. Each of these needs a great deal more thoughtful work, and we would be very willing to help with

that. However, it is our firm conviction that unless such fundamental issues are openly addressed, there is little scope for real and lasting progress in the political arena.

1. Our core view is that an International Commission is highly desirable to help our society face our past – but that the objective for that Commission should be to pave the way for the healing of the community. The stature and independence of the Commission will be key to its success.
2. The purpose should be unambiguously reflected in its name. We suggest that it be an International Commission for Community Healing.
3. The name implies both a retrospective and prospective role. Necessarily its work would involve a significant element of truth recovery. This would inevitably lead to analysis and informed judgement about the implications of the findings for taking forward community healing.

The emergence of truth, or partial truth, could, of course, readily become a weapon against others, and may well not be a source of healing. This is why it is essential that the Commission gives equal consideration to the prospective objective of community healing.

4. We are greatly exercised that the legal definition of victims makes no distinction between ‘innocent’ victims and ‘perpetrators’ of violence, so we believe that a serious effort must be made to deal with the sense of moral and judicial outrage and hurt that this causes. If this is not done, then we see little prospect of there being community healing or reconciliation. We are acutely aware that there are strongly opposing narratives about the past, but are convinced that political progress will be impossible unless this distinction is faced in some coherent way. We return to this issue below.

5. With that said, it might well be possible to have a dual approach to drawing out as much truth as possible, which many victims deeply long for. We suggest a “bottom up” process where a wide range of victims and survivors can tell their story. This would allow them to testify about the impact of the incident on their lives and would afford them public recognition. We also believe that those who have criminal convictions (including ex prisoners) should be encouraged to tell their stories. Such ‘story telling’ should have the widest possible public hearing, and not be relegated to the edge of public consciousness. Separately, the International Commission would take receipt of the stories (many of which are already available via Healing Through Remembering), and would, in general terms, review the accounts from which conclusions might be drawn on how best to achieve healing at both individual and community levels. This ought not in any way to be a process of judicial

interrogation – rather it is offered as a way of helping as much truth as possible to emerge, whilst at the same time helping many of those who really are innocent victims to know that they are not put in the same group as those who perpetrated the violence upon them.

6. There would also necessarily be other elements in a Commission's work – such as seeking maximum acknowledgement / confession of the pain inflicted by groups, individuals and institutions over the years; seeking maximum information on particular events and killings from whatever sources are available; and seeking the highest level possible of justice for those most affected, without there being any further public enquiries. (We are conscious that as the years go by, it is becoming increasingly difficult to bring many cases satisfactorily to court, and that many families will never find redress there.) We also believe that wrongdoing by state forces should be investigated on the same basis as wrongdoing by any other group or institution.

7. We are not in favour of amnesty, as it clearly implies that the necessary pillar of justice which is one of the marks of a healthy democratic society is much less important than the need for reconciliation.

8. We regard it as very important that the current resources of the PSNI are not unduly absorbed by such work, which should be funded separately by the UK government.

9. As indicated above, we remain deeply troubled that the current legal definition of victims makes no distinction between the perpetrator and the person attacked. This is morally unacceptable, and we will continue to support legislative attempts to align the legislation on victims with that of terrorism. With that said clearly, we do not believe that the need for community healing for the well-being of future generations should be held up indefinitely whilst a change in the law is being sought. A better future must be pro-actively built for the welfare of present and future generations. In paragraph 5 above, we have tried to offer a path through the acute moral and practical dilemma of the proper balance between the need for justice to be done and community healing to be advanced.

10. Since healing in our society will, by definition, be a long term intergenerational process, we believe that the initial remit of an International Commission on Community Healing must be to set out proposals for public discussion as to how it would set about getting that long term work under way. We must explicitly disavow any suggestion that the Commission can effect the reconciliation.

11. Therefore, there must be wide public discussion and subsequent wide agreement both within civic society and politically on the route and shape of

such healing over coming years. On the basis of that agreement, the Commission could then outline the steps needed on a short, medium and longer term basis – and offer some guidance on the modalities of those steps. We see the Commission's life span initially as being for 3 years to make the progress identified above.

12. In parallel with this process, we regard is as absolutely essential that:

- (a) the current work with victims and survivors is energetically pursued;
- (b) that the NI Executive explicitly delivers real improvement in the quality of life for our citizens in the areas most afflicted by the legacy of the past. We regard is as utterly unacceptable for communities to be left without any substantial visible benefits from the Belfast Agreement, whilst complex and highly charged political issues are hammered out over a long period.

13. We would be happy to discuss further with you or your staff if that were helpful.

Presbyterian Historical Society

The Presbyterian Historical Society seeks the approval of the General Assembly in offering advice and guidance for Presbyterian Churches in relation to: a) the indexing of congregational records and b) digitising records by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN RELATION TO THE INDEXING OF CONGREGATIONAL RECORDS

Introduction

Many Presbyterian churches are being approached by individuals and organisations seeking to index baptism and marriage registers in particular but they may also want to index other records such as communicants' registers, stipend books etc, all of which are of value to family historians. There is certainly great benefit in having these records indexed as it obviates the necessity to access the originals, thereby reducing handling and the possibility of the records being stolen or lost. It will also save time for ministers who are often approached to carry out searches in the records. However, there are also inherent dangers as records may be lost or damaged in the course of indexing and churches can lose control over what uses are being made of the indexes.

The following is offered by way of guidance and advice and has been issued with the approval of the General Assembly.

1. It is advisable to have a written agreement drawn up prior to any indexing being done that will make it clear what can and cannot be done with the compiled indexes:
 - a. The congregation should definitely ask to receive a copy of the index.
 - b. You may want to request that the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland (PHSI) receives a copy of the index to assist the Society in handling the many genealogical enquiries it receives every day; if the Society did not exist then these enquiries would fall to congregations to respond to.
 - c. You may want to retain the right to approve all future uses of the index (questions that should be asked are: will the indexes be made available for commercial gain or simply made available within the organisation).
 - d. Consider whether PHSI might benefit from placing indexes of congregational records on its website so that any income earned would go towards the on-going work of PHSI in preserving our Presbyterian heritage.
 - e. Take into account the need to respect privacy of living individuals by only permitting indexing of records more than 100 years old

2. It is strongly advised that records are not removed from the custody of the church for indexing purposes as there is no guarantee that the records will be housed in secure accommodation, are not being tampered with (eg pages torn out) and will not get damaged (eg tea/coffee stains). Bear in mind that if the records were being preserved in an archive/library there are no circumstances in which records would be given out on loan or consulted in an unsupervised area. In most instances copies of congregational records are available, either on microfilm or in photocopy form which indexers can work from. Microfilms can be consulted either at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) or at the library and archive of PHSI. Should no copies of the records be available or the existing copy is illegible then you could make a request to PRONI for the records to be digitised (digitisation has now replaced microfilm as the preferred copy format). Other options might be: the indexers work on church premises under supervision; the congregation commissions PHSI to have the records indexed by its volunteers, which rules out any third party involvement.

Advice for Presbyterian churches who have been approached by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland to have their records digitised.

If you have been approached by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) to have your records digitised you might want to consider the following and to draw up a formal agreement:

1. Requesting that a digital copy is provided to the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland (PHSI) in the same way as PRONI give a copy of the microfilm to PHSI.
2. A proviso that the digital copy produced can **only** be used in PRONI itself ie the digital images are not to go on-line. There is the potential for the digital images to be placed on the members area of the PHSI website, with any income earned going towards the support of PHSI (but only with the permission of the Kirk Session).
3. A proviso that copies of an entire volume or the entire digital copy of the records **cannot** be made without the permission of the congregation (see resolution of 2007 General Assembly Page 28) – ‘digital’ simply replacing ‘microfilm’ as the format.
4. A proviso that the copying of any record other than baptisms, marriages and burials that is less than 100 years old requires the permission of the congregation (see resolution of 2007 General Assembly Page 28).
5. A proviso that the digital copy will **not** be used for commercial purposes without permission from the session.
6. Care should be taken about permitting the digitisation of recent Kirk Session minutes and making them available for public inspection as there may be matters of a confidential and personal nature; sensitive personal data is protected under the Data Protection Act in which case records may be closed for up to 100 years depending on the age of the data subject (digitising and making available minutes up to 1914 would be the latest if 100 years is decided on but probably 75 years is sufficient, so Kirk Session minutes up to 1939 could be copied and made available). If the church is satisfied that there is no sensitive personal data in any of their Kirk Session minutes then you may want to have all Kirk Session minutes digitised and made available subject only to the above provisions in relation to copying. If more recent Kirk Session minutes are to be closed then this should be intimated to PRONI in the agreement, as PRONI can ensure that any closed records are not made available to the public.

Thanks

Rev Dr Annes Nel

1. During the year the Rev Dr Annes Nel resigned as Convener of the Global Concerns Committee. This was a new Committee, coordinating the work of several independent panels, so the convenership has not been an easy one. Annes carried this out with diligence and thanks are expressed to him.

Rev Dr Brian Savage

2. At the last Assembly the Rev Dr Brian Savage took over the convenership of the Ad Hoc Committee on Elders' Terms, having been very involved in the work of this Committee. While the Committee is now asking to be discharged Brian's constructive and innovative work is very much appreciated.

DONALD J WATTS

Amended Resolution

Resolution 5

That an Assembly Residential Conference be held in the Summer of 2017 with the theme, "A Church Fit for Purpose", and that the General Board be authorized to appoint a planning Committee.

Licensed Amendment

Resolution 8

That the General Assembly, recognizing that the local congregation is the primary unit for mission, instructs the Structures Review Panel to bring a revised report with reduced and simplified structures to the 2015 General Assembly.

WILLIAM JA MOODY
DAVID W REID

Additional Resolutions

Church and Society

22a. That the General Assembly, as the main parading season approaches, encourage all who participate in public parades and protests to obey the law and

avoid any behaviour which is not for the overall good of society and respectfully urge those parading organisations which espouse Christian values to uphold those values through behaviour in the public sphere which honours the Lord Jesus Christ and reflects the teaching of Scripture.

22b. That the General Assembly urge those who speak in the public square to ensure they use words that heal rather than hurt and where there is legitimate disagreement a generosity of spirit is shown so that no one is demeaned or devalued for holding a different view.

22c. That the General Assembly commend congregations and communities who model a radical gospel alternative to racially motivated prejudice against immigrants and ethnic minorities by providing welcome and acceptance.

T NORMAN HAMILTON

22d. That the General Assembly, in regard to the forthcoming Referendum in the Republic of Ireland on same sex marriage, urge Presbyterians and others in the Republic to consider that the witness of the Bible, accepted by this and most Churches, is that marriage is to be between a man and a woman and, bearing in mind the deeply held views and strong feelings on the issues, request all involved to carry on the debate with gentleness and respect.

JOHN G FARIS
CWP KENNEDY

Global Concerns

28a. That the Presbyterian Church in Ireland commend to all her leaders and people a gospel-centred peacebuilding which is demonstrated in a generosity of spirit towards all people across our divided society recognising that our call to a ministry of reconciliation challenges us to build good relationships with all in public life for the future good of the whole community.

STEPHEN S JOHNSTON
JOHN A PEACOCK

28b. That the resignation of the Rev Dr Annes Nel as convener of the Global Concerns Committee be noted, that he be thanked for his services and the Rev Richard Kerr appointed in his place.

DONALD J WATTS

Presbyterian Historical Society

32a. That the General Assembly approve the Advice and Guidance on the indexing of congregational records.

32b. That the General Assembly approve the Advice for Presbyterian Churches who have been approached by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland to have their records digitised.

32c. That a grant of £17,750 be paid from the Incidental Fund to the Presbyterian Historical Society.

DONALD J WATTS

Item 20 – Amended Overtures

Anent Par 128 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that, from 1st January 2015, paragraph 128 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

128. (1) **The Linkage Commission** shall consist of:
- (a) The Moderator, and Clerk of the General Assembly; Commission Convener and Secretary; the Deputy Clerk; three representatives of the Council for Mission in Ireland; Conveners of the Commission Panels.
 - (b) One direct nominee from each Presbytery.
 - (c) Nine nominees of the Nominations Committee.
2. Ten members shall form a quorum for the Commission.
- (3)(a) The Commission shall have Assembly powers to determine conditions under which congregations shall be linked, vacant pastorates filled or supplied, associate pastorates established, special ministries provided, auxiliary ministry posts established, additional pastoral personnel posts authorised and to deal with such other matters as the Assembly may from time to time refer to it. The law of the Church shall apply where relevant to associate ministers where ministers of congregations are referred to but the associate minister shall have no entitlement as such to benefits for the minister in active service.

(b) The Commission shall approve additional pastoral personnel and auxiliary ministry posts, as appropriate.

(4) Before any step is taken by a congregation or Presbytery towards filling a vacancy in the pastorate of a congregation, the sanction of the Commission evidenced under the hand of its Convener shall be first obtained.

(5) Prior to such sanction being given and after consultation with the Presbytery or Presbyteries concerned, the Commission shall go into the merits of the case and decide –

(a) whether the case is one for continuance, linkage, dissolution, porting or other special provisions as may be appropriate, including dissolution of existing linkages for alternative arrangements;

(b) what minimum of stipend, Central Ministry Fund contributions, ministerial expenses and other sums shall be paid from local sources or what grants shall be made from central funds;

(c) what other special terms should be set or arrangements made for leave to call, pulpit supply or pastoral oversight;

(d) to what Presbytery a newly linked or ported congregation shall belong.

(6) Where there is not a vacancy in the pastorate of a congregation, the Commission shall have power –

(a) upon report from Presbytery or a request from the congregation, to examine the matter and act accordingly;

(b) to arrange the retirement from active duty or alternative employment of a minister, upon such terms as may be agreed, to facilitate linkage with a vacant congregation;

(c) where a minister in active duty proposes to undertake additionally a paid public appointment, to examine the proposal and act accordingly so that his duties to the Church shall be discharged and no improper demand made upon the manpower and resources of the Church.

(7) In congregations and Charges served by ministers under the Home Mission, ordained assistants or other agents of the Church, the Commission shall have power to –

(a) determine the remuneration of those so serving and allocate the cost among the various funds of the Church;

(b) determine the contributions to be made by the congregations or charges to various funds of the Church in respect of services received.

(8) The Commission shall consider church architecture issues and provide for the examination of all plans and proposals for the building, alterations, renovation or demolition of all or part of Churches, Church halls and manses, as well as all proposals and designs for memorials, windows and artificial lighting, and for the seating and furnishings requisite for the conduct of public worship, observing rules agreed by the General Assembly from time to time.

Anent Par 272 of the Code

To add: 272 (9) The Council may call ministers to work in the administration of the Church or to facilitate the work of this or other Councils.

Anent Par 277 of the Code

To add: 277 (4) The Council may call ministers, elders, deaconesses or lay agents to recognised work in Ireland and allocate them to their spheres of service.

Anent Par 278 of the Code

To add: 278 (4) The Council may select and call missionaries and allocate them to their spheres of service.

DONALD J WATTS

Item 22 – TRUSTEES – Supplementary Report**APPOINTMENT OF NEW TRUSTEES****RESOLUTION**

That Mrs Avril Heenan be, and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in room of Mr AT Ross, resigned, and of the due appointment of Mrs Avril Heenan as a said Trustee attestation is made by the signature of the Moderator of the General Assembly and of the Clerk of the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1871.

DONALD J WATTS

Item 28 – SPECIAL (JUDICIAL) COMMISSION**Additional Resolution**

1a. That from 1 September, 2014 the Rev Dr DJ Watts shall be a member of the Special (Judicial) Commission in place of the Rev TD Gribben.

DONALD J WATTS

Item 29 – COMMISSION ON APPLICATIONS**Additional Resolution**

1a. That the Commission on Applications be reappointed with the following membership:

The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly (Convener)
Revs. Princ JS Carson, JNI McNeely, TJ Stothers, RS Hetherington, Mairisine Stanfield; Mrs EA Warden.

DONALD J WATTS

Item 30 – SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL (PTFI)

Additional Resolution

1a. That the Commission be thanked and discharged.

DONALD J WATTS

Item 32 – BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

Additional Resolution (SPUD)

4a. That the General Assembly endorse the vital work of university chaplaincies and encourage chaplains to maximise opportunities to support students on campus, in particular during more stressful periods.

DONALD J WATTS

Item 34 – BOARD OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL – Supplementary Report

REVIEW OF THE CENTRAL MINISTRY FUND BONUS

During 2013 the Priorities Committee of the General Board asked the Board of Finance and Personnel to undertake a review of the expenditure of the Assessment Funds of the Church. In particular the Board was asked to identify if there were ways in which expenditure could be reduced or the money applied in another way. One of the significant issues identified during this review was the cost of the Central Ministry Fund “bonus” under Para 315 The Code. This Report outlines the present “bonus” arrangements and sets out proposals for changes.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Under the provisions of The Code Para 315(2) “*the income of the Central Ministry Fund shall be applied.....To pay (in the first place out of income from the Sustentation Fund) to every qualified minister a monthly sum of £30 together with an annual bonus of £300 plus £2.50 for every £50 or part thereof of the Basic Ministerial Income for the Incoming year which is in excess of £4,300 or as may be fixed from time to time by the Supervising Board.*”

1.2 For the purposes of Para 315(2) a qualified minister is defined in Para 316(1) as a “retired minister, minister, colleague minister, associate minister, assistant minister of a congregation”

1.3 Using the 2014 Basic Ministerial Minimum the amount of the “bonus” that every qualified minister could receive is calculated as £1,615.00 (being £23,416 less £4,300 equals £19,116 divided by £50 = 382 parts, 382 parts at £2.50 plus £300 plus £30/month for 12 months).

1.4 The Board of Finance and Personnel have however fixed the amount of the bonus at £1,518 since 2008 (based on 2008 Basic Ministerial Minimum of £21,450) as allowed for under Para 315(2) The Code

1.5 For “active” ministers the bonus is paid as a monthly grant of £30 (£360 for year) and an annual bonus in December of £1,158. Retired minister receive 1/12th of the total “bonus” each month.

1.6 Some Ministers with pre-78 service also receive an additional £15/month (previously approved by the General Assembly by resolution). This was stopped a number of years ago for new retirees but continues to be paid to those previously in receipt.

1.7 The cost to the Central Ministry Fund of the “bonus” in 2013 was £882,016, which equates to approx. 580 ministers being in receipt. Per the Statistics Report for 2012 there are 230 retired ministers and 392 active ministers i.e. a total of 622. Some ministers are not entitled to the bonus e.g. College Professors, Chaplains, Ministers serving overseas and Ministers based in “Church House”.

1.8 The bonus is treated as pensionable income which adds an additional 27.5% to costs – this was funded through the Pension Assessment prior to 2012 but since 2013, and following the change in the basis of assessment from stipend to assessable income, is funded through the Central Ministry Fund assessment.

1.9 The “Bonus” is partly funded by income from the Commutation Fund and the Sustentation Fund but the majority of the cost is covered by the CMF assessment. See 1.10 below.

1.10 A summary of the cost to the Central Ministry Fund over recent years is as follows:

	2013	2012 £	2011 £	2010 £
Cost of "Bonus" (monthly and annual)	882,016	876,626	881,627	881,017
Net Income from Sustentation Fund (which includes income from Commutation Fund)	(224,473)	(224,457)	(210,301)	(207,460)
Net Cost to Central Ministry Fund	657,543	652,169	671,326	673,557

If the net income of the Sustentation Fund was paid to qualifying ministers this would equate to approx. £385 per minister (say £225,000 divided by 580 ministers). This roughly equates to the present monthly bonus of £30 or £360 for the year.

1.11 There is an important "link" between the "bonus" and any pension due under the Retired Ministers Fund for ministers with pre-78 service. The Rules of the Retired Ministers Fund provide that normally a minister will receive a pension from the Fund based on the number of complete month's service prior to 1 April 1978. Each months service gives an entitlement to 1/420th of half the basic ministerial minimum on retirement e.g. if a minister has 10 years' service prior to 1 April 1978 the pension he would receive would be 120 months divided by 420 months times 50% of £23,416 which equals £3,345.

However, under the Code the payment of the RMF pension is deemed to be inclusive of the payment due from the CMF. (Ref The Code Para 321(i) "The retirement pension, inclusive of the designated payment under the Central Ministry Fund.....").

Therefore for a Retired Ministers with pre 78 service to receive any entitlement above the total "bonus" he will need to have more than approx. 55 months pre 78 service i.e. $55/420 * 50\% * £23,416 = £1,533$ which broadly equates to the bonus of £1,518

There are very few active ministers now who have pre-78 service.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The Pensions and Assessment Committee considered various ways in which to reduce the cost of the "annual bonus" to the Central Ministry Fund and identified the following options/issues

a) Incorporating the “Annual Bonus” into the Ministerial Minimum

To achieve this the ministerial minimum would be increased from £23,416 (for 2014) to £24,574 (i.e. add £1,158 – this assumes the monthly bonus of £360 would still be paid by the Central Ministry Fund out of income from the Sustentation/ Commutation Funds). It was noted that:

- there would be an additional direct stipend cost to congregations but this could be offset by a reduction in the Central Ministry Fund Assessment.
- if there was no “offset” there is likely to be an increase in the cost of augmentation to the Central Ministry Fund in respect of congregations that could not increase their stipend.
- there would be implications for other funds which base amounts on the Basic Ministerial Minimum e.g. Retired Ministers and Widows of Ministers Funds pensions, Students Bursary Fund grants, Deaconesses, Irish Mission Workers “salaries” and pulpit supply fees.

b) Fixing the bonus at £1,518 until it comes in line with income from Sustentation Fund

This would take approx. 60 years to achieve assuming an annual increase in income of 2.5%

c) Gradually reduce the bonus to the level of income from Sustentation Fund

This would result in a reduction in minister’s income over time.

d) Whether the “bonus” should be pensionable?

The Committee noted that the bonus is currently treated as pensionable income for active ministers and therefore they accrue a pensionable entitlement on this income in retirement. They however, also continue to receive the bonus in retirement.

3. IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE – INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS.

(a) After considering the various options in Section 2 the proposal that was **initially** acceptable to the Committee was to move the annual bonus part of the bonus (i.e. £1,158) into the basic ministerial minimum in a phased way over a period ten years e.g.

TRANSFER OF CMF BONUS TO MINISTERIAL MINIMUM					
	Ministerial Minimum £	"Regium Donum" £	CMF Bonus £		Total
2014	23,416	360	1,158		24,934
2015	23,474	360	1,100		24,934
2016	23,574	360	1,000		24,934
2017	23,674	360	900		24,934
2018	23,774	360	800		24,934
2019	23,874	360	700		24,934
2020	23,974	360	600		24,934
2021	24,074	360	500		24,934
2022	24,174	360	400		24,934
2023	24,274	360	300		24,934
2024	24,374	360	200		24,934
2025	24,474	360	100		24,934
2026	24,574	360	0		24,934
2027	24,574	360	0		24,934

(b) It was recognised however, that other payments are “linked” to the ministerial minimum (e.g. *Deaconesses, Irish Mission Workers, Students, Retired Ministers, Widows of Ministers*) and therefore it may be necessary to retain the “basic ministerial minimum” to avoid additional costs to those funds. One option would be to incorporate the Non-Regium Donum element of the bonus or the “annual bonus” into the minimum stipends after one year’s service and thereby retaining the present basic ministerial minimum. However, to ensure ministers in their first year do not “lose out”, as they would no longer receive the annual bonus, a special grant would need to be awarded for that year only.

4. IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE – FINAL PROPOSALS

In summary it is proposed that with effect from 1 January 2015 the Central Ministry Fund no longer covers the cost of the current annual bonus (£1,158) but that all qualifying ministers continue to receive the payment due from the Commutation / Sustentation Fund (approx. £360 per year). The proposals are designed to ensure there is no additional cost to congregations or reduction in the income of ministers in congregations or those in retirement. The detailed proposals are as follows;

4.1 PROPOSAL 1 – THE ANNUAL BONUS

That with effect from 1 January 2015 the annual bonus is no longer paid.

4.2 PROPOSAL 2 - STIPENDS PAID BY CONGREGATIONS

That with effect from 1 January 2015 all Congregations will be expected to increase their minister's stipends by £1,158 i.e. in line with the proposed reduction in the bonus.

4.3 PROPOSAL 3 – CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

In order to ensure that there is no additional cost to congregations it is proposed that rather than implementing the reduction in the annual bonus over a ten year period, as outlined in 3(a), that it would be fully implemented in 2015 i.e. all congregations will be expected to increase their ministers stipend by £1,158. The additional cost to congregations of £1,595 (being £1,158 plus the employer's national insurance and pension contribution) will be offset by a reduction in the Central Ministry Fund Assessments. It is proposed that this will be achieved by introducing a new Nil rate assessment band of £11,000 which would ensure the level of assessment is reduced by the increase in stipend i.e.

	Bands	Rate	Amount
CURRENT			
First Assessment Band	Zero to £65,000 -----	14.5% -----	£9,425 -----
PROPOSED			
First Assessment Band	Zero to £11,000	Nil	Nil
Second Assessment Band	£11,001 to £65,000 or £54,000 -----	14.5% -----	£7,830 -----
TOTAL	£65,000 -----		£7,830 -----
REDUCTION IN ASSESSMENTS			£1,595 =====

4.4 PROPOSAL 4 - STIPENDS PAID TO ACTIVE MINISTERS

Minsters should have their stipend increased (by £1,158) and will continue to receive the "Regium Donum" monthly payment from the Central Ministry Fund. They will no longer receive the annual bonus from the Central Ministry Fund

but overall there should be no change in their remuneration just a change in where it comes from.

It is proposed that the Regium Donum monthly payment would not be pensionable.

Active Ministers, especially those coming close to retirement, may have an expectation that they will receive the bonus in retirement. As noted above they already accrue pension on the bonus. It is proposed that Active Ministers aged 56 or over on 1 January 2015 will be entitled to receive “annual bonus” (currently £1,158) on retirement, if deemed to be a qualified minister under The Code Para 315(2). The cost of this will be funded through the Central Ministry Fund as a special grant under The Code Para 315(5).

Active Ministers under 56 on 1 January 2015 will not be entitled to receive “the annual bonus” on retirement.

4.5 PROPOSAL 5 - RETIRED MINISTERS

It is proposed that those presently in receipt of the “annual bonus” will in effect continue to receive it and that this will be achieved as follows;

(a) Those with pre 78 service

Ministers with service prior to 1 April 1978 will be entitled to receive a pension from that fund calculated in accordance with the Rules of the Fund (and without any reduction for the “annual bonus” but with a reduction for the Regium Donum or monthly CMF payment). Where the calculated amount, less the Regium Donum, is less than the annual bonus they should receive the shortfall from the Central Ministry Fund as a special grant under Para 315(5)

(b) Those with no pre 78 service

To ensure their retirement income is not reduced they should receive a special grant from the Central Ministry Fund under Para 315(5) equivalent to the present annual bonus.

In respect of any amounts due under 4.5(a) and 4.5(b) as a special grant, this is a fixed amount and not subject to an annual review.

4.6 PROPOSAL 6 – THE REGIUM DONUM

It is proposed that the part of the “bonus” historically linked to the Regium Donum and funded through income from the Sustentation and Commutation

Funds should continue to be paid to all “qualifying ministers”. It is estimated this would be set initially at £360 per ministers per year but would be reviewed on an annual basis in light of income received. Using historical income the annual amounts would have been;

Sustentation / Commutation Fund Income						
Year	Income	Per Qual. Minister		Total Bonus	Bonus	Qualifying Ministers
2013	224,473	386		882,016	1,518	581
2012	224,454	389		876,626	1,518	577
2011	210,302	363		878,627	1,518	579
2010	207,460	358		881,017	1,518	580
2009	218,558	383		865,413	1,518	570
2008	252,438	442		866,033	1,518	571

The Committee concluded that the name “Bonus” is not helpful and that in future the payment from the Sustentation / Commutation Funds should be referred to as the “Regium Donum” to maintain the historical link to the original source of the income.

4.7 PROPOSAL 7 – BOARDS AND AGENCIES THAT USE THE BASIC MINISTERIAL MINIMUM

Rather than adopt the proposal set out in 3(b) it is proposed that the annual bonus is incorporated into the Basic Ministerial Minimum. As a consequence other Boards and Agencies which use the Basic Ministerial Minister as a basis for remuneration or grants should reassess their remuneration arrangements and e.g. consider amending the percentage of the minimum which is paid.

4.8 CODE CHANGE

An appropriate overture to amend Paragraph 315(2) of the Code is appended.

SUMMARY OF PRESBYTERY RETURNS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2013

Please see table on next page

		[----- INCOME -----]			[----- EXPENDITURE -----]							
		Assessment	Other	TOTAL	Presbytery	Other	Insurance	Other	TOTAL	SURPLUS	CLOSING	
		Congregations		INCOME	Clerk	Staff			EXPENDITURE	(DEFICIT)	BALANCE	
OPENING	BALANCE											
1	Ards	20,876	17,585	314	17,899	(10,848)	(5,385)	(214)	(3,733)	(20,180)	(2,281)	18,595
2	Armagh	4,144	10,199	313	10,512	(8,657)	(200)	(207)	(1,375)	(10,439)	73	4,217
3	Ballymena	9,594	17,403	3,413	20,816	(11,320)	(3,500)	(207)	(5,787)	(20,814)	2	9,596
4	Belfast North	7,431	15,924	1,253	17,177	(10,971)	(4,400)	(306)	(4,518)	(20,195)	(3,018)	4,413
5	Belfast South	12,610	15,266	17,941	33,207	(8,470)	(16,299)	(207)	(4,612)	(29,588)	3,619	16,229
6	Belfast East	144,293	21,502	4,541	26,043	(5,837)	(6,092)	(207)	(15,223)	(27,359)	(1,316)	142,977
7	Carrickfergus	9,734	10,918	12	10,930	(9,218)	(540)	(127)	(1,444)	(11,329)	(399)	9,335
8	Coleraine & Limavady	39,429	9,364	0	9,364	(9,315)	(873)	(207)	(2,411)	(12,806)	(3,442)	35,987
9	Derry & Donegal	27,143	31,273	25,873	57,146	(12,000)	(917)	(207)	(33,511)	(46,635)	10,511	37,654
10	Down	29,082	9,937	2,676	12,613	(6,338)	0	(207)	(3,331)	(9,876)	2,737	31,819
11	Dromore	2,208	12,855	0	12,855	(10,306)	(1,700)	(207)	(522)	(12,735)	120	2,328
12	€ Dublin & Munster	46,570	17,609	31,151	48,760	(8,287)	(25,395)	(646)	(12,111)	(46,439)	2,321	48,891
13	Iveagh	12,159	13,212	337	13,549	(9,824)	(850)	(207)	(1,950)	(12,831)	718	12,877
14	€ Monaghan	58,400	5,490	17,340	22,830	(2,050)	(2,315)	(417)	(19,010)	(23,792)	(962)	57,438
15	Newry	3,209	10,531	691	11,222	(7,327)	(300)	(127)	(1,831)	(9,585)	1,637	4,846
16	Omagh	13,334	11,391	686	12,077	(7,273)	(1,828)	(207)	(1,934)	(11,242)	835	14,169
17	Route	138,742	11,553	9,742	21,295	(8,902)	(350)	(207)	(8,273)	(17,732)	3,563	142,305
18	Templepatrick	15,054	17,400	5,524	22,924	(8,268)	(650)	(272)	(12,662)	(21,852)	1,072	16,126
19	Tyrone	743	11,382	544	11,926	(7,514)	(1,000)	(207)	(828)	(9,549)	2,377	3,120
Sterling		489,785	247,695	73,860	321,555	(152,388)	(44,884)	(3,530)	(103,945)	(304,747)	16,808	506,593
Euro		104,970	23,099	48,491	71,590	(10,337)	(27,710)	(1,063)	(31,121)	(70,231)	1,359	106,329

Note re Iveagh – Closing Balance 31 December 2012 £10,869 adjusted to £12,159

Additional Resolution

5a. That the proposals set out in the “Review of the Central Ministry Fund Bonus” be approved and implemented on 1 January 2015.

JOHN G HUNTER

Item 35 - Additional Overture**Anent Par 315(2) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 315(2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

“To pay (out of income received from the Sustentation Fund) to every qualified minister a monthly sum to be fixed from time to time by the supervising Board.”

JOHN G HUNTER