



GENERAL ASSEMBLY



ANNUAL REPORTS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- Notes:**
- (i) **Business commences at 9.30 a.m. each morning.**
 - (ii) **Lunch will be at 1.00 p.m. each day.**
 - (iii) **Figures printed in brackets are page references to the Annual Reports.**

Tuesday

Business

Communications

PWA

Mission in Ireland

Union Commission

Social Witness

Wednesday

Trustees

Trusts

General

Thursday

Mission Overseas

Youth and Children's Ministry

Studies and Christian Training

Finance and Personnel

Education

United Appeal

Hymnal

2010 Committee

Judicial Commission

NOTES

MONDAY, JUNE 4

Within Church House

7.00 p.m.—

Service of Worship
Constitution of Assembly
Memorial Roll
Election of Moderator

TUESDAY, JUNE 5

9.30 a.m.—

1. BUSINESS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (83-91).
Arrangements Committee.
2. Reports of Synods and Presbyteries (73-82).
- (10.30) 3. Reception of Corresponding Members and Delegates.
Church of Scotland: Rt Rev Sheilagh M Kesting, Rev Colin G McIntosh, Mrs Kirsteen Miller.
United Reformed Church: Rev Elizabeth Caswell, Mrs Rosemary Johnston.
Presbyterian Church of Wales: Rev Dr John Tudno Williams.
Church of Ireland: Rev Canon Alan Abernethy, Mr Leslie Johnston.
The Methodist Church in Ireland: Rev DC Bain, Mrs Phyllis Watters.
Irish Council of Churches: Mr Michael Earle.
Presbyterian Church USA: Rev Doug Baker.
Presbyterian Church of Australia: Rev Bob Thomas.
CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi: Rev Levi Njombole Nyondo.
Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Kenya: Rev Simon Githiora Njuguna.
Reformed Church in Romania, Transylvanian District: Rev Imre Levente Zold.
Reformed Church in Hungary: Rev Bertalan Tamas.
Church of North India: Rt Rev Vinod Malaviya.

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

NOTES

- (11.00) 4. **BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS: Report and Resolutions (92-98).**
 Communications Administration; Communications Development; Church Architecture.
- (11.40) Intermission
- 12.00 noon Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**
- 2.00 p.m.—**
5. **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION: Report and Resolution (147-152).**
6. Overture anent Par 308(5) of the Code (152-153).
- (2.30) 7. **BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND: Report and Resolutions (120-145).**
 Education and Promotion; Home and Irish Mission; Congregational Life; Shankill Road Mission.
8. **Memorial of the Kirk Session of Grange Presbyterian Church (145-146).**
9. **UNION COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (56-71).**
10. **Memorial of the Kirk Session of Bloomfield Presbyterian Church (71-72).**
- (3.45) Intermission.
11. **BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS: Report and Resolutions (154-184).**
 Adult Services; Family Services; Older People Services; Specialist Ministries.
- Lapsed Business.
- (5.30) Close of Business.

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

NOTES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6

9.30 a.m.—

12. TRUSTEES: Report and Resolutions (272-276).
13. COMMISSION ON TRUSTS: Report and Resolutions (229).
14. GENERAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (1-44).
General; Priorities; Doctrine; Moderator's Advisory; Recognised Ministries.

(11.00) Intermission

15. GENERAL BOARD: Report and further Resolutions (1-44).
Church & Society; Global Concerns; Church Relations.

12.15 p.m.—

Worship.

2.00 p.m.—

16. GENERAL BOARD: Report and further Resolutions (1-44).
Church House.

(3.45) Intermission.

17. GENERAL BOARD: Report and further Resolutions (1-44).
Manses; Centres Review; Presbytery Bounds; Pastoral Care; Ministries; Training Issues.
18. Overtures on the Books anent Pars 19(1); 19(2); 43(1); 59(2)(c); 65(1); 66(1); 66(2); 67(1); 67(4); 79(b); 79(c); 79(d); 86-92; 93(1); 94-96; 105(c); 106(a); 106(b); 109; 134(1) of the Code (44-45).
19. Overtures anent Pars 29(1)(b); 97(h)(iii); 137 of the Code (46).

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

NOTES

20. Overtures anent Pars 142(1); 142(2); 145(3); 165(5); 172(3); 195(8); 198(5); 228(2); 229(b); 229(2); 239(2); 253(1)(b); 254(4); 258(d)(iii); 259; 260; 260(f); 260; 261(1); 261(1)(f); 262; 264; 265; 267(1); 269(1); 269(4); 269(5)(a)(b)(c); 269(6); 272(1); 274(8)(b)(i); 275(5)(c); 275(5)(d); 275(12); 301(3); 302(3)(c); 306(3); 309(5) of the Code (46-47).
21. Overture on the Books anent Par 85(1) of the Code (48).
22. Overtures anent Pars 63; 126(5); 127; 129; 207(1); 207(2); 268(4)(a); 269(3); 270(3)(a); 272; 280; 281(3)(a); 281(3)(b); 283; 283(2)(a); 284; 284(2)(f); 284(3)(b) of the Code (48-51).

Lapsed Business.

(6.00) Close of Business.

7.45 p.m.— Evening Rally.

THURSDAY, JUNE 7

9.30 a.m.—

23. **BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS: Report and Resolutions (99-119).**
Leadership Development; Mission Involvement; Outreach Ministries; World Development.
24. **YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BOARD: Report and Resolutions (185-197).**
Training; Research and Education; Resources; Ministry Opportunities; Ministry Events.

(11.00) Intermission

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

NOTES

25. STUDIES AND CHRISTIAN TRAINING BOARD:
Report and Resolutions (210-228).

12.15 p.m.—

Worship

2.00 p.m.—

26. BOARD OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL: Report
and Resolutions (230-264).

Finance; Legal and IT; Personnel; Property
Management; Pensions and Assessments.

27. BOARD OF EDUCATION: Report and
Resolutions (198-209).

State Education; University Education.

(3.45) Intermission

28. UNITED APPEAL BOARD: Report and
Resolutions (265-271).

29. Hymnal Committee: Report and Resolutions
(277-278).

30. 2010 Committee: Report and Resolutions
(279-280).

Lapsed Business

(5.45) Adjournment

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

NOTES

7.00 p.m.

In Private

31. JUDICIAL COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (52-55).

Late Business, if any.

Lapsed Business.

BUSINESS BOARD: Final Report.

CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY.

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

REPORTS: JUNE, 2007

BELFAST

GENERAL BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The General Board has again dealt with a vast range of topics and tribute should be paid to the dedicated conveners who often have to handle sensitive issues. The resignation of the Rev JH Robinson from his role as Deputy Clerk and Executive Director of the Board of Mission in Ireland was received in June. This has meant some reorganisation and an additional workload for some members of staff in these areas of work. However, the Board was delighted that the Rev Dr WP Addley, retiring from his role as Professor in Union College, readily agreed to act as Deputy Clerk for the year. His willingness to serve and the committed work of staff and conveners has enabled work to proceed.

2. *The Rev Harry Robinson* served as Deputy Clerk for three years. As well as his diligent work for Assembly and Board meetings his particular responsibility was with the Board of Mission in Ireland. At a time of change, his insight and attention to detail was greatly valued. He travelled widely and helped to encourage the Board towards its vision of “vibrant communities of Christ”. Having heard the call back to parish ministry in Downpatrick and Ardglass, the Board recognises that he will continue to serve the Church faithfully.

3. *The Rev Dr Bill Addley* has served the Church in many ways and by readily agreeing to come into the Deputy Clerk’s post for a year, rather than retirement, has stretched his service even further. His ability to quickly pick up issues, together with his determination to ensure the right outcomes for the Church, has enabled the work to move forward. His irrepressible wit has also brightened many a meeting. The Board appreciates this particular service and wishes him well now in retirement.

Deputy Clerk

4. The Board has considered the future of the position of Deputy Clerk of Assembly and Assistant General Secretary. It was noted that in the last re-definition of the role responsibility for education was removed from the Deputy Clerk but not given elsewhere. For a short time there was a minister fulfilling the role part-time, but largely the work was carried out by the Convener and Clerk. Similarly, in a previous re-organisation responsibility as Secretary to the Board of Studies and Christian Training was taken out of the Director of Ministerial Student’s role but not re-assigned. This has meant that there is no senior executive responsible for this Board, other than the Clerk.

5. The Board believes that the Deputy Clerk job description should have four main components:

- (i) **Deputising for the Clerk:** The wide range of issues which are dealt with by the Clerk's Office is recognised and it is recommended that the Deputy Clerk's job description should be flexible enough to allow the Clerk to delegate work where appropriate. The work outlined below referring to specific Boards is therefore an initial designation of the work to be undertaken by the Deputy Clerk. There was strong agreement that deputising for the Clerk and being available to give support and advice when the Clerk is on holiday or otherwise unavailable is an important role in its own right.
- (ii) **Public Policy Research and Development:** There is an increasing workload being carried by the Clerk's Office in relating to civic and governmental bodies in both jurisdictions. This work is mainly overseen by the Church and Society Committee, but it is unrealistic to suppose that the work may be carried by its Conveners. With the present developments at Stormont there should be even greater opportunity to interact with policy-makers in the public arena, but the Church must be in a position not only to respond but to contribute to the setting of the agenda.
- (iii) **Education Board Secretary:** One specific policy area where there is an extremely wide-ranging debate at present is education. The Board Convener, even with some support from the Clerk, cannot be expected to carry the present workload. Again the danger is that the Church may easily be sidelined, or miss an opportunity for its position to be understood. There are critical issues regarding schools in the Republic of Ireland as well as in Northern Ireland. Issues in third-level education are also in flux and it is important to be aware of them.
- (iv) **Board of Christian Training Secretary:** The Training Panel will bring recommendations to this Assembly which will re-focus the work of the Board and make it even more important to have a senior executive with responsibility for this area of work. The recommendations of the Training Panel should be read alongside this report

Board Structure

6. The Board has also considered, as reported last year, whether its work has become too wide and varied. Often the meetings last for a long time and even then the business may be rushed. It was considered whether it may be preferable to divide the work between two Boards – one to cover the internal issues of the Church e.g. Priorities, Doctrine, Recognised Ministries, Moderator's Advisory, etc.; the other to cover the Church's interaction with societal and world issues e.g. Church and Society, Global Concerns and possibly including the work of the Education Board. The main disadvantage of dividing into two Boards is that at present the General Board has strong representation from the Presbyteries which gives the status of being the voice of the Church when the General Assembly is not in session. This role is important both for issues within the Church and in relation to others. It was therefore concluded

that for the present the Board should remain as one, but recognising that Board meetings will normally run over lunch. Similarly the Education Board should continue for the present.

Professor of New Testament Studies

7. Last year the Assembly received notice of the intention of the Rev Prof JC McCullough to retire from the Chair of New Testament Studies in Union College. The Board of Studies and Christian Training agreed a new Job Description for the post and the General Board appointed an Interviewing Panel. When advertised, one application was received. The panel is now dealing with this and will report fully in the Daily Minutes.

Principal of Union College

8. The General Board also has the responsibility to nominate a member of the College Faculty as Principal, for a five-year term. (see Reports, 1980, p 227). Elsewhere the Board of Studies and Christian Training has expressed thanks to the Rev Prof JP Taylor for fulfilling this additional responsibility. When requested, the Faculty unanimously agreed to nominate the Rev Prof Laurence Kirkpatrick as Principal for a five-year term, beginning 1 September, 2007. An appropriate resolution is appended.

Synods

9. At the time of writing, 19 of the 21 Presbyteries have reported on the overtures sent down under the Barrier Act which would have the effect of abolishing the Synods. All were in favour. Legal advice is being given on the position of the Education Board of the Synod of Belfast. This leaves only two issues – appointments to (a) Judicial Commission and (b) the Trustees.

10. Appointment of the Judicial Commission (see Code Par 127)

- (i) During the General Assembly debate in 2006 it was suggested that a possible model would be: each Presbytery (21 at present) to nominate one representative. However, with the addition of Moderator and Clerk and “not more than ten nominees of the Business Board” that formula would produce a sizable Commission which could be unwieldy in dealing with sensitive cases, whereas a smaller body would be more appropriate for those situations.
- (ii) The solution may lie in previous practice. For many years the Assembly appointed (i) an ordinary Judicial Commission and (ii) a Special Commission to deal with cases of a certain kind (see Code 1948 Pars 273, 417; Code 1963 Pars 273, 416). Those provisions lapsed when the new Code was introduced in 1980.
- (iii) We now propose (a) that the model in par (ii) above be followed for the appointment of the Judicial Commission and (b) that a Special Commission should again be appointed but with a smaller membership and a narrower remit extending only to sensitive cases of an exceptional nature. Membership should be drawn exclusively from the Judicial Commission; in other words the Special Commission would be the Judicial Commission reduced in numbers, having due

regard to appropriate representation and balance.

- (iv) We also propose that the Special Commission be appointed by the General Assembly at the same time as the Judicial Commission, that it hold office for the same period of time and that it have the same Assembly powers as the full Judicial Commission. Members of the Special Commission would remain in office only as long as they remain members of the Judicial Commission.
- (v) Had the Special Commission continued after 1980 it would only have met on rare occasions since then. A revived Special Commission might not meet more frequently than that; indeed it is hoped that it would never have occasion to meet at all, but in an era of much litigation, Child Protection, etc the Church needs to have appropriate procedures in place to deal promptly and finally with any particularly sensitive cases that may arise.
- (vi) Other changes to Par 127 are also advisable to deal with resignations.
- (vii) Resolutions are submitted to test the mind of the Assembly on the general principles underlying these proposals. If these resolutions are approved then the appended Overtures will be submitted to give them legislative effect.
- (viii) If the Overtures anent Pars 126(5) and 127 were made Interim Acts in 2007 that would enable (i) Presbyteries and the Business Board to make valid nominations during the incoming year, and (ii) the Assembly to appoint the Judicial Commission in 2008.

11. **Appointment of new Trustees**

- (i) At present four Trustees are nominated to the General Assembly by the Executive Committee (Reports 1987 page 265 par 17) and the remainder (up to 30) by Synods, though there is nothing in the Code or in the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1871 to specify who should nominate a new Trustee. Nomination by Synod has merely been custom and practice.
- (ii) The abolition of Synods will not affect the four Executive Committee nominations but a new procedure will be needed for all the other places. Unlike other Boards, the Board of Trustees is not re-appointed annually at the Assembly after any necessary changes have been made. Trustees are appointed one at a time when a vacancy arises and they hold office indefinitely.
- (iii) There is an existing Assembly procedure that could be used for the selection and appointment of a new Trustee. When a new convener is required for a Board or Committee a sub-committee is appointed, the vacancy is made known and applications and nominations are invited. The sub-committee considers the names suggested, selects the most suitable one and submits it to the parent Board for approval and transmission to the Assembly. That model could be used for the nomination of a new Trustee.
- (iv) While a geographical spread of members is advisable in any Board, in the case of the Trustees it is also important to have a wide selection of persons who are highly qualified and experienced in some relevant discipline (eg banking, law, etc). They should also be deeply

interested in church work and free to attend regularly. Trustees need not be ministers or elders, just members of PCI for at least two years, though it is required that a minister succeed a minister and that a non-minister succeed a non-minister (See the 1871 Act, sect. 29; Code pp 228-229). Women are eligible, though there are none on the Board at present.

Other Legislation

12. As well as overtures to remove Synods from the Code, the opportunity has been taken to change some paragraphs to bring them into line with current practice. The overtures are appended.

Convenerships

13. *The Rev AD Davidson* has indicated that he wishes to step down from the Convenership of the Church Relations Committee. This does not mean he is stepping aside from the work of promoting good relations among the Churches. He has been appointed, and will be installed next year, as President of the Irish Council of Churches for a two-year period. Tony's commitment to this demanding work goes back to the former Inter-Church Relations Board, where he served as Irish Church Relations Convener from 1995 and the Board Convener from 2002, continuing as Convener of the Church Relations Committee. His dedication and insight has led the Church through many difficult decisions and enabled us to foster good and healthy relationships with other denominations.

Office

14. The General Board, like many others, is serviced by the General Secretary's Office which has had a challenging year. Not only has there been a change of Deputy Clerk, but sadly the Deputy Clerk's Secretary, Liz Harrison, has been on long-term leave due to illness. While her treatment is progressing well, our prayers continue for her complete recovery. This has meant additional responsibility for the remaining staff – Joyce Anderson, Jennifer McClure, Ellery Beattie and Michelle James. The Board is grateful to them all.

PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

1. The Priorities report last year set up a 3 to 5 year process, focussing on 5 areas of mission and ministry. This is to be reviewed each year, so at the end of the first year the committee has reviewed the work as it applies to the Boards of the General Assembly. It is not sure to what extent the identified priorities have been discussed at presbytery level and a resolution is attached to encourage presbyteries to do so.

2. The need for congregations to develop every member ministries has been emphasised, not only in the Priorities report but also in recent reports of the Doctrine Committee. While in the 2005 Assembly Reports responsibility for developing this emphasis was given to the Board of Mission in Ireland, the

committee again draws attention to the need for this important development at all levels of church life.

3. The committee is heartened by the numbers and abilities of those presently offering themselves for full time ordained ministry. It is, however, aware of the concerns expressed at the last Assembly about the lack of younger students. It notes that the Board of Studies and Christian Training agreed to look at the matter and would ask for a report, with recommendations for action, as soon as possible.

4. The report last year recognised that in mission and engagement with the world, the distinction between home and overseas has become increasingly irrelevant. The committee believes that it is now an appropriate time to begin conversations between e.g. Church and Society and Global Concerns Committees; the Boards of Mission in Ireland and Overseas, to explore how we may develop mission and witness in both a global and local context. The Clerk has been asked to initiate such discussions on behalf of the committee.

5. The committee is aware that on setting priorities to provide focus for the church it is also necessary to give thought to prioritising the work of the boards, both in their future plans and existing projects. As the General Board has a co-ordinating role and all the mission boards are represented on the Priorities Committee, together with representatives of the General Board, it is recommended that the Priorities Committee be given responsibility for reviewing the future work programmes of all the mission boards. A report will then be presented which will inform the work of the United Appeal Board in allocating budgets.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

The main business of the Doctrine Committee this year has been ongoing work on the question of participation in “multi-faith events”. This is an interim report, still to be considered by the General Board. If substantive changes are made a revised version will be printed in the Daily Minutes.

Multi-Faith Events

1. The Doctrine Committee has been asked to draw up principles to enable presbyteries to guide any of its members who are requested to represent local Presbyterians at multi-faith events at which members of other world religions also participate. By ‘multi-faith events’ we mean strictly such events; we are not discussing participation in inter-faith worship. They are varied and include civic and state activities, royal occasions, remembrance services, prominent public funerals, school events and weddings. These can take place north or south of the border, although their character may vary from place to place.

2. In order to lay bare the theological issues at stake, we need to analyse each situation carefully and precisely, distinguishing between what we are being asked to do in the different situations. Some theological principles will always

apply, but the combination of principles that turn up in one situation might be different from what obtains in another and the principles might be weighted differently in different cases. It is not our objective here to undertake a detailed analysis of all the different possibilities and contexts. It is, rather, to ask a broad question about the theological principles that should govern our decisions.

We are proceeding on the basis of two assumptions:

- (a) Jesus Christ is the sole mediator of salvation. All things were created through him; he was the Messiah promised to Israel for the sake of the salvation of the world; he became incarnate and was the one atoning sacrifice for human sin; he rose again from the dead and is exalted as Lord of all; he will come again as Saviour and Judge. Christians do not proceed from a confession of Christ as their Lord to the belief that everyone should confess Christ as Lord. Rather, they confess Christ as their Lord only because they first believe in his claims to universal lordship (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Timothy 2:5).
- (b) As already stated, we are not discussing the question of involvement in inter-faith worship, to which we are opposed. If multi-faith events amount to inter-faith worship, then we should have to reject participation in them. Doubtless 'inter-faith worship' can be defined in different ways, but we assume that it normally refers to the practice of coming together for purposes of common worship. The multi-faith events that we are discussing constitute activities undertaken either in a context that is not specifically religious (for example, a Presidential inauguration) or in the presence of people who have no stated religious belief (for example, at a funeral). We are distinguishing between 'multi-faith' events, where a number of faiths make a separate contribution in a public civic context and 'inter-faith' activity, which implies the deliberate and purposeful mutual interaction of different faiths. We address later in the report the question of public perception where such distinctions are concerned.

3. While Scripture distinguishes between true and false worship (John 4:24), it does not give us direct guidance in relation to multi-faith events. If all religious practices outside Christianity were regarded as idolatrous, then this might determine our negative attitude towards such events. But the Old Testament polemic against idolatry and the use of the word 'idolatry' in the New Testament does not cover the cases of all religions, even if we believe (as we do) that the difference between them and Christianity is of the greatest significance. Just as we need to examine different scenarios one by one, so we really need to examine teachings and practices of different religious traditions one by one in order to make our judgements on their content. But if we are guided by biblical vocabulary, it seems difficult to extend the word 'idolatry' to Islam, for example. Judaism is clearly not a case of it. Scripture neither equates nor implies the equation of religious error with religious idolatry. This is not to deny that idolatrous attitudes and beliefs can be found within such religions as Judaism and Islam, of course, but they are found within Christianity as well, in all its branches: Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. We recall that the prophets indicted the people of Israel on the charge of idolatry and, in one form or

another, it was a danger for some of the New Testament churches (e.g., 1 John 5:21; Revelation 2: 13-16).

4. We believe that the issue of multi-faith events is a difficult one. Even if such events are not instances of inter-faith worship, they might at least give the appearance of containing elements of inter-faith worship and convey a message to people that we do not wish to convey. They might give the appearance to people both inside and outside the churches that Christ is only one way amongst many to God. We believe this to be a significant argument against participation in multi-faith events. At the same time, an argument from appearance, on its own, is not a decisive argument and it is one-sided. For if we are concerned about appearances, it is arguable that, in our current context in Ireland, North and South, the *appearances*, if we do *not* take part in multi-faith events, might considerably *weaken* our witness. Many people recognise that Christian churches have had a largely positive impact on society. Others see things differently. From the standpoint of those outside (and sometimes those inside) the churches, at least two negative things characterise Christianity here and elsewhere in the world. Firstly, Christians *as people* are perceived as being no different from anybody else. We have different *beliefs* and profess an experience of grace, but we are just as prone to pride, malice, untruth, materialism etc. as anybody else. Secondly, Christianity is perceived as a force that has made for hatred and even violence. In such a context, refusal to participate in multi-faith events might not draw attention to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Rather, it might draw attention to ourselves and be seen as the latest form of religious bigotry. So an argument from appearances cuts both ways.

5. It may be argued that, if we are doing what is right, we should not care how our actions are perceived by the world outside or by many inside the churches. We should be arguing about principles, not appearances. We agree that where matters of principle are concerned, our actions should not be determined by people's perceptions, even if we do all that we can to make sure that people understand the what and why of our activities. If it is wrong in principle to participate in multi-faith events, we should not do so even if we run the risk of being *perceived* as bigoted. (Even if we participate, of course, let us remember that Christians might be *perceived* as bigoted for other reasons.) But if principle matters more than perception, then the argument that participation in multi-faith events will be *perceived* as inter-faith worship has a limited force. If it is right in principle to participate in multi-faith events, then this also should over-ride people's perceptions. At the same time, arguments about perceptions are relevant and important. However, what we are doing by participation or non-participation will be perceived in different ways by different people in different contexts. We shall usually have more opportunity to form perceptions of people inside than outside the churches. However, our responsibility will always be to make judgements on the basis of three factors. The first is our theological convictions about Christ and salvation. The second is an informed analysis of the particular multi-faith situations in question. The third is discernment about what compromises the gospel and when it does so.

6. We have said that, while Scripture distinguishes between true and false worship, it does not give us direct guidance about participation in multi-faith events. Despite its treatment of the uniqueness of Christ and of idolatry, it

turns out to be impossible to draw definitive practical principles for our purposes from its doctrines and narratives. We believe, however, that it is instructive to consider how Scripture encourages us to shape our judgements according to context and discernment. In this connection, it is instructive to read Romans 14 against the background of Galatians 2. In Romans 14, Paul is dealing with the issue of what foods Christians should be eating. He has a firm view on the matter: no food is unclean in itself (14:14). Further, a correct understanding of the gospel is at stake (14:17). Nevertheless, he urges abstention from certain foods for the sake of the weaker brother or sister. In Galatians 2, he reports a situation in which he urged that there should be no compromise. On this basis of Galatians 2, we should expect Paul to say here: 'You must eat any kind of food; if you do not, you give the *appearance* that the gospel is a matter of abstaining from certain foods and you compromise the gospel of justification by faith alone.' In fact, Paul says the opposite. He is able to discern when a set of actions like abstaining from certain foods threatens the gospel and when that set of actions does not. Compromise in the Galatian situation would harm the gospel; refusal to compromise in the Romans situation harms the gospel. Paul observes the context very carefully as he discerns differences or similarities in the issues at stake.

7. In invoking these passages and using them in relation to the question of multi-faith events, our point is not that participation in multi-faith events is a kind of biblically-founded compromise. The point is that Scripture warrants – indeed, mandates – on our part a discernment of times and contexts so that we judge when something is a denial of the gospel or an expression of it, although, of course, we do not have the same apostolic insight as did Paul. Scripture neither clearly prohibits nor clearly permits participation in multi-faith events; the desire to glorify Jesus Christ will lead some to abstain from participation, on the grounds that it compromises his uniqueness and will lead others to participate, on the grounds that it is a public witness to him. If, in all conscience, a presbytery considers that the integrity of the gospel is not compromised in particular circumstances by engaging in worship at a multi-faith event, it should not go beyond the principle of separate and distinctive acts of worship. Taking all things into consideration, we believe that liberty of conscience must be given to presbyteries in relation to such participation. Presbyterianism gives less autonomy to leaders and congregations than do congregationalists and more than do Anglicans. So if the force of the arguments on both sides is acknowledged, then at this particular juncture in history it would seem wise to allow liberty of decision. This undoubtedly contains a risk. Given the wider context today, especially where church teaching and State legislation appear to be on a public collision course, we are surely summoned in a special way to firmness and clarity in Christian conviction and its public expression. We need outward public unity and allowing liberty of decision seems not to advance this. It is therefore important that, if we do allow such liberty, it is maintained within a framework of clear declaration of the belief in Jesus Christ as universal Saviour and Lord. This entails that those who participate in such events must conscientiously decide how this declaration is most effectively made in their particular context and be involved in decision-making about the form of the occasion.

8. In this report, we have tried to stick to our remit, but we believe that our thinking on this question needs to be integrated into broader reflection on Christian responsibility in civil society. Questions of co-operation with other faith groups in the public square arise quite independently of issues surrounding inter-faith worship or of multi-faith events of the sort under consideration here. We are now operating within a new context with respect to the relations of Christianity, civil law and civil society, and we wish to keep this wider scene in mind while reflecting on the question of multi-faith events in particular. Indeed, we regard it as a matter of urgency for the church to address the issue of church-state relations in a post-Christian society, and the issue of multi-faith events is an indicator of this need.

J PATTON TAYLOR, Convener

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. The Moderator's Advisory Committee continued during the year to appoint assessors to act in matters of difficulty, as requested by presbyteries or kirk sessions. It also received representation from a presbytery on a sensitive issue.

Conciliation Panel

2. In 2005, the General Assembly agreed that the management of the Conciliation Service should be a responsibility of the Moderator's Advisory Committee. *The Rev Doug Baker, who co-ordinates the panel, gave the following report:-*

“There are currently ten conciliators available. Eight were trained as part of the initial PCI initiative and two independently, by Mediation Northern Ireland and the London Mennonite Centre. Three are clergy who have been retired for many years and are not likely to be active in this role for much longer. At least one of the lay members wishes to be involved only in a secondary capacity rather than a lead role. Hence, there will be a need to train a small additional number of conciliators over the next two years.

Only 2-4 cases have been referred to the conciliation service each year. Referrals have come via the Clerk's Office, Presbytery Clerks, individual ministers, and the Judicial Commission.

Most referrals are made when conflicts have already progressed to a point where reconciliation between the parties is not likely to be possible. Furthermore, in several cases when one of the parties is approached about engaging in conciliation a very strong response has been received along the lines of: 'Why didn't anyone tell us this was available months ago.' Hence, more publicity needs to be given to the service and Clerks of Presbytery in particular need to be encouraged to refer cases much earlier. Those making the referrals also need to consider more carefully whether or not conciliation is the appropriate approach to use in each case. In some cases

parties wish to use conciliation as another attempt to achieve a ruling in their favour rather than reach some reconciliation with other parties.

There have been a small number of kirk sessions who have requested preventative training in handling conflict in the church. Ballymena Presbytery also recently offered a one evening programme for ministers and clerks of session, which was facilitated by Laura Coulter, PCI Peacemaking Officer. Kirk sessions and presbyteries should be encouraged to consider the importance of this training.

A revised brochure on the conciliation service is being prepared, which will clearly indicate a point of referral for conciliation.”

3. The report was received with considerable interest by the committee, who accepted that it should have responsible oversight for the Conciliation Service. It also recognised that there are occasions when it may refer issues for conciliation before proceeding further. Presbyteries should be encouraged to offer training programmes and the Clerk agreed to raise this at the next meeting for Presbytery Clerks. The committee also asked the Clerk to write to encourage conciliation training as part of ministerial formation and the continuing in-service training of ministers. The production of a new brochure was encouraged and it was also noted that the key contacts, including a point of referral for conciliation, should be widely available to ministers, possibly in the Directory.

The Role and Nomination of Moderator of the General Assembly

4. The 2006 General Assembly encouraged the committee to review the role and nomination of the Moderator and report back. The days are long gone when the Moderator was elected simply to chair the General Assembly. Now the Moderator is taken out of his/her congregation to begin a hectic round of engagements both in the church and society. Often, especially if the person has not been very involved in Assembly work, the experience can be confusing and stressful. There is little time for adequate preparation. This is particularly true when the Moderator has to respond to detailed questions from the media on controversial or political issues. The range of duties expected of the Moderator today is wide and varied. The purpose of this paper is not to take any of the leadership role away from the Moderator, but to ask if there are ways that he/she may be supported in the role.

The Role

5. One basic question is whether the person elected is given enough time to prepare for the role expected of them. The four months (or three on occasions) are largely taken up by preparation for the Assembly itself; it may not give the necessary time to gain an in-depth knowledge of the work and policies of the various boards, on which the Moderator may be asked to speak with authority, or to familiarize himself/herself with the workings of the Church. However, aware of another report coming through the Business Board, the committee decided to leave this matter of preparation for the present.

6. A related question is whether the Moderator is expected to do too much. As “the principal public representative” of the Presbyterian Church, the Moderator will be busily engaged in visiting congregations and attending public

functions. He/She will also be invited to attend numerous committee meetings and give input to the evolving policies of the boards. A further question is how much pastoral work the Moderator should be expected to do, e.g. when there is death or illness in a manse family or when a member celebrates a 100th birthday. The committee takes the view that public representation, both within and beyond the church, and pastoral care should be central to the role of the Moderator. Further thought needs to be given as to how a programme is drawn up when visiting a presbytery, or on an overseas tour.

7. There is also the question of the Moderator's relationship to the media. While he/she must clearly have a prominent public profile, it is not possible for each Moderator to have detailed knowledge of every topic under discussion in the church. The committee believes it is more helpful if the public spokesperson is the one most intimately involved in the area of work being discussed. At times it may be appropriate for the Moderator to accompany the relevant spokesperson.

8. However we may try to be helpful to the Moderator by defining more clearly the role expected, it must be recognized that each Moderator will have different gifts, abilities and interests. There must be enough flexibility to allow the Moderator to develop the role in his/her own way. However, the Moderator is to be encouraged to disengage completely from normal congregational responsibilities.

The method of nomination

9. The present system of names being submitted prior to the Presbytery nomination in February has obvious strengths in that everyone now knows at least a little about the person for whom they are invited to vote. In practice, however, there are also weaknesses. On a number of occasions different presbyteries have found they have no nominations by the appropriate date. The problem is that only the Clerk of Presbytery will know. There is also no clear way to allow for a new name to be suggested if someone withdraws at a late stage. There has also been confusion as to who may or may not allow their name to go forward.

10. One way to overcome the problem would be for names to be suggested for nomination by presbyteries at the December meeting of presbytery (or November if no December meeting is held). All the names proposed and seconded at presbyteries in December/November would be forwarded to the Clerk of Assembly, who would confirm that the persons suggested are prepared to allow their names to go forward. All the relevant names would then be circulated with a brief biography to all presbyteries, who would be invited to nominate from the list. The procedure for voting at the February Presbytery meetings would be as before, but only those on the list would be eligible to be proposed. The committee believes that this would allow for a much more open and transparent procedure in nomination to the Moderator's chair.

Appointment of Assessors

11. At present the Code allows the committee to appoint assessors only from its own membership (Code Par 63). The committee would like to change

this paragraph to allow the appointment of suitably qualified and gifted people from within the membership of the church. A suitable overture is appended.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

RECOGNISED MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

1. The Recognised Ministries Committee met as required. Following the decision of the General Assembly to approve “Mission Africa” as a suitable organisation for recognised ministry, the committee approved a call to the Rev Dr WP Bailie for work with the organisation.

2. A request from the Rev Dr RJ Greer to have “Answers in Genesis” approved as a suitable organisation for recognised ministry was considered. For several members of the committee this raised again the more general question of the need for the designation of “recognised minister” as distinct from “minister without charge”. The committee decided that it should first consider the general issue.

3. The need for a “recognised minister” category was previously raised in 2005. The main difference from “minister without charge” is that the person in “recognised ministry” is a member of the church courts. At the same time it was noted that not all the jobs occupied by a “recognised minister” essentially require an ordained minister. The committee is of the view that in principle the category of “recognised minister”, as presently defined, is not necessary, but further thought needs to be given to the implications of phasing it out. The status of those already inducted as “recognised ministers” should not change, but no further calls should be approved. Boards would, of course, still be able to call ministers to special work. A resolution is appended this year to test the mind of the Assembly in principle and, if approved, overtures will then be prepared for the next Assembly.

4. The following list of ministers without charge, as reported by presbyteries, was adopted:-

<i>Presbytery</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Ards	Rev S I Dennis	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	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.
	Rev James Todd	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
North Belfast	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 F W Vincent	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Belfast East	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).
	Rev W J Harshaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev R K Graham	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev C Meban	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Carrickfergus	Rev A T Maze	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Coleraine	Rev J D Mark	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Derry/Strabane	Rev. Dr L W H Hilditch	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	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).
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.

Ministers in Recognised Service

Rev Desi Maxwell reports:

This has proved to be a very different and rather exciting college year. During the autumn term I was on sabbatical. This afforded the opportunity to do some preaching in Oregon, visit Israel twice and finish a book that is about to be published. As the past term has been refreshing so the future is proving to be exciting. I am now to become a senior teaching fellow of the college and plan to develop a wider teaching ministry called XPLORATIONS. A major aspect of this new role will be conducting teaching events wherever there is a hunger to explore the Bible. Plans include the preparation of teaching DVDs that hopefully will be of help to small study groups.

The Rev Dr Ruth Patterson reports:

The theme on which restoration Ministries has focussed this year has been 'Healing the Broken Hearted'. Our monthly gatherings have taken the form of healing services, and facilitated days of retreat have provided space in busy schedules for reflection. One of our chief targets this year has been young people so our programme has included hospitality evenings specifically geared to them. Speaking engagements have provided opportunities for further communication. Once again the openings for sharing the message of restoration have been many and varied, both at our centre and around Ireland and beyond. A third book is now available, 'Proclaiming the Promise: Reflections on the God of Love'. Prayer remains the heartbeat of our work, and we are grateful to those who faithfully remember us.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE

The Rev Dr Donald Watts writes:

1. The Church and Society Committee has been very concerned this year by the ill-health of its co-convener, the Rev Dr Lesley Carroll. At the time of writing Lesley is coming back to work and the Committee rejoices that she is regaining her strength and will hopefully soon be giving a lead again in this important aspect of our Church's witness.

VICTIMS OF THE TROUBLES

2. Like his predecessor, the Rt Rev Dr David Clarke has been concerned to demonstrate the Church's pastoral support for those most closely affected by the violence of past years. With one of his chaplains he met the Victims' Commissioner, Mrs Bertha McDougall, to offer encouragement in her demanding role and to learn from her experiences. He is also planning further meetings with victims in border areas to follow up on those which took place last year. Dealing with the past is an important topic on the Committee's agenda. It has noted the recent initiative of "Healing Through Remembering" in calling for a Day of Private Reflection on 21 June and hopes to report more fully at the General Assembly.

MEETINGS WITH POLITICAL PARTIES

3. This has clearly been a year of much political activity. In the weeks prior to the St Andrew's meetings, representatives of the committee had two important and meaningful meetings with senior leadership of the Democratic Unionist Party. Representatives also met senior leaders of Sinn Fein and the Ulster Unionist Party. At that time the views of the Church were clearly being listened to and understood.

4. The meetings were taking place in the Autumn and the position of the committee was reported to the General Board as follows:-

“The Committee recognises that while most people would like to see devolution restored there are issues to be resolved and the politicians need to do so with clarity. Any future local Assembly and Executive must be on a stable and secure footing, especially if it is to provide any economic benefit to the community. Two vital issues are those of accountability and the responsibility for justice/security issues.

While only the politicians can fine tune the agreement there are certain broad principles to be affirmed. One is that a method must be found for the Executive to exercise a degree of collective responsibility for decisions made by individual ministers in their own Departments. The size of the Assembly and number of Departments should also be looked at again. The devolution of justice/security powers also needs careful consideration. While the latest Independent Monitory Report is encouraging, it does not necessarily reflect the perception of ordinary people who need to be convinced that IRA activity has fully and completely ended. The ambivalent response of the Loyalist Paramilitaries also gives considerable concern. It is the view of the Committee that Sinn Fein should come within the policing structures and join the Policing Board without delay.

The Committee recognises the role of deadlines in focussing minds, but would urge that the governments do not lose an agreement because of a rigid deadline. If an agreement on sequencing can be reached then it may be allowed to stretch beyond the 24 November. The Committee also recognises that whatever agreement, or lack of it, the future shape of society is our ultimate concern. The Church must work and act for a society founded on the pillars of righteousness and justice for all. In this discussion all citizens need to be involved and the present disengagement from political life by many is a matter of concern.” (*Report to General Board, October 2006*)

5. As this report is being written devolution has become more certain. On 26 March the Moderator joined other Church Leaders in issuing the following statement:-

“Today’s announcements from the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party and the President of Sinn Féin represent an important and welcome development in the search for a stable future for Northern Ireland.

Along with many others, our Churches have long encouraged local politicians to work towards a devolved government for Northern Ireland and we trust that this is now to be realised.

We would encourage all to continue to pray for our whole community and our future together. It is important that everybody continues to build a country where all are valued, difference is respected and peace and harmony can flourish.”

6. The committee is very aware that our society is entering a new era in which, if the Church is to have influence, relationships will have to be built with all the political players. As well as the parties mentioned above this includes the Alliance and Social Democratic and Labour Parties. It is hoped before the Assembly to have begun a round of talks with all these parties, on an agenda which the committee would hope to formulate together with the politicians. One

topic already identified is the Church's contribution to supporting urban regeneration, specifically in loyalist areas.

CONSULTATION ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION REGULATIONS

7. As usual, the Committee has had to consider many consultations. Others have been dealt with more specifically by the Social Witness Board. Undoubtedly the consultation which caused the most concern was **“Getting Equal – Proposals to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods and services in Northern Ireland”** *The committee submitted the following response:*

- (i) “We would like to express our thanks for the opportunity to respond to the consultation paper but also to express our concern at the shorter than normal consultation period which coincided with the summer holiday months. Consequently our comments are restricted to those matters of main interest to us as follows:

SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND LIFESTYLE

- (ii) PCI respects and would seek to protect the civil, political, social and religious rights of all persons irrespective of sexual orientation and welcomes progress on such an agenda. However, contrary to the basis of the proposed legislation, the church distinguishes between orientation and personal lifestyle choices, regarding certain lifestyles as unacceptable as expressions of faith. Our concern is that under this legislation, with its intended narrow basis of exception for religious organisations, the right to determine when and where faith is being challenged or undermined by sexual orientation practices will no longer lie with the church but with tribunals and courts. For us this represents a worrying intrusion of legislation into the affairs of faith.

EXCEPTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

- (iii) In relation to exceptions for religious organisations we reference the second sentence of paragraph 3:35:
 ‘Any exceptions from the regulations for religious organisations would need to be clearly defined and our starting point is that these should be limited to activities closely linked to religious observance or practices that arise from the basic doctrines of a faith’
 While appreciating the consideration given to exceptions for religious organisations, the out-working of this proposal will be for the courts to determine what are and are not the basic doctrines of a faith. Again we would regard this as potentially a very contentious development in the relationship between religious organisations and the state.
- (iv) With further reference to paragraph 3:35 we note that the basis for exception for religious organisations appears to be considerably narrower than that provided for in the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003 which allow for exceptions from the Regulations for employment that is ‘for the purposes of organised

religion' or 'to avoid conflicting with a significant number of followers' strongly held religious convictions'.

CONTRACTING PARTNERS

- (v) We reference paragraph 3.38 of the proposals:
 'we propose to apply the prohibition on sexual orientation discrimination to organisations – including churches, charities or other similar groups with a religious ethos – that are contracted by a public authority to deliver a service on its behalf'

It would be unfortunate if, as a result of a contracting partnership between a public authority and a Christian organisation the ethos of the organisation is challenged or undermined, as often it is the ethos which enhances the quality of service provided and makes the organisation desirable as a contracting partner.

EDUCATION

- (vi) In the section on Education the Church would agree fully with the view that admission criteria should not discriminate and there should be robust protection against bullying. However, the regulations need to be framed in such a way as to respect the ethos of the school.
- (vii) We understand that it will be possible for representatives of the four main churches to meet with the Sexual Orientation Consultation Team, though outside the consultation period. We look forward to this meeting."

8. Together with this response, representatives of the four main churches met twice with the civil servants drafting the legislation and once with the responsible Minister of State, Mr David Hanson. Especially with the civil servants the meetings were long, detailed and helpful. There is little doubt that the opinion of the churches was heard and understood. Together with lobbying from other Christian groups this did bring about changes in the legislation. Nevertheless strong reservations still remain and continue to be voiced, especially in terms of the religious rights of individuals; adoptive rights of homosexual people and the definition of harassment.

9. The legislation came into effect on 1 January, 2007. Since then the Christian Institute, and others, have sought a judicial review in the High Court which will now be heard in June. The Roman Catholic Church subsequently became associated with this legal proceeding as a notice party. While sympathetic to the review, at the time of writing the committee has not felt that it is necessary to be joined as a notice party but continues to make its views known wherever possible. The committee also believes that its representations will be most effectively heard if made in collaboration with the Methodist and Church of Ireland Churches. All three are keeping the matter under close review and consulting legal advice.

10. The pace of legislation continues unabated and may indeed increase. The St Andrew's Agreement commits the Government to bring forward legislation on a Single Equality Bill "at an early date". The committee submitted its views on a previous attempt at such a Bill some years ago and intends to be

fully involved in the consultation process this time. It will involve many, if not all, of the same issues as were central to the discussion of the Sexual Orientation regulations. The consultation will come from the same civil service department and will in many ways be a continuation of the present discussion.

OTHER CONSULTATIONS

11. *The committee also submitted the following comments on reforms to the law on Sexual Offences in Northern Ireland:-*

“The General Board of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland appreciates the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. While not responding to every question, the Board makes the following points.

- (i) The proposed definition of consent as ‘agrees by choice and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice’ is acceptable. The new ‘preparatory offences’ are welcomed.
- (ii) It should be recognised that a child under the age of 13 cannot give consent to any sexual activity under any circumstances. The additional specific offences suggested to protect a child are welcomed. All sexual activity for those over the age of 18 with those below the age of consent should be illegal.
- (iii) The inclusion of vulnerable people within the legislation is welcomed.
- (iv) The Board considers that the offence of sexual activity in a public lavatory as in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 should be replicated in the new law on sexual offences. The offence of kerb crawling should be included. There should be no redefinition of the meaning of a brothel.”

12. The committee was also aware of representations on the proposed amendment to the Licensing and Regulation of Clubs Order and to Betting and Gaming legislation.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

13. The Taoiseach’s Office is now moving forward on providing a forum for discussion between government and the Churches/faith communities. This will involve at least one formal meeting during the year with each of the individual Churches at a high level, and with the agenda set by the Church. The committee is encouraged by this development.

14. The Moderator and Clerk also joined the other main protestant Church leaders in making representation to the Taoiseach on the future development of the Adelaide and Meath Hospital (Tallaght). This also incorporates the National Children’s Hospital, but a new Children’s Hospital is planned on a different site. When the hospitals were amalgamated the Charter retained a distinctive (Protestant) ethos.

15. The committee has been updated during the year on issues of inter-faith dialogue; the integration of migrants and civil registration of marriages.

16. At the National Forum on Europe, in Dublin, we are represented by Mr George McCullagh. *He writes:*

The National Forum on Europe provides a neutral public space for discussion on issues relating to the European union and Ireland’s place within it. The Members of the Forum are the political parties and groupings

represented in the Oireachtas, Members of the European Parliament and, in a Special Observer Pillar, over forty civil society organizations. Our church has been present from the beginning, as have all the other churches.

Under the Chairmanship of Senator Maurice Hayes the Forum is leading the debate in Ireland on the issues facing Ireland and the European Union in the period of reflection and engagement following the No votes to the Constitutional Treaty in France and the Netherlands in 2005.

The European Union celebrated, on 25 March 2007, fifty years from the signing of the Treaty of Rome. The Union now consists of 27 Member States with a population of (approx.) 500 million people. It has impacted on many national policy areas. Enlargement to include other Eastern European countries and Turkey is the subject of much debate. So also in immigration control, cross-border crime control and the effect of incoming workers on the wage structures in the local economy.

A new Constitutional Treaty is being considered but there is no agreement on what it should contain. Should the EU have an army and will the proposals include references to God and Christianity unlike the failed Treaty? There is much more talking and thinking to be done before progress will be made. Speakers from different countries will be addressing the Forum on some of these issues as will representatives of other interest groups.

The Irish Government is to be commended on its initiative in setting up the Forum and continuing with it beyond the No vote of 2005.

EUROPE

17. As well as the Forum in Dublin, our main links with Europe are through the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches where we are represented by the Rev Matthew Ross. In December the Moderator attended a meeting of European Church leaders in Brussels. Until recently, the Clerk acted as an observer on CSC on behalf of the Irish Council of Churches but that appointment has now passed to a Methodist representative. He continues to serve on a Working Party on the theme of "Peace, Security and Reconciliation, which he has now been asked to chair, This group held a useful consultation at Corrymeela between representatives of Irish Churches and Balkan Churches to explore the role of religion in conflict situations.

LE CARROLL, AJ BOAL, Co-Conveners

GLOBAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

1. On one occasion the Psalmist commented that he did not concern himself with great matters or things too wonderful for him: "But I have stilled and quietened my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me." These words are written from the point of view of having complete confidence in the eternal purposes of Almighty God. Certainly there are times when the world can become so alarming and overwhelming to the

extent that all we want to do is escape into the safe place of our loving, heavenly Father's arms. However, the same Psalmist implies neither disengagement from the world nor reducing God to a narrowly defined spiritual realm. On the contrary, he reaches out to Israel with the plea to put her hope in the Lord both now and forevermore.

2. Even within the areas we have chosen as our particular brief and concern, as a committee we are often overwhelmed by the scope and complexity of everything that is involved. Our three associated panels continue to monitor events, take appropriate action, and are making a significant contribution to the life and witness of the church. Liz Hughes, Richard Kerr and Sam Millar, the Conveners of Peace and Peacemaking, Race Relations and The Environment respectively, are to be commended for their prayerfulness, energy, and resourcefulness. Their reports appear below.

3. This year, *The Rev Sam Millar* has continued to serve as Caretaker Convener of the Environment Panel. Now he is preparing to step down from this role and we hope that The Rev Dr Robert Buick will be appointed by this Assembly as his successor. Sam has a passionate interest in the beauty of God's creation, and as a geographer has a tremendous grasp of detail. We thank him for his tireless zeal, inimitable style and unique insights into God's wonderful world.

4. On Saturday, 10 March the committee held a morning conference on Christian Lifestyle issues in West Church, Bangor. The event arose from the need as a church to respond to the Accra Confession passed by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches at its General council meeting in Ghana, already three years ago. Our keynote speaker was appropriately the Rev Dr Setri Nyomi, General Secretary of WARC, an ordained minister of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, who has spent considerable periods of his service in the USA and is well placed to bring a global perspective, as well as being a passionate advocate for the rights of the poor.

5. Dr Nyomi took as his text Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and pleasing and perfect." He said: "We live in a world in which conformity to the world and the world's standards is the norm. Christians are afraid to do the will of God. If the world says talking about "sin" is not politically correct, we refrain from talking about sin. If the world's economic systems value greed and neglect the cries of the poor, many Christians uncritically follow suit. We live in this kind of challenging times. Yet Paul's words still ring in our ears today – 'Do not be conformed to this world – but be transformed.' It is a call for examining our lifestyles in the light of the Word of God. Such an examination is done by Reformed Christians in the light of the Word of God and how we read the times we are in."

6. As a committee we hope to continue raising the profile of lifestyle issues and to bring a more comprehensive report to next year's General Assembly. So often we as Christians can be perceived to be negative and reactionary. We hope in our report to speak prophetically and to recapture something of our radical, dissenting non-conformist tradition as we offer in Christ a positive alternative to the prevailing norm of accelerating consumerism.

PANEL ON PEACE AND PEACEMAKING

The Rev Liz Hughes reports:

Introduction

7. It has been a busy but very exciting year in the life of the peacemaking panel - ably assisted by our full time programme officer Laura Coulter. Our main vision has been to move the biblical challenge of peace building to where it ought to be – at the centre of our church's life and mission.

Work of the Programme Officer

8. Our programme officer has undertaken visits to presbyteries, kirk sessions and other peace building groups - often accompanied by her PYP counterpart Deborah Erwin. Workshops have also been delivered in Ballymena & Donegal on the theme of building good relationships. Regular reports are made to the Peacemaking Panel. We are continually amazed at the ground covered.

Deal or No Deal Conference

9. Our first major event was the Deal or No Deal Conference on the 18 November, 2006 which took place in Whitehouse Presbyterian Church. It proved the largest attendance of any of our annual Peace conferences. Enriching contributions to the day included devotions by the Moderator and Helen Killick, Chaplain of Lagan College, a Biblical reflection by Professor Stephen Williams and examples of local accommodation from Glenn Jordan and Garvan O'Doherty. The highlight was a panel discussion chaired by Rev Dr John Dunlop – the panellists were Baroness May Blood, Garvan O'Doherty, Nelson McCausland and Rev Dr Donald Watts. Each gave their own view as to whether or not a "deal" was possible. This year's conference will be held on *Saturday 10 November 2007*.

The Gospel in Conflict – Loving your Neighbour Course

10. The biggest piece of work during the year has been the production of *The Gospel in Conflict – Loving Your Neighbour Course* – a straightforward Biblical Discipleship course addressing the challenge of living in a divided society. Four pilot courses were successfully completed with generally good feedback. Amendments have been made on the basis of evaluations received.

11. We are indebted to Laura Coulter, John Peacock and Doug Baker for the work done in writing and producing the manual, to Sam Bell of Fishbone for the artwork and printing and to Rick Hill for co-ordinating the work done on the DVD which has been professionally produced by Andrew Stuart from Subterranean Fish. Our thanks is also extended to Rev Dr Bill Addley for checking the manual on behalf of the Doctrine Committee. We also greatly appreciate the many contributors from right across our church who have shared their views and experiences frankly and openly on the DVD.

12. The Launch took place on 20 March, 2007 with two main events one in the morning for ministers and other key leaders and the other in the evening

in this Assembly Hall for the whole church which was also attended by many colleagues working in the field of peace building. The speaker was Joel Edwards from Evangelical Alliance and the Moderator presided. Guest contributors included Paul Clark from UTV. The Manual and DVD was on sale on the day, for a mammoth discount price.

13. It is our fervent prayer that many congregations throughout our church will make use of this 5 week course and mobilise their people to be effective peace builders in their own community. Although trained facilitators are available, the materials are so organised that any minister or other experienced group leader can use the manual with accompanying DVD and run the course themselves with minimal outside assistance.

14. In our ideal scenario, we would like to see both the PYP and the GIC Courses run simultaneously in congregations so that both young people and adults alike are focusing on what they can do to build good relationships in their local situation. Laura Coulter and Deborah Erwin are preparing to organise this in a number of congregations who have already booked courses from September.

Funding & Management

15. We continue to appreciate the main funding for this programme which is provided by International Fund for Ireland, Community Relations Council, Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. A Programme Management Group has been put in place to ensure proper accounting and reporting mechanisms. The Panel remain profoundly grateful to Rev Doug Baker for all his work in acquiring this funding and also his further commitment in continuing to be part of the Management team.

PANEL ON RACE RELATIONS

The Rev Richard Kerr reports:

Introduction

16. The global economy has contributed to a greater movement of people than ever before. 230 million international migrants, one for every thirty-five of the world's population, are living outside their country of origin. The factors that motivate people to abandon their homes and families are frequently complex. Civil unrest, fears for themselves and for their families, poverty and natural disasters certainly contribute to the mix. In contrast to most of us in the United Kingdom and Ireland in the 21st century, many have limited choice.

17. Migration flows tend to originate in countries of the developing South and graduate towards counties of the affluent North, or, as for many from the newer EU states, from East to West. Many are prepared to take incredible risks to attain a better life for themselves. This is evidenced by example such as Mexican immigrants running the gauntlet of US immigration authorities and West African migrants packed into flimsy craft bound for Europe.

18. The human cost for those who fail to make the arduous crossings is high. Even for those who make it, the price of being far from home and in a

strange country is significant. This includes disruption of family life, fragmentation of society, a 'brain drain' and difficult working and social conditions in the host country. Integration may well prove a challenge.

Trafficking

19. Problems are compounded when the person's immigration status is 'irregular' or 'illegal'. The situation for trafficked persons (see the 2006 report) still gives us cause for concern. Although numbers in both jurisdictions of Ireland are small, the implications for people at the mercy of criminal elements are enormous.

20. Rev Rebecca Dudley, presently working with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, addressed the Panel recently. Her challenging presentation reminded us of the complexities of the situation. Ms Dudley noted that there was a need for a commitment by government to sign up to UN protocols and to finance measures to combat trafficking and support victims as well as a need for further research. We were pleased to note that the Prime minister, Tony Blair, announced on January 22 that the UK would become party to the Council of Europe's Convention on Trafficking in Human Beings.

21. Ms Dudley further suggested that the church had a role to play in three areas; namely service provision, education and advocacy. The Panel continues to keep a watching brief on developments across the Island.

22. As we mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade and reflect on the Christian involvement which made that possible, we are conscious that much has still to be done to address modern day slavery in its many forms.

Migrant Workers from the EU

23. Unlike members of the A8 accession states, workers from the two latest arrivals into the EU family; Romania and Bulgaria, have not been given unrestricted access to the job market. It is too soon to gauge the impact of these restrictions, or their enforceability.

24. Significant numbers of migrant workers from the A8 accession states continue to come to Ireland – both North and South. Those arriving in the Republic of Ireland since the expansion of the EU in May 2004, now number in excess of 250,000.

25. The vast majority are gainfully employed and a wide range of services have developed to support their lifestyles. However a small number of migrant workers become destitute (see 2006 report). Some churches in the Belfast area have been involved in a pilot project with Embrace, Homeplus, the Welcome Centre and members of the Simon Community to provide basic necessities for these people.

Legislation

26. Stories of abuses of the immigration system are rife in certain sectors of the media, with concerns being raised about national security. In what appears to be a response to this, the UK Home Office has introduced the **Borders Bill**, the fifth on immigration in eight years. Given its second reading in the House of

Commons on 5 February, 2007, human rights groups have expressed concern that this bill will increase the powers of immigration officers and reduce the rights of immigrants.

27. In parallel with this new legislation, there are reports that an **Immigration Enforcement Unit** is to be established in Northern Ireland and staffed by Home Office officials along with members of the PSNI and the Garda Siochana. Again, concern has been expressed in some quarters about the potential increase in the use of detention and removal powers.

28. In the Republic of Ireland, a scheme for an Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill has been published for consultation. Churches have given a cautious welcome to legislation which they hope will provide more comprehensive legislation and greater clarity for those coming to live and work in the ROI. On the other hand, concern has been expressed that the proposed Bill does not provide adequate transparency, opportunities for family reunification, and protection for those in seeking asylum or who are at the mercy of traffickers.

29. Also in the Republic of Ireland, the **Irish Born Child Scheme** applications are being reviewed. Under this scheme parents of children born in Ireland before 1 January, 2005 were given two year residency status. These two years have now passed and this status is being reassessed and renewed on the basis of the following criteria 1) being resident in the state, 2) having no criminal record and 3) having made an attempt to get employment.

Meetings and Networking

30. The Race Relations Panel continues to meet on a regular basis and maintain relationships with a number of church bodies, non-government organisations and relevant statutory bodies.

Proposed Race Relations Grants

Veluka Trust (South Africa)	£750
Diakonia Council of Churches (South Africa)	£750
Embrace (NI)	£1,000
Churches' Asylum Network (ROI)	£500

PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr Joe Furphy reports:

31. As mentioned last year, we are keen to see the Eco-congregation Ireland project rolled out and taken up by a number of our congregations, as a first step to enabling them both to appreciate our Christian responsibilities for the environment, and to manage their resources in more environmentally-friendly ways to God's world and how we are to care for it. We were glad to participate in the Lifestyles Conference organized by Global Concerns, at which we launched this project. Over the next winter, we hope to visit Presbyteries throughout Ireland to raise awareness of Eco-congregation Ireland.

32. Two members of the Panel, Rev Dr Robert Buick and Mr Joe Furphy, attended the Conference of the European Christian Environmental Network in Sweden in the autumn. Attended by almost one hundred delegates from all over

Europe, one of the main themes was the use of energy and the need for the much greater use of renewable resources. One of the major outcomes of the conference was the production of a charter for helping Third World countries financially and by projects in an effort to offset the worst ravages imposed on them as a result of our profligacy in the developed world.

33. We have continued to consider a wide range of issues on the Irish scene, although this year has not produced a topic of such great significance as those in the last few years. We have continued to supply articles for the Presbyterian Herald, and to give talks and seminars to presbytery and church groups.

34. We were encouraged to see the setting up of a Faith Waste project in Belfast, a project which brought together various denominations, the City Council and Sustainability Northern Ireland. At an awards ceremony, Stormont Presbyterian Church was a major prize-winner. Although the project was only designed to operate in 2006, the impetus it generated is now carried on through an informal grouping of interested persons from several Christian denominations; we are represented on this group.

35. As always, our theme is 'The earth is the Lord's' and we encourage all our members to treat God's Creation as one of the essential parts of His great gifts to us.

CJC McMULLEN, Convener

CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The committee met twice during the year. During this year the committee has sought to maintain the status quo with regard to membership of inter-church bodies. In this regard it was decided not to recommend joining the newly structured CTBI. However we have sought to not only maintain but to increase and deepen our commitment to the inter-church bodies of which we are already members. I would like to thank all those who serve with time, expertise and energy-consuming commitment.

2. **Irish Council of Churches.** After a series of meetings the executive, under its President Gillian Kingston, agreed core objectives for the next 3 years and a series of working groups for this year. These include updating the web site and looking at the guidelines for considering churches for ICC membership. Two receptions were held during Pentecost in Dublin and in Belfast. The annual Woman's Link Fellowship Day was held in March 2006. The speakers Bishop Ken Clarke and his wife Helen took as their theme "Travelling light: taking a fresh look at Psalm 23 - finding a balance in life and ministry." The Overseas Board under the Moderatorship of the Rev Dr Jim Campbell organized public meetings for Bishop Riah, Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem; Prof Piet Meiring from Johannesburg (South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission); Paul Riordan from Lisburn, who had taken part in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel; and Leslie Weaver who facilitated Post Tsunami work in Sri Lanka. The Very Rev Dr Sam Hutchinson was appointed as the ICC representative on the Bill of Rights Forum. This group will have responsibility for recommendations on the Human Rights Bill for Northern

Ireland. The AGM was held in Armagh on 22 March. The theme was “Future directions for the churches in Ireland: Post - nationalism, Post Christendom, Post Modernity.” The speaker was Derek Poole from the Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland, with a response from Linda Hogan from the Irish School of Ecumenics. There was also an opportunity to ask questions to the four Church leaders. It was agreed that there be a 3% increase in membership subscription for 2007 and again in 2008. There has been no increase for about the last 10 years. Last year the subscription was £16,400.

3. **Irish Inter-Church Meeting.** The Irish Inter-church meeting took place in the Emmaus Centre in Swords Co Dublin on November 10 and 11. The theme was “The Light of Christ shines on all”. It helped prepare delegates for the European Assembly in Sibiu in September 2008. Speakers included Canon Bob Fyffe, General Secretary of CTBI and Monsignor Noel Treanor, Secretary General, Commission of Episcopates of the European Community based in Brussels. Workshops on immigration, secularization, the environment, the issue of suicide and our ecumenical journey were all worthwhile. Delegates were invited to an inter-church event entitled “Taste and See” in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin, reflecting the variety of newer Christian worship styles in Ireland today.

4. **Irish Inter-Church Committee.** The focus of the committee tends to be on dialogue and at looking at issues of common interest to the churches. There is now one permanent orthodox representative on the Inter-Church Committee. To quote the General Secretary of ICC, Michael Earle, “For the first time, the historic churches from the East and West are breathing through their two lungs in this Irish inter-church structure.” Funding has been obtained from the Department of Justice in the Republic to start a new 3 year project managed by the committee on Social Issues. Adrian Christea, a member of the Romanian Orthodox Church, was appointed in January as a Dublin based project officer. He will be a catalyst in stimulating parish based projects that address the needs of their new Irish neighbours, sharing best practice and helping to deepen integration within parish communities. Presentations to the committee were made from World Council of Religions for Peace, “the Healing through Remembering Project” and the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister on the “Shared Future” policy document. It was also agreed that there be a 3% increase in membership subscription for 2007 and again in 2008. There has been no increase for about the last 10 years. Last year the subscription was £8,000.

5. **United Reformed Church.** The Rev Brian Boyd has continued to represent our church at the United Reformed Church Ecumenical Committee.

6. **Community of Protestant Churches in Europe.** The Revs Prof Cecil McCullough and Dr Gordon Campbell attended the Assembly of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, in Budapest in September. In an attempt to be nearer the heart of Europe the organization of CPCE is moving from Berlin to Vienna. There was much discussion on the internal workings of the organization. It was decided to look at three new topics: “Office, ordination and episcopacy”, “Scripture, confession and church” and “Social ethics”. There was a fresh realization that the survival of the Protestant churches in Europe will depend in the 21st century on the mission of the church.

7. **World Alliance of Reformed Churches.** Revs Dr Donald Watts and Gabrielle Farquhar attended a meeting of WARC, European Area Committee and Council, in Budapest in September. Gabrielle was thanked for her work on this committee over the last four years. She has been a hard working, influential and determined representative for our church. The committee has a new constitution. Rev Dr Donald Watts has been appointed Secretary of the committee which will involve him also in the executive of WARC.

8. **Conference of European Churches.** The Rev Ken Crowe attended the CEC Central Committee meeting in Londonderry in May. Much time was spent reviewing their structures and preparing for the third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, Romania, 4-9 September, 2007. The delegates visited Corrymeela and were briefed by Irish church leaders. They issued a statement about Northern Ireland and another about its concerns regarding people trafficking around the time of the World Cup in Germany. Mrs Heather McKinley is no longer able to serve on Central Committee. She was thanked for her commitment and contribution to the committee. The Rev Ken Crowe has been nominated to replace her on the Central Committee.

9. **Lebanon.** At the October General Board a motion was passed expressing solidarity with and prayers for our partner churches in Lebanon through their recent time of civil upheaval. The Rev Prof Cecil McCullough had been in touch with representatives of the church in Lebanon.

The Rev Dr Donald Watts writes:

10. **Convenership.** In the Board's Report thanks is expressed to the Rev Tony Davidson for his outstanding work as Convener of this Committee. At the time of writing a successor is being sought for nomination.

Appendix

Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriage

1. The Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages met in Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, Newry, Co. Down, on Thursday 16 November, 2006. The Rev Elizabeth Hughes acted as Chairperson for the meeting.

Changes to the committee membership

2. It was noted that the House of Bishops of the Church of Ireland has appointed Canon Victor Stacey to the committee in succession to the Rev Ben Neill.

Report on the Meeting of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages 2005

3. There was a discussion of last year's report and it was noted that the Report had been distributed and approved by each of the churches. The committee exchanged information regarding marriage ceremonies within our traditions involving a Christian and a non-Christian. It was noted that, with the

arrival of many immigrants, the number of such marriages is on the increase and will continue to be a feature of life into the future. While noting that this specific issue was not part of the committee's remit, it was agreed that the discussion was informative and useful.

Joint Preparation for Inter-Church Marriage

4. The Rev Liz Hughes and Fr Brendan Murray reported on a recent pre-marriage course held in the Greater Belfast area (outside Antrim) for couples preparing for Inter-Church marriage. The subject matter and questions dealt with in the course were well received by participants. Initial concerns that couples might have had at the outset of the course were largely dispelled and feedback received afterwards was positive and encouraging. It was noted that the subject of inter-communion was raised by some couples during the course. Sometimes, the Catholic party is concerned as to the genuineness of the marriage ceremony if it takes place outside the celebration of Mass.

5. The Rev Victor Stacey noted that the pre-marriage course for couples for inter-church marriage organized through the offices of ACCORD, Harcourt Street, Dublin, is also well received by participants and generates positive feedback. The committee noted, with regret, that the Association of Inter-Church Families has ceased to exist. Membership had been dwindling over the years and the Association had not been able to attract new members. It was felt that every effort should continue to be made by each church to support and commend preparation courses to all engaged Inter-Church couples. The committee expressed their grateful thanks to all those involved in the preparation of Inter-Church couples for marriage. The committee emphasized the importance of the couple discussing before marriage the denominational tradition into which they wish to baptize their children.

Recent Trends in Inter-Church Marriage

6. Recent trends in the preparation for Inter-Church marriage and the celebration of Inter-Church marriage services continue to be, in the main, positive. Some discussion took place by the committee regarding the issue of inter-communion at an Inter-Church marriage. It was noted that this issue has been raised by some couples at marriage preparation courses. Bishop Anthony Farquhar and Bishop Gerard Clifford reported on discussions with officials from the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity which had taken place during the recent ad limina visit to Rome of the Catholic Bishops from Ireland, noting that inter-communion at Inter-Church marriages is to remain 'by way of exception'. Dr. Dunn reported on the work of NIMMA over the past year. It was noted that funding has been secured from the Irish Government's Department of Foreign Affairs which will be a significant help to NIMMA's work. The NIMMA website continues to be very popular with up to 120 hits per day reported. 25% of visitors to the site stay for longer than twenty minutes. There continues to be calls to the office from inter-church couples with an increasing number seeking information in relation to the celebration of the sacrament of baptism.

Pastoral Care of Inter-Church Families

7. The committee discussed the pastoral care of inter-church families. The Rev Charles McMullen reported on the Alpha Marriage Course he is currently undertaking with his wife (and five other couples) and he praised highly the quality of the course content. Mr McMullen will be offering this course to his congregation in January. The committee concurred that participation in the course was a very useful and enriching exercise for couples. Bishop Gerard Clifford reported on the work of ACCORD in the areas of marriage enrichment and counselling.

8. The committee also discussed the matter of Inter-Church preparation for baptism. During the discussion, it was noted that we recognize the validity of each other's baptism together with a common Certificate of Baptism, recognising baptism in the name of the Trinity. As in the case with the celebration of mixed marriages, ministers from the respective churches can be present for the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Date and Venue of Next Meeting

9. It was agreed that next year's meeting of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages take place in Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, Newry, Co. Down on Thursday, 22 November, 2007 at 2.00 pm.

Members of the Committee

Most Rev Gerard Clifford
 Dr Kenneth Dunn
 Most Rev Anthony Farquhar (Co-Chairperson)
 Rev Elizabeth Hughes
 Rev Brendan Leahy
 Rev Charles McMullen (Joint Secretary)
 Very Rev Brendan Murray
 Rev Aidan O'Boyle (Joint Secretary)
 Canon Victor Stacey
 Rev David Turtle

AD DAVIDSON, Convener

CHURCH HOUSE PANEL

The Rev Adrian McLernon reports:

1. Following the 2006 General Assembly, the General Board instructed a new Church House Panel to consider –

- (a) The future use of Church House, including costed options.
- (b) Costed options on alternative venues for the central administration of the church.

2. Given the task, the Panel were reminded of Thorncroft's definition of Estate Management –

“The direction and supervision of an interest in landed property with the aim of securing the optimum return; this return need not always be

financial, but may be in terms of social benefit, status, prestige, political power or some other goal or group of goals.”

As a church, we have “an interest in landed property,” Church House. So, what is our optimum return? Some see the optimum return as financial, some see the optimum return as a status symbol in the City Centre, some see the optimum return as a prestige building and others see the optimum return as a means of outreach to the watching world and a buzzing city. Each view point is equally valid and yet in some way it also illustrates why we have been debating the issue for the last number of years.

3. The Panel in its deliberations was conscious of the following socioeconomic trends –

- Vibrant City Centre
- Changing shopping habits
- Buoyant residential market
- Over supply of office space & implications of “Workplace 2010”
- Sunday trading issues

4. In response to the remit the Panel considered:-

(a) *The future use of Church House, including costed options.*

A number of potential schemes were considered –

- No internal work on Offices, retain Mall. Market as Conference Centre
- Internal reorganisation of Offices, new entrance to building, retain Mall
- Sell Fisherwick Buildings to finance repair work
- Develop Fisherwick Buildings for residential use
- Develop Fisherwick Buildings to maximise rental income
- Cease trading on Mall and refurbish for mission/outreach
- Create Conference facilities on ground floor with a limited number of retail units
- Encourage suitable partner agencies to take up occupation within Church House
- Consider a Church Plant
- Sell ground floor
- Extensive internal refurbishment to meet identified requirements

5. Should the decision be taken to retain Church House, the Panel would tend towards a phased refurbishment scheme. Priority should be given to:

- (i) *a new entrance from Fisherwick Place;*
- (ii) *the refurbishment of Church House office accommodation;*
- (iii) *maximising income from the remainder of the building. Surplus space on the ground floor could be made available for mission/outreach.*

All work will be subject to the necessary approval of statutory bodies. Such a scheme must also take into account the necessary repairs to exterior stonework and roofs.

(b) *Costed options on alternative venues for the central administration of the Church.*

6. It is the view of the panel that possible sites within Greater Belfast should be identified on the basis that approx 25,000 square feet will be required.

At the time of writing (March) one such property would appear to meet the criteria –

- Excellent Communication links
- Stand alone building with presence
- Car Parking available (40 spaces)
- 22,000 sq ft
- Purchase Price in the region of £4 Million + relocation and fitting out costs

7. At the time of writing an Architect is working on more detailed costings and it is intended to send a further Report, with these Annual Reports, prior to the General Assembly.

MANSES PANEL

The Rev Dr Donald J Watts reports:

At the last Assembly the Manses Panel was continued “for consultation, if necessary”. The Panel was consulted by the Church Architecture Committee but has not otherwise met.

CENTRES’ REVIEW PANEL

The Rev Dr Donald J Watts reports:

The Centres’ Review Panel continued to meet during the year.

Rostrevor Youth Centre

1. Representatives of the panel and congregation met to discuss a way forward. The panel accepted that some work needs to be done to renovate the building before it is handed back to the congregation. To allow time for the congregation to prepare to use the building, it was agreed that the Youth and Children’s Ministry Board would continue to administer the centre during a phased hand-over of not more than three years.

Lucan Youth Centre

2. To follow through the resolution of the 2005 Assembly (Minutes p 56, res 24), the Boards of Mission in Ireland and Social Witness have both been asked for proposals to use part or all of the site at Lucan. The Social Witness Board is actively pursuing the possibility of sheltered accommodation/supported housing. A meeting with South Dublin County Council Planners has clarified the following:-

- At present there is a Local Zoning Objection on the site. The earliest this can expire is 2010.
- Restriction on access and the Local Zoning Objection are the two main reasons why full planning permission is extremely unlikely.
- Planning submission for low intensity usage might be received favourably, particularly if this was for Sheltered Accommodation.

- In principle permission has been given for Sheltered Accommodation. However this does not mean that full planning permission is guaranteed.
- Planning permission for Sheltered Accommodation would depend upon the scale of the accommodation and the outcomes of road safety and infra-structure audits.
- With the current restrictions on access it is thought that it would be most unlikely that planning approval would be given for a Church Ministry.

The Dublin and Munster Presbytery has recently submitted a paper which is currently being considered by the Panel.

Guysmere Youth Centre

3. The Guysmere Centre continues to operate under the guidance of the Youth and Children's Ministry Board. The Panel recommends that Guysmere should continue as the one Residential Centre to be managed by the Youth and Children's Ministry Board. It is also recognised that renovation will be necessary.

PANEL ON PRESBYTERY BOUNDS

The Rev Dr Donald J Watts reports:

1. The Presbytery Bounds Panel continues its discussion with presbyteries and congregations to seek a way forward in three key areas – the Northwest Border area; the Southern Border area and greater Belfast. At present agreement has largely been reached on a redistribution of congregations in the greater Belfast area, maintaining three presbyteries. The congregations on the Shankill Road will join the North Belfast Presbytery; on the Ormeau Road they will be part of the South Belfast Presbytery; and the two Holywood congregations will move to the East Belfast Presbytery. Carryduff has opted to be part of the Down Presbytery. There is continuing discussion with one congregation on the Shankill Road, but a final recommendation will be brought to the General Assembly.

2. In the Border areas, including the present Monaghan, Donegal, Omagh, Derry and Strabane and Foyle Presbyteries, it has proved difficult to find the right solutions but further meetings are planned and if possible recommendations will be brought in the Daily Minutes.

3. During the discussions it was pointed out that some retired ministers would not wish to move Presbytery even if their former congregations move. It is recommended that ministers in that position should be allowed to choose, and an appropriate resolution will be brought to the Assembly. In order to minimise disruption to the work of Presbyteries during the year it is also intended that recommended changes to Presbytery Bounds become effective on 5 March, 2008. Depending on the further discussions appropriate resolutions will be brought in the Daily Minutes.

PANEL ON PASTORAL CARE

The Rev Gabrielle Farquhar writes:

1. The Panel began its work in November 2006. Since then it has been gathering information and viewpoints from different sources eg presbyteries, ministers who are single, ministers recently finished training. The results have confirmed what care is already in place and highlighted the challenge our Church faces in being more effective in the pastoral care of ministers and manse families.

2. The replies on practice of pastoral care in **Presbyteries** show that some have a person designated, as 'Pastor Pastorum', to pastor and keep in touch with ministers and manse families. In others the Presbytery Moderator takes on this role. However, this can often be arbitrary and the effect dependant on personalities. Others have regular times of prayer and fellowship. Informal support amongst ministers as a group sadly appears to be diminishing. The results revealed that the number of those off on stress or sick leave in the last three years (24) is high enough to cause some concern. Many, but not all, are in congregations that are mid-range in size. The Panel felt the true figures of those experiencing stress were not fully reflected in the responses. The suggested reasons being: fear of opening up, guilt, reactions from congregations, feeling of failing God (Christians should not suffer from stress), stigma. There is a concern for confidentiality throughout the Church about issues that should be treated with respect rather than gossip. This needs to be addressed from college right through to congregational life. The 'Grapevine' which often is overactive, needs to be pruned within our denomination!

3. While much of the Pastoral Care offered at present reacts to needs, one of the areas where we can be pro-active in prevention is in **Training**. Comments from those recently finished training suggest that when entering the ministry there can be a lack of realism about expectations and the cost involved in ministry. Work in a congregation calls on skills other than conducting worship and preaching eg communication, management, relational and, far too often in Christian communities, conflict resolution. The pastor's own spiritual life and care of self and family can suffer. There is a real need for more training and regular in-service days on, eg coping with stress; spiritual life (care for the self), facilitated by qualified personnel. There is the question if these should be optional. The Board of Studies and Christian Training is also already working on some of these same issues.

4. Reflections from **ministers who are single** suggest that a greater awareness and sensitivity from congregations and colleagues could meet many of the needs of this group. Thanks to the secretary of the Minister's Wives Association this year, only ministers who have wives will receive an invitation to the lunch during Assembly week – a small but important step in caring!

5. On hearing of the Panel's remit concerns have been raised for ministers and manse families in the following situations: early retirement or move to a smaller congregation due to illness or disability; marriage breakdown; sudden death of minister in active service. Subsequently some work has already

been done on the latter and a more personal approach to passing on information about practical issues and entitlements has been put in place.

6. Possibilities for the way forward: -
 - A Central panel be set up of trained personnel who can be contacted by a minister or a member of the manse family and confidentiality be assured. This would compliment the 'Care Call' package being set up by the Social Witness Board.
 - Presbyteries to seriously consider how they can better care for ministers and the manse family eg Templepatrick Presbytery have had a day for ministers on 'Coping with Stress' and another for ministers' spouses. Another Presbytery has compiled a list of the names of each member in the manse family household and circulated it among those families (a simple but practical help).
 - The Panel would want to strongly support compulsory in-service training for identified courses.

PANEL ON MINISTRIES

The Rev Prof WP Addley reports:

1. The General Board set up the panel in response to the resolution of the General Assembly for an "ad hoc committee to explore and take forward the recommendations of the Doctrine Committee". (Minutes of the General Assembly 2006, p 45, res 8).

2. Work has been carried out on aspects of the Additional Pastoral Personnel scheme. Work is in hand to "explore the value of (i) 'specialist' teaching elders, (ii) part-time teaching elders, and (iii) non-stipendiary teaching elders". The intention is to bring a full report to the next Assembly.

TRAINING ISSUES PANEL

The Rev George Moore reports:

1. The Panel appointed to consider training issues met during the year. It noted the wide range of training already being offered. This includes the Institute of Christian Training Courses and the work of the Director of Christian Training. The Youth and Children's Ministry Board Field Staff, Certificate Courses and Training Events. The new Diploma in Ministry and training in specialisms e.g. urban mission, church planting, pioneer evangelism. Training offered in pastoral care and counselling. The Preparing Youth to be Peacemakers and Gospel in Conflict programmes. Training in conflict resolution. The Taking Care training programme and challenging behaviours. The Congregational Life programme and its Director's work. The Board of Mission Overseas work in mission involvement and training leadership in a global perspective. Training teams for outreach and overseas work. The ministerial development programme.

Range of Training

2. While not an exhaustive list the above illustrates the wide range of training opportunities provided by the Boards and does not include training offered by outside, para-church organisations. The danger of overlap has been recognised and the Board of Mission in Ireland is leading a co-ordinating group of those providing training to better focus resources. A calendar of training has been suggested as well as a “super-roadshow”. The Panel recognise the existence of this co-ordinating group and encourage its present work, while understanding that its form may change in the future.

Ministerial Development

3. The challenge for the Panel is to both co-ordinate training and bring it more centrally into the life of the denomination. To do this it was recognised that the resourcing and training of ministers will be key, if they are to provide training opportunities in their own congregations. The ministerial development programme therefore needs to be emphasised and resourced. Greater direction of Presbyteries is needed for those who undertake in-service training and sabbaticals.

Board of Christian Training

4. The Panel concluded that the lead Board to co-ordinate and develop training must be the Board of Christian Training. At present this is the Board of Studies and Christian Training but the Panel are of the view that the name gives an unbalanced emphasis and should be changed. To help the Board refocus the Panel agreed the following mission statement:-

“**The Board of Christian Training** exists to envision and equip the ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for cross-cultural and intergenerational mission and ministry in Ireland and across the world”.

It plans to achieve this goal through the work of four Committees:

The Committee on Ministerial Studies exists to recruit, train and encourage the spiritual growth of people for the ministry of the Word and sacraments.

The College and Magee Management Committee exists to manage the physical and human resources of Union Theological College and to ensure that these resources are used efficiently in the achievement of the Board’s mission.

The Committee for the Training of Church Members exists to equip church members of all ages for active involvement in mission, ministry and pastoral care.

The Ministerial Development Committee exists to encourage fruitfulness in mission and ministry by providing life-long learning and training opportunities for ministers.

It is proposed that the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee should move to the General Board.

Christian Training Committee

5. The Christian Training Committee would become a key, inter-Board Committee to determine the training needs and priorities for the denomination.

It would be made up of members of the Board and representatives of all other Boards who provide training in the Church. Training may be offered at all levels as appropriate – congregation, presbytery, area or church-wide. The Boards will be encouraged to develop their programmes, but co-ordinated through the Christian Training Committee. The Committee would also recognise and at times point to other training resources offered outside the structures of the Church, as well as initiate new programmes of training.

Finance

6. It is recognised that at present the Board of Studies and Christian Training does not have its own budget – the Union College and Students’ Bursary Fund budgets are simply transmitted through the Board. The Panel will recommend to the United Appeal Board that the annual grant should be made to the Board of Christian Training, although with an amount “ring-fenced” for Students’ Bursary Fund. The College has indicated that it should be self-financing.

Staffing

7. The Panel would wish to give further consideration to the staffing needs of the refocused Board, recognizing the present positions of Director of Christian Training and Director of Ministerial Studies. It does recognize that a senior administrative post is necessary as Secretary to the Board of Christian Training and has submitted its thinking to the General Board Business Committee, who have been tasked with bringing a recommendation on the job description of a Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly.

MEMORIAL RECORD

The Rev WTJ Richardson, MBE, reports:

The Rev William Thomson Agnew, BSc, BA, MA, died on 3 July, 2006 in the 95th year of his age and the 65th of his ministry. Brought up in the congregation of Belmont he was educated at the Municipal College of Technology, Shaftesbury House, Queen’s University and what was then Assembly’s College, Belfast. Before entering the ministry he worked in several business establishments including the famous Robinson and Cleaver Ltd. On completion of his theological studies he was licenced as a probationer for the Ministry in 1941 and in the same year ordained and installed in the congregation of Maguiresbridge where he remained until 1951. During this time he took on the additional responsibility of Lisnaskea and Newtownbutler charges. In 1951 he moved to Ardglass and Strangford where he remained until, for health reasons, he took early retirement in 1971. While in Fermanagh he was Clerk of the Clogher Presbytery and, in Ardglass and Strangford, Officiating Chaplain to the Royal Air Force base at Bishopscourt. Described by one of his colleagues as an “exemplary minister” - he had a tremendous capacity to work alongside people of all ages and persuasions and, although he and his wife, Maureen had no children themselves, he took a great interest in the young people of his congregations. As a keen sportsman, particularly soccer, tennis, badminton,

table tennis and golf, he had great opportunities to get to know young people and relate to them. Retiring to Bangor, he was for many years a most conscientious secretary of the Bangor Ministers' Club. In retirement he derived great enjoyment in reading history and in choral music.

The Rev Thomas Hugh Mullin, MA, BA, BD, DD, died on the 1 September, 2006 in the 92nd year of his age and the 68th of his ministry. He grew up in the Limavady area and was educated at the Limavady Academy, Foyle College, Queen's University and what was then Assembly's College, Belfast. He was licenced by the Presbytery of Limavady in June 1937 and ordained in Convoy in March 1938 where he remained for the next 10 years. In July 1948 he was installed as Minister of Ballyrashane where he remained until his retirement in September 1978. A keen historian, he with the help of his wife was responsible for several publications including "Kirk and Parish of Ballyrashane", "Kirk and Lands of Convoy", "Ulster Clans", "Roots in Ulster Soil", "Whither the Reformation" and "Reformation Heritage". His writings also included three publications on old Coleraine for which he was awarded an honorary MA by the University of Ulster. His writings and ability as a local historian earned him an honorary DD from the Presbyterian Theological Faculty of Ireland. His ability as a preacher meant that he was much sought after particularly on special occasions. His warmth of personality endeared him to all who had the privilege of knowing him. His wife Julia Elizabeth, daughter Catherine and sons Peter and David can rest assured of the sympathy of the General Assembly of which he was a past Trustee.

The Rev George Ernest Cromey, BA, BD, died on the 27 September, 2006 in the 93rd year of his age and 67th of his ministry. Although born at Ahoghill he was, doubtless due to his father's career as a Head Constable in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, educated at various locations including Ballymoney Model and Methodist College Belfast. He studied classics at Queen's University Belfast and Theology at what was then Assembly's College. Licenced by Belfast Presbytery in May 1938 he was ordained and installed in Ballyweaney in September 1939 where he remained till his retirement in 1978. During the last war he was a Royal Air Force Chaplain. His interest in and flair for classics made him an ideal extern examiner in New Testament Studies during the years 1959-66. A keen sportsman in his earlier life, he was capped for Ireland in Rugby football. He was a most conscientious parish minister and in the pulpit was renowned for meticulous preparation and delivery. His wife Margaret can be confident that the sympathy and prayers of the General Assembly are with her in her sorrow and loss.

The Rev James Ian Mairs, BSc, MA, died suddenly on the 23 November, 2006 in the 53rd year of his age and the 16th of his ministry. A Coleraine man, he was educated at Coleraine Academical Institution and his home congregation was Hazelbank. For his BSc degree he studied at Loughborough University of Technology and for his MA, the University of Ulster, Coleraine. He trained for the ministry at Union Theological College, Belfast and his assistantship was undertaken at First Ballymena where he was ordained on the 22 January 1990.

His first charge was in the congregations of Mountjoy and Drumlegagh, where he remained until May of last year. He was installed in the congregation of Whitehead on the 5 May, 2006. Humanly speaking his death seems so untimely in that it appeared that he was in the prime years of his ministry and, with the gifts and talents which he possessed, could have had many more years of valuable service to the church. Ian was a thoughtful preacher, a caring pastor, a gifted musician and an able administrator. He had a tremendous appreciation of life in all its forms and, as a result of a serious rowing accident in his earlier life, was forever thankful for the gift of life and for the marvelous recovery he had made. Possessing a great love for travel and the wide open spaces, it was his constant resolve to keep physically fit. Hence his involvement in several running marathons and golfing tournaments. He is survived by his wife Paula, two daughters Vicky and Emma and a son Tim who, because they knew him best and loved him most, will miss him most. They can rest assured that the sympathy of their many friends within and beyond the fellowship of the General Assembly is very much with them in their sorrow and loss.

The Rev William James Watson, MBE, BA, died on 12 December, 2006 in the 77th year of his age and the 50th of his ministry. A son of the late Rev David Watson he was brought up in First Donaghadee Manse. His secondary school education was at Regent House School, Newtownards. He studied at Magee University College, Londonderry, Trinity College, Dublin and what was then Assembly's College, Belfast. Following an assistantship in First Bangor he was licenced by the Ards Presbytery in 1953 and ordained and installed in his one and only charge - Roseyards - where he remained until retirement in February 1996. He exercised what has been described as a "unique" ministry, characterized by faithfulness, zeal, dedication and sheer hard work. As a preacher and pastor he was greatly beloved both within and far beyond the congregation of Roseyards. A man of strong opinion which, if the need arose, he could defend vigorously. He was much in demand as a speaker within the *Loyal Orders*. Widely known in equestrian circles he was an authority on *Hackney Ponies* and a past President of the *Hackney Breeders Association*. His book on this subject is regarded to be a classic. His vast contribution to equestrian matters, and indeed to anything to do with rural life generally, doubtless contributed towards his being awarded an MBE. He was married to the former *Evangeline Armstrong* to whom the sympathy of the General Assembly is directed at this time of sorrow and loss.

The Rev James Wilson McAuley, BA, MA, died on 6 January, 2007 in the 82nd year of his age and the 53rd of his ministry. He was brought up in the Knockagh area of Greenisland and after a time in business he answered the call of God and entered the ministry of our church. He was licenced by Belfast Presbytery in 1953, and ordained and installed by the Presbytery of Magherahoghill in 1954 in Brookside congregation, Ahoghill, where he remained until being called to the congregation of Nelson Memorial in 1960. In 1967 he received a call to Magheramorne and in 1978 to Whitehead. Here he remained until retirement in 1991 when he, with his wife *Eleanor*, joined the congregation of Ballycarry, where he delighted in being an ordinary and most

supportive member and choir member. James McAuley was characterized by his high view of worship, his interest and love for people and his diligent service to Christ and the Church. A faithful and supportive presbyter he also served the church as Convener of the General Assembly's Christian Marriage Committee. On a personal level James McAuley knew what sorrow was. The dark shadow of bereavement struck when he lost his first wife – the former Betty O'Neill. They had four daughters – Ann, Helen, Ruth and Janet. To them, their families and his second wife Eleanor, the sympathy of the General Assembly is extended in this time of sorrow and loss.

The Rev Kenneth Gregg, BSc, HCF, died on 16 January, 2007 in the 95th year of his age and the 68th of his ministry. A son of the manse, he was born at Ballyarnett, where his father was minister, and educated at Foyle College, Londonderry, Queen's University, Belfast and what was then Assembly's College, Belfast. On completion of his theological studies he was licenced by Belfast Presbytery in 1937 and ordained and installed in Urney and Sion Mills congregations in March 1939. Here he remained until 1964 when he received a call to the congregation of Athy and Carlow. In 1967 he moved north to the congregations of Lisnaskea, Newtownbutler and Lisbellaw where he remained until retirement in 1978. His experience as an Army Chaplain brought great enrichment to his entire ministry and especially his ministry to men. His wise judgement was greatly appreciated in his pastoral work and within the courts of the church. He will be remembered within his circle of friends, within and beyond our denomination, as a most likeable human being. His wives, Georgina and Olive, both of whom predeceased him, were sisters. To his son Iain, the sympathy of the General Assembly is directed.

The Rev John Edwin Barr, BA, BD, died on the 19 February, 2007 in the 84th year of his age and the 55th of his ministry. Born at Crossnacreevy in the Castlereagh hills, he was educated at Methodist College, Queen's University and the then Assembly's College, Belfast. Having studied Classics at Queen's he had a particular flair for languages and derived great satisfaction through some part time teaching of Latin at Cookstown High School. Upon completion of his studies for the ministry he was licenced by the Belfast Presbytery in June 1948 and, following a period as assistant in Strand congregation, was ordained and installed by the Tyrone Presbytery on 1 May 1952 in Sandholes congregation, where he remained until retirement in 1988. A man of the utmost integrity Edwin Barr was known to be a thoughtful preacher and much loved pastor. His clear lucid mind during debate was much appreciated by his fellow presbyters within the Tyrone Presbytery where he will be greatly missed. Married to the former Margaret Isobel (Gretta) Alexander, they enjoyed many happy years of retirement in their beloved Cookstown. To her, her two sons and two daughters, the sympathy of the General Assembly is directed at this time of sorrow and loss.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report of the General Board and its Priorities, Doctrine, Moderator's Advisory and Recognised Ministries Committees be received.
2. That the General Assembly adopt the outline job description for the post of Deputy Clerk of Assembly and Assistant General Secretary, as outlined in the Report, par 5.
3. That the General Assembly authorise the General Board to proceed to make an appointment to the post of Deputy Clerk of Assembly and Assistant General Secretary.
4. That the General Assembly express thanks to the Rev Harry Robinson for his service to the Assembly as Deputy Clerk, 2003-06.
5. That the General Assembly acknowledge the service given by the Rev Dr WP Addley, in acting as Deputy Clerk since last September.
6. That the Rev _____ be appointed Professor of New Testament Studies at Union College.
7. That the Rev Prof Laurence Kirkpatrick be appointed Principal of Union College for a five-year term.
8. That the General Assembly approve the proposal set out in the Report, par 10, concerning the appointment of the Judicial Commission.
9. That the General Assembly approve the above-mentioned proposal with regard to a Special Commission.
10. That the General Assembly approve the procedure set out in the Report, par 11, for the future selection and appointment of new Trustees.

Priorities Committee

11. That the General Assembly encourage Presbyteries to review their work and priorities in the light of the Priorities Committee Report (Reports 2006, pp. 4-9) and report to the Convener of the Priorities Committee by 31 January, 2008.
12. That the General Assembly give responsibility to the Priorities Committee for prioritising the work of the mission and ministry Boards and that its report be used to inform the work of the United Appeal Board in allocating budgets.

Moderator's Advisory Committee

13. That the General Assembly encourage a greater emphasis on conciliation training at all levels of Church life.
14. That the General Assembly confirm the main emphases outlined in the report on the role of the Moderator of the General Assembly.
15. That the General Assembly approve the new arrangements for nomination of the Moderator of the General Assembly, as outlined in the Report, par 10.

Recognised Ministries Committee

16. That the General Assembly adopt the recommendations on ministers without charge contained in the Recognised Ministries Committee Report, par 4.

17. That the General Assembly accept in principle that the category of “recognised minister” is not necessary in the present context of the Church and instruct the Recognised Ministries Committee to prepare appropriate legislative changes for the next Assembly.

18. That the Report of the Church and Society, Global Concerns and Church Relations Committees be received.

Church and Society Committee

19. That the General Assembly appreciate the initiative of the Moderator and his chaplains during the year in listening pastorally to victims of the troubles.

20. That the General Assembly encourage the Church and Society Committee to engage positively with all political parties in their search for a stable and inclusive society.

21. That the General Assembly note the responses made to government, both written and verbal, in relation to the Sexual Orientation Regulations (Northern Ireland) and other consultations.

22. That the General Assembly appreciate the provision of a structured forum for discussion between the Republic’s government and faith communities alongside the continued commitment of the Republic’s government to dialogue with the churches.

23. That the General Assembly recognise the important work in the Republic of the National Forum on Europe and appreciate the commitment of Mr George McCullagh in representing Presbyterian views.

24. That a budget of £2,000 be made available from the Incidental Fund for the work of the Church and Society Committee.

Global Concerns Committee

25. That the General Assembly commend the “Gospel in Conflict” packs as a resource to the whole church and thank those who produced it.

26. That the General Assembly commend the work of the Race Relations Panel and authorise the following grants:

Veluka Trust (South Africa)	£750
Diakonia Council of Churches (South Africa)	£750
Embrace (NI)	£1,000
Churches’ Asylum Network (ROI)	£500

27. That the General Assembly encourage the eco-congregation initiative as a valuable project to be promoted throughout the church.

28. That the General Assembly encourage the preparation of a comprehensive report and appropriate material on Christian lifestyle issues.

Church Relations Committee

29. That the General Assembly appoint the following delegates to the third European Ecumenical Assembly, to meet in Sibiu, in September 2007 – Revs Ken Crowe, Richard Kerr, Dr Donald Watts; Ms Helen Bond, Linda Gould, Mrs Maureen Patterson, Mr Ben Walker.

30. That the General Assembly appoint the following:

To the Irish Council of Churches Executive: Revs John Brackenridge, Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie, Dr Donald Watts.

To the Irish Inter-Church Committee: Revs Gabrielle Farquhar, Dr Donald Watts.

31. That the following grants (approx) be made from the Incidental Fund.

Irish Council of Churches	£16,900
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	£8,400
Conference of European Churches	£3,400
Church and Society Commission (Brussels)	£11,000
Community of Protestant Churches in Europe	£1,700
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	£11,000

32. That the resignation of the Rev Tony Davidson as Convener of the Church Relations Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and _____ appointed in his place.

Church House Panel

33. That the Report of the Church House Panel be received.

Motion on the Books

34. That the General Assembly rescind the decision of the 2004 General Assembly: "That the General Assembly agree that the Church House complex be sold and that a suitable alternative site and accommodation be acquired."

35. That the Reports of the Manses, Centres' Review, Presbytery Bounds, Pastoral Care, Ministries and Training Issues Panels be received.

Centres' Review Panel

36. That the General Assembly express appreciation to Rostrevor congregation for permitting the use of its former manse as a Youth centre; recognise that it is no longer appropriate to the needs of the Church; and instruct that appropriate arrangements be made to hand the building back to the congregation.

37. That the General Assembly confirm that Guysmere should continue as the one Residential Centre to be managed by the Youth and Children's Ministry Board.

Pastoral Care Panel

38. That the General Assembly encourage the work of the Pastoral Care Panel, as outlined in the Report.

Training Issues Panel

39. That the General Assembly recognise the need for the ministerial development programme to be developed and resourced, with clearer presbytery involvement.

40. That the General Assembly approve the re-naming of the Board of Studies and Christian Training as the Board of Christian Training.

41. That the General Assembly approve the proposed committee structure for the Board of Christian Training and agree to the proposed move of the committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees to the General Board.

General

42. That the Clerk of Assembly be authorised to make any necessary changes to the List of Contents, Headings and the Index to the Code.

43. That a budget of £9,000 be made available from the Incidental Fund for the general work of the Board.

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

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

Anent Pars 19(1); 19(2); 43(1); 59(2)(c); 65(1); 66(1); 66(2); 67(1); 67(4); 79(b); 79(c); 79(d); 86-92; 93(1); 94-96; 105(c); 106(a); 106(b); 109; 134(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact as follows:

Par 19(1)

That the words “Presbyteries, Synods and” be deleted and the words “Presbyteries and” substituted.

Par 19(2)

That the words “under the jurisdiction of the Synod and each Synod is similarly” be deleted.

Par 43(1)

That the words “Presbytery, Synod” be deleted and the word “Presbytery” substituted.

Par 59(2)(c)

That the words “the Assembly, the Synod” be deleted and the word “the Assembly” substituted.

Par 65(1)

That the words “immediately preceding the annual meeting of Synod” be deleted and the words “in March” substituted.

Par 66(1)

That the words “the Clerks of Synod and Assembly” be deleted and the words “the Clerk of Assembly” substituted.

Par 66(2)

That the words “Synod or” be deleted.

Par 67(1)

That the words “Synod or Assembly” be deleted and the words “the Assembly” substituted.

Par 67(4)

That the words “or Synod” be deleted.

Par 79(b)

That the words “the Synod or” be deleted.

Par 79(c)

That Par 79(c) be deleted and the words “report annually to the Assembly and furnish returns on such matters as may be specified by the Assembly;” substituted.

Par 79(d)

That the words “nominations for the offices of Moderator of Synod and” be deleted and the words “a nomination for the office of Moderator” substituted.

Pars 86-92 and 94-96.

That Pars 86-92 and 94-96 be deleted.

Par 93(1)

That the words “In addition to the regular Synods of the Church, every” be deleted and the word “Every” substituted.

Par 105(c)

That the words “Synods, boards” be deleted and the word “boards” substituted.

Par 106(a)

That the words “Synods and” be deleted.

Par 106(b)

That the words “Presbyteries from one Synod to another, and” be deleted.

Par 109

That Par 109(a) be deleted and (b) to (f) be re-numbered as (a) to (e).

Par 134(1)

That in Par 134(1) the sentence be deleted: “The Synod’s only power of discipline is over its own officers and members when acting as such.”

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Anent Pars 29(1)(b); 97(h)(iii); 137 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in:

Par 29(1)(b) of the Code the words “Presbytery, Synod” be deleted and the word “Presbytery” substituted in their place.

Par 97(h)(iii) of the Code the words “or Synod” be deleted.

Par 137 of the Code the words “‘Synod’ when used in relation to a Presbytery means the Synod with which the Presbytery is connected but does not include either of the historic Synods mentioned in paragraph 93;” be deleted.

DONALD J WATTS

Anent Pars 142(1); 142(2); 145(3); 165(5); 172(3); 195(8); 198(5); 228(2); 229(b); 229(2); 239(2); 253(1)(b); 254(4); 258(d)(iii); 259; 260; 260(f); 260; 261(1); 261(1)(f); 262; 264; 265; 267(1); 269(1); 269(4); 269(5)(a)(b)(c); 269(6); 272(1); 274(8)(b)(i); 275(5)(c); 275(5)(d); 275(12); 301(3); 302(3)(c); 306(3); 309(5) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in:

Par 142(1) of the Code the words “Presbytery, Synod or Assembly” be deleted and the words “Presbytery or Assembly” substituted in their place.

Par 142(2) of the Code the words “Presbytery, Synod or Assembly” be deleted and the words “Presbytery or Assembly” substituted in their place.

Par 145(3) of the Code the words “Neither Presbytery nor Synod may” be deleted and the words “Presbytery may not” substituted in their place.

Par 165(5) of the Code the words “or a Synod” be deleted.

Par 172(3) of the Code the words “or Synod” be deleted.

Par 195(8) of the Code the words “or upon any other eligible minister” be deleted.

Par 198(5) of the Code the word “Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly” be deleted and the words “Presbytery and General Assembly” substituted in their place.

Par 228(2) of the Code the words “Synod and” be deleted.

Par 229(1)(b) of the Code the words “and supervising Synod.” be deleted.

Par 229(2) of the Code the words “the case has been reported to Synod and” be deleted.

Par 239(2) of the Code the words “and Synod,” and “or Synod” be deleted.

Par 253(1)(b) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place: “(b) in the case of the General Assembly by the attestation of the Clerk after the close of the Assembly.”

Par 254(4) of the Code the words “Presbyteries, Synods or Assembly” be deleted and the words “Presbyteries or Assembly” substituted in their place.

Par 258(d)(iii) of the Code the words “Clerks of Presbytery and Synod, and” be deleted and the words “Clerks of Presbytery, and” substituted in their place.

Par 259 of the Code that the words “Synods and minute books of Synods to” be deleted.

Par 260 of the Code the word “Synod” be deleted and the words “General Assembly” substituted in their place.

Par 260(f) of the Code that sub-paragraph (f) “cases referred to the Synod for advice or adjudication and appeals against a decision of Presbytery during the year;” be deleted and the subsequent paragraphs re-designated (f) to (k).

Par 260 of the Code the words “sent to the Clerk of Synod at least three days before its meeting, with a copy” be deleted.

Par 260(1) of the Code the words “the Synod for transmission to” be deleted.

Par 261(1) (f) of the Code that the words “Moderator of Synod and” be deleted; also that the word “years” be deleted and substituted by the word “year”

Par 262 of the Code the words “Synod or” be deleted and the words “the General” substituted in their place; also that the words “to Synod” be deleted.

Par 264 of the Code be deleted.

Par 265 of the Code be deleted.

Par 267(1) of the Code the words “Assembly, with the exception of the reports of Synods and of committees whose reports are based on returns or reports from Synod, which shall be submitted before March 31st.” be deleted and the word “Assembly.” substituted in their place.

Par 269(1) of the Code the words “Synods or” be deleted.

Par 269(4) of the Code the word “Synods,” be deleted.

Par 269(5)(a)(b)(c) of the Code the words “Synods and” be deleted in each sub-paragraph.

Par 269(6) of the Code the words “Synods and” be deleted.

Par 272(1) of the Code the words “Synods and” be deleted.

Par 274(8)(b) (i) of the Code the words “and Synod” be deleted.

Par 275(5)(c) of the Code the words “congregation, licensed by Presbytery and transmitted by Synod” be deleted and the words “congregation and licensed by Presbytery” substituted in their place.

Par 275(5)(d) of the Code the words “and transmitted by Synod” be deleted.

Par 275(12) of the Code the word “Synods” be deleted and the word “Presbyteries” substituted in its place.

Par 301(3) of the Code the words “Presbytery, Synod and” be deleted and the words “Presbytery and” substituted in their place.

Par 302(3)(c) of the Code the words “Assembly, Synod and” be deleted and the words “Assembly and” substituted in their place.

Par 306(3) of the Code the word “Synod” be deleted.

Par 309(5) of the Code the words “Presbytery, Synod and Assembly” be deleted and the words “Presbytery and Assembly” substituted in their place.

DONALD J WATTS

OVERTURE ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 85(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 85(1) of the Code after the words “minister without charge” there be inserted the words “or licentiate”.

DONALD J WATTS

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 63 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 63 of the Code the words “from their number representatives” be deleted and the words “representatives, from among the ministers and ruling elders,” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 126 (5) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 126 (5) of the Code the words “the Judicial Commission, the Union Commission, the Shankill Road Mission Commission” be deleted and that the words “the Judicial Commission, the Special Commission, the Union Commission” be inserted in their place

Anent Par 127 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 127 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:-

“**127. (1) The Judicial Commission** shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly and one person (being a minister or a ruling elder) nominated by each Presbytery together with not more than ten persons nominated by the Business Board.

(2)(a) Appointments shall be made from members on the roll of the Assembly to hold office for five years. During the period of office ruling elders who are members of the Judicial Commission shall be constituted members of Assembly, ex-officio.

(b) Any vacancy which may occur in the Judicial Commission membership through death, resignation or removal from the Presbytery shall be filled by the Assembly on the nomination of the Presbytery having the vacant seat, or of the Business Board respectively.

(3) Seven members shall form a quorum for the Judicial Commission.

(4) The Judicial Commission shall have Assembly powers to dispose finally of any cases of appeal or reference or any other matters which may be referred to it under or by virtue of this Code. However, where the Judicial Commission deems it appropriate, it may refer cases to the Special Commission to hear and to issue.

(5)(a) **The Special Commission** shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly and ten other members of the Judicial Commission appointed by

the General Assembly having due regard to all relevant factors. It shall hold office for five years.

(b) Any vacancy which may occur in the Special Commission membership through death, resignation or removal from the Presbytery shall be filled by the Assembly on the nomination of the Judicial Commission.

(6) Five members shall form a quorum for the Special Commission.

(7) The Special Commission shall have the same Assembly powers as the Judicial Commission to dispose finally of any cases of appeal or reference which may be referred to it.”

Anent Par 129 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 129 of the Code be deleted.

Anent Par 207(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 207 (1) of the Code the words “and marriage.” be deleted.

Anent Par 207(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 207 (2) of the Code after the word “Studies” the words “and Christian Training” be inserted.

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

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 268 (4) of the Code the words “Board of Communications, and Nomination Board” be deleted and the words “Board of Communications.” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 269 (3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 269 (3) of the Code the words “shall consist of not more than twelve members, two-thirds of whom shall be drawn from the Presbytery or Synod nominees to the Board, and one-third nominated by the Business Board” be deleted and the words “shall normally consist of not more than twelve members, at least one-half of whom shall be drawn from the Presbytery nominees to the Board, and the others nominated by the Business Board” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 270(3)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 270(3)(a) of the Code the words “the Judicial Commission or Business Board” be deleted and that the words “the Judicial Commission, the Special Commission or Business Board” be inserted in their place.

Anent Par 272 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 272 of the Code the following be added as sub-paragraph 272(4)(e): “conferring with

other Churches; Councils of Churches and other ecumenical and confessional organizations approved by the Assembly, and advising on relations with them.” as sub-paragraph 272(5)(c): “to encourage the study of and response to global issues, including race relations; peace and peacemaking; and the environment.” and as paragraph 272(6): “The Board may call ministers appointed to work under Inter-Church auspices or Inter-denominational fellowships, to be ministers in recognized service to the Church in such full-time appointments, provided that those who become members of Church courts in virtue of such call and appointment report on their work to the Board as may be required, not less than annually.”

Anent Par 280 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 280 of the Code the following be inserted as sub-paragraph 280(4)(c): “supervise the work of the Shankill Road Mission, except the congregational activities over which jurisdiction shall be exercised by the Presbytery of the bounds;” and that sub-paragraphs (c) and (d) be re-designated (d) and (e).

Anent Par 281(3)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 281(3)(a) of the Code the words “hospices or prisons” be deleted and the words “hospices, prisons, universities or colleges” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 281(3)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 281(3)(b) of the Code the words “hospices or public institutions (except educational establishments or as otherwise provided)” be deleted and the words “hospices, universities, colleges or public institutions” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 283 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 283 of the Code the title “Youth Board” be deleted and the title “Youth and Children’s Ministry Board” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 283(2)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 283(2)(a) of the Code the words “the needs of young people” and the words “nurture of young people” be deleted and the words “the needs of children and young people” and “nurture of children and young people” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 284 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 284 of the Code sub-paragraph 284(2)(e) be deleted.

Anent Par 284(2)(f) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 284(2)(f) of the Code the words “other than third-level institutions” be added after the words “educational institutions”.

Anent Par 284(3)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 284 (3) (b) of the Code the words “Deans of Residence or chaplains to”, be deleted and the words “Chaplains to” substituted in their place.

DONALD J WATTS



JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: THE CLERK

1. At the time of writing the Judicial Commission has met five times, with at least two further meetings planned.

REFERENCE RE COMPLAINTS AGAINST A MINISTER

2. It was reported last year that the Judicial Commission was investigating complaints made by an individual against a minister under Code Par 161. The Commission issued the following determination on 16 June, 2006.

“The Judicial Commission is not satisfied that clear, convincing and corroborated evidence has been disclosed with regard to the complaints, or any of them, made by (the complainant) against (the minister) and directs that no further proceedings be taken. The Judicial Commission has appointed the Rev Dr Donald Watts, the Rev Dr Derek Poots and Sir John Pringle to confer with (the minister) on matters arising.”

3. A statement announcing the determination was read in the congregations concerned on Sunday, 18 June, 2006 and the meeting to confer took place with the minister. The minister subsequently chose to voluntarily resign his charges, under Code Par 226, on 31 August, 2006 and was received by the Presbytery as a minister without charge. The Judicial Commission agreed a special arrangement with the Union Commission.

4. In a later reference from the Presbytery for advice, the Judicial Commission advised that the Presbytery should satisfy itself that child protection guidelines are being followed in all congregations.

FOYLE PRESBYTERY REFERENCE RE LARGY CONGREGATION

5. The General Assembly last year delegated to the Judicial Commission any of the powers referred to in the Code Par 106 in its consideration and determination of the Largy reference, which relates to the refusal of Largy to pay monies owed to Dungiven congregation for certain expenses incurred in relation to maintenance of the Manse. During the year the Commission made further attempts to resolve the situation. Members of the Congregational Committee were individually summoned to meet with the Judicial Commission. Only four attended on 29 June, 2006, although some had legitimate reasons for non-attendance and/or explicitly stated that they are prepared to abide by any legitimate direction given by the Courts of the Church. In the light of this, on 26 July, 2006, a further instruction was given to the two signatories to the accounts of Largy congregation that a cheque be signed and delivered to the treasurer of Dungiven congregation. One signatory was prepared to sign but, in contravention of the Judicial Commission instruction, the other indicated that she was unable to sign and intended to resign as a signatory. The Judicial Commission considered that the refusal to sign in the circumstances amounted to the disciplinary offence of contumacy.

6. Code Par 20(3) states that a commission of the General Assembly “shall not adjudicate in any matter of discipline except by way of reference or on appeal”. A report on the Largy situation was sent by the Judicial Commission to the Foyle Presbytery to ascertain if the Presbytery wished to initiate disciplinary proceedings. Following further consideration by the Presbytery, a meeting was arranged by the Judicial Commission with representatives of the Presbytery. The Commission then resolved as follows:

- (1) “The Congregation of Largy Presbyterian Church shall be dissolved on 31 May 2007 unless before 30 April 2007 both the Kirk Session and the Congregational Committee separately request the Judicial Commission in writing that the Congregation be not dissolved, and also both give before 30 April 2007 to the Judicial Commission undertakings in writing that the Kirk Session and the Congregational Committee will thereafter abide by the rules of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the directions and orders of her courts, and also make the payment of £5,436 before 30 April 2007 to the Honorary Treasurer of Dungiven Presbyterian Church, provided always that the said undertakings are acceptable to the Judicial Commission in consultation with the Presbytery of Foyle.
- (2) In the event of dissolution of the Congregation of Largy Presbyterian Church the Judicial Commission shall take such steps as are possible and appropriate to safeguard the property and interests of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.”

The resolution of the Commission was sent to the Clerk of Session, and a copy to the Congregational Secretary, on 29 March, 2007. At the time of writing no response has been received.

APPEAL OF MR RICHARD WILLIAMS AGAINST A DECISION OF THE DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY

7. The Clerk of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery had forwarded an Appeal of Mr. Richard Williams from the decision made by the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster, on 8 October, 2006, whereby the Presbytery did issue the findings of the Special Visitation of Howth and Malahide. The Judicial Commission determined that under Code Par 163(1), Mr. Williams does not have the right of appeal as he is neither a member of an inferior Court nor a party in a case before a Court.

APPEAL OF AN APPLICANT FOR NOMINATION AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

8. The Clerk of a Presbytery had forwarded an Appeal of an applicant against the decision of the Studies Commission of the Presbytery not to nominate him as a candidate for the ordained ministry. The Judicial Commission determined that under Code Par 163(1), the applicant does not have the right of appeal as he is neither a member of an inferior Court nor a party in a case before a Court.

INTERPRETATION OF CODE PAR 181(2)

9. The Clerk asked for guidance on the interpretation of Code Par 181(2), as to whether a ruling elder can be co-opted having resigned from the same congregation. It was agreed that co-option is only possible for those who have moved from one congregation to another. Further consideration is to be given as to whether Code Par 33(5) should be amended to allow a name to remain on a list of elders without charge for five years rather than three.

REFERENCE FROM THE DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY

10. The Special Commission appointed to conduct a Special Visitation of Howth and Malahide Congregation, referred to the Judicial Commission for advice and/or determination the issue of whether a letter, dated 19th February, 2003, had been properly dealt with by another Presbytery Commission appointed on 4th March, 2003. Having considered the letter and relevant minutes from the Presbytery and the Presbytery Commission, the Judicial Commission determined that as the issues referred to in the letter took place more than four years ago and the Presbytery Commission had sought then to deal with them by a "pastoral and personal" approach, no further action is necessary. It directed the Presbytery accordingly.

LETTERS RE HOWTH AND MALAHIDE

11. Letters were received from Mr Richard Williams and Mr Mervyn Furney expressing concerns about matters in Howth and Malahide Congregation. The letters were noted and the Clerk instructed to reply appropriately.

REFERENCE FROM THE TYRONE PRESBYTERY

12. The Tyrone Presbytery referred for advice the matter of a dispute between two members of Tobermore Congregation. Having heard Presbytery representatives and considered the documents submitted, the Judicial Commission advised that as the Presbytery had publicly committed itself to disciplinary action against one of the members, in a statement read to the congregation, it should now consider a charge. The Commission further advised that if, however, at any time an acceptable apology is forthcoming the proceedings should be brought to an end. The Commission also raised for the Presbytery's consideration the possibility of adding to the numbers of the Kirk Session.

13. The Presbytery subsequently brought a charge against a member of Tobermore Congregation and referred it to the Judicial Commission for hearing which at the time of writing has not yet been held.

FUTURE APPOINTMENT TO MEMBERSHIP OF THE JUDICIAL COMMISSION

14. On the abolition of Synods another arrangement will be needed for the appointment of members to the Judicial Commission. A paper suggesting possibilities was forwarded to the General Board and can be found in its report.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

15. The Union Commission continues to consult on special arrangements following resignation under Code Par 226.

OVERTURES

16. Overtures coming to the Assembly were considered and, where necessary, the wording amended.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

UNION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev TJ STOTHERS

Secretary: Rev Dr I HART

INTRODUCTION

1. The period covered by this Report is from March 2006 to February 2007.

Rev JH Robinson

2. During the year Rev Harold Robinson resigned as Deputy Clerk and thereby as Secretary of the Allocation Committee. The Commission places on record its deep appreciation of his commitment to its work, of his vision for the mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and of his manner in dealing with people. It wishes him well in his ministry in Downpatrick and Ardglass.

Rev Dr WP Addley

3. Rev Dr Bill Addley became Acting Deputy Clerk and quickly 'learned the ropes' as Secretary of the Allocation Committee.

Rev TJ Stothers

4. Rev Jim Stothers completes his five-year term as Convener of the Union Commission at this General Assembly.

The Rev Dr SA Matthews writes:

The Union Commission records its appreciation of the work of the Rev TJ Stothers who has served as Convener for the past five years. Mr Stothers brought to his Convenership the experience he gained of the wider work of the Church as Clerk of the Donegal Presbytery, and as Secretary of the Commission. His work was also grounded in his understanding of the challenges faced by a wide variety of congregations through his service as Assistant in First Comber and then as Minister of Ballylennon and St Johnston, Scrabo Church Extension and Greenisland.

Mr Stothers used his great organisational skills and his grasp of the complexities of congregational statistics to prepare for the Commission meetings and to present the business to the membership. He was generous with his time in leading deputations to meet with the local leadership of congregations in their own situation so that the Commission might be better informed about their concerns. He had the ability to lift his eyes beyond individual cases to the great issues facing the Church for the future. He co-operated with other key personnel in our denomination to think through the new policies required to meet new situations. He had a particular burden to bring to the attention of the Church the reality of a growing number of vacancies. His own personal faith and commitment were reflected in the way he related to delegations and individuals on behalf of the Commission.

Mr Stothers was part of the developing relationship between the Commission and the Board of Mission in Ireland. This gave expression to his own fundamental concern that the Commission should focus on furthering the mission of the Church in Ireland.

Internal Committees

5. The Rev Dr Michael Barry succeeded Rev Dr Ian Hart as Convener of Reviews.

RESOURCING MINISTRY

6. Last year the General Assembly encouraged the Union Commission actively to address the issue of the number of Church buildings, Congregations and Charges that, for historical reasons, are more than are required in present circumstances. The Commission is encouraged by the current number of students and licentiates, but is aware that this will slightly fall short of maintaining the number of active ministers for the foreseeable future when retirements are taken account of. This means that the number of vacancies will not decrease unless the number of charges decrease. The publication by Rev Laurence Kirkpatrick, 'Presbyterians in Ireland', sets our present situation in an historical context with a very clear contrast, 'although there are more Irish Presbyterian congregations today than in 1840 when the General Assembly was formed, church membership has fallen by about 50% in the same period.' He describes this fact as 'curious'. Some might call it scandalous, especially in view of the fact that in 1840 the only means of travel to worship was on foot or by horse — how different now! The Commission believes the Church must ask itself whether the fact that we cannot recruit the number of ministers we need, and our continuing decline in membership, is God's judgement on the fact that we appear to value our buildings more than the worship of God himself and that mission to the island on which we live comes second to keeping buildings open. The previous statement is a conclusion drawn by members of the Commission on deputation to congregations who frequently hear 'if you amalgamate us with another congregation people will stop coming to church' and 'we must keep this building open at all costs.' The Commission does not possess (nor would it relish using) the power to coerce congregations into amalgamations or the closure of buildings. It is frustrated, though, that not only congregations but many Presbyteries fail to see both the urgency of the situation and the need for an island-wide vision. The Commission urges the Church to continue to seek God's face in prayer over this matter, and to be willing to take whatever hard decisions the Holy Spirit may guide it to.

7. In order to enable it to carry out the remit referred to at the beginning of the previous paragraph, the Commission has established a Panel on Strategic Planning for the Use of Resources. Its first aim is to establish some principles, and to help towards this it is gathering some statistical information.

8. The Union Commission commends the Presbytery of Donegal for taking steps to address the resourcing of ministry within its bounds. Members of the Commission helped facilitate a presbytery day-conference in January and the

Commission is represented on a Donegal Panel established by the Board of Mission in Ireland.

MATERNITY LEAVE

9. Provisions for maternity leave were amended as follows:

that Ordained Ministers received from other denominations be considered as Final Year Students for the 1st year of their Ordained Assistantship; that there be a qualifying period of 1 year from the re-commencement of service of Ministers without Charge who have been such for 1 year or more.

MEDICAL ASSESSMENT AND PERMANENT DISABILITY SCHEME

10. The Union Commission regularly sets, in consultation with the Judicial Commission, special arrangements under the Code, Par 226(b) for ministers who resign because of ill-health and hope eventually to enter the Prolonged Disability Scheme. The Board of Finance and Personnel requires a rigorous medical assessment before entry into the scheme. Previously this assessment took place at the end of the time of special arrangement set up by the Union Commission, which meant it was possible to come to the end of the arrangement and then, after medical assessment, not be able to enter the Prolonged Disability Scheme. In consultation with the Board of Finance and Personnel it was agreed that in future the assessment would take place before formal resignation under Code Par 226(b) and thus before the special arrangement begins. While this means that all who enter into a special arrangement in this way now have a reasonably assured prospect of eventually entering the Prolonged Disability Scheme, it should be noted that, in all cases, an improvement in health *may* mean a minister is required to leave the scheme.

COMMISSION PROCEDURES

11. The Commission has reviewed its procedures on the occurrence of a vacancy. Previously an appointment would be made for a deputation from the vacant charge to appear before the Commission, forms eliciting information sent to the Convener of the Vacancy, the forms filled in and returned and the appointment kept. However, sometimes it was not possible for all the information to be provided in the time anticipated, which meant that Leave to Call was delayed, and charges which had all the necessary information and could have used the appointment also delayed. The procedure now is that the forms are sent to the Convener of the Vacancy who returns them completed to the Convener of the Union Commission. If everything is in order an appointment is then made. To facilitate this the Commission now meets on the *last* Tuesday of September, October, November, January, February, March, May and June.

12. The Commission also investigated whether basic criteria could be set out which, applied to each congregation, would determine whether Leave to Call would be granted and whether stipends should be determined by the use of formulae and stipend bands. It was found that the factors to be considered were so numerous and variable that each congregation had to be considered as an individual case; various models had been produced and it had been found that the use of formulae and bands is not practical.

DEVELOPMENT MODERATOR

13. At the request of the Urban Mission Panel of the Board of Mission in Ireland, the Commission approved the post of Development Moderator.

LETTING MANSES IN VACANCIES

14. Congregations are reminded that the permission of the Union Commission is required before letting a Manse in a vacancy; and that the required survey of the vacant Manse should be carried out *before* the tenants move in, so that eventual Leave to Call is not delayed.

CLONTARF AND SCOTS

15. Since the sale of the former Ormond Quay and Scots property, the Union Commission has sought to find an equitable arrangement for the use of these assets, amounting to c.€3,000,000, following amalgamation with Clontarf congregation. There is a body known as 'The Governors of Ormond Quay and Scots Presbyterian Endowments' which is distinct from the Congregational Committee and which is responsible for the distribution of income from these assets. This body is composed of the office bearers of the congregation, including the members of the Congregational Committee. An understanding has been reached whereby the Congregational Committee has accepted

- (a) that the Education Board of the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster continue as trustees of the endowments which were previously endowments of Clontarf Congregation before the amalgamation, i.e. that the Governors of Ormond Quay and Scots Presbyterian Endowments should not become the Trustees of the former Clontarf endowments.
- (b) that the Governors operate under the directions of the Congregational Committee, or, if applicable, of a meeting of the Congregation (that is, that the Governors do not make executive decisions about the endowments and their income on their own initiative)
- (c) a Stipend of €26,956.52 (2006) and Initial Ministerial Expenses of €7,800. These figures will be reviewed annually for at least three full years after the installation of a Minister. If no minister is installed before 31 December this year [sc.2006] the Tyrone Memorial increase will apply, but if the congregation is still vacant in 12 months time, a review will take place at that point.

The Governors have accepted

- (d) that no change is to be made to the name of 'The Ormond Quay and Scots Presbyterian Endowments'.
- (e) that the Governors operate under the directions of the Congregational Committee, or, if applicable, of a meeting of the Congregation.
- (f) that the Convener of the Vacancy, who is the Interim Moderator of Kirk Session, will act as Chairman of the Governors each time they meet (until a Minister is installed), or will appoint a deputy so to act.
- (g) an understanding of Clause 2 of their scheme which means that the Governors are ultimately subject to the authority of the General Assembly and that Clause 1 of the scheme extends this to 'include any

authority duly empowered to represent or act for the General Assembly in that behalf" which would include the Union Commission acting within the powers given it by the General Assembly.

For its part the Union Commission acknowledges that the terms of the Deed of the Governors of the Ormond Quay and Scots Presbyterian Endowments can be changed, only on the request of the Governors to the General Assembly.

STATED SUPPLIES

16. Presbyteries are asked to note that, except in cases where the installed minister of a neighbouring congregation is appointed Stated Supply, the position is not intended as permanent and will normally be terminated by the Commission after two years.

17. In view of the temporary nature of these appointments, the Supply is responsible for Supply Fees for any Sunday he or she does not take the service(s) in a Stated Supply arrangement. It is recommended that the congregation(s) pay the fee to the person who does in fact take the service(s) and deduct it from the Stated Supply's normal remuneration. If the Stated Supply, whether through holidays, illness or some other reason, does not carry out pastoral duties, then that portion of remuneration and expenses should not be paid by the congregation(s) for that period. Again, this does not apply where the installed minister of a neighbouring congregation is appointed Stated Supply.

ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS AND MANSES

18. The Commission is very concerned at a lack of consistency among congregations and presbyteries concerning the appointment of Additional Pastoral Personnel. In particular there is a lack of awareness of (a) procedures, including the necessity to consult 'Peninsula' for professional indemnified advice concerning contracts and other matters, and (b) the implications of secular employment law. The Commission is currently drawing up new guidelines for the submission of requests for approval of additional appointments. In addition there are a confusing number of different terms being used for various posts: it intends to offer a guide to nomenclature with the hope of introducing a measure of standardisation for future appointments.

19. Requests for approval of Additional Appointments and for the necessary permissions concerning Manses must be with the relevant committee convener at least one week before the Union Commission meeting at which it is proposed to be considered.

DATA PROJECTION

20. After a period of allowing deputations seeking Leave to Call to make presentations using a data projector, the Union Commission has decided to discontinue the practice as it has proved counter-productive.

LEAVE TO CALL A MINISTER

Note: This is only a summary; there may well be conditions attached to the Leave to Call which are not recorded here. Expenses are "Initial Ministerial

Expenses”, and are to be kept under review and paid in accordance with the procedures agreed by the Board of Finance and Personnel.

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses
Clough	£28,050 [2006]	£6,700
High Kirk	£37,000 [2006]	£7,000
Clarkesbridge & 1st Newtownhamilton,	£ 7,300 [2006]	£2,250
Garmany’s Grove	€ 5,200 [2006]	€1,660
and McKelvey’s Grove	€ 4,400 [2006]	€1,430
Richview	£22,131 [2006]	£6,300
High Street, Antrim	£30,000 [2006]	£7,000
Clough	£16,900 [2006]	£4,150
and Seaforde	£ 5,750 [2006]	£1,950
Orritor	£16,000 [2006]	£4,050
and Claggan	£11,300 [2006]	£2,700
Ramoan	£11,000 [2006]	£3,000
and Armoy	£12,000 [2006]	£3,250
Bloomfield	£33,000 [2006]	£6,500
Castlereagh	£25,000 [2006]	£6,400
Ballygrainey	£22,800 [2006]	£6,500
1st Garvagh	£23,575 [2006]	£7,000
2nd Castledearg	£19,800 [2006]	£6,000
and Alt	€ 3,500 [2006]	€ 675
1st Ballyeaston	£30,000 [2006]	£6,750
Trinity, Bangor	£30,500 [2006]	£6,800
Clontarf and Scots	€26,956 [2006]	€7,800
Moneydig	£15,500 [2006]	£5,120
Ballykeel	£16,000 [2006]	£5,500
Ballysally	£ 9,250 [2006]	£5,950
1st Islandmagee	£20,000 [2006]	£7,213
Cumber	£15,125 [2006]	£3,250
and Upper Cumber	£12,100 [2006]	£3,250
Mountjoy	£23,000 [2006]	£6,000
and Drumlegagh	£ 7,000 [2006]	£1,000
Tullyallen	£10,250 [2006]	£3,500
and Mountnorris	£10,250 [2006]	£3,500
Strean	£30,000 [2006]	£6,750
Drumachose	£21,513 [2006]	£4,610
and Derramore	£10,133 [2006]	£2,240
Greystone Rd, Antrim	£28,000 [2007]	£6,900
Whitehead	£26,880 [2007]	£7,000
Hillhall	£33,000 [2007]	£7,000

LEAVE TO CALL UNDER HOME MISSION DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Greystones	€12,270 [2006]	€ 4,800
Arklow	€ 6,420 [2006]	€ 3,800
Christ Church, Sandymount	€10,000 [2006]	€10,000
Ballina,	€ 3,909 [2006]	€ 3,520

Killala	€ 580 [2006]	€ 180
and Ballymote	€ 1,056 [2006]	€ 475
Clones,	€ 3,890 [2007]	€ 1,285
Stonebridge,	€ 1,552 [2007]	€ 803
Ballyhobridge	€ 1,270 [2007]	€ 635
and Newbliss	€ 4,655 [2007]	€ 2,008

LEAVE TO CALL AN ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Congregation	Salary	Expenses
Mourne	£25,000	£5,000
Wellington Street	£21,500	£4,250
West Church, Ballymena	£21,250	£3,500

EXTENSION OF TERM OF ASSOCIATE MINISTRY

Carnmoney: The Associate Minister's term was extended by 2 months until 31 March 2007.

Orangefield: The Associate Minister's term was extended by 1 year until April 2008.

STATED SUPPLY

Donaghmore and Stranorlar: the Commission renewed its nomination of Rev T Luke for a further year from 11 April 2006;

1st Castleberg and Killeter: the Commission nominated Rev L Casement for 1 year from September 2006 and agreed the terms;

2nd Killyleagh: the Commission nominated Rev P Banney for a period of up to 1 year and agreed the terms;

Ramoan and Army: the Commission nominated Rev T Luke and agreed the terms;

Ray and Newtowncunningham: the Commission renewed its nomination of Very Rev Dr R Sterritt for 1 year from 1 January 2007;

Clontibret: the Commission renewed its nomination of Rev TJ Hagan for a further year from 1 December 2006;

2nd Newtownards: the Commission nominated Rev RT Anderson for a period of 1 year and agreed the terms.

REVIEWS

Through its Reviews Sub-committee the Commission adjusted stipends for 2006 as follows:

St Columba's:	£18,000
Movilla:	£18,000
Kirkpatrick Memorial:	£20,000
Tullycarnett:	£13,000
Crumlin Road:	£16,000

MANSES

Through its Manses Sub-committee the Commission dealt with a wide variety of matters. These are the most important:

The following congregations were given permission to demolish their manse and rebuild on the same site: High Kirk, Ballymena; Clough (Ballymena); Clontibret.

The following congregations were given permission to sell their manse and buy or build another: Dunmurry; 2nd and 3rd Rathfriland; Bloomfield; 1st Larne; Ballygomartin.

The following congregations were given permission to sell a redundant manse and use the proceeds in an appropriate manner: Ramelton; Lislooney; Oldpark.

The following congregations were given permission to use proceeds of the sale of a manse in appropriate ways: Drumlee; Gilford.

The following congregations were given permission to let their manse during a vacancy: Ballykeel; St Johnston; 1st Castlederg.

UNION DISSOLVED

Greystones and Arklow

This union under the Home Mission Development Scheme was dissolved and each congregation given Leave to Call, on the recommendation of the Presbytery and BMI.

CONGREGATIONS AMALGAMATED

2nd and 3rd Rathfriland

The 2006 General Assembly approved the amalgamation of the two congregations on terms to be set by the Union Commission. The following terms were set:

1. That the congregation of 2nd Rathfriland be amalgamated with the congregation of 3rd Rathfriland from 23 June, 2006, or other suitable date under the name '2nd & 3rd Rathfriland'.

2. That the two Kirk Sessions become one Kirk Session and the two Congregational Committees become one Committee until new Committee elections are held.

3. That all existing or future assets, including property or lands not disposed of, become the property of the amalgamated congregation.

4. That any expenses accruing through failure to dispose of any property held by the two congregations, or through having to make the buildings secure and insured, be the responsibility of the amalgamated congregation.

5. That where no arrangements regarding the sale of any properties and distribution of the proceeds therefrom have been agreed by the Union Commission under Code Par 274(6)(d), no such sale or distribution shall take place for three years from the date of amalgamation without such agreement being obtained by the amalgamated congregation.

ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS

The Commission, through its Additional Appointments Committee, approved 18 full- or part-time Additional Pastoral Personnel posts. These posts

are mostly for Youth Workers or Family Workers. About 100 of our congregations now employ such staff. Presbyteries, the Union Commission, and Peninsula Business Services all play a part in trying to ensure these appointments will be satisfactory.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

The Commission, through its Expenses and Fees Sub-committee, each year gives guidance to Congregational Committees on the amount of Car Allowance they should pay to their minister. The average distance a minister travels on business is 14,400 miles, and for that mileage the recommended Allowance for 2007 is £5,268 (€8,060). Ministers doing a higher mileage should be paid more, and those doing a lower mileage should be paid less.

SUPPLY FEE

Through its Expenses and Fees Sub-committee the Commission set the Supply Fee for 2007 at £56 (€92) (single) and £84 (€138) (full). Travelling expenses should be paid in accordance with the rate set for attendance at Assembly Boards, currently 12 p or 20 cents per mile.

**ASSESSMENTS ON FULLY CONSTITUTED CHURCH EXTENSION
CHARGES — 2007**

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

<i>Church</i>	<i>Fully Constituted</i>	<i>Families (†)</i>	<i>Assess 2007 £</i>	<i>Spec. Sources £</i>	<i>Income £</i>
Downshire	1993	250 (170)	255	69,576	136,755
Lisnabreen	1993	160 (130)	195	43,455	60,790
Scrabo	1994	242 (155)	232	69,182	111,640
Burnside	1995	165 (140)	210	68,000	111,417
Movilla	2001	248 (188)	282	61,990	136,080
New Mossley	2005	89 (77)	115	19,009	46,781
Ballysally	2007	150 (66)	99	31,609	65,253

† Families contributing at least £5.00 per annum

ASSESSMENTS ON CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES — 2007

<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>
Taughmonagh	—	15,213	4,564	2,282	1,521	913	9,280

LICENTIATES — 2007

66

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £15,495 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, 2007

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
West Church Ballymena	Mark Donald*	11.06.06	36,500 (30%)	11,451	5,046
Eglinton	John Montgomery*	16.06.06	22,860 s/a	2,500	13,997
Kilfennan	William Montgomery*	01.06.06	28,949 (30%)	9,185	7,312
Ebrington	Richard McIlhatton†	28.05.06	29,545 (30%)	9,214	6,983
Hollywood (First)	Martin McNeely*	04.06.06	31,138 (30%)	9,842	6,655
Legacurry	Kenneth Nelson*	21.05.06	30,999 (30%)	9,800	6,697
Cunningham Memorial	Nigel Reid#	02.06.06	32,081 (30%)	9,264	6,231
Ballyclare	Heather Rendell†	19.05.06	31,313 (30%)	9,744	6,453
Newtownards (Regent St)	Ivan Thompson*	23.06.06	31,893 (30%)	10,068	6,429
Gardenmore	Scott Woodburn*	09.06.06	32,996 (30%)	10,399	6,098
Saintfield (First)	Martin Cowan*	21.05.06	31,800 (30%)	10,041	6,456
Rathcoole	David McIlwaine*	12.06.06	22,939 s/a	0	16,497

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

No House Allowance — House provided by congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES — 2007

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £15,495 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, 2007

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend £</i>	<i>Congregations Contribution £</i>	<i>C.M.F. £</i>
Newtownbreda	Michael Anderson*	05.06.05	31,747 (30%)	10,025	6,472
Trinity, Bangor	Nigel Craig*	19.06.05	27,805 (30%)	8,842	7,655
Larne (First)	Gareth McFadden*	15.05.05	33,962 (30%)	10,689	5,808
Kilbride	Rod Mulholland*	26.06.05	29,397 s/a	2,492	14,005
McQuiston Memorial	Leslie Patterson†	24.06.05	27,856 (30%)	8,707	7,490
1st Antrim	Alastair Dunlop†	05.06.05	31,734 (30%)	9,871	6,326

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

No House Allowance — House provided by congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES — 2007

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £15,495 plus House Allowance p.a.
 (single — £702; married — £1,002) if applicable. House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

THIRD YEAR — From 1st January, 2007

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend £</i>	<i>Congregations Contribution £</i>	<i>C.M.F. £</i>
Harmony Hill, Lambeg	Karen Campbell*	13.06.04	32,247 (30%)	10,175	6,322

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

No House Allowance — House provided by congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

ORDAINED ASSISTANTS — 2007

From 1st January, 2007

<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>
			£		£	£	£	£	£
Cregagh	Troy Morgan	24.08.03	28,887	100	20,660	702	21,362	6,639	14,723
West Kirk	Hiram Higgins	01.02.03	22,617	100	20,660	1,002	21,662	0	21,662
St Andrew's, Bangor	Gareth Stewart	27.10.00	24,468	100	20,660	1,002	21,662	2,500	19,162
Hillhall	Craig Wilson		32,097	95	19,627	1,002	20,629	13,339	7,290
Hillsborough (from 25.02.07)	Kiran Wimberly	19.11.06	35,447	85	17,561	1,002	18,563	12,907	5,656
Stormont	Warwick Smart	17.03.01	39,978	95	19,627	1,002	20,629	16,492	4,137
Malone	Annes Nel	03.05.86	33,203	90	18,594	1,002	19,596	12,952	6,644

ASSOCIATE MINISTERS 2007

<i>Name</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Salary</i>		<i>House</i>	<i>Annual Assessment</i>
		<i>Paid</i>	<i>Recovery</i>	<i>Allowance Paid</i>	<i>Recovery</i>
		£	£	£	£
NSR Lockhart	Hamilton Road, Bangor	21,000.00	15,650.80	2,000.00	612.65
R Montgomery	Bangor, West	24,000.00	17,340.00	2,000.00	2,866.11
JE McDowell	Wellington Street	21,500.00	15,440.00	2,250.00	3,820.12
LH Eagleson	Carnmoney	20,660.00	14,336.00	2,000.00	422.59
J Rogers	Whiteabbey	20,660.00	13,450.40	2,000.00	3,359.99
A Carson	Orangefield	22,703.00	15,703.00	3,000.00	3,625.36
M Gibson	Westbourne	20,660.00 s/a	9,507.00	2,000.00	387.37
CWP Kennedy	Knock	25,000.00	22,968.40	n/a	2,787.53

s/a Special Arrangement

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That CMF be authorised to pay grants towards expenses incurred by Ministers in Congregations, up to a limit of NI £5,268 or RI €8,060, within the terms of resolution 3, p 70, General Assembly Minutes, 1988.
3. That the resignation of the Rev TJ Stothers as Convener of the Union Commission be accepted, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev Dr SA Matthews be appointed in his place for a period of five years.
4. That the Union Commission be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 128 of the Code as follows:

MEMORIAL TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet in Belfast on 4th June 2007.

The Memorial of the Kirk Session of Bloomfield Congregation, Belfast, Respectfully Showeth:

That whereas the Code Par 128 (4) and (5) (b) states that the Union Commission must approve the minimum of stipend to be offered by a congregation applying for leave to call a minister;

That the Board of Finance and Personnel approves annual salary increases in salary bands under the Tyrone Memorial regulations;

That all Executive and Administrative staff employed under the General Assembly and its Boards are placed at the appropriate place on the salary scale range for each post;

That it is now common practice throughout all sections of the business community to place staff at the appropriate place on the salary scales for that position;

That the Kirk Session considers a system of agreed salary scale ranges for each congregation would give greater clarity and flexibility to congregations who would be able to reward the minister within the parameters of the agreed range appropriate to their experience and the work of the congregation.

Memorialists, therefore, pray your Venerable Assembly to ask the Union Commission to review the current practice of setting a “minimum of stipend” and bring recommendations to the next General Assembly to consider the merit of “an agreed salary range”.

And Memorialists, as in duty bound, will every pray

Adopted unanimously by the Kirk Session on 4th January, 2007.

ALISTAIR R BILL, Vacancy Convener
JOHN R McKIBBIN, Clerk of Session

Licensed by the Presbytery of East Belfast at its meeting on 6th February, 2007 and transmitted simpliciter to the Synod of Belfast

ALISTAIR S SMYTH, Moderator
DOUGLAS C COWAN, Clerk of Presbytery

Licensed by the Commission of the Synod of Belfast at its meeting on 12 March, 2007 and transmitted simpliciter.

IA McKAY, Moderator
ALISTAIR R BILL, Clerk

REPORTS OF SYNODS AND PRESBYTERIES

SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN

The **SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN** report that the Rev Dr RS Tosh is their Moderator, and that their next stated meeting will be held at Church House, Belfast, during the General Assembly.

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev TWD Johnston is their Moderator; that the Rev WA Kennedy, minister of Trinity, Bangor, retired on 31 July, 2006; that the Rev NJ McCullough, minister of Ballygrainey, resigned his charge on 31 May, 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh; that the Rev JH Robinson resigned his position of Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that Rev William Sinclair resigned his charge on 8 September, 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that Rev WJ Todd resigned his charge on 30 September 2006 and was received as a minister without charge; that the Rev GJ Kennedy resigned as associate minister at First Bangor and was installed to the charge of Ballygrainey on 19 January 2007; that the Rev Dr MJ Welsh was ordained and installed to the charge of Greyabbey on 15 September, 2006; that Rev WJP Bailie was inducted to the work of Senior Executive with Mission Africa on 11 February, 2007; that Mr AC Wilson, a licentiate, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Foyle; that Mr Ivan Thompson was licensed on 23 June, 2006; that Mr MD McNeely presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was received as a licentiate; that under their care are: as ministers without charge Revs David McKee, CD Mawhinney, Mark Spratt, WJ Todd and Dr Ian Dennis; as licentiates Mr Nigel Craig, Mr MD McNeely, Mr Ivan Thompson; as students Mr Colin Anderson and Mr William Harkness; that they held consultations at Movilla and Cloughy; that the financial reports of congregations are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2) votes: For 50, Against 0; Pars 86 – 92 and 94 – 96: For 47, Against 0.

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev SD Finlay is their Moderator; that the Rev NJ McCullough presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed to the charge of Hill Street, Lurgan, on 31 May, 2006; that the Rev PL McKelvey presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane and was ordained and installed to the charge of Loughgall and Tartaraghan on 15

Retired
Resigned

Installed

Ordained
Inducted

Credentials
Licensed

Under Care

Consulted

Installed

Ordained

Licensed September, 2006; that Mr K Nelson was licensed on 21 May, 2006 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr J Montgomery was licensed on 16 June, 2006 and given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that they have under their care as students for the ministry Messrs RS Agnew, A McConnell, R McIlnea, R Orr and M Wilson; that during the year they held no consultations; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev JM Casement is their Moderator; that the Rev WT Agnew, minister emeritus of Ardglass and Strangford, died on 3 July, 2006; that the Rev NAL Cameron, minister of Second Killyleagh resigned his charge on 31 August, 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that the Rev JH Robinson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed to the charge of Downpatrick and Ardglass on 8 September, 2006; that Mr M Cowan presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was received as a licentiate; that Mr DM Shaw and Mr CI Dickson were given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane and Omagh respectively; that under their care are: as ministers without charge, the Rev RN Stewart, and the Rev S Armstrong; as students Mr M Catney, Mr J Cochrane and Mrs K Viner; that they held a consultation at First Ballynahinch; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2), 86 – 92 and 94 – 96: For 23, Against 0.

The **DROMORE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev JG Trueman is their Moderator; that the Rev H Young, minister emeritus of Hillhall, died on 24 March, 2006; that the Rev WTJ Richardson, minister of Hallhall, retired on 31 December, 2006; that Mr M Cowan was licensed on 21 May, 2006 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that under their care are: as licentiates Mrs K Campbell and Mr K Nelson; as students Mr R McKibbin and Mr C McKibbin; that they held consultations at Ballinderry and Anahilt; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; that under the Barrier Act 33 members voted in favour of the Overture anent paragraph 19(1) of the Code and 0 voted against and 33 members voted in favour of the Overture Anent paragraph 19(2) of the Code and 0 voted against.

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev WL Orr is their Moderator; that the Rev RJ Greer resigned his charge on 14 January, 2007 and was retained as a minister without charge under their care; that the Rev DJM Boyle was installed to the charges of Hilltown and Clonduff on 1 September, 2006; that the Rev WB Martin presented credentials from the Presbytery of Belfast South and was installed to the charges of Anaghlonge and Garvaghy on 13 January, 2007; that under their care as a minister without charge (retired) is the Rev EG McAuley; and as students Mr TN Bingham and Mr A Faulkner; that the Financial

Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2), 86 – 92 and 94 – 96: For 36, Against 0.

The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DB Murphy is their Moderator; that the Rev SJ Hanna, minister of Tullyallen and Mounthorris, resigned his charge on 31 August, 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Foyle; that they held consultations at 2nd Newtownhamilton and Creggan congregations; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2), 86 – 92 and 94 – 96: For 23, Against 1.

Resigned

Consulted

SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE

The **SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE** report that the Rev JM Finlay is their Moderator and that the next stated meeting will be held, if required, in Church House, Belfast, during the General Assembly.

The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DA Murphy, is their Moderator; that the Rev RB Savage, resigned his charge as minister of Ballykeel on 27 May, 2006, having received and accepted a call from Kells and Ervey and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that the Rev NAL Cameron presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was installed to the charge of High Kirk on 1 September, 2006; that the Rev William Sinclair presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed to the charge of First Ballymena on 8 September, 2006; that the Rev Kenneth McConnell presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was installed to the charge of Clough on 1 December, 2006; that Mr DB McCorriston presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane and was ordained and installed to the charge of Ballyloughan on 28 April, 2006; that Mr JE McDowell, a licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was ordained and inducted as associate minister in Wellington Street on 3 December, 2006; that Mr ME Donald, was licensed on 11 June, 2006 and remains under the care of Presbytery; that Mr NJE Reid, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane, was received as a licentiate under the care of Presbytery on 28 June, 2006; that they have under their care as students for the ministry: Messrs T Bruce, WE Chestnutt, CWA Jones, TP McCullough, and RM Moody, and Mrs L.M. Keys; that they held consultations at Cuninghame Memorial, Third Portglenone and Killymurry; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to

Resigned

Installed

Ordained

Licensed
Credentials

Under Care

Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2), 86 – 92 and 94 – 96: For 42, Against 0.

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DJ Paul is their Moderator; that the Rev CF Young, minister emeritus of Ballylinney, died on 17 March, 2006; that the Rev JI Mairs, minister of Whitehead, died on 23 November, 2006; that the Rev JW McAuley, minister emeritus of Whitehead, died on 6 January, 2007; that the Rev SP Moore, minister of First Islandmagee, having received a call to the congregation of Gilnahirk, resigned his charge on 19 June, 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that the Rev JI Mairs presented credentials from the Presbytery of Omagh and was installed as minister of Whitehead on 5 May, 2006; that Miss HM Rendell was licensed on 19 May, 2006; that Mr RSJ McIlhatton was licensed on 28 May, 2006; that Mr SA Woodburn presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was received as a licentiate under care of Presbytery on 5 December, 2006; that Mr RSJ McIlhatton, a licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane on 28 May, 2006; that Mr WG Hamilton, a licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone on 26 June, 2006; that Mr JE Sloan, a licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone on 26 June, 2006; that they have under their care as Minister without Charge Rev AT Maze; as licentiates Mr G McFadden, Miss HM Rendell, Mr SA Woodburn; as students Mr MJ Gracey, Mr WJA Buchanan, Mr GR Connor, Mr JA McKay, Mr MF Russell and Mr NRA Cooper; that during the year they held consultations at Ballynure and Cairncastle; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed; and that the voting on the overtures sent down to Presbytery under the Barrier Act was as follows: For 25 votes; Against 0 votes.

The **COLERAINE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev TJ Laverty is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr TH Mullin, minister emeritus of Ballyrashane, died on 1 September, 2006; that the Rev John Coulter was installed to the charge of Ballysally on 18 January, 2007; that Mr William Montgomery was licensed on 1 June, 2006 and issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane; that Mr Robert Campbell, having been called to the vacant congregations of Clogher and Glenhoy, was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Omagh; that they have under their care as a minister without charge the Rev JD Mark; as students for the ministry Mr PM Baxter and DS Brownlow; that the financial reports of congregations are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2), 86 – 92 and 94 – 96: For 36, Against 0.

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev KDW Crowe is their Moderator; that the Rev GE Cromey, minister emeritus of Ballyweaney, died on 27 September, 2006; that the Rev WJ Watson, minister emeritus of Roseyards, died on 12 December, 2006; that the Rev RB Thompson resigned his charge of Armooy and Ramoan on 2 March, 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane; that Dr PB Wilson presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was ordained and installed to the charge of Bushmills on 15 September, 2006; that the Rev Denis Bannerman presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick and was installed to the charge of Toberkeigh on 10 November, 2006; that they have under their care as a minister without charge Rev Dr Victor Dobbin, CB, MBE; that they have under their care as students Mr AD Mullan and Mr JB Mullan; that they visited the congregations of Toberdoney, Roseyards, Dunloy; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; that voting on overtures sent down under the Barrier Act anent Code Pars 19 (1) & (2) 86-92, 94-96 was For 21; Against 5.

Died

Resigned

Installed

Ordained

Under Care

Consulted

The **TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev AV Stewart is their Moderator; that the Rev WJ Sleith, minister of High Street, Antrim, retired on 31 March, 2006; that the Rev JH MacConnell, minister of First Ballyeaston retired on 24 June, 2006; that the Rev Denis Bannerman, Minister of Greystone Road, Antrim, resigned his charge on 9 November, 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Route; that the Rev CM Glover presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was installed to the charge of Second Ballyeaston on 23 June, 2006; that they have under their care as a student, Mr P Turton; that during the year they held a consultation with Muckamore; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2), 86 – 92 and 94 – 96: For 19, Against 0.

Retired

Resigned

Installed

Under Care

SYNOD OF BELFAST

The **SYNOD OF BELFAST** report that the Very Rev Dr IA McKay is their Moderator and that the next stated meeting will be held in Church House on Tuesday, 5 June, 2007.

The **NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev SE Hughes is their Moderator; that the Rev Kenneth McConnell, minister of the congregation of Oldpark, resigned his charge on 30 November, 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that Mr JWD Rogers was ordained and inducted as associate minister in Whiteabbey on 17 September, 2006; that Mr D McIlwaine presented credentials from the South Belfast Presbytery and was received as a

Resigned

Ordained
Credentials

Under Care licentiate; that Mr J Montgomery presented credentials from the Armagh Presbytery and was received as a licentiate; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs CI McKnight, WA Shaw, WM Smyth (Retired) and FW Vincent; that they have under their care as licentiates Mr J Montgomery and Mr D McIlwaine; that no consultations were held, the Presbytery instead conducting a review of its consultation practice; that the congregational Financial Reports are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2), 86 – 92 and 94 – 96: For 30, Against 1.

Died The **SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev V Sinclair is their Moderator; that the Rev WM Jackson, minister emeritus of Shankill Road Mission Congregation died on 7 March, 2006; that the Rev Dr WM Boland, minister emeritus of Malone Congregation died on 24 April, 2006; that the Rev Alexander Wimberley, a minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA), was installed as minister of McCracken Memorial on 28 February, 2007; that the Rev Dr PB Wilson, licentiate assistant at Malone, was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Route on 29 June, 2006; that the Rev WB Martin, minister without charge, was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh on receipt of a call from the congregations of Garvaghy and Anaghlonie;

Installed that Mr D McIlwaine, a student under the care of the Presbytery was licensed on 12 June, 2006 and issued with credentials to the North Belfast Presbytery; that they have under their care as students Mr D Under Care McCarthy, Mr D Leal, Mr G Fowles, Miss K Simpson, Mr M McClenaghan, Mr I Streen, Ms Lesley-Ann Wilson; that consultations were held in the congregations of Ballycairn and Ulsterville;

Credentials that the Financial Reports are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2), 86 – 92 and 94 – 96: For 33, Against 0.

Consulted

Resigned The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev RM Crooks is their Moderator; that the Rev John McVeigh resigned on 31 August, 2006; that the Rev CM Glover resigned as associate minister of Stormont on 22 June, 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that the Rev Dr Graham Connor resigned his charge as minister of Bloomfield on 9 April, 2006 and was commissioned and installed for service with the Board of Mission Overseas on 18 June, 2006; that the Rev SP Moore presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was installed as minister of Gilnahirk on 20 June, 2006; that the Rev Dr Andrew Gibson resigned as associate minister at Bloomfield and was installed as Professor of Practical Theology at Union College on 7 September, 2006; that the Rev Dr MCA Gray presented credentials from the Presbytery of Donegal and was installed as minister of Cooke Centenary on 15 September, 2006; that the Rev Installed ME Taylor resigned as assistant minister at Cooke Centenary and was

installed as chaplain to the Marie Curie Centre on 3 December, 2006; that the Rev MR Burnside presented credentials from the Presbytery of Monaghan and was installed as minister of Castlereagh on 9 February, 2007; that Mr CWP Kennedy was ordained and inducted as associate minister of Knock on 23 June, 2006; that Mr MD McNeely was licensed on 4 June, 2006 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that Mr SA Woodburn was licensed on 9 June, 2006 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that Mrs Amanda Best, licentiate, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Donegal; that under their care are: as ministers without charge Revs DR Baker, RA Crooks, RK Graham, WJ Harshaw, Dr Elizabeth Jamison, Cheryl Meban and LR Pedlow; as licentiates MRJ Anderson and LA Patterson; as students for the ministry D Clawson, JM Browne, BJ Walker, L Rutherford, D Leach and M McKeown; that they held consultations at Dundonald and Kirkpatrick Memorial; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: ament Code Par 19 (1) & (2), 86 – 92 and 94 – 96: For 39, Against 0.

Ordained
Licensed

Credentials

Under Care

Consulted

SYNOD OF DERRY AND OMAGH

The **SYNOD OF DERRY AND OMAGH** report that the Rev WD Cupples is their Moderator and that a commission has been appointed to transact any further business which may be required.

The **DERRY AND STRABANE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DW Reid is their Moderator; that the Rev DAG Milligan, minister emeritus of Ardstraw and Douglas, died on 7 March 2006; that the Rev Dr WJH McKee retired on 28 February, 2007; that the Rev Dr LWH Hilditch, minister of 1st Castledearg and Killeter resigned his charge on 31 August, 2006 and was received as a minister without charge, under the care of the Presbytery; that the Rev RB Thompson, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route, was installed as minister of Badoney, Corrick and Glenelly on 3 March, 2006; that Mr DM Shaw, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down, was ordained and installed as minister of Strabane on 1 December, 2006; that Mr NJE Reid, a student under the care of the Presbytery, was licensed on 2 June, 2006 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that they received as licentiates Mr RSJ McIlhatton, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus on 12 September, 2006, and Mr W Montgomery, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine on 12 September, 2006; that Mr DB McCorriston, a licentiate under the care of the Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena on 20 March 2006; that Mr PL McKelvey, a licentiate under the care of the Presbytery was given credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh on 7 September 2006; that they have under their care as ministers without charge the Revs JC Teeney,

Died

Retired
Resigned

Installed

Ordained

Licensed

Credentials

Under Care

Consulted and Dr LWH Hilditch; that they are holding consultations with the congregations of Second Derry (Strand and Buncrana), Burt, Carlisle Road and Crossroads and that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being published separately.

Retired The **FOYLE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev JG Jones is their Moderator; that the Rev GD Simpson, minister of 1st Limavady and Magilligan retired on 27 August, 2006 and that the Rev DS Irwin, minister of Drumachose and Derramore, retired on 31 August 2006; that Installed the Rev SJ Hanna presented credentials from the Presbytery of Newry and was installed to the charge of Glendermott on 1 September 2006; Ordained that Mr AC Wilson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was ordained and installed to the charge of Ballykelly on 22 Under Care September 2006; that they have under their care as minister without Consulted charge Rev KG Patterson; that they held consultations at Faughanvale and at Donemana; that the congregation of Strathfoyle was terminated on 31 December 2006; that the financial reports of congregations are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2), For 22, Against 0; Par 86 – 92, For 22, Against 0; and Par 94 – 96,; For 22, Against 0.

Died The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Kenneth Henderson is their Moderator; that the Rev DP Kirkwood, minister emeritus of Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler, died on 20 March 2006; that the Rev Kenneth Gregg, minister emeritus of Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler, died on Retired 16 January 2007; that the Rev JL Casement, minister of Sixmilecross, Resigned retired on 3 October 2006; that the Rev JI Mairs resigned his charge on 4 May 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that the Rev RA Campbell presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine and was ordained and installed to the charge of Clogher and Glenhoy on 30 March 2006; that the Rev CI Dickson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was ordained and installed to the charge of Cavanaleck and Aughtentine on 7 Consulted December 2006; that they held a consultation at Enniskillen; that the financial reports of congregations are being published separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code: Par 19 (1) & (2), For 28, Against 0; Par 86 – 92, For 28, Against 0; and Par 94 – 96,; For 28, Against 0.

Died The **TYRONE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DJ Irvine is their Moderator; that the Rev JE Barr, minister emeritus of Sandholes, Resigned died on 19 February, 2007; that the Rev IF Smith, minister of Orritor and Claggan, resigned his charge on 31 March, 2006; that Mr WG Hamilton presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was ordained and installed to the charge of Orritor and Claggan on Ordained 8 September, 2006; that Mr Jonathan Sloan having presented credentials

from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus, was ordained and installed to the charge of Bellaghy and Knockloughrim on 22 September, 2006; that under their care as students are: Mr Stewart Glendinning, Mr Bryan Kee, and Mr Adrian McAlister; that they have consulted with the congregations of Pomeroy and Sandholes; that the financial reports of congregations are being printed separately; and that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Par 19 (1) & (2), For 35, Against 1; Par 86 – 92, For 35, Against 1; and Par 94 – 96.; For 36, Against 0.

Under Care

Consulted

SYNOD OF DUBLIN

The **SYNOD OF DUBLIN** report that the Rev RB Savage is their Moderator; that a Commission will meet in May; and that Synod will meet during the General Assembly in Church House, Belfast.

The **DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Stanley Stewart is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr MCA Gray, minister of Convoy and Carnone congregations, resigned his charge on 14 September, 2006 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that Ms Amanda Best presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was ordained and installed to the charge of Ramelton and Kilmacrennan on 21 October, 2006; that they held consultations at Trenta and Ballyshannon; that the financial reports of congregations are being printed in the form of a Year Book; and that voting in connection with Overtures anent Code Par 19(1) and (2), and Pars 86-92 and 94-96 was, in each case, 22 for and 0 against.

Resigned

Installed

Consulted

The **DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Dr JG Millar is their Moderator; that the Rev James Carson retired on 1 May, 2006; that the Rev RB Savage presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was inducted as Minister of Kells and Ervey on 28 May, 2006; that the Rev Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie was installed as minister of Clontarf and Scots on 9 February, 2007; that under their care is: as student for the ministry Mr Andrew Carroll; that the financial statements of congregations are being printed separately; and that voting in connection with Overtures anent Code Par 19(1) and (2), and Pars 86-92 and 94-96 was, in each case, 26 for and 0 against.

Retired

Inducted

Installed

Under Care

The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev David Nesbitt is their Moderator; that the Rev MR Burnside, minister of Ballyalbany and stated supply of Glennan resigned his charge on 8 February, 2007 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that they have under their care as students for the ministry Miss Molly Deatherage and Mr Clarke Deering; that they did not hold any consultations last year; that the financial reports are being printed

Resigned

Under Care

separately; and that voting on the overtures anent Code Pars 19(1) and (2), 86-92 and 94-96, under the Barrier Act, was 23 for and 0 against.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

BUSINESS BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. As well as the routine arranging of business for this year's General Assembly, the Business Board had two outstanding items of business –
 - (a) the requirements for an Assembly to be held at a venue outside Belfast;
 - (b) the involvement, especially of young people, in the Assembly decision-making process.

Assembly Venues

2. The last Assembly noted that a report was to be drawn up outlining the facilities and support which is necessary for an Assembly to be held outside the Assembly Hall. The Business Board agreed the following:-

- (a) The General Assembly is an important focal point for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The venue must therefore be appropriate to the occasion, accessible to those commissioned to attend and capable of providing visibility for the Church. While it may not be possible to achieve all three, each should be carefully considered. The first decision to be considered is whether the venue should ever be moved away from the traditional two centres of Belfast and Dublin.
- (b) The venue will have to provide a Hall capable of seating 1,000 people, with ancillary office accommodation and the capacity to provide meals for the participants. Audio and visual equipment of a high standard will be necessary. There will also be a requirement for press and media facilities. The effect of a changed venue on media coverage needs to be taken into account.
- (c) The locality will need to be capable of providing rooms for up to 1,000 visitors. This should include a mix of hotels, guest houses, perhaps student accommodation and caravan sites. The venue should be easily accessible for travel. Health facilities should also be readily available.
- (d) As important as the requirements of space and facilities will be the need for an enthusiastic, hard working organising group from the Presbytery to make local arrangements, in consultation with the Clerk's Office and Arrangements Convener. The level of encouragement of the local community should be considered.
- (e) A Presbytery in issuing an invitation should be asked to submit in writing the details outlined above, with the names of an organising committee, before consideration by the Business Board. A report on costs would also be needed, with consideration of the possible effect on attendance and participation.

Review of Assembly Business

3. A Panel has been reviewing the way Assembly business is arranged, to consider ways of encouraging more participation. This discussion has included the request of the 2005 Assembly to investigate ways in which young

people may be facilitated to actively engage in the debate of the General Assembly. While reviewing that issue, the Panel is aware that in fact few people actively engage in Assembly business, other than to vote.

4. Specifically on the involvement of young people the Panel, through its Youth and Children's Ministry Board members, has been considering the possibility of a Youth Assembly held prior to the General Assembly. The details of this are being discussed by some young people, facilitated by Graeme Thompson and Glenda McCormick. It is recognised that the process would only have meaning if a clear way is found to allow the young people's views to be heard in Assembly business. Apart from the understandable reticence of young people to engage in debate at the Assembly, the timing in early June mitigates against many young people attending. Further discussion is necessary, in conjunction with the Youth and Children's Ministry Board, before definite plans are suggested.

5. The Panel considered ways to engender greater involvement and interaction for all who attend the Assembly. The Board this year agreed to two developments:

- (i) Greater use of display materials from Boards and Agencies to form an exhibition of the Church's work and inform people of main developments. This will hopefully spread beyond the Concourse into the Minor Hall. While it will be fairly low-key this year, it is hoped in the future to expand with DVD presentations and perhaps seminars for people who are interested to learn about particular aspects of a Board's work.
- (ii) A new-style of interactive discussion around one of the key areas of concern for the Church. This is not to make decisions, but to open up a subject in fresh ways and enable members of Assembly to become involved and better informed. This year the topic chosen is "Education" and the discussion will take place on Tuesday evening. The event will be widely publicised and people not involved in the Assembly encouraged to come. The discussion will feed into a later debate of the Education Board where resolutions will be considered.

6. Further ways are being considered to encourage engagement of the wider Church with the Assembly. One idea is to use the Sunday evening prior to the Assembly (or perhaps a couple of Sundays) for a series of celebratory worship events, where the outgoing Moderator can report to the Church on his year in office and the Church pray for the business of the Assembly.

7. The Panel is raising the sensitive issue of whether it would be more appropriate to install a new Moderator towards the end, rather than the beginning of Assembly week. This would have the advantage that the Moderator will have visited widely in the Church and beyond. He/she will have had the opportunity to learn in more detail of the issues being raised by Boards and therefore be able to chair sessions of the Assembly with greater knowledge. The Moderator will also have had more time to prepare for the contribution they will make to the ethos of the Assembly. The suggestion is that the Moderator be installed on the Thursday evening as a final act of the Assembly. This would then be an opportunity for the new Moderator to introduce his theme for the

year. The outgoing Moderator would have had a previous opportunity to report on his year in office. The Wednesday evening rally would be re-considered.

8. If this is accepted the Assembly could begin on Monday, mid-morning, with the Communion Service. Rather than the traditional reception, visiting delegates may be briefly welcomed during the service and some, perhaps, involved in leading worship. The Communion Service may also be an appropriate occasion to read the Memorial Roll. Business sessions would begin on Monday afternoon.

9. While these proposals are far-reaching they can be phased in over a number of years. It is important that the Assembly considers the principles behind the proposals rather than the detail. Some ideas which fall within the remit of the Business Board are being introduced this year, but clearly the most basic proposed change would be to the time of installation of the Moderator. Other possibilities follow from this. A resolution is appended to test the mind of the Assembly.

10. To help streamline the business it is intended that resolutions should in future be categorised as “for debate” or “for approval”. While any resolution may obviously be discussed, more time will be devoted to those marked “for debate”. As a pilot, the resolutions of some Boards will be designated this year.

Board Membership

11. 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 2007-2008, together with the associated Arrangements Committee is as follows:-

The Clerk, Convener

- (a) The Moderator, Clerk and Deputy Clerk of Assembly, Moderator-Designate, former Clerks, preceding three Moderators, Conveners and Secretaries of Commissions and Boards.
- (b) Rev WT Cordner; W Graham — Rev CG Harris; L McIlwaine — Rev BCG Black; M Barbour — Rev DB Knox; J McDowell — Rev GE Best; E McCleary — Rev DB Murphy; Wm Grills.
- (c) Rev D Knowles; AP Brown — Rev AE Tolland; N Carmichael — Rev TJ Laverty; H Stewart — Rev RW Gaston; A. Hanna — Rev WJ Murdock; TW Coulter.
- (d) Rev TV Patterson; Miss M Torrens — Rev JR 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; N Morrison — Rev H Ross; E. Carroll.
- (f) Rev S Stewart; N Watt — Rev GA Mitchell; W McIlreavy — Rev D Nesbitt; A McAdoo.

A. ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE (6)

Rev TC Morrison, Convener

- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Moderator-Designate, Deputy Clerk, Communications Secretary, Hospitality Secretary, Buildings Manager; Committee Convener.
- (x) Rev Alan S Thompson; D Crowe, M Fisher, Mrs J Anderson.

- (y) Revs JR Lambe, GE Best, WT Cordner, AE Tolland, R Herron, WJ Murdock; Miss M Torrens, DC Cowan.

Other Churches

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

Church of Scotland 2007: Rt Rev Dr David Clarke; Rev AR Bill; Mr Colin Beck

United Reformed Church 2007: Rt Rev JM Finlay

Presbyterian Church of Wales 2007: Rt Rev JM Finlay

Church of Ireland General Synod 2007: Rev Dr DJ Watts; Mr Victor Harper

Methodist Conference 2007: Very Rev Dr David Clarke; Mr John McCully.

The URC Assembly 2006

The Right Rev Dr David Clarke reports:

1. The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, was held on the campus of Exeter University from 7th to 10th July. Hazel and I had the privilege of attending along with the Clerk of Assembly, Dr Watts, who was accompanied by his wife Fiona.

2. The campus of the University must be one of the most attractive in the United Kingdom, with manicured lawns and fine old trees surrounding impressive buildings. The Assembly was marked by warm hospitality extended in an informal atmosphere. Such a residential Assembly provides exceptional opportunity to form friendships and share impressions with other international and ecumenical delegates.

3. The United Reformed Church came into being in 1972, with the coming together of the Presbyterian Church in England, the Congregational Union and the Churches of Christ. It was born in the hope that their union might prove a catalyst for further unions. The fact that these have not materialised has induced a measure of disappointment, but the sense of ecumenical adventure has not diminished. Indeed, delegates were instructed to consider each resolution's ecumenical impact! One significant document presented to the Assembly was a joint production with the Methodist Church entitled, "Peace-making: A Christian Vocation."

4. Like many mainstream denominations, the United Reformed Church has to manage decline, with membership falling at the rate of 3% per year. The outgoing Moderator, Dr David Peel, stated that, barring a miracle, many of their 1800 congregations will not be around in ten years time. Other research indicated that over the next ten years the number of paid ministers could fall from the present 550 to around 300. While the Assembly rejoiced in the opening of one new church in Cambridgeshire in a joint ecumenical venture, it also noted the closure of 17 other churches. While these closures may simply be a long-awaited rationalisation, I was somewhat surprised that little alarm was expressed at these trends, and that they were simply seen as 'changing patterns of grace.'

The author of one report offered the high-minded opinion that even if the URC should perish on the vine, its existence will have been justified as a template for inter-church co-operation.

5. Dr Peel also pointed out that when acting together, the churches can still make a significant impact in civic affairs. Certainly, the relatively small numbers in the URC at about 70,000 does not diminish their determination to make an impact in world affairs, with much attention being given to issues of world poverty and injustice. Bishop John Gladwin, Chair of Christian Aid, was guest speaker at one evening session, and spoke persuasively of our obligations to the underprivileged.

6. The Assembly addressed other problems with which all churches are familiar, including issues of Child Protection, and matters relating to recent Civil Partnership legislation. Indeed, significant amendments were made to the church's Pension Scheme, to bring it into line with current equality legislation. The year 2007 will see the end of a moratorium on the discussion of same sex relationships within the church, which followed on two bitterly divisive debates on this issue seven years ago.

7. Some facets of Assembly procedure were interesting and could be adapted in PCI. For instance, visiting delegates were greeted in one line by the Moderator—almost like a school prize-giving, with simple biographical details being announced as they were presented – with one British delegate and one overseas delegate being invited to address the Assembly. I was interested to note that greetings were also extended by the Mayor of Exeter, and by a member of the Jewish community, representing other faith communities in the city, which included the Roman Catholic, and the Muslim.

8. The Memorial Roll forms a solemn part of the opening night of our General Assembly. In the URC the names of those ministers who died during the previous year are read in the context of prayer at the Assembly Communion service. One minister who was very much alive was 100-year-old Rev Katherine Hendrie, who was celebrating the 75th anniversary of her ordination.

9. The Assembly gives significant attention to their youth wing, with FURY (Fellowship of United Reformed Youth) meeting for some days prior to the main Assembly.

10. The Assembly was a very orderly affair, and we waited a long time for our first amended resolution. Like buses, two came along at once, in the debate on the rationalisation of training Colleges where there was obvious overprovision for the small number of ministerial candidates. Both amendments were resisted, and the Church will no longer be using historic Mansfield College, Cambridge in this capacity.

11. The cost of a residential Assembly at well over £100,000 was one factor contributing to a decision to make the Assembly a bi-annual affair, with Manchester providing the venue in 2007 and Edinburgh in 2008, with Assemblies thereafter being held in even-numbered years. The number of delegates will also be reduced to little over 250. To my mind, this runs the risk of concentrating influence and decision-making in too few hands, and attracting the inveterate conference junkie.

12. The visit to Exeter was memorable, and enabled us to learn from those who are grappling to present the Christian faith in an increasingly secular and multi-cultural society; and our links with the URC are to be cherished.

The Methodist Conference 2006

The Very Rev Dr REH Uprichard reports:

1. The Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland met from Friday 9 to Tuesday 13 June in Cavehill Methodist Church, Belfast.

2. The corresponding observers from our Church were the Very Rev Dr REH Uprichard and Dr Charles McKay. Other denominations were represented and Dr Uprichard brought greetings from the General Assembly. The hospitality was lavish and the welcome warm.

3. The opening evening was the occasion of the installation of the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland the Rev R Ivan McElhinney. It was a packed gathering and the Wesley Choir tunefully led the praise.

4. On the Sunday evening the President of the British Conference conducted the Service. Candidates were ordained for the ministry and each gave a word of testimony as to their call to faith and also to the ministry.

5. The pattern of business was similar to our own General Assembly though there was less controversy in debate than we would normally have. Ministry came in for quite a discussion. The Presidency continues to be limited to one year, though a Lay leader of Conference is to be introduced holding office for three years. Part-time, associate and team ministry was also part of the remit as well as health and well-being of those involved in ministry. Department of Youth and Children's work, as in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, is grouped together with a basic purpose of personal commitment to Jesus Christ, active involvement in the community and practical action in the world. Inter-Church relations majored on the Covenant relationship with the Church of Ireland and mention was made of other ecumenical involvement including alternating ministry with PCI. Mission in inner City areas was also brought to the Conference's attention: Belfast Central, East Belfast, Londonderry, Newtownabbey and Dublin being the areas noted. Under Faith and Order and Mission and Society, reports on sexuality and the theology of marriage were to be the subject of future research, while membership of the Methodist Church and a study on justification by faith form the on-going agenda. In education, the decreasing possibility of Christian ethos in Stranmillis and Methody was a cause of concern. Civil partnerships was briefly mentioned and genetic research was also a field of investigation. The Methodist Missionary Society and the work of Methodist Women in Ireland also featured in report and discussion.

6. Of particular interest was an item entitled **Conversation on the Work of God**. There were various short reports from individuals as to what God was doing in their area Finaghy, Larne, Portadown, Enniskillen, Ballymena, Dunlaoghaire, Meghaberry, Dublin Central Mission gave a wide spectrum of information. General ministry among adults and children was mentioned, as also some specialised fields like prison chaplaincy work and urban outreach.

7. It was an interesting Conference with a ready interest in prayer and the vitality of the work in congregations was much in evidence. It was good to be there and our presence was warmly appreciated.

The Welsh Assembly 2006

The Right Rev Dr David Clarke reports:

1. Attendance at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Wales in Lampeter from 10-13 July, 2006 was an event which my wife Hazel and I will not soon forget.

2. For some years now Lampeter, an attractive small town in the heart of rural west Wales, and seat of a small University College, has been home to the PCW Assembly. However, because of the growing popularity of Lampeter as the out-of-term venue for school groups, the Assembly from 2008 onwards will be held in September, rather than July.

3. The visitor is struck by the widespread use of the Welsh language, with most business being transacted in it, and earphones provided to enable those linguistically challenged to enjoy simultaneous translation. The warm welcome and generous hospitality made our stay a most enjoyable one. In the course of the Assembly, two lectures were given in accordance with long-standing endowments, and a 'Preaching service' was held in the town's 'Shiloh Chapel'. I was honoured to be invited to preach on that occasion.

4. At a Communion service in the middle of the Assembly, the Rev Robert Bebb, minister of Park End Church in Cardiff, and our guest in 2006, stepped down as Moderator and was succeeded by Dr John Tudno Williams. Dr Williams lectures in Biblical languages at the University of Wales at Aberystwyth, and has acted as an external examiner with staff at Union College.

5. The Welsh Presbyterian Church operates in a niche market, with 80% of their members being Welsh-speaking, in a population where only 10% speaks the ancient language. Listening to a Welsh Assembly in full voice is uplifting – language aside, one is conscious that something grand is going on! The bilingual nature of the Assembly leads also to the production of two magazines.

6. Sadly, the PCW has seen rapid decline in recent years, with numbers halving in the last two decades, and only 70 ministers in active service. Although the broad structure of the Church remains unchanged, with three Associations (the North and South being composed of Welsh-speaking congregations, the East being English-speaking although some of them are located in Anglesey), alterations to the number of Presbyteries were agreed, in accordance with a much-debated document, 'Moving Forward 3'. Thirty Presbyteries, some with as few as three or four ministers, will be merged into ten Presbyteries. A new 'Book of rules and orders' is being prepared in a loose-leaf version, designed to make it easier to record amendments. In some ways, the central Boards are more directive than our Irish bodies, with the 'Ministerial Board', for instance, determining that they would not permit pastorates to fall under 100 members unless they became self-financing pastorates.

7. Like other Churches in the Western world, our own included, the Welsh Church struggles to attract young ministers. One speaker, imploring

Congregations to search out among their membership those to whom they could present the challenge of ministry, went on to declare, 'there is no work like ministerial work'

8. The disposal of redundant properties, among other things, ensures that financial considerations do not hamper development work.

9. Some acres are being disposed of at Trefeca, one of the Church's residential centres, and originally the home of Howel Harris, guiding genius of Calvinistic Methodism in Wales. The other residential centre is at Bala, destination of Mary Jones's historic walk.

10. The Welsh Church has wide horizons, with extensive missionary involvement, including 22 mission partners, and a deep concern for national issues, including the recent decision to renew the Trident missile system, and Lord Joffe's Bill on assisted dying. Indeed, one of the finest reports was on the latter issue, with telling contributions by Mervyn Phillips, Chairperson of the Church and Society Board, and a former County Council Chief Executive.

11. Warm Christian fellowship and generous hospitality contributed to memorable days in Lampeter.

ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Communion Service

1. The Communion Service this year will as usual commence 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

Exhibition

2. A new development this year is the exhibition in the Minor Hall of the work of Boards and other agencies within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Be sure to visit it during the week. Hopefully, during tea/coffee breaks, refreshments will be served in the Minor Hall as well as on the concourse.

Bread and Cheese Lunch

3. Because of the exhibition, at the time of writing it is not clear whether or not it will be possible to provide a Bread and Cheese lunch this year.

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 Reception at the Wellington Street entrance. Full details of rates are printed on the form.

COLIN MORRISON, Convener

RESOLUTIONS*For debate*

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly note the requirements for an Assembly venue.
3. That the General Assembly recognize the importance of seeking ways to encourage greater participation in the discussions of the Assembly, especially by younger and less experienced participants
4. That the General Assembly encourage the creation of a Youth Assembly, with meaningful ways of reporting into Assembly business.
5. That the General Assembly agree in principle to the installation of the new Moderator at the end of the Assembly and instructs the Business Board to bring detailed proposals to the next Assembly for implementation in 2009.

For approval

6. That the professional amplification controller and the visual display operator be admitted to the private session.
7. That a grant of £18,000 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Committee.
8. That the Business Board, with its associated working committee, for the ensuing year beginning 15 March 2007 be appointed in accordance with Par 275 of the Code.

BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Convener: Rev WA KENNEDY

Secretary: Mr STEPHEN LYNAS

1. Communicating the Gospel and its implications to a world awash with information and competing value systems is very challenging. We have come a long way from the Reformation era when the pulpit was the main means of communication with local communities! Today we must pay close attention to discerning what channels of information individuals actually use.

2. The good news is that there has been a great democratisation in communication. Terrestrial television, once the dominant player and one from which a distinctive Christian voice was largely excluded, struggles to retain its audience. Even newspapers are feeling the pressure. All this is due to the undreamed of success of the worldwide web which gives the individual a potential access to the most influential people in the world. Every individual may have her blog (on line diary/ news-sheet) and if we own a digital movie camera, we may even have our own TV station! All these developments have enormous potential for the Church – both how we communicate with our own people and how we speak to the world. The most active people today get most of their information from the web and we believe that the Church needs to be proactive in such areas as those mentioned.

3. Throughout the year the Board of Communications has continued to push forward the agenda given it by the Assembly in June 2005 through the work of our various committees and day-to-day labour of the staff in the Communications Department.

4. We express our thanks and appreciation to Stephen Lynas (Communications Secretary), Anne McCully (Departmental Secretary), Edward Connolly (Production Manager), Sarah Harding (Communications Co-ordinator) and Arthur Clarke (*Herald* Editor) for their devotion and high calibre work.

5. In particular we have come near to a point where we will be equipped to launch out into fresh communication strategies through the employment of new staff and the redirection of existing team members.

6. The Board hopes from the autumn to be in a position to move strongly into the provision of significant quantities of visual material suitable for use by congregations through data projection in Sunday services or at other meetings. The aim is to make available DVD clips and graphic presentations which will enable congregations to show their people vividly the work in which our Church engages throughout Ireland and the world. This will motivate prayer and giving and be a suitable feedback and acknowledgement to donors. The new staff member will, in addition, be able to provide increased use of visual materials on the PCI website from which the new material would be downloadable.

7. In addition it is hoped that in the autumn a new Press Officer will be appointed who will be capable of taking over much of the day-to-day press

relations role, thereby freeing Stephen Lynas from involvement in all but the most important or sensitive issues. In addition this person will research and write up stories of interest from the PCI to feed into both the press and our denominational publications (including the website).

8. As this report is in writing the necessary moves towards the above appointments are in process and we hope to be able to report progress to the Assembly in June.

9. Our long-serving and much-respected *Herald* Editor, Rev Arthur Clarke, will retire from that role at the end of the year and a full tribute will be recorded in the 2008 Annual Reports. Stephen Lynas will step into that gap until the future of the editorship is decided. Stephen's role within the department will evolve as overall director, with responsibility in all areas of work. Sarah Harding will concentrate on production and writing.

10. In addition to all of this we recognise we need to re-visit our denominational website which was early in the field and is in need of renewal to bring it to current standards of visual content and inter-activity. We intend to address this during 2007-2008.

COMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

1. The Committee continues to be responsible for the administration and finances of the Board, the Communications Office and the *Herald*. Consequently, as the Board begins to implement the various elements of the co-ordinated communications strategy, as agreed at the last Assembly, it will be the responsibility of the Committee to apply these to the work of the Communications Department and the future running and format of the *Herald*. It is our expectation that practical results of this work will become increasingly apparent in the months before the next Assembly.

Department

2. The Department incorporates the offices of information, publication and the production of the *Herald* and we are grateful for the various tasks they have fulfilled during the past year. At the same time we have been aware that staff numbers are below strength and we have been supervising plans for recruitment. The changing circumstances in our province are developing an increasing need to reassess our contacts with the media and the way in which we draw attention to the witness and activity of our Church. In addition, changes to the production of the *Herald* as well as plans for development of our web service and the increasing provision of audio visual publicity in electronic format will require additional people to work within the department.

3. Stephen Lynas still continues to lead his hard working staff in maintaining an excellent service for our Church and we look forward to their role in developing our plans for the development of the services we offer to the Church.

Herald

4. Once more we express our appreciation of the good work of Rev Arthur Clarke and thank him for his wise editorship, a position that he has indicated his intention to retire from at the end of the year. We are continuing to consider how the magazine can become more effective as a contemporary publication for our Church and how we can be in partnership with our other denominational magazines so that the various publications can complement each other in their editorial stance and content.

Historical Society

5. The activities of the society continue to be represented within the Committee by my joint convener, Rev Ivor Smith. We will be asking the Assembly to note that 2007 is the centenary of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland and the occasion is to be marked by a history of the Society written by Rev Dr Joseph Thompson who also contributes an introduction to the reprint of Patrick Adair's *True Narrative*.

6. During the year the Public Record Office (PRONI) has alerted us to a difficulty that has arisen regarding the many Church records they hold either on deposit, or on microfilm. With the rise of other genealogical agencies that hold copies of various Church records, and the increasing use of websites, the accessibility of records is becoming increasingly possible without any permission being sought, and often for large fees.

7. PRONI has maintained its policy of making records available for consultation free of charge, and not permitting them to be printed without the consent of the appropriate congregation. They recognise, however, that we are now living in a culture of openness so far as records are concerned, and have suggested to us some possible ways forward, while at the same time safeguarding the right to reasonable privacy.

8. After a wide-ranging discussion between PRONI and representatives of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland, a new code of practice is now recommended and is reflected in resolution 3. It is open to any congregation who may have concerns about this new arrangement to discuss it with PRONI with a view to maintaining their right to be consulted on a case by case basis.

R ALAN RUSSELL, Convener

COMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. The Committee has sought to fulfil the Assembly's remit of media training, media development, media consultancy and media relations, in a number of ways.

2. The Committee has corresponded with Government and regulatory bodies on a wide variety of media issues this year, including the BBC Charter and standards in broadcasting.

3. Religious advisers for TV and radio continue to inform us of developments in broadcast media.

4. Rev Frank Sellar, Religious Advisor to RTE was elected Chairman of the Irish Churches' Council for Television and Radio Affairs (ICCTRA). Martin Long, Director of the Catholic Communications Office is Vice Chair and Brenda Drumm, Communications Officer of the Irish Bishops' Conference is Hon Secretary. ICCTRA hosted a seminar for local radio religious broadcasters on Religious Broadcasting for Today (Emerging Trends and Directions) with speakers including Pat Coyle, Manager of Jesuit Communications Centre, and Eileen Good, Religious News Network at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, on Thursday 9 November 2006. The Committee wish Mr Sellar well in his new role.

5. A successful informal meeting with representatives from UTV was held in May as part of the Committee's commitment to developing good relations with local broadcasters. The convener was able to extend the Committee's good wishes to Alan Bremner's successor, Michael Wilson, as Director of Television at UTV.

6. Excellence in Communication Awards: To showcase and recognise excellence in PCI communications, the Communications Development Committee launched the Achievement in Communications Awards, designed to encourage and celebrate good practice in the use of technology and communications for PCI mission and life. The scheme was promoted through PCI websites, email and magazines from December 2006 with material from congregations, missionaries, congregational organisations and members who promote the life and mission of PCI in all its diversity, being eligible for submission by 30 March 2007. There was an award of £100 per category (Broadcast, Print, Internet and Audio-Visual) towards further good communications and material was judged by a panel appointed by the Committee.

7. The Churches Media Council met on Wednesday 24 January in London in the headquarters of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and the meeting was chaired by Joel Edwards, Chair of the Evangelical Alliance. The convener represented PCI. The Council's annual conference, with the theme "A Future and a Hope" will take place from Monday 11 – Wednesday 13 June 2007 in Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire. The conference will examine issues such as the future of broadcasting and the place of faith in the new media landscape and the impact of the digital revolution on the Christian church and the UK's other faith communities with keynote sessions on society, technology and the future shape of belief in the UK. The panel of contributors will be headed by Andy Duncan (Channel 4) and futurologist Patrick Dixon (Global Change). The Young Persons Training Project will run in parallel with the Churches' Media Conference and is designed to help young Christians discover and develop their creative and technical skills. As part of its commitment to encourage new talent, the Churches' Media Council invites young people up to the age of 30 to apply for a free training place during the Conference. Training is offered free of charge to students under 31 years of age at the time of the project, however there is an administration charge of £20 per student. The Committee agreed in principle to cover the administration charge for a limited number of PCI students, once details were finalised.

8. The Committee welcomed the BBC Trust's invitation to consult on the key priorities for the six Public Purposes as set by the BBC Charter. The Committee also believes that the six Public Purposes will help invigorate public service broadcasting in the years to come through education, representation and the promotion of excellence in all areas of communication. The BBC's Charter sets out six Public Purposes to help guide the BBC to achieve its primary mission to educate, inform and entertain. However the Committee believes that the fine history and quality of religious broadcasting is in danger of being undermined by a reductionist approach within the Public Purpose key priorities which diminishes the role of religious broadcasting to little more than criticism as by yet undefined standards. Religious broadcasting falls under "Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities" (www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust).

9. Religious broadcasting would aim for the BBC to "give people opportunities to understand the beliefs of others, and to examine their own beliefs critically. Annex II of the Public Purpose remit expands this to state, "the BBC has an important role to play in enabling people of different faiths, as well as those subscribing to non-religious belief systems, to understand each other and also to examine their own beliefs critically. This is particularly important at a time when faith is playing a critical role in shaping world events."

10. This reductionism in religious broadcasting lacks the previous emphasis of BBC religious broadcasting on "celebration, scrutiny and surprise." The Committee agrees that open debate regarding religious life and practice is invaluable for our society today but the loss of the BBC's earlier aim to provide religious broadcasting characterised by celebration will fail to properly encapsulate the true nature of religious belief in the UK today. Religious belief is not simply a matter of a list of facts about tradition and doctrine but a living celebration of those beliefs in daily life. To fully inform and educate the wider public it is vital to provide religious broadcasting that includes this important celebratory role. The Committee submitted the suggestion, that was carried by the Board of Communications, that a better wording for the Public Purpose regarding "Representing the UK, its nations, regions and communities" in relation to how the BBC will "Reflect the different religious and other beliefs in the UK" should be, "The BBC should give people opportunities to celebrate and understand the different religious beliefs in the UK, and to examine all beliefs critically." The Committee looks forward to the BBC Trust's response on this issue.

C GLOVER, Convener

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE

1. The committee has met on nine occasions since the last report.
2. Fifty-five submissions were dealt with, ranging from new church buildings, new halls, new manses as well as major and minor renovations.
3. A site visit can be very beneficial and thanks are due to those who gave of their time in this way.
4. Sometimes the committee receives plans which are at such an advanced stage it cannot make suggestions regarding alterations. Please ensure

that plans are sent at an early stage, preferably before working drawings are produced. If any congregation is unsure about whether or not approval is required contact the Convener who will be pleased to guide you in the right direction.

5. In October 2006 the committee visited the Presbyterian Church in Wales. The visit centred around the Cardiff area where three churches were inspected. Members were also shown round a lightship docked in Cardiff Bay and used as a Gospel outreach. This proved very interesting. Although most of the renovations were relatively minor the committee was encouraged by the tour.

6. During the year the committee was involved in considering the Manse Guidelines 1994. This was a task assigned to it by the General Assembly last year. Following a meeting with members of the Manses Panel suggested changes have been drawn up to ease the burden some churches are facing.

7. As convener I would like to say a very sincere thank you to all members of this hard working committee for their dedication and enthusiasm. Many thanks to Anne McCully in the office for her work in sending out the minutes each month. A special word of thanks to the architects on our committee for the time given and advice offered.

GEORGE SIMPSON, Convener

APPENDIX 1

Report on Manse Guidelines

1. The Church Architecture Committee discussed the *Guidelines for New Manses 1994* and realised that things have changed over the years.

2. Many churches provide an office but the minister needs a study at the manse of sufficient dimensions to accommodate appropriate furniture and storage for books.

3. A manse in its lifetime will be required to serve several family groups of different sizes and demands. While it could be considered extravagant to centre the design around a family unit which is somewhat larger than average, it is also short-sighted to simply provide accommodation for a minimal family unit.

4. Generally this could be achieved by providing:

- (a) Study, ideally located convenient to the entrance of the manse.
- (b) Ground floor WC.
- (c) Family room which could be integrated into the kitchen area.
- (d) Kitchen fitted to modern standard.
- (e) Adequate dining facilities.
- (f) Lounge of sufficient size to permit comfortable social and official entertainment.
- (g) Preferably four good sized bedrooms one with en-suite.
- (h) Bathroom fitted to modern standard.
- (i) Adequate garage, storage and utility facilities.
- (j) Mechanical and electrical services should meet appropriate standards

including alarm systems and environmental consideration.

6. In church planting and other situations these guidelines may not be feasible and flexibility can be used with the permission of the relevant bodies.

7. A manse of lesser size or specifications, if suitable, may require to be extended or replaced at a later date.

8. The advice of the Presbytery Architecture Committee should be sought and the proper procedures adhered to. It is inadvisable to seek full planning approval before the plans are with the Church Architecture Committee.

RESOLUTIONS

For debate

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the General Assembly congratulate the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland on their centenary and encourage them in the recording and promotion of the historical story of Presbyterianism in Ireland.

3. That General Assembly accept that the permission of an individual congregation is not necessary if anyone wants to copy a few pages from a register of baptisms, marriages, or burials held by PRONI, but is necessary if they want to copy any other record that is less than fifty years old, or if they want to copy an entire reel of microfilm.

4. That the General Assembly approve the revised *Guidelines for New Manses*, outlined in Appendix I.

For approval

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

6. That a grant of £14,750 be paid from the Incidental Fund to the Presbyterian Historical Society.

7. 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:

BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS

Convener: Very Rev Dr SJ DIXON

Secretary: Rev WS MARRS

‘Equipped to Serve’

1. Having cast the vision of mobilising the Church for mission beyond the shores of Ireland, one emerging factor for the Board of Mission Overseas (BMO) in this past year has been the importance of being well equipped at every level. Paul highlights for Timothy the importance of God’s people being “thoroughly equipped for every good work”. For BMO this not only applies to missionaries who are called to go, but to every dimension of our Church’s involvement in overseas mission, including those who sit on the Board and its committees, seeking to be true to God’s purposes for our sharing in His mission.

2. Amidst all the ongoing work of the Board a number of important dimensions to this task of equipping have come to the fore. One of these is **the equipping of the membership of the Board** for the work they have been called to do, not least as they sit on our new committees. Arising out of last year’s discussion on the governance of the Board, the new committees have been examining their purpose, asking “Why are we here?” and, “What can we as committees do that the Board or executive staff alone cannot do?”

3. As a result committees have been encouraged to help their members to engage in active discussion and corporate decision-making; know their role and play an active part in the committees’ work; and join in discerning and furthering God’s purpose for the work of their committee. The Committees seek not just experience and know-how but fresh insight and ideas. This means that all members will be involved in on-the-job learning as they share their expertise and experience, enthusiasm and initiative. One of the key functions of the committees is to be a think-tank or resource group for the on going development of the strategy of the Board. Where appropriate, working groups are being formed for specific areas of research. It has been encouraging to see committees taking up this responsibility more and more throughout the year.

4. Not only do committee members need to be enabled to play their part, but as a church we continue to need to be **equipped to relate well to our partners in mission** worldwide. At the time of writing, the Steering Committee is planning to have an Away Day on partnership. This will be conducted in an attitude of self-examination as we ask the question, “What kind of partner do we want to be?”

5. We aim to acknowledge appreciatively what has been achieved through the work undertaken in co-operation with our partners over the years and, through a process of audit, to look at the health of our partnerships so that lessons can be learned, problems can be sorted out, and the depth of relationship and quality of working together improved. Such an audit would be carried out largely by executive staff, in conjunction with our partners and drawing on the first-hand knowledge and experience of missionary personnel familiar with each

context. It is hoped that a report on this undertaking will be brought to the General Assembly in 2008, highlighting the consequences for the strategic placement of missionary personnel and for partner church consultations.

6. In this year's annual report we have not made detailed reference in the committee reports to each of our partners and ongoing work with churches, united missions and institutions. A good deal of this information is available in *Points for Prayer 2007* published annually with weekly updates available through Prayerline by e-mail and on the website.

7. As a Board, we continue to be aware of the need to be well **equipped to offer adequate pastoral care for missionaries**. Over the past year policy has been further developed in relation to those missionaries intending to marry while in the service of the Board, and we have been highlighting that the pastoral care of mission personnel is foundational through times of significant change in the work of the Board.

OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

8. The Outreach Ministries Committee (OMC) has largely spent its first year grappling with its remit and future direction. It is never easy to start a new committee from scratch and so an important part of our work has been to ask *why are we here and where are we going?* As a committee we are to lead the way in the development of clear strategy, facilitating the engagement of BMO in outreach initiatives around the world. In doing so, we seek to remain true to the command to make disciples, especially amongst those who have never heard the gospel, so that all peoples might have fullness of life in Christ.

9. Having come to a better understanding of what we were charged to do, then the next task was to determine the direction, aims and goals for the new committee. While this is a challenging task it was decided that over the next 2 years the following areas would be further researched, with policy and strategy being refined:

- Evangelism and church planting
- Scripture translation, distribution and literacy work
- Hospital and community based healthcare mission
- Mission through education
- Sustainable development and crisis intervention

10. We decided to look at the more traditional forms of our church's mission engagement first of all, and so in February 2007 we examined *mission through education*. In September 2007 we plan to look more closely at *hospital and community based healthcare mission*.

11. **Mission through Education:** Education has played an important role in the overseas mission work of our church right back to the 1840's. Enabling literacy as a key factor in Christian discipleship, alongside the modelling of Christian life in the school context, meant that education always played a significant role in mission. The strategy of mission school alongside mission hospital and church provided a three-pronged strategy adopted by early missionaries.

12. The educational needs of the children of missionaries has also meant that missionaries have been involved in schools such as Woodstock International Christian School, the Kathmandu International Study Centre (KISC) and the United Mission To Nepal's Tutorial Group System. These educational establishments have enabled missionary families to stay in the field and have provided teachers with the opportunity to model the Christian life. While in some of these contexts the number of children of missionaries may have decreased, very important educational work and faithful Christian witness continues, not least at schools and colleges now making a significant contribution to 'nation building' in regions of the world where the Church remains a persecuted minority.

13. The current educational needs around the world continue to present us with many opportunities and challenges, both traditional and new. In Africa, a country such as Malawi currently requires approximately 6,000 teachers largely because the number of teachers has been severely reduced by HIV/AIDS. Partners have encouraged us to prioritise our support for teacher-training in this context. In Asia and the Indian Sub-Continent Woodstock School and other similar educational establishments continue to do important work. The Amity Foundation continues to offer opportunities to teach English in China. UMN still requires teachers for their Tutorial Group System, and it may be that we would wish to consider partnering with other international/mission schools in the region. There are new opportunities for lecturing staff at Forman Christian College in Pakistan, for teachers in Mongolia, through Joint Christian Service (JCS), and elsewhere in Central Asia.

14. How do we respond to these challenges and opportunities in the field of mission through education? A number of points were highlighted: Given the resources required to send a missionary overseas, coupled with the desire for effective mission engagement, normally we would not wish to send a missionary for less than two years. Occasionally there may be a specific and specialised role that can be undertaken in a shorter period of time, and the Board will endeavour to develop support for congregations who wish to respond directly to volunteer and short-term placements.

15. Resources should be used in response to our partner's strategy. For example, in a situation where there is a major shortage of teachers, it may be very helpful to send a teacher but preferable to send someone to serve in a teacher training programme or provide scholarships for local teachers.

16. The teaching of missionary children in the overseas context should continue to be an important area of involvement for the Board, such as our ongoing involvement in Nepal through UMN's Tutorial Groups System, and in India at Woodstock School. The latter is one of those 'nation building' schools that is strategically placed where the Church is a minority, at times persecuted, and such schools should continue to be part of the Board's vision. We should also consider taking up new and challenging teaching opportunities in Mongolia and Central Asia.

17. It would be hoped that each new placement of a missionary would meet a significant number of the criteria arising out of the following questions:

- Is the opportunity with a persecuted minority Christian community?

- Is the school struggling to have basic educational resources?
- Is there an opportunity to share in education regarding HIV/AIDS?
- Is the school or educational establishment contributing significantly to 'nation building'?
- Is there an opportunity to teach English as a foreign language?
- Is the educational establishment reaching the poorest and neediest people?
- Will the role contribute towards the education of children of missionaries?
- Does the educational role have a direct impact on medical or church work?
- Is there an opportunity to teach Christian subject matter?
- Is the role in a context where there are poor levels of literacy?
- Will the role contribute to the education of women?
- Is there an understanding that the missionary goes where there is no local person qualified or immediately available, and with the intention of working themselves out of a job?

18. **Guiding Principles:** As we move forward in the OMC we seek to keep in mind our guiding principles. In being *God-centred*, we need to have a special sensitivity to how He might have us refocus our worldwide involvement, especially in terms of our openness to new opportunities and initiatives. We continue to be *church-based*, encouraging and supporting partner churches, but also working with united missions, institutions and specialist service agencies that serve the Church. Maintaining a *people-focused* approach, we continue to support outreach ministries that adopt an integral or holistic approach, seeking to serve in word and in deed. We aim to be *forward-thinking* in looking for creative new ways of engaging in outreach.

19. The work of the committee is at a very early stage, however the ongoing audit of existing partnerships will encourage clarity of thinking concerning the focus of future outreach. OMC's 2007 budget (£31,500) is disbursed in the form of ten multiple modest grants in eight countries. The proposed 2008 budget (£32,000) is similar in shape. The beginning has been good and it is hoped that over the next few years we will be able to work more effectively in outreach with our existing partners and also move into new outreach opportunities as God leads us.

STEPHEN RICHMOND, Convener

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

20. The new Leadership Development Committee (LDC) was set up in June 2006 to address one of BMO's four strategic priorities, for implementation post review. As well as for stated meetings, LDC also met twice during the year in working groups. Guidelines for promoting active discussion and corporate decision-making, adopted by all BMO committees, greatly helped LDC members begin their involvement.

21. BMO's review team envisaged that the *purpose* of sharing, with partner Churches, in leadership development (LD) would be addressed in three ways: the strategic placement of Presbyterian Church in Ireland personnel; the support of training programmes which equip indigenous leaders; and the sharing of resources and ideas which strengthen local vision for mission.

22. Within this overall purpose, LDC aims to set, meet and review a clear leadership development (LD) *agenda* for proposal to our overseas partners and implementation, in conjunction with them, according to an agreed timescale. This agenda would entail helping partner churches and institutions overseas produce, and adequately train, Christ-like leaders committed to engaging in holistic mission, in word and deed. Ongoing development not just of purpose, but also of *vision* and *strategy* in LD work, will enable the committee to develop and pursue such an agenda in coming years.

23. LDC is keenly aware that purposeful partnering in mission involves two-way traffic and gratefully acknowledges BMO Steering Committee's plans for in-depth consideration of partnership issues for the years ahead. Whilst our church may engage pro-actively with partners in the pursuit of clear missional goals overseas, she must do so as a servant, humbly and self-critically, learning to see herself through partners' eyes. LDC sees an important implication of this: That our partners be actively encouraged to have an impact on PCI, for the development of mission-minded leaders in our denomination and for our Irish context.

24. In 2006-07, LDC devoted most of its time and energy to acquiring the expertise necessary for doing its job properly. This included focused prayer for wisdom and for the leading of the Holy Spirit, since this is God's mission not ours. The remainder of this year's report summarises progress made to date. It is to be anticipated that next year's report will describe the first steps taken, together with our overseas partners, in the setting and pursuing of cooperative LD goals.

25. For implementing a clear LD agenda with specific achievable goals, in consultation and cooperation with our partners, BMO executive staff need all the empowerment and support an active LDC can give. For fulfilling this role successfully, LDC identified the need for *two precision tools*. The first relates to *remit* and the committee worked hard at making this as sharp as possible. The second is a tool for *audit*, comprising analytical criteria and a schedule for reviewing LD work undertaken by BMO with existing partners.

26. In order to sharpen remit, detailed key questions were drawn up, grouped under the three headings *Vision and Purpose*, *Issues of Partnership in LD* and *Strategic Use of Resources in LD*. Working groups then set about answering these. This process has been a significant learning experience, exposing committee members to a wealth of accumulated wisdom and knowledge concerning leadership development practice and to the hands-on experience of BMO executive staff.

27. By its very nature this material is incomplete and capable of improvement. Nevertheless, LDC envisages making it available as soon as is feasible, either as LD fact-sheets or perhaps as an interim LD Handbook. In whatever form, this accumulated knowledge will prove invaluable for LDC and for executive staff.

28. Before criteria for audit can be finalised, work on remit must first be finished. However, in preparation for audit, draft audit criteria have already been drawn up. These take the form of information-gathering questions, under headings such as *Partnership in Mission, Accountability, or Priority and Strategy*. Once finalised the audit criteria will be used across the range of leadership development work, with whatever flexibility of application is appropriate to each of the overseas situations involved.

29. With the demise of the three BMO Area Committees (Africa/Caribbean/Latin America, Asia & Europe/Middle East), LDC now administers an integrated budget covering the provision of all grants and scholarships allocated to LD projects. This task is facilitated by a summary of existing LD work, updated for each stated meeting of LDC, which retains a country-by-country focus and supplies essential detail concerning the history and dynamics of each LD partnership in progress.

30. As inherited from the Area Committees, LDC's 2007 budget (£93,500) reflects around twenty-five distinct financial commitments in some fifteen countries. The proposed 2008 budget, in turn (£98,000), retains this overall shape and continues to apply the LD practice which underlies it, namely the awarding of multiple modest grants. As audits are completed and lessons learned, as well as through the ongoing implementation of its remit, LDC will have active involvement in the future strategic use and development of this budget.

31. Prior commitments made to our partners in Malawi, Hungary and Romania account for the five bursars whom BMO will support, partly or wholly, for courses of training in the UK in 2007-08. In future, LDC's ability to set goals for this part of the LD agenda will gradually increase, as will its engagement, alongside executive staff, in the decision-making process of selecting and funding such candidates for a term or a year of study.

32. Against the backdrop of a rapidly changing world, BMO's review team highlighted the strategic importance of sharing with partners in leadership development in Africa, Asia and also Europe. From 2008 onwards, as the Board's future strategic involvements in these contexts take shape under the guidance of the Steering Committee, LDC hopes to work effectively with new or existing partners in helping meet the leadership needs of sister churches across these continents.

GORDON CAMPBELL, Convener

WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

33. **Whose Earth?—Turning Things Around, Advent/Christmas Appeal:** This was the first of a three-year campaign, under the overall title "Whose Earth?" The intention is to focus on different dimensions of the ecology/development interface in each of the three years. There is an urgent requirement to foreground environmental factors as integral to authentic development given our present global ecological context.

34. The facts are disturbing and demand urgent attention: the earth is warming faster than at any time in the last 10,000 years; the 1990s was the

warmest decade, and 1998 the warmest year, on global record; the summer of 2003 was Europe's hottest for 500 years; by 2100 the world could be between 6 and 10 degrees C warmer on average. The impact in the lives of the world's poor is already catastrophic: the area of the world stricken by drought doubled between 1970 and 2005; 150,000 die as a result of climate change each year; 30 million more people may be hungry because of climate change by 2050; rising sea levels and crop failure could create 150 million refugees by 2100; the economic costs of global warming are doubling every decade; people in low-income countries are four times more likely to die in natural disasters than people in high-income countries.

35. For this year, the focus was on two projects in Honduras (one Tearfund supported, the other Christian Aid supported), one in Malawi (Tearfund), and another in Zimbabwe (Christian Aid). At the launch of the Appeal, Osvaldo Mungia from Honduras, graphically highlighted the extent of deforestation in the region by comparing a map showing rainforest cover in 1950 with one showing the vastly reduced amount of rainforest by 2000. He then described the climate changes that had occurred as a result of this and their impact on the struggle for genuine development: graphic testimony of the importance of factoring ecological and environmental concerns into development.

36. The first year of the **Whose Earth?** Appeal struck a chord and has been exceptionally well supported. As of mid-February, £642,000 had been contributed, of which £300,000 has been disbursed to Tearfund and £300,000 to Christian Aid.

37. Climate change will adversely affect the poor most, even though they had least to do with creating it. It is an issue that must be to the forefront of all aspects of church life: one of the marks of our solidarity with the world's poor in the present age will be the way we integrate environmental measures into everything we do here in Ireland. This is a "cross-cutting" issue beyond the remit of the World Development Committee alone. It is a matter for the whole church at every level. In the projects our generosity helps support, poor communities demonstrate that through valuing, defending, enhancing and working with the natural environment, they are turning things around for themselves through improving living standards. They are also making their contribution to turning things around ecologically for an increasingly fragile and beleaguered planet, which we all share, rich and poor alike. They challenge us about our stewardship, both locally and globally.

38. **Christian Aid Restructuring:** Christian Aid has changed from having an Irish Committee to having an Irish Board in order to more effectively work within the Irish context. These new structures of governance have now been finalised. PCI representation is Mrs Fiona Watts; Rev Dr Roger Purce; Rev Dr Mark Gray.

39. **Special Appeals:** When special Moderator supported crises appeals take place, the bulk of monies donated are passed as quickly as possible to benefiting agencies (ie BMO partners, Tearfund, Christian Aid). Sometimes, however, residual amounts can be left. In connection with the Sudan, Tsunami and Pakistan Earthquake/Africa Famine Appeals respectively, final payments have been made to clear out and close accounts.

40. **World Development Appeal 2006:** In 2006, the 5% allocation of the World Development Appeal agreed for use in the wider work of the Board was disbursed between St Paul's Theological College, Kenya, to provide scholarships for students on their Masters programme on HIV/AIDS and Pastoral Care (£15,500); for the relief and development work of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa's Board of Social Responsibility (£10,000); and through UMN for the work of Vision Network, Nepal (£5,000).

41. **The Micah Challenge:** In 2000, the powerful of the world in the form of the G8 committed themselves to Millennium Development Goals intended to half the number of people living in absolute poverty and hunger by 2015. An international coalition of Christian agencies, including both Christian Aid and Tearfund, has come together around the text Micah 6:8—"What is it that the Lord requires? Only this: do justice, show steadfast love, and walk in humble fellowship with your God"—in order to hold the G8 governments to account for the promises they made. It is important that pressure is kept up on governments, not only to meet these goals but to go beyond them in the name of the Exodus God who promised that when the Children of Israel were set free it would be with the resources of the oppressor—the "plunder of the Egyptians" (Exodus 3:22)—with which to start a viable new life. The deep call of the gospel pushes beyond charity to the quest for justice, including justice for creation, and beyond the amelioration of poverty to liberation.

MARK GRAY, Convener

MISSION INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

42. From the outset of this committee we have been aware that our role is one of significant difference to the Education committee which it has replaced. Our primary aim moves from informing and educating to that of mobilising the church for mission. That people will not only be aware of and know about the mission work of our church, but that they will also be equipped for involvement in it – from prayer support at home to actually going in person to serve. That immediately draws us to a basic understanding of mission – that it is not only what the Church does overseas, it is what the Church does everywhere.

43. In a way, therefore, we are working to encourage mission at home as well as overseas. To help in establishing and maintaining this mindset our committee have brought to its membership representation from the Boards of Mission in Ireland, Youth & Children's Ministry and Communication, and we also have representation on the Youth & Children's Board. This basic understanding of the totality of mission will be at the heart of all our discussions in the coming years for what we are seeking to establish is an active involvement in mission 'from the end of the pew to the ends of the earth'.

44. Whilst initially we will focus on developing the committed and enthusiastic supporters we will also be concerned to envision church leaders, as well as having an eye on how to encourage and stimulate those who are currently uninvolved.

45. We obviously have a priority for mission overseas and our work is set in a rapidly changing context. In the past, the Board, along with other denominational and independent mission agencies, were the primary means through which mission overseas was carried out. Today however, that emphasis is moving to the local congregation and individual enthusiasts. Congregational teams, groups of individuals linking up with various agencies and charities, and individual volunteers would seem to have become the primary means for overseas mission. In addition, another significant change that has developed in recent years is the fact that rather than us going to the world, the world is now coming to us with an influx of people to Ireland from all over the world to work and also settle. This has created a different playing field and the Committee are taking this on board as they begin to plan and prioritise.

46. We recognise that we have a unique opportunity to establish the work and pattern of this committee from the beginning. We feel that once certain structures are established it can be very hard to change them and so from the outset we are taking careful steps, giving clear strategic thought to the priorities which we want to establish for our committee. To facilitate this, an additional meeting of the Mission Involvement Committee will take place in April 2007 with a view to providing clear remits for working groups set up in order to prioritise the work. While we cannot anticipate the work of the Committee, it is likely that the working groups will be dealing with matters such as events, teams, training programmes, and publications. A key question throughout this process is, "Will these working groups help to inspire people to mission involvement at local congregational level?" The aim is to be ready with reports from at least two working groups to feed into the General Assembly Report for 2008.

47. Although we are a new committee within the Board's structure we have also inherited a number of works in progress.

48. **Annual Celebration of Global Mission:** The committee was very pleased with the 2006 event which focused on the theme of 'Mission Then and Now'; there was a better attendance than in 2005 and the venue, Carnmoney Presbyterian Church seemed very suitable for a number of reasons: easy access from major travel routes, good car-parking, excellent provision for ICT and sound, and a team of helpers from Carnmoney. As we look forward to 2007 we are seeking to implement the decision to repeat the event at a second venue. For the reasons named above, it was decided to return to Carnmoney and also seek out a second evening at a venue in the Armagh or South Down area. We hope that in future years this event will continue to use local congregations as venues in various areas of Ireland, given that the committee acknowledges the congregation to be the 'engine room' for mission. In the longer term the committee will be keeping a critical eye on the Celebration given that this event overlaps with the task of the working group reviewing tours and deputation, and also with similar events held by other boards of our church.

49. **Tours and Deputation:** Once again, we extend our gratitude to all those who in the past year have so willingly and enthusiastically engaged in speaking engagements on behalf of the Board. The understanding and commitment of church members to the work of mission around the world is surely enhanced as mission personnel inform and challenge, telling their story of

how they have seen God at work. We appreciate the ongoing efforts of the staff of the Mission Overseas Office who handle the administration of deputation bookings with efficiency and diligence.

50. In the past year there have been mission tours in seven presbyteries, Ballymena, Dublin & Munster, Coleraine, Derry & Strabane, Foyle, Dromore and North Belfast respectively. Under the old Education Committee, a small working group was set up to undertake a review of Presbytery Mission Tours. The working group met twice but considers more time and further consultation is needed before it can bring recommendations to the MIC. Recognising that Presbytery Tours are just one 'outlet' for missionary personnel on deputation, and that there is a feeling we need to reassess how deputation is carried out, the MIC has added to the membership of the working group, asking it to carry out a review of both deputation and Presbytery Tours, and bring recommendations for the future. In the meantime, it was agreed that there should be a moratorium on Presbytery Tours during 2007 to allow space for reflection.

51. **Annual Residential Conference:** At the time of writing planning was well under way for the 2007 Conference at Greenmount College, in Antrim on 20 and 21 April. This year the executive staff of the Board took the lead in planning, being supplemented by a number of committee members in the latter stages. In future years there will be committee involvement right from the outset of the planning. The theme of the 2007 conference is "*Thinking Globally, Acting Locally – Making the Links*" and it will endeavour to continue to enthuse and inspire local mission leaders and supporters for the task of encouraging greater involvement in overseas mission at congregational level.

52. **BMO Training Event:** This is a one day event at Belfast Bible College planned for June 2007 for those going overseas in summer 2007. The event is planned primarily with congregational teams in mind, but those preparing to serve as individual volunteers are also very welcome. The committee also feel that in future some thought should be given to holding this kind of event in conjunction with the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry in keeping with the broader approach to mission we are trying to develop.

53. **Overseas Prayerline:** continues to be a valuable aid to regular, focused prayer support for our missionaries and overseas partners in mission. It is at present being sent to more than 1,300 e-mail addresses on Wednesday each week and we thank those who faithfully use this key resource.

54. Just as we would encourage all in our church to make good use of Prayerline, so too as a committee we are seeking to make prayer an integral part of our work, for mission in all its forms is the Lord's work. Therefore, we need his help, wisdom and guidance so that as we take each step what Proverbs 16 v 9 says will be true, *In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.*

PETER LYLE, Convener

PERSONNEL, VISITS AND VISITORS

55. We give praise and thanks to God for the faithful witness and service of all our missionaries during the past year as they have undertaken their calling to serve in cross-cultural contexts outside Ireland – see Appendix A. 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.

56. In the course of the year memorial minutes were recorded and sympathies expressed in respect of Mrs Ellis Young who passed away on 14 July 2006 having served in India from 1945 to 1967, and of Miss Annie (Nean) Kinkead who passed away on 16 October 2006, having served in Malawi from 1984 to 1987.

57. We give thanks to God and record our appreciation of the six missionaries who resigned from the service of the Board during the past year. James and Heather Cochrane (Brazil 1998-2006), James and Willie Barton (India 1966-1984 and 1999-2006), Andrew and Clerah Clenaghan (Kenya 1999-2006) and Maureen Stevenson (Malawi 2002-2007).

58. During the year six new missionaries were appointed. Two as Volunteers in Mission, one as candidate for long-term service, two as candidates for short-term service and one by marriage into the PCI family. The two Volunteers in Mission served in Malawi and Kenya. The mission candidates plan to serve in Romania and Malawi – see Appendix A for further details. We thank God for these brothers and sisters and would encourage Church wide prayer and support for them.

59. In the months of July, August and September 2006 three teams visited Ukraine, Romania, and India.

60. We have been delighted to have the following members of partner churches and missions studying in Belfast and Aberdeen over the past academic year:

- **Rev Simon Kamande** from the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya, is studying for a Masters degree in Theology at Union Theological College.
- **Rev William Mumba** from the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi, is studying for a Masters degree in Theology at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland.
- **Rev Imre Zold** from the Transylvanian District of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Romania, is undertaking a year of Post Graduate research at Union Theological College.
- **Mr Samuel Mayuni** from the Student Christian Organisation of Malawi, is studying for a Certificate in Biblical Studies at Belfast Bible College.

61. In the past year the following visits were made to attend consultations and conferences called by our partner churches and missions, and to offer pastoral support and encouragement to our missionary personnel:

- **Rev Dr Terry McMullan** to Basel, Switzerland for a Presbyterian Church of Sudan Partners' Consultation.
- **Rev Uel Marrs** and **Mr Nigel Eves** to Malawi, 30 July to 12 August 2006.
- **Mr Nigel Eves** to Stuttgart, Germany, to attend Eukumindo meetings, 14 to 16 September 2006.

- **Mr Nigel Eves to India**, 30 Sept to 5 Oct 2006, to attend meetings of the Church of North India Partners in Mission Committee.
 - **Mrs Maureen Weir**, PWA President, and **Mrs Maureen Patterson** to Hungary and Romania, 15 to 23 Oct 2006, to visit the Hungarian Reformed Church.
 - **Rev Dr Gordon Campbell** to France, 8 to 15 December 2006, to lecture at the Free Faculty of Reformed Theology in Aix-en-Provence.
 - **Rev Ian McKee**, Deputy Director of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, to Pakistan, 8 to 15 February, to meet with the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan in particular Karachi Presbytery and the Adult Basic Education Society.
 - **Rev Dr Gordon Campbell** to Algeria, 10 to 17 February 2007, to provide in-service training for pastors and elders.
 - **Right Rev Dr David Clarke**, Moderator of the General Assembly and Mrs Hazel Clarke, 9 to 29 April accompanied by Rev Uel Marrs 9 to 17 April 2007, to visit the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.
 - **Rev Dr Gordon Campbell** to Riga, Latvia to lecture at the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary.
 - **Miss Helen Johnston** to Nepal to attend the United Mission to Nepal's General Assembly meetings, 4 to 16 May 2007.
 - **Rev Uel Marrs** to India to visit Woodstock School, 10 to 17 May 2007.
62. During the year we were delighted to receive the following visitors from our partner churches and mission organisations:
- **Rev Samuel Muriguh**, Secretary General, PCEA, Kenya, 25 to 27 June 2006
 - **Mrs Emily Chiona**, Ekwendeni Hospital, Malawi, 16 July to 10 August 2006
 - **Ms Esther Lupafya**, Ekwendeni Hospital, Malawi, 12 to 30 September 2006
 - **Rev Gibson Gichuki**, Director of the Board of Social Responsibility, PCEA, Kenya, 19 to 29 October 2006
 - **Rev Edison Christian**, Al Bashir, India, 13 to 17 November 2006
 - **Miss Jennie Collins**, Executive Director, United Mission to Nepal, 23 March 2007

THE HOME BASE

63. Once again we express our thanks to our team of executive and administrative staff who in handling a heavy workload, have carried out their work with great 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 (part-time), Dep Senior Administrative Officer

with special responsibilities for finance, and two Senior Secretaries with special responsibilities for mission education and mission personnel respectively. There is also a Secretary (part-time), and at the time of writing we are seeking to appoint a new Secretary/Receptionist. We also extend our gratitude to those who, from time to time, help out in the office on a voluntary basis.

64. Aside from the full-time staff in the Mission Overseas Office, many members of the Board willingly sacrifice of their time, energy and gifts to serve on the Board's Assembly and Board Committees. 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.

65. The Board expresses its deep appreciation to **Very Rev Dr John Dixon, outgoing Convener of the Board**. Having served as Convener of the Asia (formerly Eastern) Committee from 1992, and been installed as Convener of the Overseas Board at the General Assembly in June 2000, John has now come to the end of his term of service. We are very grateful to him for the prayerful leadership he has rendered to the Board over these past seven years; for his willingness to travel near and far as Christ's ambassador and on behalf of the Board; for his provision of pastoral care and encouragement to the Office Staff; and not least for guiding the Board through a lengthy period of review and transition. We know John's support for the overseas mission of our church will continue in the years ahead, and trust he will know God's richest blessing as he looks to the future. As agreed at the General Assembly in 2006, we warmly welcome Rev John Hanna to the role of Convener.

66. We record our sincere appreciation for the 16 years of faithful and committed service by **Very Rev Dr John Ross, Pastoral Adviser to the Board**. We are also grateful for the ongoing services of Dr Moreen Gordon in the same capacity, and are delighted to welcome Miss Dobbie McCaughan and Rev Brian Hughes to the pastoral adviser team.

67. 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 and congregations that have very faithfully provided financial support through the United Appeal, and we appreciate all that **the United Appeal Board** does to ensure that the target of honour for the total appeal is reached each year.

68. Once again the Board of Mission Overseas is very grateful for the ongoing support of **the Presbyterian Women's Association (PWA)** whose office bearers and Executive Committee members continue to contribute faithfully to the work of the Board. In 2006 the Annual Grant made by PWA to the work of the Board was £220,000. 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 the way in which they take to their hearts our overseas personnel, offering them prayerful and practical support.

69. The Board is glad to help individuals, congregations and other mission boards and organisations to identify **special projects** from a wide range of partner church activities. On the understanding that United Appeal targets have been met, the Board continues to offer the service of channelling funds from 'extra mile' giving, ensuring that, where appropriate, a refund of tax paid

by the donor is received under the Gift Aid scheme. Once again, we express our appreciation to those who organised and contributed to:

70. **The Presbyterian Women's Association's Birthday Thank Offering** 2005/2006 has raised £38,666 for the theological training and family support of two ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan, and for the Women's Ministry Programme at Zomba Theological College. To date the 2006/2007 Birthday Thank Offering has raised £13,387 to purchase and kit out a mobile unit for the 'Proclamation & Action' Project of Casa Caiada Presbyterian Church in Olinda, NE Brazil.

71. **The Young Women's Group's project** in 2005/2006 has raised £5,000 for the Darfur region of Western Sudan, funds being channelled through Christian Aid. The 2006/2007 project has to date raised £7,000 for the refurbishment and equipping of the kitchen of the 'Halfway House' project of the Aksza Mission House of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Transylvania.

72. **The Youth and Children's project** in 2005/2006 which was entitled 'Yes! Tak! Da!', in partnership with Scripture Union, raised £101,500 to help with the development of two centres for children and young people, one in Ukraine and the other in Russia. The 2006/2007 project is entitled 'Wings' and is supporting the work of the Aksza Mission House of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Transylvania by helping to provide a 'Half-way House' in Cluj for older street children.

73. **The Junior Boys' Brigade Appeal** for 2005/2006 was to help the Christian Church in Halmahera (GMIH), Indonesia to replace two motor boats destroyed in communal violence. These will be used for reaching remote areas and isolated Christian communities. A total of £17,000 was contributed towards the cost of the boats. Working in conjunction with the Church of North India, Gujarat Diocese, the Appeal launched for 2006/2007 aims to raise £14,000 to purchase a hostel for street children in Ahmedabad, with a further substantial donation going to the international work of Boys' Brigade.

74. The Board of Mission Overseas ended 2006 with a surplus of £189,959 on its current account, compared with the accumulated surplus of £176,279 at the end of 2005. We are once again indebted to the Board's Finance Officer (Overseas), **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.

75. Our membership of Global Connections enables us to keep abreast of new thinking and initiatives in world mission, and we value the opportunity of working alongside other agencies and societies in the local context through the Mission Agencies Partnership (MAP). In the past year a delegation from the Steering Committee attended the Global Connections Annual Conference entitled, "Running on Empty", and we also have been represented at a number of their forums and conferences examining a broad range of mission related issues. Additionally we continue to attend as observers at 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.

Derek & Linda Roulston	1998	Outreach & Development work, PCEA, Galana
Gary & Mary Reid	2000	Outreach & Development Work, PCEA, Narok

MALAWI

Margaret Young	1995	St Luke's Hospital, Malosa
Diane Cusick	1995	Pre-school teacher training, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Mzuzu
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 on home assignment
David & Maggie Steele	2002	Livingstonia Theological College Scholarship Administration, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Mzuzu
Andrew & Debbie Soye	2003	CCAP - Blantyre Synod Projects Office
Robin & Helen Quinn	2004	Lay Training Centre, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Ekwendeni

NEPAL

Joe &		Peace & Conflict Transformation Co-ordinator
Janet Campbell	2006	Pastoral Care with United Mission to Nepal

ROMANIA

Csaba &	2001	Executive Secretary, IKE
Ilona Veres	1993	Aksza Mission House, Cluj
Richard Lynas	2002	Bonus Pastor Foundation, Cluj on final home assignment

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 on final home assignment
--------------------------	------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Rev P Smetana Moderator, Synodical Council of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren

FRANCE

Pasteur M Manoel President, Eglise Réformée de France (ERF)
 Prof Michel Johner Principal, Faculté Libre de Théologie Réformée

HUNGARY & ROMANIA

Bishop G Bolcskei Presiding Bishop, Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary
 Rev B Tamas International & Inter-Church Relations, Synod of the Reformed Church of Hungary
 Bishop G Pap Transylvanian District of the Reformed Church of Romania
 Bishop L Tokes Kiralyhagomellek District of the Reformed Church of Romania

INDIA

Most Rev JV Mal Moderator of the CNI Synod
 Rev Enos das Pradhan General Secretary of the CNI Synod
 Rt Rev VM Malaviya Bishop of the Gujarat Diocese CNI
 Rt Rev SR Cutting Bishop of the Agra Diocese, CNI
 Miss Kaye Aoki Interim Principal, Woodstock School

INDONESIA

Rev A Ranoh Moderator, Evangelical Christian Church in Timor
 Rev MD Beeh General Secretary, Evangelical Christian Church in Timor
 Rev LP Duan Moderator, Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera
 Rev MD Boediman General Secretary, Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera
 Rev D Umbu Dingu General Chairman, Christian Church in Sumba
 Rev N Djoru General Secretary, Christian Church in Sumba

JAMAICA

Rt Rev Dr R Hewitt Moderator, United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands
 Rev C Cowan General Secretary, United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands

KENYA

Rt Rev Dr D Githii Moderator, Presbyterian Church of East Africa
 Rev S Muriguh Secretary General, Presbyterian Church of East Africa

MALAWI*Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP)*

Very Rev Dr SM Nyirenda	Acting Moderator, CCAP General Assembly
Rev L Kaluah	Acting Secretary General, CCAP General Assembly
Rt Rev LN Nyondo	Moderator, Synod of Livingstonia
Rev HM Nkhoma	General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia
Rev M Kadawati	Moderator, Synod of Blantyre
Rev D Gunya	General Secretary, Synod of Blantyre
Rt Rev CEJ Msangaambe	Moderator, Synod of Nkhoma
Rev Dr W Kawale	General Secretary, Synod of Nkhoma

MYANMAR (BURMA)

Rev Dr Demgthuama	General Secretary, Presbyterian Church in Myanmar
Rev Ralkunga	Moderator, Presbyterian Church in Myanmar

NEPAL

Ms J Collins	Executive Director, United Mission to Nepal
Mr G Hafvenstein	President, Board of Directors, United Nation to Nepal

PAKISTAN

Rev Prof A James	Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
Rev Dr M Kamil	Executive Secretary, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

POLAND

Bishop Marek Izdebski	Evangelical Reformed Church in Poland
-----------------------	---------------------------------------

PORTUGAL

Mrs Eunice Leite	President, Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Portugal
Dr David Valente	General Secretary, Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Portugal

SPAIN

Mr J Cortés	President, Permanent Commission, Spanish Evangelical Church
Rev A Abad	First Secretary, Permanent Commission, Spanish Evangelical Church

SUDAN

Rev JK Dung	Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Sudan/Malakal
-------------	-------------------------------------------------

Rev SO Awow	General Secretary, Presbyterian Church of Sudan/Malakal
Rev PM Nyak	Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Sudan/Akobo
Rev OL Daky	General Secretary, Presbyterian Church of Sudan/Akobo

THAILAND

Rev V Koydul	Moderator, Church of Christ in Thailand
Mr S Muangsak	General Secretary, Church of Christ in Thailand
Rev P Juanchaipoom	Administrator, Lamp of Thailand

ZAMBIA

Rev LR Mbewe	General Secretary, CCAP Synod of Zambia
Rev L Nyirenda	Moderator, CCAP Synod of Zambia

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for partner relationships with churches, united missions and institutions around the world, and encourage the Board to consult with partners in an ongoing process of audit, mindful of the underlying question for us, "what kind of partner do we want to be?"
3. That the General Assembly give thanks for the faithful and dedicated witness of our missionary personnel and their families in many different and challenging cultural contexts, and encourage the church to pray for and support them and their national colleagues as they engage together in mission in a fast-changing world.

Outreach Ministries Committee

4. That the General Assembly affirm its desire to work with partner churches, united missions and institutions to witness to Jesus Christ through a broad spectrum of involvement in education as set out in the report.
5. That the General Assembly ask the Board to give prayerful consideration, in consultation with partners, to the future role of our church in hospital and community health care mission.

Leadership Development Committee

6. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the ongoing work of our church in sharing in the development of Christ-like leaders around the world, and actively encourages our partners to help us develop mission-minded leaders in our church and for our Irish context.
7. Acknowledging the accumulated wisdom and knowledge in facilitating leadership development over the years, together with the lessons learned, that the General Assembly encourage the Board to develop all necessary tools and resources for good practice in leadership development in the global context.

World Development Committee

8. That the General Assembly give thanks for the continued generous support of the World Development Appeal and the work it enables in facilitating authentic development in ecologically aware ways.

9. That congregations and individuals take all measures possible to stop climate chaos as an act of solidarity with the world's poor.

10. That congregations and individuals lend their support to the Micah Challenge as a step towards confronting the scandal of world poverty.

Mission Involvement Committee

11. Recognising that the mission of our church is one, that the General Assembly ask the Board to engage increasingly with other mission boards of our church, working towards an integrated approach to mission.

12. Believing that the congregation has the primary role in mission, that the General Assembly ask the Board to help further develop congregational involvement in mission overseas.

13. That the General Assembly give thanks for the very generous support raised in 2006 through PWA; by other boards and organisations of our church for the mission of our partners in Indonesia, India, Sudan, Malawi and Eastern Europe; and for every expression of 'extra mile' giving by the wider church.

14. That the resignation of the Very Rev Dr John Dixon as Convener of the Board of Mission Overseas be accepted, and that he be thanked for his very valuable contribution to the work of the Board.

15. That the Board of Mission Overseas, with its associated working committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 279 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Rev RA PATTON

Acting Secretary: Rev Dr WP ADDLEY

1. As a church facing unparalleled new opportunities and challenges, the Board of Mission in Ireland has been called to take the lead role in providing a focus for the mission of the church in this island. This reflects a recognition that our identity as a church is bound up with being a vibrant community of Christ and serving and transforming Ireland. In all aspects of our work we have sought to put mission at the centre of our denomination's life. Among other things, this calls for persistence, determination, courage and a total dependence on the God who is the God of the nations – including our island home.

2. An important and indeed vital element of our remit is to challenge presbyteries and congregations to be outward looking, forward thinking and shaped by gospel imperatives. We are encouraged by the responses made by presbyteries to the report "Vibrant Communities of Christ, serving and transforming Ireland" and, indeed, this last year has proved to be a very helpful period of consultation as they have engaged with the issues. We sense an increasing awareness of the need to take on board the way forward that the report commends (see Appendices A to C). We thank those Presbyteries and congregations who have taken part in the pilot process and rejoice in the knowledge that many have a heart for mission and reflect a genuine desire to be effective in the service of the Kingdom.

3. Last year, as part of the Home and Irish Mission report and in conjunction with the Dublin and Munster Presbytery, we proposed to explore new areas of development. While appreciating that the pace of progress may vary considerably from place to place, we remain committed to what has been previously agreed. At the same time, much more hard thinking is required as we seek to establish clear priorities and develop the work along the most helpful lines.

4. As a Board we are committed to the whole of the island and, in this last year, such a commitment was demonstrated in the help we sought to bring to the Presbytery of Donegal. We recognise that ministers and congregations in such a context face tremendous challenges and we wish to encourage them and those who are in similar situations, wherever possible.

Urban Mission also involves its own unique challenges as well as providing new opportunities for outreach and evangelism. Our Urban Mission Panel has done valuable work in relation to Urban Mission Congregations and Development Workers. As that work is complete, we believe now it is the time to bring together the various strands of Urban Mission ministry under the auspices of a new committee of the General Assembly. We want to see this work move forward and for the church to face the very real challenges of mission in our urban communities.

5. Another vital area of the Board's work is the development of congregational life. The Committee on Congregational Life is seeking to

provide quality resources to assist congregations in the five areas of Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry and Mission. We commend these resources as helpful tools in the development of congregational life and appreciate feedback and response. Our heart's desire is that local churches become "vibrant communities of Christ serving and transforming Ireland".

6. 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. It asks the Assembly to continue to pray for all those in the front line of mission. We are greatly indebted also to our executive and administrative staff as well as the various conveners for all their work in supporting and providing resources for the Board's activities.

7. Above all, we give thanks to God for sustaining us through a year of significant challenges as far as the life of the Board is concerned. We pray that, under God, our Board can play some role in encouraging our church as a whole to be "a vibrant community of Christ's people serving and transforming Ireland."

The Rev RA Patton writes:

8. The Board of Mission in Ireland records its deep gratitude to the Rev Dr William Addley for his committed and dedicated work during this past year. In retiring from Union College, Bill anticipated the opportunity to do some new things. However, as it turned out, the new thing was taking up the role of Acting Deputy Clerk and Secretary of the Board of Mission in Ireland. He may have been acting but Bill has been much more than a stand-in for the year. He has brought enthusiasm and passion to the role as he has engaged with the multiplicity of the Board's work. We thank him for the commitment of time and energy as well as his many gifts in the service of the Church. We pray God's blessing on him and his wife Ruth in the years ahead.

9. The Board of Mission in Ireland records its thanks to the Rev Wilfred Orr for his convenership of the Urban Mission Panel. During its life as part of the Board of Mission in Ireland, the Panel was responsible for a number of important developments in the area of Urban Mission. To all this work, Wilfred brought leadership, careful organisation, and a meticulous attention to detail. We thank him for using his gifts in the service of the Board and for his commitment to the development of mission in urban areas.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE

1. The health and vitality of congregational life within our church continues to be the focus of the committee and its five panels. We have been encouraged by the use of our first publication, "Is Your Church Alive and Well", though we still feel that many more congregations could benefit from it.

2. Two further publications are projected for this year. The first, from our Discipleship Panel, is a booklet on what it means to be a church member. It

will be useful for communicants' classes and as a basic instruction manual for new Christians.

3. The second publication will provide basic guidance for the establishment and running of a small group ministry in congregations. This is being produced by our Fellowship Panel.

4. We encourage congregations to make full use of these and other resources.

5. August of this year sees our first worship conference. It is being held at Loughry Agricultural College, Cookstown, from 17 to 19 August 2007. There will be various streams related to all aspects of our corporate worship. We have asked our Director for Congregational Life, David Montgomery to be the keynote speaker. The Worship Panel is currently offering practical help to congregations looking for suitable arrangements for particular worship songs. The panel is also offering training for those responsible for music in the congregation.

6. The Committee calls the attention of the church to the evangelistic event being held in the Odyssey Arena in the Spring of 2008 when Mr Franklin Graham will be the preacher.

7. As ever we are very grateful to the dedicated staff in the BMI office for their efficient work on our behalf.

DIRECTOR FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

The Rev David Montgomery, Director for Congregational Life, writes:

I have been privileged this past year to speak in, or work with the leadership in, over 90 congregations in 18 presbyteries, meaning that since 2005 I have covered congregations in all of our 21 presbyteries. Much of the work is with kirk sessions, helping them to assess their effectiveness in various areas of congregational life and assisting them in thinking strategically and planning for mission. In addition, I have spoken to those involved in leading worship, small groups, evangelism groups, local clergy groups and a number of combined congregational events. It has been particularly satisfying to spend a period of time in a given presbytery or congregation and walk them through a process of change, or develop a crucial theme over a period of weeks or months. Indeed, the year has been one of trying to balance "breadth" (clocking up the miles and spreading the net, ensuring that those who need help are covered, especially in the more remote areas) and "depth" (follow-up and ongoing contact with those congregations and regions at critical stages in their development). I look forward to the year ahead and the challenges of new situations. If you are interested in using me, usually the best way to begin is with a series of conversations, so feel free to drop in or ring me at the BMI office.

A fair bit of time has been taken up in piloting the BMI strategy presented to last year's Assembly, in liaising with presbyteries as they respond to our report, and in helping to redraft the Board's strategy for the 2007 Assembly. With regard to pilots, I have had good co-operation from the Presbyteries of Down and Omagh, particularly as we undertook an in-depth look at the needs of the Fermanagh/Clogher Valley area. I have also been involved in piloting the

strategy with a number of individual congregations in Belfast, Ards, Dublin and Donegal.

The work of the Panels continues apace, and I have enjoyed the stimulation and support of the conveners and members. Our forthcoming Worship Conference in August and the imminent resources on small group development and church membership I hope will be of great help to the wider church.

I would also like to thank the Presbytery Congregational Life Agents for their support in drawing to my attention needs that are prevalent in their area and in helping with communication of congregational life issues to their presbyteries. I also want to express my sincere thanks to my secretary, Mrs Mandy Higgins, for her support and unending patience!

HAROLD BOYCE, Convener

HOME AND IRISH MISSION COMMITTEE

1. The Home and Irish Mission Committee has a clear focus on strategy, working it through at various levels and in many different areas.

2. The report 'Towards Vibrant Communities of Christ, Serving and Transforming Ireland' seeks to plot the course ahead and to recommend ways in which, as a denomination, we can implement our agreed principles and priorities. We recognise that all of this calls for high levels of commitment at both congregational and presbytery level. Furthermore, we believe that the proposals are necessary if we are serious in moving beyond simply being aspirational to truly becoming outward looking and missional in focus. We are convinced that mission must be at the heart of our church's life, embedded within our structures and that each local congregation needs to be encouraged and resourced to engage in mission.

3. **Dublin and Munster Presbytery Strategy:** The Committee has benefited from a Joint Working Group with the Strategy for Mission Committee of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery. We are both excited and challenged by the opportunities for mission that currently exist within the bounds of this presbytery and we believe that now is the time to be seeking to move into new phases of development. Together we pray for the rising up of 'vibrant communities of Christ, serving and transforming Ireland'.

4. No two areas are the same and each will require its own approach and plan. Each church plant will be expected to eventually become self-supporting, such that it grows from being a receiving church to a sending church. The overall plan set out in the 2006 General Assembly was "going out to be with people where they are". "Where people are" in the Republic of Ireland is in the Greater Dublin area, the East Coast, then the cities of Cork, Limerick and Galway.

5. We still maintain this vision although we have recognised the need to fully think through the implications of starting a new work or encouraging an older work. In particular we have commenced a review of our strategy in Munster and have started to investigate the basis and models for church planting which might be suitable for an Irish setting.

6. **Maynooth:** is our first new church enterprise in living memory and continues to develop under the leadership of Dr Keith McCrory. The church

plant has originated from the wonderful vision of Lucan congregation and we believe we have much to learn for the future from this model. This Assembly it is hoped Maynooth will be granted appropriate status (a memorial will be presented in the name of Lucan Congregation) and so enable Maynooth to continue the journey of discovery and maturity as an independent congregation.

7. **Greystones/Arklow:** With the continued development and growth of Greystones town and potential in the Wicklow/Arklow area we recommended that Greystones become a separate charge and that Arklow be permitted to call a Minister who would also have the responsibility to assess the needs and potential for development in the area.

8. The chief priority for the committee must be to create a cohesive priority for mission. This is extremely difficult given the vast area of our land and its spiritual need. The monetary implications for new areas of work are huge (never mind the available personnel). We nevertheless realise that, under the hand of God, other opportunities will arise in the next 10 years and we do not exclude these other possibilities. We value the prayers of the church as a plan is formulated.

9. **Urban Mission:** Noting the particular challenges that the church faces in this area, the committee has sought to develop and encourage exciting new ministries. May Street under the guidance of Rev Keith Drury, expands its ministry into the City Centre. Contact with the Board has been developed with Strand and Westbourne seeking to develop ministry that connects with the people of that area of East Belfast. At the time of writing further discussions are planned with the congregations on the Shankill Road with a view to creating a vital Presbyterian witness as the committee responds to the further reflections of the congregations concerned.

10. **The Mission Partnership Forum** initiated a fact-finding event between the Church of Ireland, Methodist and Presbyterian Church in the Shannon (Limerick) area with a view to resourcing the work as effectively as possible in the area.

11. The Home and Irish Mission Committee expresses thanks to all who have helped with its work during the past year. In particular, we thank Rev Roy Patton and Rev Dr Bill Addley for their contributions to the development of strategy. During the next year, the Committee wishes to progress the work in different directions, including the training of those involved. The prayers of the whole church are sought for the days to come.

WILLIAM HENRY, Convener

EDUCATION AND PROMOTION COMMITTEE

1. During the past year the committee has sought to develop its ways of communicating information about the Board's work to PCI members as well as information about mission-linked events and situations in Ireland. It has also been investigating other ways of disseminating information and of providing support for outreach work by congregations.

2. 'ReachOut' is now being produced six times a year as a publication dealing in depth with various aspects of mission in Ireland. While it is primarily

the publication of the Board of Mission in Ireland, it also carries contributions relating to the work of the Boards of Social Witness and of Youth and Children's Ministry.

3. Prayerfocus continues to be emailed once a month to provide information for prayer in relation to mission and outreach in Ireland. The Executive Secretary for Education and Promotion has been exploring various formats for producing this information to find the one most suited to the needs of the recipients.

4. A pilot project has been started to put members from larger congregations in touch with those from smaller congregations who need help with a particular outreach event. The first of these took place last autumn and the second in the spring when members from several congregations in the north spent a day with members of Mullingar church helping them with the distribution of the new *Reachout2you* leaflet.

5. A copy of the DVD on May Street's urban mission was circulated in the autumn and work on a second DVD on the work of Nightlight has been started. The committee is not planning any further DVDs at present, because it is of the opinion that, as more congregations are acquiring modern technology for use in their churches, it would be more beneficial to work on PowerPoint presentations which can be produced far more quickly and be easily kept up to date.

6. Work has started on producing a series of easily transportable publicity banners about the work of the Board. These will be used at exhibitions or by those on deputation.

CHERRY POYNTON, Convener

SHANKILL ROAD MISSION

1. The Rev Bill Campbell continues to head up the work of the Mission in an area with more than its fair share of the common problems of the inner-city: the malign influence of the paramilitary organisations, drug and alcohol abuse, one-parent families, teenage pregnancies, high unemployment.

2. The Mission continues to operate a popular all-day cafeteria serving nutritious meals and snacks at a reasonable price; Christian literature is on display. There are also men's and women's second-hand clothing shops.

3. It is plain for all to see that PCI's work and witness in the Shankill Road area would be better served by having a smaller number of larger units than by the present six small congregations very close to each other. Accordingly representatives of BMI have been in discussion with the Kirk Sessions of all six Shankill Road congregations and also with the two presbyteries regarding plans for the future. The Shankill Road Mission Committee and the Shankill Road Mission congregation have been quick to declare themselves willing to join with other congregations to form a larger unit. We urge BMI to proceed quickly with its plans. The new larger units will

hopefully have the staffing and also appropriate premises to be able to start new activities and forms of outreach.

IAN HART, Convener

NIGHTLIGHT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mr John Luke, Director, reports:

1. The street outreach work of NIGHTLIGHT is continuing in the entertainment areas of Belfast with Mr John Luke as Director. A team of volunteers, working on rota, take Christ onto the streets in the Golden Mile on Thursday night from 8 pm, and Friday and Saturday nights from 11 pm and in the Odyssey Complex on Friday and Saturday nights from 10 pm.

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 and it also provides somewhere to bring anyone in need of help and counselling. A regular Saturday and Sunday morning (12pm to 3am) Tea-Table takes place on the footpath outside the church and this has become a great contact point.

4. 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. Mrs. Linzie Cobain is the Development Officer and has concentrated on team development and contact follow-up with the volunteer team in the Golden Mile area. Mr. Brian Simons was appointed in September 2005 to “head-up” a new team working in the Odyssey Complex. 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.

5. This year has seen the establishment of more new “Nightlight style” teams in places like Kilkeel and Monkstown. These teams are overseen and supported at a local level and have been a great encouragement to all involved in PCI Nightlight.

6. The Nightlight Executive Committee, in consultation with Mr Luke, oversees the work of NIGHTLIGHT.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mrs Irene Younge, Convener, reports:

The Committee has been acting on behalf of the Board on personnel matters relating to the Board staff, including deaconesses, Home and Urban Mission ministers and Irish and Urban Mission workers.

Home Mission Ministers

The Rev Brian Savage was installed as minister to the congregations of Kells and Ervey on 28 May 2006.

Irish Mission Workers

Mr Tom Dowling commenced service alongside the Rev David Moore in Kilkenny Presbyterian Church.

Mr Kevin Hargaden commenced service alongside the Rev Dr Keith McCrory in Maynooth.

Mr Eamon Doyle commenced one year's training at Union College and is also gaining experience working in the Drogheda area with Mr Billy Patterson.

Pastoral Care

The Director for Personnel, Rev David Temple, in his pastoral role has been meeting with Home and Urban Mission ministers and Irish and Urban Mission personnel.

BMI/PWA HOME PERSONNEL**Deaconesses**

1. Mrs Julie Peake completed her training in June and received a call to serve in Portrush alongside the Rev John Kirkpatrick

Mrs Carol O'Hara received a call and is serving in Antrim Area Hospital - 4 sessions and in Musgrave Park Hospital - 1 session.

Mrs Jenny Robinson resigned from Ballyholme congregation on receiving a call to serve in South Belfast Friendship House under the Board of Social Witness.

Mrs Lynda Gibson has been seconded to the Social Witness Board to serve as a temporary chaplain in the NI Prison Service.

Deaconess in Training

2. For her probationary year, Miss Sonya McCullough is placed in Abbey, Monkstown and will complete training in June 2007.

Miss Rosemary Spiers and Mrs Elizabeth Warnock commenced a two year course at Union Theological College in September 2006.

We continue to pray for God to call new students for Deaconess training.

Resignations

3. Mrs Ruth Henry retired from Belvoir Park Congregation in December 2006.

Miss Pat Shirley retired from Antrim Hospital in December 2006, but continues to serve part-time in Greystone Road during their ministerial vacancy.

Congregation Applications for a deaconess

4. Three applications were circulated with no response; a fourth has been circulated with a closing date 16 March 2007.

Leave of Absence

5. Kathleen Spence was granted a year out from September 2006 – September 2007 and is serving with OM on the Logos II Ship.

Thanks

6. We give praise and thanks to God for the faithful witness and service of deaconesses, Home Mission ministers, Irish Mission workers, Tentmakers and Urban Mission personnel.

We thank them for their commitment and service in congregations, hospitals and other placements.

(see Appendix D)

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Mr Brian Knox, Convener, reports:

1. During the year the Committee and representative sub-groups have met together and carried out visits to numerous church properties, meeting with congregational representatives and reporting to the Board as appropriate. The following is a brief resume of the work of the Committee, since reporting to the 2006 General Assembly.

Taughmonagh

2. Construction of the new building commenced in November 2006 and has progressed steadily over the months. The congregation continues to worship in the local school and looks forward to completion of the building in August 2007.

Ballysally

3. Design proposals to provide additional storage areas, more appropriate toilet facilities and a more welcoming entrance area, together with works in respect of requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, have progressed and it would be intended that building works should proceed over the summer months.

Strand, Belfast

4. Design proposals for the new complex were examined prior to Planning application being lodged.

Irvinestown

5. Together with other Board committees, Property Committee representatives have been in discussion with members of Irvinestown congregation regarding their proposal to provide a more appropriate building to replace the present church.

Mullingar

6. Following discussions with Conservation/Planning Officers, an archaeological survey is being undertaken to enable architect to submit Planning application for additional accommodation to provide meeting rooms and ancillary facilities linked to the existing listed church building.

Waterford

7. Essential roof repair works to St. Patrick's have been completed and the congregation continues to use this listed church building. The future use of the building is still being considered and discussions with Waterford City Council in this regard are pending.

Wexford

8. Essential repair works have been completed to the listed church building, which is located in the centre of Wexford. During the works, the congregation met in the local hotel and were pleased to return to the Church building in March 2007.

General

9. The Committee continues to work in close co-operation with various relevant Committees within the Board in an attempt to be supportive in respect of property matters. Deliberations are ongoing regarding numerous matters including Drogheda; Sligo; Enniscorthy; Arklow manse; Tullamore manse; Limerick manse; Ballyshannon; Nun's Island; Galway; Kells; Mountmellick church.

FINANCE COMMITTEE*Mr Douglas Cowan, Convener, reports:*

1. The Committee has developed further the Board accounts to bring our reporting mechanism into line with the work of our committees. We have finished the year 2006 with a small balance before charging depreciation. We are pleased with this result as we have had to bear unexpected extra staff pension costs during the year.

2. 2006 was the first year when our Board was responsible for the payment of deaconess salaries. We are continuing discussions with PWA representatives about the administrative arrangements for the management of this. We have been able to agree increased contributions from congregations towards the salary costs of deaconesses and we are in negotiations about possible financial support for the salary cost of deaconesses working in hospitals. We are grateful for the financial and prayerful help of PWA members and congregations as we seek to support deaconesses in every way.

3. The Committee has spent considerable time trying to ascertain that the salary package and conditions for all staff employed by the Board are fair and comparable. Home Mission ministers, Irish Mission workers, deaconesses and Nightlight staff were all employed under different arrangements and we are

looking at all packages to ensure that we are fair to all and also good stewards of the limited resources of the Board.

URBAN MISSION PANEL

The Rev WJ Orr reports:

The Panel was set up originally under the Union Commission (subsequently transferred to the BMI) to consider a creative approach to a limited number of congregations struggling in difficult urban environments. Our recommendations can be traced, as they developed, in Reports 2004 - 2006.

In short, we drew up criteria for recognising such congregations: a scheme for adopting them (which mirrors that of Home Mission congregations to a large extent); and proposed the appointment of a Development Moderator. Our work drew to a conclusion as we drafted a job description and employment details, including stipend, for the latter post.

Having fulfilled our brief, and conscious that there were issues of urban mission which lay beyond our remit, it was suggested to the Board in March, that the Panel be discharged, its work being subsumed by a committee of Assembly, under the Board. This committee would be given a broader focus, and carry the responsibility and authority of an Assembly committee.

PRESBYTERIAN MUTUAL SOCIETY

Mr D H C Ferguson, Secretary, reports:

1. The Directors are pleased to report that the Society has continued to grow with net investment in excess of £70 million pounds during this financial year bringing the total assets to over £280 million pounds.

2. A dividend of 6.0% has been declared on all shareholdings for the financial year ended 31 March 2007. The total dividend amounted to over £14 million, which was distributed to 9,700 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.

APPENDIX A

TOWARDS “VIBRANT COMMUNITIES OF CHRIST SERVING AND TRANSFORMING IRELAND”

1. Response to Presbytery Submissions:**A. Introduction**

1. The Board of Mission in Ireland has found the period of consultation and piloting since last Assembly helpful and fruitful. We were particularly encouraged that all presbyteries recognised and commended the general thrust of the report and the underlying desire to see congregations develop a heart for mission and become vibrant communities of Christ. We were also pleased that a few presbyteries completely endorsed what we were trying to achieve in the report while a number of others welcomed many of the specific proposals. Since we never claimed that the report was complete or perfect, we also welcomed the many suggestions for improvement and were happy to take account of the various areas of concern highlighted in a number of responses.

2. Admittedly, in reading the responses, we felt that while some concerns were valid and required clarification or inclusion, others arose from either a misunderstanding of what was being said (eg some of the fears regarding ‘centralisation’), a failure to recognise the implicit pre-suppositions behind the report (eg the place of prayer, Gospel ministry and the role of the Holy Spirit), or more rightly belonged to a later debate (eg some of the comments regarding the details of implementation). We hope that none of these easily-allayed fears would become a reason why some might feel unable to endorse the main thrust and vision of the report.

3. We want to emphasise in all that is said in this report that, as a Board, we recognise that we are ultimately servants of the wider church. Our aim is not to promote an agenda, nor to seize control of, or interfere in, congregations’ ministries; but rather to help churches discover and fulfil their God-given mission. The pilot process, incorporating over three dozen congregations in six presbyteries, was implemented specifically in order to observe how the strategy would work in a variety of situations and to ensure that what was proposed would indeed serve the needs of local churches.

B. Theological concerns*B.i. The role of the Holy Spirit, prayer and gospel preaching*

4. In our desire to major on the implications of the report for our church, we assumed, perhaps naively, that fundamental core beliefs such as the sovereignty of God in mission, the necessity of the Holy Spirit’s enlivening presence to motivate a congregation for mission, the prior need for repentance on the part of God’s people for past failings and unfaithfulness, and the indispensable role of humble prayer, should be taken as understood. Indeed the

report (*General Assembly Reports 2006*) did, on page 161 para 2, state: "Only God, in His time and by His Spirit, can advance His Kingdom."

5. However, we acknowledge that as serious and central a subject as mission is so prone to the dangers of reliance on man-made techniques and methodologies, human effort and spiritual short-cuts and worldly views of success and failure, that any discussion on the subject needs to state explicitly at the outset that this is God's work which He will achieve in His time and in His way. However, we believe that the proposals contained within this report are compatible with the doctrines mentioned above. Taking the Great Commission of the Gospels and Acts as our starting-point, we believe our proposals to have their genesis in a biblical understanding of the church and its task in the world, as we seek to be obedient to Christ and as we aim to ensure that no town, district, street or road on our island is inhabited by people who have never had the chance to hear the gospel message or experience it in action.

B. ii. A definition of Mission

6. Concern was expressed that we did not give an adequate definition of mission. Our reticence to attempt such was purely on the basis of time and space. As one theologian has written "every aspect of theology has an inescapably missiological dimension, for each one exists for the sake of the church's mission". Some were concerned that we were limiting mission to, or equating it with, proclamation evangelism. Our response is that while it is clearly wrong to limit our understanding of mission to this, it surely includes evangelism. We believe that everyone needs to be challenged to follow Christ in repentance and faith, resulting in a life of sacrificial witness and service. It is our conviction that, though we are encouraging every congregation to draw up a plan for mission, it is not our role to tell them what that might look like in their local situation. It is for congregation and presbytery to discern, under God, which of the rich and multi-faceted aspects of the *Missio Dei* they are being called to embody in their time and place, but sacrificial service of word and deed would be included.

7. On one level it should be as unnecessary to define mission as it is to define prayer or preaching. However, since it is a reasonable question to ask in response to a report which is so centred round Mission, we will point to the words of the Lausanne Covenant "We affirm that Christ sends his redeemed people into the world as the Father sent him, and that this calls for a similar deep and costly penetration of the world. We need to break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos and permeate non-Christian society.... The church is at the very centre of God's cosmic purpose and is His appointed means of spreading the gospel."

B. iii. The biblical basis of strategic planning

8. Another concern was the alleged lack of any biblical basis for the type of planning we were proposing. We, of course, refute this strongly. One respondent helpfully referred to 'God the Planner', and we would want to affirm this as we trace the story of salvation from Old to New Testaments and witness the ministry of Christ for whom the cross was not a moment of unexpected failure but the culmination of the Divine Plan formed in eternity. Even at moments within His earthly ministry Christ could be seen clearly following His

own strategy of self-revelation, a strategy closely tied up with His purpose and mission on earth (Matt.15:24; Luke 8:56; John 2:4). In Luke 14:28-33 Jesus, though speaking primarily about the cost of discipleship, uses an illustration with which everyone could identify: namely, it is sensible and prudent to make plans. It is not an unspiritual activity.

9. Regarding our suggestion that congregations work on a five-year time-scale, we acknowledge that the time-line is arbitrary. However, we would see the adoption of short-term (1-2years), medium term (say 5 years) and long-term (say 7+ years) plans as a common-sense application of the many biblical examples and commands concerning wise planning (1 Chron 28:11ff.; the books of Ezra-Nehemiah, [see esp Ezra 4:5; Neh chs 2 & 3]; Prov 12:5; 15:22; 16:3 [while acknowledging the balancing truth of 16:1 & 9]; 21:5).

10. In the New Testament, perhaps the most relevant book for our purposes is the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus' words in Acts 1:8 show that the evangelistic progress of the church was not haphazard but took the form of a number of ever-expanding circles emanating from the centre at Jerusalem. Throughout the book, at crucial junctures in the church's early history, strategic decisions were prayerfully made. The decisions of Acts 6:1-7 and Acts 15:13ff were strategic decisions. Particularly in Acts 6:7 we read that there was a cause and effect between the apostles' wise strategies and the powerful spread of the Word of God.

11. Paul, in his subsequent missionary journeys, exhibited a clear strategy to follow the main routes around the Mediterranean, concentrating on the large urban centres and then strengthening the churches which he had planted. His work in tent-making was due to a determined strategy not to be a burden on anyone (2 Thess 3:8) and in 1 Cor 9:21-23 in setting out his philosophy of ministry he articulates essentially what amounts to a strategy.

12. Acts 16:6-7 is often rightly quoted as an important corrective in the whole business of mission strategies. Here Paul and his companions were prevented by God from fulfilling their initial plans (to visit Asia / Bithynia), and led instead to a different region (Macedonia). This demonstrates the flexibility required in any plan (something which was acknowledged in the 2006 report) but it also shows that Paul and his friends clearly did have plans in the first place and this was a supernaturally-inspired extraordinary departure from their usual practice. As is often said, when addressing other issues in Acts, it is bad hermeneutics to make what is clearly extraordinary the basis for ordinary practice.

13. The words of warning in James 4:13-17 are spoken to the arrogant that make plans with no reference to God. While this is a sobering reminder to all of us, it in no way applies to churches whose desire is to wait upon God and devise their plans under His guidance. As one presbytery highlighted, just as it is foolhardy to go down this road without prayer, it would also be foolhardy to try and advance the work of the kingdom without planning.

B iv. The imposition of management models on the church

14. All of this has implications for a further concern highlighted by many: the fear that this is the imposition of business models onto the church or,

as one presbytery put it: “the borrowing of marketing strategies from the greedy world”. We have sought in the paragraphs below to emphasise that this is not the case, and hope that our statements on both the sovereign work of God the Holy Spirit and on the need for flexibility will allay some of these fears.

15. The fact that some, but not all, businesses may use a degree of strategic thinking and planning should not, in and of itself, deter us from doing the same. We are, after all, committed to accepting light from any quarter. Naturally there are fundamental differences between a business and a church and congregations which blur those distinctions get into trouble very quickly! Nevertheless we do not regard the use of plans, strategies and mission statements as impositions of secular models any more than the use of instrumental technique or rhetorical skill in our praise accompaniment and preaching. We would caution against making the possible abuse or over-use of some secular models an excuse for inactivity and thereby failing to grasp the helpfulness of such tools in our desire to be faithful servants. As one respondent pithily noted: “we do not see this as a Master-plan, but as a tool to help churches find the Master’s Plan for them.”

16. We acknowledge that in some business quarters it is becoming unfashionable to speak in terms of long-term strategic planning. It is claimed that this is a carry-over from modernity and increasingly unsuited to the flexibility and unpredictability of the post-modern world. Nevertheless, most of the criticism is directed towards “objective-driven strategies” and inflexible goals “set in concrete” that are unable to cope with unexpected circumstances, or human diversity, much less the unpredictable work of the Holy Spirit. In such scenarios goals become more important than people and efficiency can become an idol.

17. However, those who rightly critique such methodology do not eschew strategising altogether. They still recognise the indispensability of plans but instead of long-term ten year schedules, they prefer to speak of “Plans in Pencil”, or “five-year plans, regularly reviewed.” This, of course, is very much in line with our thinking and proposals. We strongly believe that such flexibility must never be used as an excuse to abandon mission activity, or to revert to the past. Rather, where churches review and alter their plans they must do so out of a desire to respond to ministry in new and initially unforeseen contexts with greater relevance and effectiveness.

18. The reality is, whether it be our preaching programme, our sermon outline or our weekly congregational activities, we all engage in strategic planning. Having a weekly evening service is a strategy, having a Midweek is a strategy, organising a two-week mission is a strategy, having a week of prayer is a strategy, having home Bible study groups or an Alpha course is a strategy!

C. The Problem of Perceptions

19. The alleged imposition of business methodologies was one perceived problem which the responses highlighted, but there were others.

C i. Centralisation

20. An issue that kept recurring and displayed a clear misunderstanding of the process was the fear of centralisation. The reality is that, at the moment, many decisions regarding the future of churches and the allocation of resources *are* made centrally. What these proposals are trying to achieve is that such decisions are not made in an ad hoc and inconsistent way. What we are aiming for is a *decentralisation*, through an encouragement and equipping of presbyteries to exercise their authority and give demonstrable leadership in the fulfilment of the gospel mandate in their geographical area. We firmly believe that local congregations and presbyteries are the bodies best placed to make these decisions.

21. However, as many responses admitted, presbyteries have often found it difficult to ask the hard questions and make the consequent decisions, preferring sometimes to leave it to the central church. As one respondent said: “we complain about centralisation, but secretly we like it because someone else can take the blame!” The effectiveness of any strategy will be dependent on presbyteries and congregations on the ground making difficult decisions for the sake of reaching those who are currently strangers to the gospel of grace. We acknowledge that the main problem in this area is that ministers and elders are having to make decisions about the effectiveness and potential future of the ministry of their neighbours. This has long been identified as a weakness in, for example, the consultation process. Nevertheless, in the words of a former Board convener: “what we need to do is encourage Philippians 2:4 leadership”. We want to affirm that no interest, no matter how important and understandable is sufficient to divert us from our primary task of reaching this island for Christ.

C ii. Acknowledging diversity

22. Some feared that the process was weak because no “one size fits all”. We readily acknowledge the diversity of congregations and contexts, and sought to emphasise on p.159 para.3, that, in encouraging congregations to be mission-motivated, we were not stipulating what that mission must look like in their context. That is the work of presbytery. Yet because all are called to mission in all contexts we do believe that all need to be encouraged down this path

C iii. Of Closing Churches

23. Others also felt that there was a perceived agenda here to close churches and that the real motivation behind the report was the need to rationalise in the midst of declining numbers, falling finances and increasing vacancies. Again, we can only deny this. We take seriously the concerns raised by some presbyteries that we need to examine our ineffectiveness in the inner cities and in economically-deprived areas. We also continue to be aware of the need to grasp the new opportunities presented by population shifts and increasingly opening doors in the South and West. However, it needs to be made clear that it will not be possible to do this and maintain the status quo everywhere else. We need to ask hard questions about over-resourced areas, and deal drastically with situations of duplication. The motivation behind any

reorganization is not retreat, but advance through more effective progress in mission.

C iv. Outsiders and Insiders

24. Other concerns related to specific words or phrases within the report, some of which we have sought to change, clarify or re-word. There was particular unease regarding the phrase “those outside take precedence over those inside”. While we feel this did need clarification we are concerned that congregations not use debates over terminology as a means of avoiding their clear responsibility to those presently “outside”.

25. We cannot emphasise strongly enough that we in no way want to denigrate the regular pastoral ministry to those “inside”. We affirm the ongoing and urgent need to care for “the sheep in the fold”. We do not believe any dichotomy can be justified between ministry to those inside and those outside. What we do wish to redress is the imbalance that was so often present whereby people saw the church as “theirs” rather than “His”, and consequently treated outsiders or newcomers with suspicion, and ministry to outsiders with apathy.

D. Did they jump or were they pushed?

26. By far the most common objection was the element of coercion, some would say threat, implicit in the report. Some presbyteries were sympathetic to the need for this to be there; using phrases such as “the need to inject urgency” into the process, and the importance of “giving the report teeth”. There was a recognition that we need to start putting resources where there is an interest in and openness to the gospel, whether this occurs in contexts within our normal Presbyterian hinterland, or not. As one presbytery commented, we cannot forever pour resources into chasing after uninterested fringe members. Paul’s (strategic?) decision to go to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46), and Jesus’ teaching regarding shaking the dust off our feet (Matt.10:14), may be instructive in this context. The possibility that we may not be expected to contend forever with some is a sobering and sensitive truth that at least needs to be factored into the overall complex debate.

27. One response put it well when it expressed concern about the potential heavy-handedness of the original report but recognised that there was a fine balance between coercion and the real and urgent need to give congregations “an encouraging push”. We have sought in our present report to maintain the urgency - the encouraging push - whilst hopefully not appearing to be dogmatic or inflexible. However, one reality of which we must be aware is the number of congregations who want a minister but who, when pressed, are unable to articulate any sense of vision, gospel understanding, or heart for mission.

28. This illustrates an important aspect of the thinking behind this report. Far from ignoring the work of the Holy Spirit or sidelining prayer and regular gospel ministry, the issues raised above show, we believe, a desire to be sensitive to where God’s Spirit is working and to “follow the wind where it is blowing”. In contrast, it could be argued, that maintaining the status quo by-

passes such spiritual activity, making prayer redundant as we simply continue putting people and resources where we have always put them.

E. From Theory to Practice

29. Many of the responses highlighted practical concerns about the implementation and sustainability of the process. We see this as a start of a journey. There will inevitably be some fine-tuning necessary on the way but we firmly believe that the difficulties encountered en route can, with God's help, be overcome.

30. Some presbyteries questioned their own competency to grasp the nettles that need to be grasped; others commented on the need for training for those given the task of drawing up the plans; others had questions regarding vacancies and unions. While these are important considerations we do not believe they are of the essence of the report. We would be saddened if the thrust of the report were lost amongst details which could be resolved at a later time. If we believe that this is the right thing to do for our church at this time then it is incumbent upon us to do it and to equip presbyteries for the task.

31. Regarding some of the other practical concerns, flexibility is key and much of this can be worked out at presbytery level. Guidelines regarding vacant congregations will need to be drawn-up, but we note that most vacant congregations draw up a profile during their period of vacancy outlining their ethos and their hopes and dreams for the future. It could be argued that vacant congregations, rather than being a spanner in the works of this process, are the ones which have actually been doing this for some time.

32. There was a widespread fear that some congregations may treat this as a paper-exercise, drawing up plans that they have no intention of implementing, while others were, in the words of one response, "too busy in mission involvement to spend the large amount of time necessary to produce a proper plan". While we doubt that the latter is ever really the case, we acknowledge that the former will always be a danger. But there are pitfalls and dangers in everything - not least in maintaining the status quo. We also recognise that decisions on where to place resources cannot solely be made on the basis of current vision or "track-record". Other factors such as potential for growth, the state of other congregations (and other denominations) in the near vicinity, will need to be factored in.

33. This is where we believe presbyteries need to start giving wise and courageous leadership. Only they will know whether or not a particular congregation's plan is realistic. They will be best positioned to make the difficult differentiation between congregations who have no vision and no potential and those who, though lacking current vision, could flourish under the right leadership. They will be the best ones to decide whether an area is over-resourced or whether resources need to be invested in a struggling congregation because it is the only "light in a dark place".

34. We also want to emphasise that this does not need to be a time-consuming process, nor should it be seen as "an extra bureaucratic layer". We see this as replacing or dovetailing in some way with the consultation process rather than supplementing it. We recognise that the congregations are already involved in completing statistical returns, etc., but we see it as a misplaced sense

of priority if we continue with these while ignoring a process which has at its heart not statistics but vision, evangelism and spiritual life. Perhaps the fear with which many of us approach such a process is a fear of the unknown. Far from distracting from mission, many of those who have already embarked upon a similar process testify to its usefulness in focussing them on mission.

35. More than one response mentioned that this report gives presbyteries the potential to fulfil their proper task of being overseers, exercising leadership and ensuring accountability from congregations. Such a rediscovery of the role of presbytery strikes right at the heart of our latent congregationalism, and it also prevents the feared centralisation. This can only be good. A number of people have also remarked that the discussion engendered by the report enlivened their presbytery considerably and, regardless of whether the response was positive, negative or mixed, there was a general feeling that the issues raised by the report and the quality of the ensuing debate were good examples of the true purpose of presbytery.

2. Into the Future

36. The 2006 report presented the vision of vibrant communities of Christ, serving and transforming Ireland. It offered some scenarios of what these might look like, traced the history of such thinking within our church with special reference to the 1994 Strategy for Mission report, and outlined, in broad brush-strokes, an implementation process involving, first presbyteries, then congregations, in drawing up strategic plans for the resourcing and implementing of mission in their areas. All of this we want to endorse and commend again to the church.

37. Nevertheless, some aspects of the 2006 report require expansion and clarification in the light of recent conversations, submissions and experiences. The report rightly stated that for some, “the vision of their local church becoming a vibrant community of Christ serving and transforming Ireland is a nightmare scenario, destroying the church they have known, loved and served all their lives”. While, for others, “this is a desire they have held in their hearts for as long as they can remember”. We do not want to give the impression, however unintentionally, that little or no missional thinking has been taking place in our church. There are faithful congregations who we want to encourage in the gospel work they are already doing through praying for them and through ensuring that the central resources of the church are available to help them and are not diverted into maintenance.

38. We acknowledge too the areas in which we as a wider church have failed: being extravagant with our resources in some parts of the North-East, less generous in the North-West and in inner-city housing schemes, and often completely absent from many expanding towns in the South, East and West.

39. Before looking at the specifics of how we might address this imbalance and help all our congregations be more faithful in mission, we want to do two important and foundational things without which all talking and planning is futile.

- (a) We want to state firmly our belief in the sovereignty of God in mission; acknowledging the indispensable role of God the Holy Spirit in guiding and equipping His church, illuminating and inspiring us as

we plan, but sometimes sovereignly interrupting those plans to surprise us and do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Eph.3:20).

- (b) We want to call our denomination as a whole to humble and penitent prayer; confessing our past failures and seeking the renewing and re-invigorating power of the same Holy Spirit on our congregations and their leadership, that we might be more obedient disciples and more effective ambassadors as we carry out the Great Commission in Ireland today.

40. This said, we want to clarify and state the following as the core principles underlying our proposals:

- The local congregation is the primary unit of mission;
- The church must never become a comfortable club where the command to reach those “outside” is ignored in favour of maintaining the comfort of those “inside”;
- people take precedence over plant;
- every-member ministry takes the place of the traditional “one-person ministry”;
- leadership is to be truly corporate and courageous.

With this in mind we must

- go out to be with people where they are;
- proclaim God’s Good News with sensitivity, courage and confidence;
- be prepared to be flexible;
- insist that resources – human and financial - follow priorities;
- work at the practical implications of the strong supporting the weak;
- exhibit an explicit commitment to prayer, humble reliance on the Holy Spirit, radical obedience and sacrificial living, by which we, as God’s people, acknowledge that this is His work and we are His servants, and through which we model the values of the Kingdom of God in word *and* action.

41. We therefore want to endorse and present again the main elements of the process as outlined in the 2006 report (see also Appendix B for summary of the process):

- Presbyteries to gather basic mission-related information from congregations within their bounds, (see App. C for example);
- In the light of this information, presbyteries to draw up a broad time-related plan for their geographical areas, paying particular attention to over-resourced areas, and new emerging opportunities for mission;
- Presbyteries then to require each congregation/charge within their bounds to draw up and submit for approval its own strategic plan for mission;
- Since these are “plans in pencil” and flexibility is important, presbytery should develop its own mechanisms for regularly hearing from each congregation/charge as to how its strategic plan is developing, what adaptations might be necessary to

respond to new circumstances, what insights and gains have been achieved and what may comprise the next strategic plan;

- The Union Commission will resource ministry, taking account of the overall missional strategy for Ireland approved by the General Assembly. This process, therefore, will have inevitable implications for decisions on matters such as Leave to Call, Unions, Amalgamations and Dissolutions. We feel strongly that the debate on matters such as these needs to move away from factors such as finance, numbers and sustainability, and instead towards a consideration of the congregation in question's Spirit-inspired vision, mission potential and passion for God and His kingdom.

42. However, we do not want anyone to imagine that issues of amalgamation and closure are at the heart of this report. It is our prayer that *every* congregation develops a truly biblical and comprehensive view of mission and discerns from God the way forward in realising its mission; that our people will give generously and sacrificially so that financial resources will not be a problem; and that increasing numbers of men and women, younger and older, will offer themselves for ministry and service so that personnel resources will be readily available.

43. Nevertheless, it is equally true that sometimes hard questions need to be asked. We hope if reorganisation is necessary in a given context that this will happen as a result of growth and a prayerful reallocation of plentiful resources, rather than out of necessity because of a slow and lingering death.

44. The words of the final section of the 2006 report are still pertinent and we want to use them also as our conclusion: "We are convinced that we are not asking congregations or presbyteries to do anything outside or beyond their fundamental Divine vocation... We must put mission at the centre of our denomination's life, embed it within our church's structures, encouraging and resourcing every viable congregation to engage vigorously in mission and asking serious questions of (and ultimately denying resources to) those congregations who limit themselves to the felt-needs and comfort zones of those already within."

APPENDIX B

Mission Strategy Plans at Presbytery and Congregational Levels

Rationale

1. Presbytery strategy plans will have to be finalised prior to those of individual congregations so that the latter can be compared with, and, if necessary, adjusted in the light of, the former.

2. Presbytery strategy plans will have to be based on and informed by outline information from congregations, otherwise they risk being detached from reality.

Process of Implementation

3. On the basis of the outline information received from congregations (see Appendix C) a presbytery mission strategy plan is devised and approved.

4. Individual congregations are informed of the presbytery's strategy for mission and are invited to draw up their own detailed time-related plan with reference to that of presbytery (see General Assembly Reports 2006 Appendix C, pp.162-166 for step-by-step guidance to congregations).

5. Congregational plans are submitted for presbytery's comment and approval, beyond which - perhaps through the revamped 'Consultation' process - presbytery offers ongoing guidance, encouragement and accountability.

6. Mission plans at both presbytery and congregational levels should be reviewed annually and radically reassessed at least every five years.

Timeline for Initial Implementation

7. June 2007: proposals put to General Assembly.

8. September 2007 – June 2008: identification and training of facilitators at presbytery level, (2-3 per presbytery or as required); outline information sought and received from congregations.

9. September 2008 – March 2009: Presbytery mission strategy plans devised and agreed.

10. March 2009: Copies of presbytery plans to be given to Board of Mission in Ireland for comment and transmission to the Union Commission.

11. September 2009 – March 2010: Congregational time-related mission plans devised and submitted to presbytery for amendment and approval.

APPENDIX C**Sample Outline Information Sheet for Presbyteries to send to Congregations**

Name of Congregation _____

TRENDS

1. Approximate size of Sunday morning congregation _____

2. Approximate size of Sunday morning congregation 10 years ago _____

3. Percentage (approximately) of worshipping congregation:

Under 15	_____
15 – 29	_____
30 – 49	_____
50 – 70	_____
Over 70	_____

CONTEXT

4. Is the population of your general parish area *Growing? Static? Declining?*

5. What trends are noticeable in the age profile of the area *Older? Static? Younger?*

6. How would you describe the typical person moving in to your area?
7. What other churches within a five mile radius have you been able to share in mission with in recent years?
8. How many new active members has your congregation attracted in the last 10 years?

OUTREACH

9. Give an example of up to three initiatives in mission, service or bridge-building your church has undertaken in the past 5 years
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)
10. Summarise the challenges you feel your church faces over the coming five years.
11. Summarise your hope and vision for the role you believe your church can play in bringing in the Kingdom of God in your area over the next five years.

APPENDIX D

HOME MISSION MINISTERS

Rev GD Allen	Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge, Newtownbutler
Rev CFD Clements	Irvinestown, Pettigo & Tempo
Rev JG Faris	Cork & Aghada
Rev CJ Gamble	Athy & Naas
Rev TD Hagan	Carndonagh & Malin
Rev WJ Hayes	Tullamore & Mountmellick
Rev J Lamont	Carrigart & Dunfanaghy
Rev SJ Lockington	Corboy & Mullingar
Rev Dr. DK McCrory	Associate Lucan (Maynooth)
Rev PG McDowell	Limerick
Rev GJ Mackarel	Drumkeeran, Killeshandra, Cavan, Bellasis
Rev S Mawhinney	Fermoy & Cahir (Stated Supply)
Re. Dr. JG Millar	Howth & Malahide
Rev GA Mitchell	Sligo & Boyle
Rev DT Moore	Kilkenny
V Rev Dr TW J Morrow	Lucan
Rev SJ Richmond	Donegall & Ballyshannon
Rev RB Savage	Kells & Ervey
Rev SW Rea	Enniscorthy & Wexford
Re. J Rushton	Carlow
Rev DJ Woodside	Drogheda
Rev GP Young	Moville & Greenbank

Rev B Savage	Kells & Ervey
Rev J Coulter	Ballysally
Rev IK McDonald	New Mossley
Rev R Love	Taughmonagh (Church Extension)

DEACONESSES

Jenny Clegg	Ballycrochan, Bangor
Amanda Cooper	New Row, Coleraine
Muriel Cromie	Belfast City Hospital
Doreen Draffin	Whitehouse
Eleanor Drysdale	Wellington Street, Ballymena
Lynda Gibson	NI Prison Service {Social Witness Board}
Jean Gwyn	Royal Victoria Hospital
Sharon Heron	Strand
Roberta Irvine	First Comber
Christine Kyle	Ulster Hospital
Phyllis Linton	West Church Ballymena
Michelle McCauley	Ballygowan
Heather McCracken	Alexandra
Sadie McCullough	Whiteabbey
Carol McRoberts	Tullycarnet
Gillian Martin	Woodvale
Elizabeth Matthews	Hill Street, Lurgan
Carol O'Hara	Antrim Area Hospital & Musgrave Park Hospital
Jackie O'Neill	Joymount, Carrickfergus
Julie Peake	Portrush
Margaret Robertson	Gardenmore, Larne
Jenny Robinson	South Belfast Friendship House
Pat Shirley	Greystone Road, Antrim
Kathleen Spence	Leave of absence to serve on OM Logos 2
Sheila Sutter	First Antrim
Evelyn White	First Lisburn

Probationary Deaconess

Sonya McCullough	Abbey, Monkstown
------------------	------------------

Deaconesses in Training

First Year	Rosemary Spiers
	Liz Warnock

IRISH MISSION WORKERS

David Boyd	Adelaide Road, Dublin
Tom Dowling	Kilkenny
Eamon Doyle	Studying at Union Theological College & Drogheda
Kevin Hargaden	Maynooth
Jim Laverty	Letterkenny

Peter Maitland	Cahir
Harry Moreland	Cork and Fermoy
Billy Patterson	Drogheda
Keith Preston	Tyrone Presbytery
Jonathan Reid	Glens of Antrim, Newtowncromlin
Stephen Wilson	Mullingar
William Workman	Athy and Naas
Philip Whelton	Arklow

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Towards “Vibrant Communities of Christ ...”

2. That the General Assembly accept in principle the structure and timetable set out in Appendices A-C.
3. That the General Assembly ask each Presbytery, as per Appendix B, to agree a mission strategy plan, based on the outline information submitted by its congregations/charges, and to give this to the Board of Mission in Ireland for comment and transmission to the Union Commission by March 2009.
4. That the General Assembly encourage each congregation or charge to submit a time-related mission strategy plan to Presbytery by March 2010, for its comment and approval.
5. That the General Assembly ask the Union Commission to note paragraphs 36-44 of the Report, Towards “Vibrant Communities of Christ...” (Appendix A), and to consider both a Congregation’s vision and commitment to mission, and a Presbytery’s overall mission strategy, when reaching decisions on subjects such as Leave to Call, Unions, Amalgamations and Dissolutions.

Secretary to the Board

6. That the General Assembly welcome the appointment of _____ as Secretary to the Board of Mission in Ireland and commend him to the prayers of the wider church.

Nightlight

7. That the General Assembly commend the expanding work of Nightlight under its Director, Mr John Luke, and its Executive Committee, and encourage volunteers to offer themselves for service.

Urban Mission

9. That the General Assembly appoint an Urban Mission Committee, under the Board of Mission in Ireland, and authorise the said Board to approve its remit.

Presbyterian Mutual Society

10. That the General Assembly congratulate the Directors of the Presbyterian Mutual Society on its continuing success and encourage congregations and individuals to avail themselves of its services.

11. 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 4th day of June 2007.

The Memorial of the Kirk Session of Grange Presbyterian Church Respectfully Showeth:

That prior to 1922 Craigmore was attached to the Presbytery of Ireland of the United Free Church of Scotland as a "Station".

That in 1922 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland resolved: "That the members of the United Free Church at Craigmore Station be and are hereby received as members of this Church ..."

That a Judgement delivered by The Honourable Mr Justice Gibson in the High Court of Northern Ireland, Chancery Division (1970 No 268) confirmed that "Craigmore is under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland exercised through the Presbytery of Ballymena."

That in 1971 the Union Commission agreed: "that ... the Home Mission be asked for the explicit inclusion of Craigmore Mission Station in any list of stations under their care ..." and "... it was also recommended that Craigmore be explicitly recognised as a Home Mission station ..." attached to Grange Congregation.

That the fact that Craigmore Mission Station is not mentioned in the Directory of the General Assembly indicates that there is still perceived ambiguity concerning its status.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Assembly to include the name of Craigmore Mission Station with that of Grange Congregation in the Annual Directory of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and also to list it as a "Home Mission Station".

And Memorialists as in duty bound will ever pray.

Adopted by the Kirk Session of Grange at its meeting in Grange on 4th March, 2007.

DESMOND KNOWLES, Moderator
IAN JOHNSTON, Clerk

Licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena at its meeting in Ballymena on 6 March, 2007 and transmitted to the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

DAVID MURPHY, Moderator
JOSEPH J ANDREWS, Clerk

Licensed by the Commission of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine at its meeting in Ballymena on 13th March, 2007 and transmitted with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

JOHN M FINLAY, Moderator
JOSEPH J ANDREWS, Clerk

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Central President: Mrs MAUREEN WEIR
General Secretary: Mrs CAROLINE HAWTHORNE

Theme for the year: SERVANTS OF THE KING

(This report should be read in conjunction with the reports of the Board of Mission in Ireland and the Board of Mission Overseas).

1. The theme for this past year has been **Servants of the King**. Mrs Anthea Harrison challenged members at the Annual Meeting last year to be servants of the King where they are, in their everyday lives. Members were encouraged to step out of their 'comfort zone' in order to be effective ambassadors for Christ. Mrs Anthea Harrison shared three points relating to the Go, Do and Say part of the theme - to reach out, display sacrificial love and bring encouragement to others in order to build them up in their faith. This theme has challenged members to explore how, why and where we should serve the King of Kings. Col. 3:24 reads "...the ultimate master you're serving is Christ."

2. The PWA office continues to be staffed by Mrs Caroline Hawthorne, General Secretary; Miss Fiona Bingham, Senior Secretary and Miss Naomi Campbell, Receptionist/Secretary. Mrs Charlotte Stevenson has completed her first year as part-time Development Officer. PWA is very grateful for the staff team it has and records sincere thanks to them for their efforts over the past year.

3. Programme Planning Committee has been commended by our members for the production of the Programme Packs. Branches are offered this pack each year to help with their programme – it is full of useful ideas relating to the theme for the year. PWA records sincere thanks to Miss Elizabeth Smyth for convening this Committee and for the valuable contribution she and Committee members have made.

4. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2006/7

Office Bearers:

Central President:	Mrs Maureen Weir (Templepatrick)
Home Vice President:	Mrs Valerie Stewart (Donegal)
Overseas Vice President:	Mrs Joan Hanna (Foyle)
Treasurer:	Miss Zena McAllister (Down)

Committee Members:

Mrs Margaret Stevenson (Ards)	Mrs Violet Miller (Foyle)
Mrs Eileen Greenlee (Armagh)	Mrs Anne Harbinson (Iveagh)
Mrs Lynn Murray (Ballymena)	Mrs Nan Bradford (Monaghan)
Mrs Dorothy Marshall (North Belfast)	Mrs Jean Donald (Omagh)
Mrs Jean Clarke (South Belfast)	Mrs Barbara Thompson (Route)

Mrs Winnie Moffett (East Belfast)	Mrs Sandra Fleck (Tyrone)
Mrs Janice Paul (Carrickfergus)	Mrs Valerie Tweedie (YWG)
Miss Elizabeth Smyth (Coleraine)	Mrs Anthea Harrison (Ex Officio)
Mrs Sheila Fell (Derry/Strabane)	Mrs Hazel Clarke (Ex Officio)
Mrs Georgina Hunter (Donegal)	Mrs Charlotte Stevenson (Ex Officio)
Mrs Phyllis Spence (Dromore)	Mrs Caroline Hawthorne

5. New Members of Executive Committee 2007/8

Mrs Edna McIlwaine (Armagh)
 Mrs Glynis Hutchinson (Derry/Strabane)
 Mrs Ann Blue (Newry)

6. Office Bearers to be installed at Annual Meeting on 3 May, 2007

Central President: Mrs Joan Hanna (Foyle)
 Overseas Vice President: Mrs Dorothy Marshall (North Belfast)

7. The Executive Committee met eight times during the year. As well as carrying the responsibility of steering the work of the Association, the Executive Committee continues to provide representatives to several committees in PCI and various other organisations and bodies.

8. Mrs Winnie Moffett represents PWA at Women's Link.

9. Mrs Hilary Jess (former Executive Member) represents PWA at Women's Forum.

10. Mrs Maureen Weir has served as Central President 2006/7. During this year she has given generously of her time in attendance at meetings of Boards and Committees and has travelled extensively throughout Ireland to fulfil her many speaking engagements. She also travelled to Hungary and Romania from 15-23 October 2006. She visited the Hungarian Reformed Church in both Hungary and Romania. PWA would take this opportunity to thank her for her dedicated service during her period in office.

11. PWA Executive Committee continues to appreciate the support and advice given by the Clerk of the General Assembly, Rev Dr DJ Watts and the Acting Deputy Clerk and Executive Director of the Board of Mission in Ireland, Rev Prof WP Addley.

12. The Committee also records its thanks to Rev WS Marrs, Secretary to the Board of Mission Overseas, for his help and expertise.

Way Ahead

13. PWA is one of the largest women's organisations in Ireland with approximately 460 branches and a membership of 14,000. PWA is aware of the constant need for self-evaluation in today's changing society.

14. PWA has been encouraged by some of the changes made in the past year. Executive Committee devotes time for prayer and discussion as part of their monthly meeting. Changing the name of Presbyterian Committee to PWA LINK and encouraging LINKs to become more proactive in resourcing branches has had a positive impact.

15. A special conference held on 9 September 2006 in Church House was attended by over 800 women who met to be inspired in leading their PWA/YWG

forward. The day was based around the themes of serving God in the home, the work place, the church and the community. The conference delivered ideas that suggested how to make meetings more effective. Members were challenged that their aim should be to know Christ and be like Him.

16. PWA has worked hard at building closer links with YWG Central Committee. We were delighted when Mrs Caroline Hawthorne, PWA General Secretary, was invited to be the main speaker at the YWG roadshow events in November 2006. Mrs Phyllis Spence, Executive Member, and Mrs Caroline Hawthorne are both representatives on the YWG Central Committee.

17. Executive Committee and YWG Central Committee are focusing on the structure of the organisation and are considering a joint name and purpose. Proposals for a new name, purpose and logo were brought to General Committee in February 2007 and were also sent to PWA branches and YWG groups. We are in the process of gathering the responses and deciding on the best way forward. It is our aim to bring proposals to the General Assembly in 2008.

18. The Association continues to contribute much to the Church's Mission at Home and Overseas through encouragement, prayer and financial support. We give thanks to God for all that He has enabled us to do over the past year and pray for His guidance and direction for the future.

19. Events 2006/7

- The Annual Prayer Meeting was held on 6 April, 2006, in the Chapel, Church House. Prayers were led by Mrs Sandra Fleck.
- The Annual Meetings were held on 4 May, 2006, in the Assembly Hall. The speakers were Mr Derek & Mrs Linda Roulston and Mrs Anthea Harrison.
- Prior to Executive Committee in September 2006, Rev Derek Weir conducted a Communion Service.
- A Special Conference was held on 9 September, 2006, in Church House. The speakers were Mrs Heather Williamson, Mrs Charlotte Stevenson, Mrs Christine Finlay, Mrs Valerie Stewart, Miss Roberta Irvine and Miss Sonya McCullagh. Worship was led by Mr Graham Hawthorne from Woodlands Presbyterian Church.
- General Committee met on 1 February, 2007, in the Minor Hall, Church House.

South Belfast Friendship House

20. The South Belfast Friendship House Management Committee met on six occasions during the year.

21. The House continues to be a place of Christian Witness for this area of South Belfast.

22. PWA records grateful thanks to Mrs Eunice Moore and Mrs Menita Cheesman for their continued faithful service and commitment to the work of South Belfast Friendship House.

23. In 2006 Friendship House was added to the Church House maintenance contract.

24. PWA members give faithfully to the Christmas Appeal each year. This helps to buy gifts for some children in the Sandy Row area. In December 2006 approximately £800 was donated for this purpose.

25. Miss Lynne Ferguson, Assistant Chaplain of Derryvolgie Hall, and a group of volunteers have continued their involvement with the After Schools Club. The Committee appreciates all that they have given of their time and talents.

26. In 2006 a grant was received from Children in Need for £4,510. This will help to purchase much needed materials and new equipment. It will also fund the four week Summer Scheme that is being planned for August 2007.

27. At a meeting of the BMI/PWA Home Personnel Committee on 21 February 2007 it was reported that South Belfast Friendship House Management Committee had requested the services of a Deaconess to serve in Friendship House. A Call was issued to Mrs Jenny Robinson at the Board of Mission in Ireland Board meeting on 14 March 2007. Committee is delighted with this new appointment and wish Jenny God's blessing as she undertakes this new area of work.

28. A donation of £100,000 was given to the Board of Social Witness in 2006. This money is being used to extend the premises of Friendship House. Discussions have taken place with Mr Brian Knox, Architect, and plans are being drawn up. It is hoped that work will take place in 2008.

29. The PWA Birthday Thank Offering Home Project for 2006/7 will support the work at Friendship House.

30. PWA Executive Committee values the partnership with the Board of Social Witness and records its thanks to Mr Lindsay Conway, Director, for his support during the past year.

Finance

31. PWA gave a grant of £360,000 in 2007 to the Board of Mission in Ireland to support, in part, Deaconess Work and training.

32. PWA gave a grant of £210,000 in 2007 to the Board of Mission Overseas.

Birthday Thank Offering Fund

33. During 2006 Executive Committee decided that the Birthday Thank Offering should run from 1 May until 30 April in each ensuing year.

34. The total amount received for the 2005/6 Birthday Thank Offering was £53,666. £15,000 has been given to Sunnyside Residential House and the balance of £38,666 will be divided between the Women's Ministry at Zomba Theological College and supporting two Sudanese students for three years in Bible College in Nairobi and their families living in a refugee camp on the Sudan/Kenya border.

35. At the time of writing the Birthday Thank Offering (2006/7) for the "Proclamação" Project in Brazil and South Belfast Friendship House was approximately £13,000.

Bequests

36. PWA Executive Committee acknowledges with thanks the following bequests:

Miss Thelma W Mitchell	£51,039.99
Miss Margaret H Henry	£3,000.00

Wider World

37. PWA Executive Committee records sincere thanks to the Editor, Mrs Anthea Harrison, Mrs Valerie Stewart who compiles the children's page, the Editorial Committee and all who contributed to the magazine and its promotion.

38. In December 2006 changes were made to the administration of the magazine, including printing and distribution.

39. The magazine continues to carry a theme in each issue. Back-dated copies of each issue are available upon request from the PWA office.

40. A new Family Focus section has been created covering issues on grief, abuse, addictions, bullying, eating disorders, retirement and marriage etc.

41. Wider World maintains its readership of around 22,000. The Committee continues to promote Wider World amongst the members of our Church and would encourage more members to subscribe to this excellent magazine.

42. Selected extracts from Wider World continue to be available on audio tape for those who are blind or partially sighted.

YOUNG WOMEN'S GROUPS**43. Young Women's Groups Central Committee 2006/7****Office Bearers:**

Chairperson:	Mrs Valerie Tweedie (East Belfast)
Secretary:	Mrs Anna Morison (Ballymena)
Treasurer:	Mrs Deborah Hyland (Newry)
Newsletter Editor:	Mrs Sharon Shannon (Carrickfergus)

Committee Members:

Mrs Vera McLean (Carrickfergus)

Mrs Anne Mawdsley (Iveagh)

Mrs Liza Scott (Newry)

Mrs Phyllis Spence (PWA)

Mrs Caroline Hawthorne (PWA)

44. The 2006/7 theme, **Servants of the King**, was shared by YWG and PWA.

45. YWG held a Conference on Saturday, 6 May, 2006, in Stormont Presbyterian Church halls. The theme was "Wholeness", and speakers were Hilary Montgomery, Jill McKee and Sharyn McKay. Members were reminded that Jesus is the only One who can give life in all its fullness – based on John 10:10 '...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full'. Sharyn spoke of the struggles she faced when given the news that she had a malignant

tumour and told of how she was healed. A cheque for £10,000 was handed over to provide much needed relief to the people of the Darfur region of Sudan. A cheque for £10,000 was also given towards the work at The Vine Centre in North Belfast.

46. The 2006/7 Overseas Project is Aksza Mission in Cluj, Romania, providing kitchen equipment for a 'halfway house' for young adults as they make the move to independent living. The 2006/7 Home Project is to help provide a sun-room extension for residents and staff at Willow Brook, Coleraine.

47. The YWG newsletter was produced in September 2006 and January 2007 for all members. YWG Central Committee records sincere thanks to the Editor, Sharon Shannon, for the valuable contribution she has made.

48. Some members of YWG attended the PWA Conference on Saturday, 9 September, 2006 in Church House. Members were given fresh ideas on leading their women's group and on serving God at home, at work, at church and in the community.

49. Over the past year YWG has continued to embrace the Way Ahead, building closer links with PWA. Central Committee have appreciated and benefited greatly from the PWA representatives, Caroline Hawthorne and Phyllis Spence, who serve on this Committee. YWG Central Committee and PWA Executive Committee are focusing on the structure of the organisation and are considering a joint name and purpose. Proposals for a new name, purpose and logo were sent to all YWG groups and we are in the process of collating the responses and deciding on the best way forward.

50. YWG Central Committee held roadshow events in Newcastle and Coleraine in November 2006. The theme was 'Forward in Strength and Unity' and the speaker was Caroline Hawthorne, PWA General Secretary. We continue to pray that YWG and PWA can move 'Forward in Strength and Unity' together.

51. YWG held a "Women Together" conference on Saturday, 24 March, 2007 based on the theme 'God is closer than you think'. Lynne Livingstone was the speaker at the morning session. The afternoon took the form of a fun-filled craft session which was led by Deborah Hyland, a member of Central Committee. This day challenged and encouraged women to listen to God and themselves. It also gave members an opportunity to get together with those from other YWG Groups.

RESOLUTION

1. That the report be received.

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 308(5) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 308(5) of the Code the words, "**Presbyterial Committees:** There shall be in each Presbytery a PWA Committee known as the Presbyterial Committee" be deleted

and the words "**PWA LINK (Living, Inspiring and Nurturing for the Kingdom)**": There shall be in each Presbytery a PWA LINK" substituted in their place.

DONALD J WATTS

BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev R VALLELY

Secretary: Mr L CONWAY, OBE

1. **AMAZING GRACE:** In 'The Message' Ephesians 2:5 is paraphrased as, "But God, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, He embraces us". As the Board continues to demonstrate God's love to individuals, we give thanks for the knowledge that the witness is His mandate for His people and that He embraces us with His grace enabling us to be effective in our witness.

2. We live in a world of great change and a society which presents many challenging issues and individuals. The Christian voice needs to be demonstrated as well as spoken. The Board appreciates the opportunity to demonstrate Christian standards and values as we meet with people in the public sector who help us finance our work and provide a high standard of care for individuals. We are thankful for the 'But God' in many situations as we experience His embracing grace in the area of social witness.

3. When we explore the history of social work we find that it was a major social crisis in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that led to the creation of social work as an institution and profession. The welfare model was an alternative to a medical approach, that if they could not diagnose it, they could not treat it - in a society that only considered problem people and children and seldom people or children with problems. The major social problems of poverty, overcrowding, poor housing, ill-health, disease, alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution and child labour were common place in most towns and collectively known as the dangerous classes!

4. All this resulted in the social conscience being awakened. Trade unions were formed to fight for better conditions in the work place and better wages and the main church denominations founded their societies and philanthropic groups were working on the margins. Thus the voluntary sector was formed.

5. Those early services which catered for the most basic of human needs in a caring and sympathetic manner made an impact on communities, on the world of Oliver Twist, of Mr Bumble and a corrupt society of the haves and have-nots! The Churches played such a significant role in this whole area, with many of the job titles and functions being borrowed from religious life:

- Police Court Missionaries – forerunners of the Probation Service.
- Rescue Societies – set to “save women and children from prostitution and exploitation”.
- Housing Associations – providing housing, training, household management and child care.
- University Settlement Workers – students living in deprived communities with many going on to be clergy and welfare workers.

- Children's Charities – responding to many needs and many remaining in operation to-day.
- Almoners – bringing a social perspective to medical problems.
- Caseworkers – many employed by relief organisations.
- Visitors – employed by the main denominations, visiting hospitals, poorhouses and workhouses.

6. 2007 is the 200th Anniversary of the abolition of slavery. Although William Wilberforce became an MP at the age of 21, he was not converted until he was 26. He then committed his life and work to the service of God and immediately thought of leaving politics. John Newton, the evangelist and hymn writer, had to persuade him to stay in politics and influence the legislation going through parliament. In 1787 Wilberforce was introduced to the anti-slavery lobby and became leader of the parliamentary campaign of the "Committee for the Abolition of Slave Trade". For twenty years he was driven by his desire to serve God and his love for his fellow man. Together with other campaigners such as Pitt, Fox and Clarkson, he fought tirelessly to abolish this inhuman, cruel, degrading practice. He eventually succeeded, his bill being carried by 283 votes to 16, with the "Slave Trade Act" receiving Royal Assent on 25 March 1807. This legislation was a significant turning point in the whole area of social reform', the Christian Faith standing up for an important principal of being dedicated and constructively stubborn for twenty years and of bouncing back on defeat and winning the fight in the name of a loving, faithful God. The very core and fabric of our societies continue to be attacked, our influence is perhaps reduced but there is a sense that society expects the Church to comment and have an opinion on critical issues. Our role as "social monitors" has to be Gospel based and not selective, and has to be delivered with grace and in humility.

7. There is a parallel story that runs alongside this, that of a social Gospel and the spread of good works by the Christian Church. This should not imply that it is casual or simply for added value. It should be fundamental to the life and work of our Church. The Home Office in their report *Working Together Co-operation Between Government and Faith Communities* states, "The Christian Churches have had an immense historic influence in shaping society and making significant contributions in a wide range of areas such as community development, education, social inclusion and heritage. For these reasons, the Churches have made and continue to make particular and distinctive contributions to the development and implementation of Government policy in certain areas." Churches Community Work Alliance and Department of Social Development in their report *Acting in Good Faith* states, "Jesus' option for the poor and powerless teaches respect and value for those who are usually marginalised and excluded from society. Daily experiences remind us that some people are forced to the margins by increasing change, and decisions about the lives of other people. Thus, a distinctive role for church-related community development is to strive for a more appropriate balance and a less divisive society."

8. Our work with the deaf community will celebrate its 150th Anniversary this year, our oldest piece of work. Our newest piece of work is our work focusing on the family. This partnership with Care for the Family and The Presbyterian Orphan and Children's Society will focus on the family as an

essential unit, both within the Church and in our local communities. To paraphrase what a leading theologian said recently, “Is it not time that the Church stopped doing social work and being entertainers? Our job is to save souls.” Jesus did not have a one-dimensional ministry. He taught us to be caring, understanding and compassionate in all that we do. Matthew summarises in this way:

- I was hungry and you fed me.
- I was thirsty and you gave me a drink.
- I was homeless and you gave me a room.
- I was shivering and you gave me clothes.
- I was sick and you stopped to visit.
- I was in prison and you came in. (The Message)

9. We are being truly blessed as a Board, encouraged by the work we do and continuing to be challenged by new issues. The danger is always taking on too much and becoming over-stretched. Two hundred years ago a small group of Christians turned the attitude of Parliament in relation to the slave trade. We have a responsibility to challenge, to question and above all to fully participate in the debate, even when it means coming out of our comfort zone. John Newton, who was instrumental in keeping William Wilberforce in parliament, went on to write the following:

*“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.”*

It is with grace that we approach our day-to-day witnessing; it is with grace that we meet people and their problems; and it is with grace that we take people as they are.

10. **BOARD RE-ORGANISATION:** The re-organisation of our Board is now complete with one minor change being recommended, that of moving Addiction Services from Specialist Ministries to Adult Services. Student Services has now been transferred to Specialist Ministries, which will now permit us to complete our Strategic and Business Planning processes.

11. The **SOFA** (Specialist Ministries, Older People Services, Family Services and Adult Services) are well established and meeting on a regular basis. The Business Committee now manages the everyday business of the Board. The scope of our work is becoming wider as we respond to the diverse needs of the Church.

12. NEW DEVELOPMENTS

- As a Board we are continuing to work with the Presbytery of Monaghan in connection with residential care.
- The Taking Care Office is now established and is responding to the wide issue of Child Protection.
- We are proposing that all Ministers are POCVA checked on a regular basis.
- Our staff review is ongoing – shaping our team for the future.
- We are placing community development on the agenda of the Board.

13. At the same time we have to be realistic; we are in a sector that is heavily regulated, inspected and monitored. We are a resource rich service, staff intensive and ever demanding of staff at all levels.

14. **THANKS:** The Board is indebted to its various Conveners and Committee/Panel members who give time to oversee the work. Our staff work at the 'coal face' of human problems and issues, and we appreciate the Christian love which they demonstrate in the units and other areas of the work. The administrators in Church House and in the Units are a special team who hold the work together. We welcome Deborah Webster as the new Taking Care Co-ordinator and Julie Sykes to oversee the office administration in Church House. The Board continues to thank our Director, Mr Lindsay Conway, for the breadth of knowledge he brings to the work and the grace with which he exercises his role. Mrs Linda Wray, Residential Services Manager, carries a busy workload with enthusiasm. We are well served by the various departments and personnel within Church House.

15. The work of the Board is dependent on funding from many bodies and agencies. Thanks are extended to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Health and Social Service Boards and Trusts; Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. The United Appeal Board of our Church continues to support the work of our Board. The Orphan and Children's Society continues to support and fund the Taking Care Programme.

16. **CONVENER:** Thanks are expressed to Rev Tom Wilson as he resigns from the Adult Services Committee. Our new Committee structure begins to be more stable and Tom's quiet personality and social sector background have helped us within Adult Services and on the Business Committee.

17. **FUNDING:**

Total income for the year 2006 was derived from the following sources:

Income from services	£4,987,000
United Appeal	203,000
Donations and Bequests	319,000
Grants	59,000
Other	<u>249,000</u>
Total Income	<u>5,817,000</u>

Total expenditure for the year 2006 was as shown below:

Older People	£4,217,000
Addiction and Education Services	497,000
Ex-Prisoners	290,000
Student Accommodation	304,000
Unemployed People	3,000
Deaf People	91,000
Learning Disabled	151,000
Relationship Counselling	21,000
Publications	2,000
Chaplains	18,000
Management Costs	<u>230,000</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>5,824,000</u>

SPECIALIST MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

1. We give thanks to God for His rich blessings on the work of the Specialist Ministries Committee. We ask the Church for continued prayer for our ministry to people through Addiction Services, Chaplains in Hospitals, in Prisons and in the Forces, in the Kinghan Church and among Students.

2. We record our congratulations to two of our Forces Chaplains who have received special recognition during the past year.

3. During the past year the Committee took responsibility for Student Services. We welcome the Rev Dr Robert Buick as Convener.

4. We congratulate members and the Ministry Team at the Kinghan Church as they celebrate the 150th Anniversary of our Church's Mission to the Deaf and Hearing-impaired. We welcome Rev Maynard Cathcart as Convener of the Kinghan Mission Committee.

Rev James Gordon reports:

CHAPLAINS

1. The Chaplains' Panel continues to have responsibility, along with Presbyteries, for the oversight of our chaplaincy provision in hospitals, hospices and prisons. The work undertaken is of immense importance, meeting and caring for people at a particular point of need in their lives.

2. A further successful conference was held for our Chaplains in May, 2006. The special Speaker was Dr Marion Gibson and her subject was, "Order from Chaos". The purpose of the bi-annual conferences (the first being in May 2004) is to provide an opportunity for fellowship for those engaged in what can often be stressful work, and a place where they can compare their experiences in chaplaincy provision.

3. These are days of overall fundamental change in the structures of both the Health and Prison Services and these changes will certainly affect our chaplaincy provision (together with that of other denominations). Under 'Agenda for Change' the number of Hospital Trusts will, at the time of writing, soon be reduced to five in number. Negotiations are continuing with regard to the nature of chaplaincy provision in the future and the process of nomination and appointment. Similarly, in a changing political situation, a wide-ranging review of the Northern Ireland prison chaplaincy provision is already underway. Once again, discussions are ongoing.

4. Towards the end of 2006, and as a new venture, a detailed pro-forma was sent to all Chaplains in order that they might have the opportunity to outline the services they provide, the way in which their work is regarded by fellow-professionals in their spheres of service and their hopes and concerns for the future. Returns were made by Chaplains through their respective Clerks of Presbyteries and the Panel were greatly encouraged by the response. Clearly the great majority of our Chaplains, both in hospitals and prisons, valued the opportunity to detail the nature of their work. The responses have been examined carefully by the Panel. Naturally, in some situations there is deep concern about the future of some of our smaller hospitals. In one or two

instances there was also concern expressed as to whether their work is sufficiently valued but, on the other hand, in the majority of cases there was recognition that they are seen as being an important part of the 'caring team'. It is intended that a summary of the responses be drawn up by the Board and made available to Clerks of Presbyteries, in the recognition that the pastoral oversight of all our chaplains, whether in the area of health provision or in the prison service, is of fundamental importance in the life and work of our church.

5. Unfortunately the chaplaincy vacancy in Maghaberry has not yet been filled. However, one of our Deaconesses, Mrs Lynda Gibson, has accepted a temporary secondment with the Social Witness Board to serve as Deaconess in the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

6. Mrs Carol O'Hara has been appointed to serve as a Deaconess working in the Antrim Area and Musgrave Park Hospitals.

7. The Rev Marlene Taylor has taken up an appointment as Chaplain in the Marie Curie Centre.

8. The work of our Chaplains in hospitals, hospices and prisons is of vital importance and should be seen as central to the ministry of our denomination. They are commended to the prayers of the whole Church.

Rev Purvis Campbell reports:

FORCES

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. This is important as the Armed Forces are under increasing pressure of deployments to hostile environments.

2. Congratulations are due to two of our Forces Chaplains who have received special recognition during the past year. The Rev Principal Patton Taylor, Chaplain in the Territorial Army, received the MBE (Military Division). The Rev Joseph Andrews, Chaplain in the Air Training Corps, received The Lord Lieutenant's Certificate for Meritorious Voluntary Service.

3. The following ministers of the PCI are serving as regular Chaplains:

- Rev David Edgar (Royal Air Force)
- Rev Jonny Wylie (Royal Air Force)
- Rev Norman McDowell (Army)
- Rev Philip Patterson (Army)
- Rev Dr Paul Swinn (Army)
- Rev Stephan van Os (Army)
- Rev Mark Henderson (Army)

The TA Chaplains and Officiating Chaplains are as follows:

- Rev Prof Patton Taylor
- Rev David Latimer
- Rev Joseph Andrews
- Rev Derek Weir
- Rev Kenneth Crowe

4. We are grateful to those organisations which 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.

5. 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.

Rev Simon Henning reports:

KINGHAN MISSION

1. The work of the Kinghan Church has been ongoing since its inception by Rev John Kinghan in 1857. This year Kinghan celebrates its 150th anniversary. Much is to be celebrated, especially the work of its former Minister, Rev Dr George Grindle, whose dedication and influence continues to be felt even today, some four years after his retirement from the Kinghan Church. The present Minister, Rev Simon Henning, is seeking to build on Dr Grindle's work, and with the able assistance of Mrs Anne Rodgers continues to provide Spiritual support to those Deaf people who need it. The Deaf Community is unique and while there are many positive points there are some negative aspects too. Even with this we continue to treat all Deaf people as children of God.

2. As with many churches, Kinghan has few younger people attending. While this is a problem affecting many congregations within PCI it is more obvious in a small one like Kinghan. What the future holds is beyond our knowing, but we pray for God's guidance that we might bring glory to Him.

Mrs Wenda Bristow reports:

ADDICTION SERVICES

1. The Committee in its new form continues to keep the issue of addiction on the agenda of the General Assembly.

2. Together with Hope UK we plan to introduce a new training programme and information material.

3. ICAP, the Inter-Churches Addiction Project, was launched in June 2006. This major initiative aims to keep addiction on the agenda of the four main Churches. It has a particular concern with regard to young people and the need to provide a Centre for young people.

4. The Committee made a response to the new Draft Licensing Order as follows:

- The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, through its Board of Social Witness, Addiction Services Committee, responded in full to the consultation phase of "The Way Forward". In our response to the consultation we outlined our track record to date in the whole area of temperance, instruction and education related to the alcohol

misuse. We again welcome this opportunity to comment on the Draft Order.

- The impact of alcohol misuse is well documented by not just the Churches during this debate and review period. The Churches found allies in the Health and Social Service professionals, many of whom see the carnage in the Accident and Emergency Units, and in the Police who are on the scene of road accidents and see at first hand the result of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse. Sections of the Licence Trade lobbied us with regard to their own objections.
- Young People continue to be the target of the attractive advertising campaigns. Recent research is frightening to the extent that many have become alcohol dependent, many being introduced to alcohol at the age of 11 or 12. The most disturbing factor is that the drinking patterns of young females have caught up with those of their male contemporaries.
- We note that England and Wales are already amending their more relaxed approach to licensing laws, since major problems have developed in such a short period of time. There are inconsistencies in government policy – more and more regulations controlling the amount of salt, fat and fibre in food for example, yet the availability of a “drug” is extended and, in some ways, encouraged.
- Our Church regrets that the changes are justified as having a beneficial effect on the “evening and night-time economy in Northern Ireland”. All benefits will submerge with the impact on Health, Police, Fire and Rescue Services and the physical and emotional damage to individuals, their families and wider communities.
- We welcome the revision of the original proposal of “24 hour opening” and thank the Review Team for recognising the issues.
- The limited extension in time will still impact on individuals, families and communities. More drinking time will simply equate with spending more money. It will do little to –
 - ◆ Prevent crime and disorder
 - ◆ Prevent public nuisance
 - ◆ Promote public safety
 - ◆ Promote public health
 - ◆ Protect children from harm
- Public transport must be developed to cater for the later opening hours – later buses, trains and taxis must be available. If this is not addressed there will be greater temptation to use cars, thus increasing the danger of “drink driving.”
- The Emergency Services will be further stretched by longer opening hours. Family life for those problem drinkers will become more unbearable and prolonged. There will be more stress on local services such as street cleaning, and communities disrupted with revellers returning home.

- The Presbyterian Church in Ireland simply requests that our comments are taken into consideration.

Rev Dr Robert Buick reports:

STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE (incorporating War Memorial Hostel Committee)

University Chaplains' Reports

Queen's University

Rev Steve Stockman reports:

1. We commend the work of Chaplain Steve Stockman and his Assistant Chaplain Lynne Ferguson as well as Carol McMahon (administrator) and the interns Alastair Freeburn and TJ McKillop.

2. Last summer saw 67 students plus staff building 12 houses in Cape Town as well as studying reconciliation, fair Trade and HIV Aids. There was also football and netball played against boys and girls on the townships.

This year has been as busy as ever with a full week's programming in both Derryvolgie and the Chaplaincy Centre – social, recreational, sporting and spiritual events are all built around the Bible Study on Sunday nights and Quiet Service on Wednesdays. Students are also involved in various outreach projects including Mornington on the Lower Ormeau Road and Friendship House on Sandy Row.

3. Queen's dropped Derryvolgie Hall from their application form which has caused us to have to do an Open Day. Numbers of applicants have not been affected.

University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus

Rev John Coulter reports:

1. Work in the chaplaincy at Coleraine continues to be varied and interesting. I represent the Presbyterian Chaplaincy at formal occasions in the life of the University such as Graduations and the University Court. However most of the work revolves around providing pastoral support to students and staff from a variety of backgrounds with a wide range of different needs and concerns.

2. As part-time Chaplain at Coleraine I spend one day per week (Wednesday) on campus in the Chaplaincy Office. We have a 'drop-in' approach for students and staff which makes for a steady stream of 'regulars' and occasional and one-off callers. An appointments system offers a more structured facility and a number of people make use of that.

3. I have been meeting with a small number of students for Bible study and prayer despite the challenge of constantly changing timetables. Equally useful is the opportunity to spend time with people chatting about spiritual issues and everyday life over a cup of tea or at lunch.

4. I have had the opportunity to speak at CU this year which I greatly appreciated and to support and encourage some of the CU members in their various roles in CU. We have also continued the joint service project between the CU and my own congregation in Ballysally. About twelve 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.

University of Ulster, Magee Campus

Rev Joe McCormick reports:

1. Chaplaincy services continue to be made available to students and Staff on the Magee Campus. Co-operation between the Chaplains, the University Music Department, the Students' and Christian Union and local residents has resulted in successful carol services in the community and on campus. Magee anticipates considerable expansion in the near future and it is important that this is monitored from the chaplaincy point of view.

Trinity College, Dublin

Rev Katherine Meyer reports:

1. The Trinity College Chaplaincy seeks to bear witness to the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the public square which is the University of Dublin, and to do so in ways which are nourished both by a living biblical tradition and by a warm, responsive engagement with the community which surrounds us. It is an honour to serve in this ministry on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland.

2. Our work frequently enables us to engage in fruitful collaboration with other groups in College to the mutual benefit of both. During Holy Week, for example, a project undertaken with the School of Drama resulted in a series of outdoor theatre pieces which explored some of the themes of the passion narratives. An exhibition of paintings by a Sri Lankan artist, whose work focuses on the theme of displacement, was held in the College Chapel, and provided an opportunity for theological reflection on responses to the 2004 tsunami. And on the last night of Passover, with our encouragement, the Jewish Student Society hosted a teaching Seder which brought large numbers of Christian, Muslim and Jewish students together for a meal.

3. Our own programme continues to be grounded in the work of both hospitality and contemporary Christian witness. Muslim and Christian leaders from Egypt were welcomed by students and others to a reception and question and answer session in the College Chapel in January. Informal evening gatherings included animated contributions from students on their summer work in China (with the YMCA) and in Uganda (with Sli Eile), along with reflections from a staff member on his vocational journey from journalism to Christian youth work to counselling psychology and peer support network training. And we marked the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2006 with a Saturday

morning urban pilgrimage to the Marginal Spaces of Dublin which was fully subscribed.

4. Our preacher at the Trinity Monday service in May was Dr Alison Elliot, the first woman to be elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and the recipient of an honorary degree from Trinity College in 2004.

5. I was delighted to be invited to preach at the installation of the URC Senior Chaplain for London in January. I was also invited back to the Church of Ireland Theological College in March to preach at the Wednesday Eucharist and to join the community for dinner.

6. A total of seven students took part in the student Bereavement Support Group in April/May, but I received 24 enquiries in total, and many of these involved e-mail and personal follow-up and/or referral of students who decided not to join the group. In addition to processing about 50 wedding applications on behalf of the Chapel Committee each year, the Chaplains receive at least 100 separate wedding enquiries, many of which involve lengthy consultations with the chaplains, even when the marriage service ultimately does not take place in Trinity or involve any of us directly. Though I personally conduct only occasional weddings in the College Chapel, the consultations involved in the enquiry and application process are increasing, and are both time-consuming and deeply rewarding.

7. Once again, I am grateful to the General Assembly for your continuing support of my work and for your constant prayers on my behalf.

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)

Rev William McLaren reports:

1. In partnership with visiting clergy of other denominations the Chaplain is responsible for worship in College including Morning Prayer, the annual Christmas Carol Service, the Anatomy Department Memorial Service for those who have donated their bodies to the Medical School, Memorial Services for students and staff who have died and other occasional offices. By maintaining links with other Dublin ministers I aim to act as a bridge 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 very well attended and provides the opportunity for informal discussion between students of different disciplines and many nationalities. I make weekly visits to Beaumont Hospital, where a similar event is also very well attended and provides students in the clinical years with the opportunity to reflect on their experience in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. From time to time I visit the other teaching hospitals associated with the College and also students on our graduate entry programme who are based on a new campus at Sandyford.

3. I am president of the RCSI Film Society and other clubs and societies as varied as the GAA, the Music Society and the Christian Union. The clubs continue to welcome the interest of the Chaplain. I sit on the RCSI Student Affairs Committee and the Student Progress Committee as well as the Cultural

Affairs Committee. A new initiative this year was “Walk and Talk”, a walking tour of Dublin for new students, introducing them to the historic sites of the city and other places of interest.

4. I represent the Presbyterian Church on the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) and represent the Third Level Chaplains Network (CN3) on the Churches Commission on International Students (CCIS). I am a lay member of the Beaumont Hospital (Research) Ethics Committee.

5. It continues to be a great joy and a real privilege to minister in Third Level Education, especially in an institution as diverse as RCSI and I thank colleagues throughout the Church and, in particular, my fellow Chaplains for their prayerful support.

ZOE VALLELY, Convener

OLDER PEOPLE SERVICES COMMITTEE

1. The Scriptures teach us in Leviticus 19:32 to, “*Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD.*” We give thanks to the Lord that He has been pleased to bless this work of our Church amongst the elderly members of society and we acknowledge that what we do is done in reverence for Him and out of respect for those of older years.

2. The primary focus of our work is the provision of a high standard of residential, nursing and sheltered housing accommodation with a strong spiritual emphasis for elderly members of our own Church and other denominations. However, under our broadened remit we are also beginning to get involved in issues that are crucial to the welfare of the older members of society.

3. The work is continually blessed with a dedicated staff in each of our units that represents the daily face of OPS to residents and their families. They are a greatly valued asset and tribute is paid to their professional and caring attitude as they meet all the needs of those given into their charge.

4. The Committee’s work is administered in the Board office in Church House and our staff there, under the Residential Services Manager, Mrs Linda Wray, is also efficient in the manner in which it provides a central structure of management for all of our units. In addition, they perform a pastoral role in the homes with a genuine interest and concern for residents and staff; we are indeed indebted to them.

5. Under the new structures of the Board the former House Management Committees were regenerated under the title of Local Support Committees and given a revised and upgraded role. This has proved to be a positive development with members integrating very well into the overall operation of the homes. These Committees are an important element of Older People Service work and we welcome and acknowledge the very positive contribution made both collectively and by individual members.

6. Homes are being encouraged to form a “Friends” group for the purpose of further supporting the work of the home, principally through the raising of additional comfort funding for residents. This initiative is to be commended and is much appreciated by the Committee.

7. A scheme of registration of all care staff is underway and has been completed for our units in the Eastern Health and Social Services Board area. It will eventually be undertaken in other Board areas and will add to the professional approach of the work.

8. The financial situation continues to cause us concern. The 2006 accounts returned a smaller operating deficit than in the previous year however it is still alarmingly high. One particular drain on our resources is the cost of staff sickness but, on a more positive note, a larger than normal increase in rates paid by hospital trusts for residential and nursing care and increasing levels of occupancy will, we trust, assist us to further improve our position in 2007. The position of our revenue account is a challenge to us as a Committee and to the staff and we will continue to investigate means of reducing the serious shortfall.

9. We are acutely aware of the need to replace some of our older buildings and the desire to extend and improve others. We are also conscious of possibilities for developing the work into Larne, Monaghan and Lucan and the Committee is constantly monitoring every opportunity for growth whilst mindful of the current financial climate.

JA NOBLE, Convener

Rev W P H Erskine reports:

OLD AGE FUND, WOMEN'S FUND AND INDIGENT LADIES' FUND

1. The Directors report that, during the last financial year which ended 31 December 2006, 98 beneficiaries (32 in the Old Age Fund, 47 in the Women's Fund and 19 in the Indigent Ladies' Fund) received grants.

2. The changes in beneficiaries during the year are as follows:

Beneficiaries Receiving Quarterly Grant	Old Age Fund	Presbyterian Women's	Indigent Ladies Fund	TOTAL
At 1 January 2006	28	42	15	85
New Grants Provided	4	4	3	11
Deaths	(5)	(3)	-	(8)
Grants no longer required	(2)	-	-	(2)
	-----	-----	-----	-----
As at 31 December 2006	25	43	18	86
Beneficiaries receiving one-off donations	-	1	1	2
Deaths and Grants no longer required (as above)	7	3	-	10
	-----	-----	-----	-----
No of Beneficiaries receiving assistance during the year	32	47	19	98
	-----	-----	-----	-----

3. The total distribution of the Funds in Grants, Donations and Gifts was £86,284 (£24,779 from the Old Age Fund, £44,470 from the Women's Fund and £17,035 from the Indigent Ladies' Fund).

4. An annual grant of £780, paid quarterly, was sent to Beneficiaries during the year (2005: £740).

5. A 'Special Gift' of £195 (2005: £185) 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.

FAMILY SERVICES COMMITTEE

1. The Family Services branch of SOFA continues to grow and develop. The Committees are now well established and dealing with the progress of each of their particular specialisms. We welcome Mrs Deborah Webster to her new post of Taking Care Co-ordinator and Mrs Jenny Robinson as the Deaconess in South Belfast Friendship House. We pray that God will enable Deborah and Jenny to settle into their respective roles and equip them for their day-to-day tasks.

2. The Taking Care Committee has a new Convener in Mr Ronnie Orr who brings to the job a wealth of knowledge and experience. We ask God's blessing on Ronnie as he fulfils this role. This Committee is constantly assessing how we as a Church can protect the needs of children and young people within our congregations. We are also aware of the vulnerabilities of leaders and want them to feel listened to and respected. The Committee has launched *We care 4 U* cards for young people and this will be accompanied by a leaders' guide. Pray for God's guidance in this essential, yet sensitive work and for all leaders as they endeavour to adhere to the guidelines set.

3. PCI Counselling continues to be in great demand and we thank Mrs Rosemary Simpson, Convener and Mrs Stephanie Windrum, Co-ordinator for their work and assure them of our prayers. The counselling team is made up of volunteer counsellors who serve God by providing this service to adults within our Church and outside. Thanks to them for their commitment, enabling people to make a difference in their own lives.

4. PCI Family Holiday continues to be a very popular week in the calendar for some families. Rev Stuart Finlay and his team ensure that everyone is catered for and adults and children of all abilities are included in the various events. Thanks to Stuart, Mavis Cunningham and the team for all their work in making this holiday such a success.

5. South Belfast Friendship House is entering an exciting phase with the kind and generous donation of £100,000, which will be put to good use in the extension of the premises. Jenny Robinson has responded to God's call to this area of South Belfast and is excited by the prospect of reaching out into the community of Sandy Row. Please pray for Jenny and the team as they assist in the planning of the extension and assess how best to progress the work in the area.

6. A panel is continuing to look at the area of infertility and childlessness and is considering the need for a Listening Service. A Pastoral Care Panel is focusing on the stresses in manse and how best to meet the needs of ministers, spouses and families. We would value your prayers for both these panels as we seek God's guidance for the way ahead.

7. A partnership has been established with Care For The Family and the Presbyterian Orphan and Children's Society with the focus on equipping church workers and volunteers with information that will assist them in their work with families in their congregations. A pilot of three seminars has taken place to date.

8. Finally, I would like to thank all conveners, committee and panel members for their commitment and contributions and the BSW staff for their helpfulness and hospitality throughout the year – it is much appreciated.

Mr Ronnie Orr reports:

TAKING CARE

1. The Taking Care Committee is keen to encourage every congregation to accept and operate the third edition of the guidelines as a matter of course. This involves all of us regarding Child Protection and Health and Safety as in the "best interests" of both children and leaders and volunteers. Many congregations have done this with commitment and have accessed training for their volunteers, adopted a Child Protection Policy and established their selection process.

2. It is not always easy to meet the demands such as appointing a Designated Person and undertaking the vetting procedures. Our staff are willing to advise and support congregations whenever possible. This has been made more available with the welcome addition of the Taking Care Co-ordinator, Deborah Webster, to Church House, a new post which has been partly funded by the Presbyterian Orphan and Children's Society. Apart from advice and consultation on specific issues, Deborah may be able to help congregations who are willing to co-operate and jointly appoint a Designated Person and access training together.

3. It is important for us to view "common sense" safety and child protection as not just a moral compunction, but a spiritual imperative. If we are to lead our children and young people to a love and knowledge of God we need

to model that in our individual and corporate life and witness. It is necessary, therefore, for the Board of Social Witness to specify a date by which every congregation in the General Assembly will have implemented the guidelines fully. The date for this is indicated in a resolution to the Assembly as at 30 June 2008. After that date the Board of Social Witness will ask Presbyteries to indicate whether or not each congregation has access to the support of a Designated Person and that training has taken place.

4. The Taking Care Office receives a constant flow of questions which show that congregations are conscientiously trying to operate guidelines sensitively and responsibly. It was felt to be worthwhile for these issues to inform the topics chosen for the Conference to be held in May. It was important to help leaders and volunteers, for example, to understand the purpose of POCVA vetting, to appreciate and avoid the dangers of the internet for children and to pick up lessons on First Aid and dealing with challenging behaviour (the children's of course!). We are pleased to report that the vetting process is now well established in the Republic of Ireland. Congregations and schools are now familiar with the new system. We are grateful to the Youth Council of Ireland for their advice and support.

5. This year partnership has been a very beneficial experience for the Taking Care Office. The involvement of the Youth and Children's Board in the planning of the Taking Care Conference has been valued. Then there was the financial support of the Orphan and Children's Society for the production of a credit card size information leaflet for children, "We care 4 U". This support has enabled 50,000 of these cards to be distributed. Then, also this year in May, the valuable card for leaders on the similar theme "We care 4 U too" was launched with the financial backing of Bartholomew and James/ Royal Sun Alliance. It is hoped that this card will be a useful prompt for leaders and confirm the importance of their calling. We certainly are mindful of the unstinting help that is forthcoming week by week in so many organisations across our denomination and we continue to thank God that so many children's lives are enriched by their dedication.

6. I wish to record my thanks to the Committee for their faithful input to the work of the Taking Care Office and to Lindsay Conway, Deborah Webster and also to Jenny, Gail, San-ye and Julie in the office. Finally, while Deborah and Julie are new to the office we said farewell to Ellen. Her initiative and efficient administrative help will be much missed.

Mrs Rosemary Simpson reports:

PCI COUNSELLING

1. PCI Counselling has continued to be a very worthwhile service within the Board of Social Witness. Client Numbers have increased during the year and the team of eleven counsellors are kept busy. Due to other commitments they have varied numbers of clients but are kept within a copable limit for the benefit of counsellor and client alike. The work is mainly in and around the Belfast area, although in some instances a few counsellors travel to other areas of the province as and when necessary. The Committee is very

grateful to churches throughout Northern Ireland for facilitating the service. Without the help of Ministers and Kirk Sessions it would be very difficult to continue the service so satisfactorily. Assessment interviews are mainly held in Belfast, thereafter clients are seen closer to their homes.

2. Ministers and church workers are using the counselling service more often and it is very satisfying for counsellors to know that their work is valued by the Church at large. Many clients are recommended by word of mouth, friends and the yellow pages, however more are now coming through their church connection.

3. The service's change of name has meant that people with more varied problems are coming forward for counselling. Problems include marriage breakdown, abuse (emotional, mental, physical and sexual), relationship difficulties, sexual orientation, attempted suicides, eating disorders and financial problems. Counsellors have continuous supervision and training throughout the year. We are very grateful to our supervisors, Mrs Susan Giffen and Mrs Lynn Farr. It is very important for clients and counsellors to receive the best possible service we can provide. Also counsellors need and benefit from their monthly supervision sessions when cases are considered, always anonymously. However, if necessary, clients are sometimes referred to experts in some fields.

4. Confidentiality is one of the most important areas for clients, and counsellors do everything they can to maintain their anonymity at all times.

5. Clients are asked to support the service financially where possible and many do so. However, this is an area which will be looked at in the coming year. Venues are also very important as is security for all involved. This is therefore a major consideration when choosing a venue.

6. The Marriage and Family Panels continue their very important work to support ministers when couples are re-marrying. The monthly panels often have to be increased due to greater demand as ministers realise their value. This service is also arranged as confidentially as possible and the Committee is grateful to all involved for treating this work in a sensitive manner.

7. During the year Mrs Ellen Wilmont retired from the Board and she has been greatly missed by all those in PCI Counselling who came into contact with her. She was invariably considerate and efficient and her work was greatly appreciated. Our thanks are also due to all those who work in the Board office. A special work of gratitude must go to Mrs Stephanie Windrum who spends many hours sorting out clients, counsellors, venues, appointments, panels and panellists. Her work is appreciated by all who come into contact with her.

8. It is clear that we have to expand our services to the Republic of Ireland. The Secretary to the Board has already held provisional discussions with the relevant parties.

9. Finally, a very sincere thanks to all the counsellors who give of their time voluntarily and willingly. Without their dedication the service would cease. This vital work is done sincerely by all involved to the glory of God and in His Name.

Rev Stuart Finlay reports:

PCI Family Holiday

1. The PCI Family Holiday takes place each year from Easter Monday through to Friday at the Share Centre, Lisnaskea. We accommodate around 160 people in the Guest House, chalets and caravans. Some of the families attending are sponsored by the Presbyterian Orphan and Children's Society. It gives everyone an opportunity for time away from home in a relaxed atmosphere.

2. The Share Centre offers a variety of activities and their staff is expert in dealing both with able-bodied and special needs individuals. The outdoor activities for the more energetic and adventurous include canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, banana skiing, climbing, gorge walking and Try Skirmishing (where the aim is to shoot one another with laser guns). The indoor activities include more leisurely pursuits like T-shirt printing, pottery, silk painting and mosaics.

3. Also on offer are a shopping-trip to Enniskillen (ever popular with all ages) and a visit to the Marble Arch Caves. On top of all this, our own Youth Team organises games and activities for the children most mornings and afternoons. This gives mums and dads an opportunity to "chill out" on their own.

4. Every morning begins with a short time of worship for all ages before the day's activities commence. In the evening there is a time of worship together before the young people go off to their own time of group learning with the Youth Team, leaving others to enjoy the "adults only" spot. Every year we have a visiting speaker (and family). This Easter it was our privilege to welcome the Rev Alan Johnston, minister of Hazelbank congregation.

5. After supper each day there is an "Evening Extra" for all ages. This year we had a Beetle Drive, a Table Quiz, a Concert/karaoke evening and (on the last night) a Party. The Beetle Drive and Table Quiz are not for the faint-hearted - there is a very competitive spirit to be encountered on these evenings!

6. The week passes all too quickly. It's the kind of mix of fun, activity and learning together that seems to go down well with our Holiday families. Maybe next year YOU will join us!

Rev Jim Waring reports:

LEARNING DISABILITY

1. The Committee on Learning Disability continues to meet as a committee of the Board under the umbrella of the Family Services Committee.

2. Our purpose is to encourage the Church in this ongoing ministry and to initiate schemes that will give expression to our ministry through practical help and support.

3. Consequently a vital part of our work is the oversight of Board projects that provide care for those with disability:

Willow Brook in Coleraine provides valuable accommodation and personal support for the tenants. The Church is indebted to the Project Manager, Ann Campbell, and her dedicated staff, as well as to the Friends of Willow

Brook under the chairmanship of Rev Robert McMullan, for their unstinting support and encouragement.

Topley Terrace is a row of three bungalows specially designed for those with physical disability and situated adjoining the Willow Brook complex.

Aaron House in Dundonald, for which the Board is gradually assuming responsibility, provides residential and day-care facilities for those with more profound learning disability.

Lisburn: A Christian group based in Harmony Hill church, which is already involved in ministry to those with learning disability, has been in discussion with the Committee regarding the establishment of a supported housing scheme in their area. The Board is presently in touch with the local Health Board and Oaklee Housing Association about the possibility of such a project. In addition the Committee has made contact with other Health Boards regarding possible further developments in this field.

4. One of the concerns of our Committee is the apparent lack of commitment by government agencies to the provision of adequate day-care facilities and we are seeking ways of expressing such concerns to those who have it in their power to improve the situation.

5. We continue to raise with the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry the possibility of a special needs summer camp.

6. We are grateful for the prayerful interest and practical support of many within the Church and are particularly encouraged to have received reports of congregations who are actively seeking ways of ministering to those with learning disability in the name of Jesus Christ.

SOUTH BELFAST FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

1. The South Belfast Friendship House Management Committee met on 6 occasions during the year.

2. The House continues to be a place of Christian Witness for this area of South Belfast. We are thankful to Mrs Eunice Moore and Mrs Menita Cheesman for their continued faithful service and commitment to the work of South Belfast Friendship House. Miss Lynne Ferguson, Assistant Chaplain of Derryvolgie Hall, and a group of volunteers have continued their involvement with the After Schools Club. The Committee appreciates all that they have given of their time and talents.

3. At a meeting of the BMI/PWA Home Personnel Committee on 21 February 2007 it was reported that South Belfast Friendship House Management Committee had requested the services of Mrs Jenny Robinson as Deaconess to serve in Friendship House. A Call was issued to Jenny at the Board of Mission in Ireland Board meeting on 14 March 2007. The Committee is delighted with this new appointment and wishes Jenny God's blessing as she undertakes this new area of work.

4. **Finance:** In 2006 a grant was received from Children in Need for £4,510. This will help purchase much needed materials and new equipment. It will also fund the four-week Summer Scheme that is being planned for August 2007.

5. A donation of £100,000 was given to the Board of Social Witness in 2006. This money is being used to extend the premises of Friendship House.

Discussions have taken place with Mr Brian Knox, Architect, and plans are being drawn up. It is hoped that work will take place in 2008.

6. PWA members give faithfully to the Christmas Appeal each year. This helps to buy gifts for the children in the Sandy Row area. In December 2006 approximately £800 was donated for this purpose.

7. The PWA Birthday Thank Offering Home project for 2006/07 will support the work at Friendship House.

8. The Board of Social Witness values the partnership with PWA Executive Committee in relation to South Belfast Friendship House.

LYNDA GRAHAM, Convener

ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE

1. This Committee is responsible for the work in Thompson House, Carlisle House and Gray's Court. Committee members attempt to support and encourage the staff teams working in these centres where the quality of the work carried out remains of the highest calibre. Throughout the past year sustaining this intense and complex work has remained a challenge. However, once more it is a delight to report that within these centres people have experienced the love of Jesus Christ and His power to change their lives.

2. The Local Support Committee members for Thompson House, Carlisle House and Gray's Court have been able to talk with people who have experienced the truth of God's word as spoken by the prophet Isaiah, 'He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom to the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.'

CARLISLE HOUSE: Unfortunately the level of addiction continues to highlight very starkly the need for centres like Carlisle House. This residential facility offers a service to people who want to deal with their addiction problems. Residents encounter staff who combine Christian compassion with a high degree of professional competence. While the ethos of the centre is one of genuine care, the programme itself is deeply challenging. The whole package has been developed and honed by the staff to make Carlisle House one of the most effective centres helping people with addictions.

Throughout 2006 Carlisle House continued to have a high referral rate, many of these being self-referrals. The work remains complex and demanding, requiring not only professional expertise from the staff, but also great resilience and stamina. It is our hope in the incoming year that the newly formed Carlisle House Local Support Committee will be able to bring an added support and encouragement to the staff as they minister on behalf of our church.

GRAY'S COURT: Gray's Court continues to provide a valuable move-on facility for those leaving Carlisle House and is vital to their long-term recovery. Support is given in this vulnerable, transition period to enable tenants to eventually find permanent accommodation and employment or training.

The need for this facility and its continual effectiveness is evident throughout the past year.

THOMPSON HOUSE: Thompson House appreciates very much the prayer and support for its outreach. We minister to a very needy section of our community. Most of the men in Thompson House come from tragic and godless backgrounds.

Mr Bryan Marshall, a member of our Local Support Committee, fully engages the residents in woodwork classes. He also leads the Bible Study and we are encouraged by the quality of this study, if not with the numbers involved.

Most of the Support Committee is very dedicated and we have a very good relationship with the Board. On 19 April 2006 we had our bi-annual training day with both committee and staff. We were guests on that day of the Governor of the Young Offenders Centre and this proved an enlightening and encouraging exercise. We are most grateful to the Governor and his staff for sharing and instructing us, so that we can be more efficient and effective in this work to which God has called us.

While we have had problems this year with engaging qualified staff, the Director and the small staff already present have held the fort and must be thanked for their dedication and services rendered. We say thanks to them, and to the new staff who are fitting in well, enabling Thompson House to continue its professional service and practical outreach to this needy group in our society.

TOM WILSON, Convener

SOCIAL ISSUES AND RESOURCES PANEL

Rev Bobby Liddle reports:

Pastoral Guidelines – Homosexuality

General Assembly Resolution - 2006

“That the General Assembly recognising homophobic attitudes within our Church and society request the Social Issues Panel to prepare guidelines to help our Church to develop more sensitive and effective pastoral care.”

Part of the fulfilment of this resolution required by the Assembly was direct contact with homosexual people.

1. Preamble

1.1 While a person's sexuality is a very important part of their lives, it does not define who they are. Biblically we as a church maintain that a person is defined in the first instance in terms of their relationship to God - creation in relation to Creator. To refer to a person as a homosexual, a lesbian or a heterosexual is therefore to narrow their identity to their sexuality alone. For this reason it seems better to refer to 'people' who have 'same sex attraction'.

1.2 It is clear from the study carried out by ShOut¹ (see below) that many people in churches who have same sex attraction are afraid to be open about it

1 ShOut – “The needs of young people in Northern Ireland who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and or transgender”. December 2003. A study commissioned by the Department of Education and carried out through Youthnet N Ireland. The sample covered 362 young people from rural and urban backgrounds across the communities.

for fear of how they will be treated by those in their church, amongst others. There is no reason to assume Presbyterians are any different. Representatives of the Gay Helpline state that they have regular calls from people belonging to PCI who are unwilling to disclose their same sex attractions. Evidence of homophobic attitudes is therefore largely anecdotal.

1.3 The position of the General Assembly has been stated in other publications, mainly *'The Church and the Homosexual'* Report June 1979² with appended comment for consideration at Presbyteries. It is not the remit of this report to change that position but to suggest guidelines whereby our Church may *'develop more sensitive and effective pastoral care.'* Hence references regarding the nature of same sex attraction are made only with pastoral care in mind.

2. The need for pastoral guidelines (The experience of people with same sex attractions)

2.1 It is clear that people of all ages who have same sex attractions are very reluctant to tell others because of fear, prejudice etc. Keeping their feelings hidden out of fear has a significant impact on mental health.

2.2 In the ShOut study of 2003, 362 young people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and or transgender were surveyed. Among others they identified the following negative responses.

126 (35%) had suffered physical abuse

237 (65%) had suffered verbal abuse

104 (29%) had attempted suicide

95 (26%) engaged in self-harm

124 (34%) abused alcohol

Comments from the study include –

'I am out to everyone I know except my family. I don't want to lose my parents. A fear of being disowned.'

'A neighbour told my parents and they threw me out, they said I was disgusting.'

'In church groups I helped for my Duke of Edinburgh Award. When they discovered my sexuality they asked me to leave as they didn't feel it was appropriate to have someone like me working in such an environment ie religious setting with an influence over young children.'

2.3 The Panel met with a group of young adults with same sex attractions. The majority had a Presbyterian background or were still involved in Presbyterian churches. The following is a combination of several stories and typifies common experience.

Bob's story. *I was brought up in a strong, loving, Christian home and was very actively involved in a lively, evangelical Presbyterian church. I became a*

2 'In commending the Report to the Presbyteries for study and comment, the Assembly considered it desirable: "to draw the attention of all people to the fact that the Holy Scriptures clearly condemn homosexual practices, as they also condemn heterosexual immorality, but as clearly declare to those so involved, the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with the promise of forgiveness and strength in response to repentance and faith'.

Christian when I was young and was well taught and have a real love for the Bible. I was very committed to the youth work in my church and tried to live for Christ and witness for Him inside and outside the Church. During my teens I began to realise that I was different. I found myself attracted to boys rather than girls. I didn't choose it to be so, it just was. I resisted it, prayed against it. I understood well the Bibles' teaching on homosexuality and wrestled to overcome my feelings and pretended to be like 'the lads'. Eventually in my late teens I confided in a Christian friend. He continued to talk to and pray for me over a number of years. Knowing and respecting the churches teaching I practiced celibacy but felt alone, fearful and overwhelmed. The pressure of keeping it to myself, the feelings of shame, the guilt of feeling that I was living a lie and the fear of how the news would affect my parents and my church life eventually took its toll on my mental health. I had to take various medicines for depression and on one occasion came very close to committing suicide.

People in the church would crack jokes about 'Gays' and I just wanted to crawl into a hole. How could I open up to them when my struggles were joked about? I respect my minister and his teaching, but when homosexuality was mentioned in church the Biblical position of calling practising homosexuality sin was outlined without ever a word of compassion or understanding for people like me who were struggling so hard and hadn't chosen to feel the way I did.

One of my greatest struggles was that I had always been brought up to respect and to tell the truth. Yet here I was living and telling lies to protect my family and myself. Eventually I felt I had no other option but to tell my parents about my struggles. They were devastated and so were my friends at church. It is devastating when all who made you and shaped and directed your life turn on you. I am not bitter, I still love my family and respect my church but when I really needed someone to listen to me without judgement, there was no one. I would love to be straight. It would cause so much less pain but for the sake of my own sanity I have eventually had to accept that I am gay. I am both a Christian who loves God and His word but I am also gay.

The fears and struggles of parents, wives and husbands, wider family

2.4 'A bereavement' is a common description used by parents on hearing that their son or daughter has same sex attractions. There is also a loss of face, and of friends. 'My son lost friends and so did I.' There can be a loss of place and respect within the church. Also there is the shattering of hopes and dreams. 'I may never have a grandchild.

2.5 It also raises difficult questions.

- How could I ever welcome a same sex partner into the home?
- What if they want to share the same bedroom?
- How do we approach this with the grandparents?
- How can I continue to show the same unconditional love to my child when I cannot agree with their lifestyle?

2.6 Some parents come to terms with the issue by accepting and endorsing the lifestyle of their son or daughter. Others feel they cannot do so and constantly live with the tension of wanting to show unconditional love to the son or daughter while not endorsing a particular lifestyle. This is extremely difficult, as it is perceived as rejection.

2.7 One mother's experience.

She told how her son had attempted suicide several times before he eventually 'came out'. There followed a grieving process before she came to terms with it, but still needs support. She found that she lost friends within the church and felt she had no one within the Presbyterian Church she could turn to for understanding and help. Only through external information and a support group independent of PCI was she able to find help. She found pulpit ministry difficult as it either only condemned same sex relationships or referred to people with same sex attractions in a negative light with little compassion or understanding for the struggle they go through. She has since found support in a different congregation.

2.8 If this is the general experience of people in our Presbyterian Church then it is evident that here has been a lack of understanding, compassion and grace. People with same sex attractions have found that they have not been treated with the same compassion as those who have presented other pastoral needs, including those sexual in nature.

*'We drive them away from our churches, especially evangelical churches, where they assume that they will be condemned. We distort their view of God by implying that He shares our hate of gay people. Our passing remarks and sweeping generalisations in favour of 'a hard line against gays' force many silent sufferers into the misery of secret loneliness...Homophobia is out. Fear, disgust, hostility and self-righteousness are not Christian reactions. If they dominate my reactions to gay people I am not yet fit to help or counsel them; I need help and counsel myself.'*³

2.9 This being the case there is a need to call such attitudes sinful and for there to be repentance on our part as a church.

3. Towards a definition of 'homophobia'

3.1 Homophobia is usually defined as 'an irrational fear and prejudice towards homosexual people and the issue of homosexuality'.

3.2 **Andrew Goddard**, in Fulcrum May 2006 defines homophobia as – 'the victimisation or diminishment of human beings whose affections happen to be ordered towards people of the same sex.' He comments that this definition is not based on 'rights' but on attitudes or behaviour 'that represent a denial of the humanity of certain people because of their imagined or actual sexual attractions, orientation, relationships or identity.'

3.3 The Panel believes this to be a more helpful definition for the reason stated and also because it moves away from defining a person in terms of perceived sexuality. In addition it allows us to state that taking the particular Biblical position we do, as a Church, on same sex practices is not in and of itself homophobia.

3.4 It is possible therefore for evangelical Christians to hold that the factors involved in why a person has same-sex attractions may often be too

3 Pierson L, 'No Gay Areas? Pastoral Care of Homosexual Christians. Grove Booklets, Cambridge, 1997 pgs 8, 15.

complex to untangle and that there was no choice made on the part of the person to feel the way they do.⁴ We are all fallen human beings and for each one the fall has affected our sexuality as it has all aspects of our being.

3.5 However, as with all areas of sexual attraction, what we do about it as individuals is a matter of choice for which we are morally responsible. This is the sentiment behind the Assembly's comment on the Report of 1979.

When we condemn homosexual practice in isolation or single it out as somehow worse than other sexual practices outside of heterosexual marriage then we demonstrate homophobic attitudes.

4. The need to dispel myths

- 'Are our children safe?'
- 'It might be infectious'
- 'They will lead our other young people astray!'
- 'They are the cause of AIDS/HIV!'
- 'It's all about sex, sex, sex!'

There is a great need to dispel such myths about same sex attractions. Children are no more at risk and possibly less so from a person with same sex attractions than from one with heterosexual attractions. Homosexuality is NOT paedophilia! Nor is a person with same sex attractions anymore a sexual predator than someone with heterosexual desires. In fact we often show our double standards by looking on 'chasing the girls' as a natural thing even when it is downright lustful. Whereas a girl who does the same is looked on as 'cheap' and a person with same sex attractions as perverted!

Such myths are very hurtful, humiliating, degrading and condemning to those with same sex attractions. They are also characteristic of the lack of understanding that fuels homophobic attitudes.

5. The need for clarity of understanding in dialogue

5.1 In our sex crazed society there are all kinds of abuses of the gift of sexual intimacy which God gave to us as part of our human identity. We are sexual beings! However, abuse of the gift, both heterosexual and homosexual does not deny the goodness of the gift.

4 Despite all attempts in the media to push the idea that same sex attraction is purely genetic the jury is still out and may remain so. While there are studies that point towards biological factors there are other studies that lean strongly towards the nurture side of the debate. The 'Gay Rights' activist Matthew Parris has accepted that the evidence is inconclusive. (The Times, 5 August 2006) Gender Development involves a variety of factors of which biological make-up is but one. It also includes family relationships, the surrounding culture and a person's unique reaction to the other factors involved. Irrespective of this the issue for evangelical Christians is what a person does about their sexual feelings. It is no more Biblically acceptable to engage in heterosexual intercourse outside of marriage than same sex intercourse. Marriage being defined as part of God's order for creation from before the Fall and between one man and one woman.

5.2 As a church we maintain that in God's plan sexual intimacy is part of the two-into-one intimacy shared in the marriage relationship and only to be exercised in that relationship.

5.3 It is important to understand that while there are also abuses of sexual practices within the LGBT community⁵ this does not mean that all people with same sex attractions engage in them.

The abuse does not negate the principle. There needs to be the recognition within the church that the desires for love (in all its aspects), intimacy, companionship etc that move heterosexual couples towards marriage are the same desires that motivate those with same sex attractions.

5.4 When a church states that it cannot agree with practising same sex relationships it is most often taken as rejection of the person because of their perceived identity – ie 'I am a homosexual!' However, as a church, we believe our identity should be defined primarily in terms of our humanity before God and not in terms of sexual orientation. It would be helpful in dialogue if we focused more on the whole person before God and did not make sexuality the focus of our understanding.

5.5 Exploring this point of perceived identity would also promote greater understanding of those within the Presbyterian Church who wish to exercise genuine pastoral care yet maintain Biblical integrity regarding marriage as being solely between a man and a woman and sexual practice as being for that relationship alone.

5.6 There is the need for the church to understand that a consistent approach is needed. Compassion begins in the pulpit and works out from there. Condemnation from the pulpit closes the door to compassionate care outside the pulpit. Pastoral care is built on proclamation.

5.7 The 'rights' dominated culture so aggressively surrounding 'gay' issues sends a message to the church that it is not acceptance as people that is being sought but rather endorsement of a way of life. The problem for many within the church is that while they would want to accept people in the name of Jesus Christ they cannot, in all integrity of conscience, endorse a way of life that they see as contrary to God's Word.

6. The aim of pastoral care.

This is not the place to discuss a definition of pastoral care, but at least it involves the process of holding in one hand the person with love and care and affirmation, and holding in the other hand the Word of God, then bringing the two together. (Eugene Peterson – The Gift)

5 LGBT = Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender. This is not a particularly helpful abbreviation as, at least some, identifying as homosexual or lesbian have major issues regarding bi-sexuality. The question also has to be asked if there really is such a thing as a definable LGBT 'community'. If we take the current trend towards identifying any likeminded group as a community then there are several 'communities' within the LGBT spectrum. In this sense it could be argued that the term 'LGBT community' does not help those who seek to be balanced and gracious in approach and wish to disassociate themselves from the excesses and aggressiveness of some.

7. The need for temperate language and balance in pulpit ministry

7.1 Unhelpful words/statements – eg ‘Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve’; ‘Love the sinner, hate the sin’, sodomy, unnatural, abnormal or any of the more derogatory colloquialisms. All of these lock the door to effective pastoral care before it is even open.

7.2 It is important for the person’s family to hear some compassionate understanding of the feelings and struggles involved as well as the Biblical issues.

7.3 A balanced proclamation of God’s Word is essential. E.g. Sexual temptation and desire is not sin; all sexual sin falls short of God’s mark and can be forgiven. When we consider the **1 Cor 6** passage we might consider that perhaps there may be more idolaters, slanderers and greedy people in our congregations than “homosexual offenders”. **1 Cor 6 v9 (NIV)**

8. The need for pastoral wisdom in ‘first contact’

8.1 For a person struggling with their sexuality to tell someone may have taken months even years. They will probably have gone through a long period of mental auditioning, weighing up different friends, family members, acquaintances, before deciding whom to tell. Even then it takes a great deal of courage to ‘come out’. The fear of rejection, loss of love, even hatred may be almost palpable at the point of disclosure. From that moment there is no retreat. It is therefore important that a minister, elder, leader, family member understands that their first reactions have the potential to crush or bring hope. The person will hear body language and attitude even more than words.

8.2 What they do not need to hear at that moment:

- That they are imagining it
- That they are sick
- That they are a disgrace or a pervert
- That they are demon possessed

At this point they do not even need to hear what the Bible says about homosexuality

8.3 What they do need to hear at that moment:

- That they are still loved no matter what
- That God’s love has not changed
- That they have displayed great courage in telling you
- That you appreciate the trust placed in you
- That you will seek to listen and to understand what they have been going through

9. The need for long term care and possibly counselling

9.1 It is imperative to state that the role of pastoral care is NOT to force a person with same sex attractions into counselling let alone suggest demonic activity. We recognise the danger of suggesting this person is sick and needs to be healed. All of us, in various ways are in need of the healing grace of Christ.

9.2 It is sufficiently documented that there are those who have moved from the position of having same sex attractions to being heterosexual. For some this has come about through careful, professional counselling. For others it has

come about by regeneration through faith in Jesus Christ. For still others a combination of both! This is entirely possible for some whose sexual identity has been part and parcel of a confused personal identity. Some may claim that such people were never truly homosexual or lesbian in the first place. That may be so and it is important to note that for many, even should they wish to undergo counselling their same sex attractions may not change.

9.3 Many teenagers experience same sex attractions. For most these do not linger but are part of their sexual development. For others their sexual development can be arrested by various factors in their upbringing including close family relationships and family breakdown. In our culture, that includes the promotion of alternative sexualities, this can result in some young people being confused about their sexuality. They may need help to understand and work through deeper-seated insecurities, issues of forgiveness, gender acceptance and self-acceptance before they can come to terms with their sexual identity.

9.4 Certain principles must be taken on board in all pastoral care and especially in this matter.

- (i) Confidentiality is paramount.
- (ii) Quick prayers and chapter and verse sticking plasters are to be avoided.
- (iii) The pastoral carer must be aware and accepting of his/her own sexual brokenness.
- (iv) The person being cared for should not be ostracised. Churches must continue to live with those who act and behave in ways seen as inconsistent with God's word – all in Christ are parts of one body, e.g. because a person has same sex attractions does not make him/her a bad musician or administrator!
- (v) When counselling help is sought, trained, skilled helpers should carry it out and the pastoral carer must be willing to refer on.
- (vi) When counselling is not sought it may be an encouragement to help the person to set personal boundaries and to be accountable. This is just as helpful with those who are heterosexual. Secular society is seeking to develop various mentoring schemes. Jesus saw the need for such mentoring with the 12 a long time ago but we have much room for improvement in the church, for youth and adults alike.⁶
- (vii) That we recognise, preach and practise the fact that our failures are not final.

10. The need for the Church to be the Church

The church has a crucial responsibility to create an environment of love, understanding, acceptance, patience, forgiveness, openness and grace.

6 As stated, the position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is that sexual practice is only for heterosexual marriage. As a church therefore our aim ought to be to help ALL unmarried people to cope with sexual pressures. We realise this raises issues regarding celibacy. While this is an area of debate in relation to the 'hope of marriage', essentially ongoing sexual pressures still need to be controlled.

Those with pastoral responsibility might -

10.1 Recognise sympathetically in services and teaching the struggles involved for individuals and their families.

10.2 Actively promote an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance rather than fear and rejection.

10.3 Provide books, tapes etc. to help individuals with same-sex attractions and their families and the congregation to be informed about the issues involved.

10.4 Actively promote church family intimacy and the inclusion of those with same-sex attractions.

10.5 Actively encourage small group / cell group involvement.

10.6 Actively help our Youth Groups to be informed, compassionate and caring.

10.7 Explore the possibility of support groups (possibly linking several churches) both for those with same-sex attractions and their families.

10.8 Make use of the key church resources of families and appropriate friendships with older leaders to mentor and nurture young people outside their immediate family.

10.9 Acknowledge a person's right to a private life.

10.10 Our wider church might also create a PCI 'Safe Space' for those who need to talk about their sexuality.

- Such a safe space could be phoned or visited and should preserve confidentiality.
- This place / space should stop short of being a counselling centre as the very nature of the struggle for many is that they do not feel they need counselling but do need to talk in confidence about how they feel. Some may later seek counselling help and others may not. But such a 'safe space' would be a tangible step in alleviating the cost in terms of mental health for a significant number of people within our church and would send a strong message of compassion and care to the wider community.
- In this way a 'safe space' would provide a safety valve for Presbyterian people who feel they cannot talk to their family, minister, elders, youth worker etc.
- Those staffing such a 'safe space' should receive appropriate training, particularly in understanding the issues involved and in Christian listening skills.

11. The need for change

Within our church there is the need for both repentance and greater understanding. This calls for education, careful listening and discussion.

11.2 Likewise there is the need for those who have same sex attractions to grasp that it is not easy for those who wish to be genuinely caring yet maintain Biblical integrity without giving the impression that in doing so they are rejecting the person.

11.3 In every way it is easier to stand at the side of the road, or in the pulpit, or 'on air' and shout condemnation. But it does not win hearts or minds. And it certainly does not show the pastoral care of Jesus Christ. It may be uncomfortable for some, but it is better to sit down and talk – but listen first.

Recommendations

That the General Assembly -

1. Adopt the guidelines and advocate their use and practice within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
2. Strongly state that attitudes and approaches within our congregations which, 'victimise or diminish human beings whose affections happen to be ordered towards people of the same sex' are unacceptable.
3. Encourage repentance for the occasions when persons with same sex attractions have been treated in ways severely lacking in grace within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and that the Assembly encourage an attitude of grace and mercy to be actively shown to all who struggle with different aspects of their sexuality.
4. Continue to encourage our congregations to 'Create an environment of love, acceptance, patience, forgiveness and grace.'
5. That the Board of Social Witness investigates the possibility of creating 'a safe space' for people struggling with their sexuality and that funding be sought to create such a safe space.
6. That the Board of Social Witness and the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry update the 'Loving in the Real World' resource to include more instructive material on the area of same-sex attraction.
7. Encourage the possibility of the establishment of parents' support group/s to help parents who are struggling with the issues surrounding young people who have 'come out'.

RESOLUTIONS*For debate*

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly approve the POCVA (Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults) checking of Presbyterian Ministers.
3. That the General Assembly commend the ongoing work of the "Journey Towards Healing" programme and thank the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister for their ongoing support and encouragement.
4. That the General Assembly welcome the report of the Social Issues and Resources Panel regarding Sexual Orientation and authorise its publication as pastoral guidelines.

For approval

5. That the General Assembly instruct Presbyteries to ensure that all congregations have fully implemented the Child Protection Guidelines by 30 June, 2008.
6. That the area of work carried out by the Addiction Services Committee be placed under the Adult Services Committee.
7. That the customary grants made by the Board of Social Witness, up to a total of £3,000, be met from the Incidental Fund.

8. That the resignation of the Rev Tom Wilson as Convener of the Adult Services Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that _____ be appointed in his place.

9. 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:-

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 is grateful to God for a year of blessed events, programmes and continuing vision for the ministry to children and young people. New opportunities for training have been pursued in the Road Trip and with the appointment of our Training Officer. An exciting innovation has begun with the Kids' Praise Party. The Board has rejoiced in the ways God has worked through events, programmes and service opportunities.

2. Aware of the difficult challenges facing young believers in today's culture, the Board is deeply encouraged and impressed with the quality of the commitment and lives of many Christian young people, and warmly commends and encourages parents, Sunday school teachers, organisational leaders, volunteers, full and part-time workers for their dedication, which is the strength of our denomination's ministry to children and young people. Let us embrace the opportunity we have to pray for and encourage them.

3. The Board has been deeply grateful for the work and service of Rev Ian McKee as Deputy Director. We extend congratulations to him on his call to High Street, Antrim and pray every blessing for him in his future ministry.

4. The Board thanks Mrs Heather Lyle for her service as Convener of the Research and Education Committee and prays every blessing for her in her future life and work.

5. The Board is grateful for the work of the Youth and Children's department staff: Roz Stirling (Director), Rev Ian McKee (Deputy Director), Miss Lois McIlrath (Senior Administrative Officer), Mrs Claire Child, Mrs Janet Maxwell, Miss Pamela Patton, Mrs Donna Thompson and Mrs Marianne Trueman. The dedication and enthusiasm they bring to their work is deeply appreciated.

6. The Board wishes to thank Graeme Thompson who as Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland continues to bring support and training to many congregations. The Board welcomes the appointment of Barbara McDade as Children's Development Officer and thanks her for the good work she has begun, delivering training and support in the area of children's ministry. We encourage Kirk Sessions and congregations to make use of the training and resources these two members of staff offer.

7. The Board is appreciative of the ongoing work of Mrs Helen Bruce, Volunteers' Co-ordinator, for the pastoral care, co-ordination and encouragement that she brings to all involved in the SWIM programme and the Year Team.

8. The Board welcomes Rev Craig Mawhinney as Training Officer and encourages churches to make use of his services.

9. The Board wishes to thank Mr Lawrence Walker for his work as Centres' Director and for all his support to the Centres' Review Panel which will report under the General Board. We extend our thanks and appreciation to Mrs Gillian Brownlow (Guysmere), Mr Jonathan Henry (Rostrevor) and Mr Kenny Morrison (Lucan) for their work in facilitating the ministry of the centres.

10. The Board thanks Miss Ruth Mitchell and Mrs Jill Condell, Regional Youth and Support Workers for Donegal and Monaghan Presbyteries respectively, for the encouragement that they have brought to many youth groups and the support that they have been able to give to leadership teams in these regions.

11. The Board wishes to thank all those who support the Youth and Children's (YAC) Projects. The magnificent sum of £101,000 was raised for the 'Yes! Tak! Da!' YAC Project 2005-2006. The Board would wish to thank all Sunday Schools and Youth Groups who worked so hard to raise this money. The current project 'Wings' is being well supported - the final figure to be reported next year.

12. The Board extends its warm congratulations to the Scouting Association as it celebrates its worldwide centenary throughout 2007. A number of national celebrations have already taken place and local counties and districts have planned activities between April and June, prior to the World Jamboree which takes place in Essex during the summer.

13. 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 and seeks to use this financial assistance with great prudence.

Miss Roz Stirling writes

14. Following the resignation of the Rev Edward Hyndman, the Board records their deep gratitude to Eddie for his enthusiastic and visionary leadership as Board Convener over the past five years. He was instrumental in overseeing the transition from Youth Board and Church Education Committee to the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry and spent much time working on structures including the development of the Board's strategy which was presented at the General Assembly last year. We thank God for his practical and insightful leadership and we pray God's blessing on his continued ministry in Seaview.

RECOGNISED MINISTRIES

The Rev David Bruce, Scripture Union Regional Director, Britain and Ireland, the former Soviet Republics and Israel, reports:

1. Scripture Union's ministry in Ireland continues to grow. Jim Donnan who is the Director in the Irish Republic has been seeking to develop holiday club and schools ministry in the border counties. The future of this project is uncertain because of funding shortfalls, but the positive benefits over the last five years of work have been encouraging.

2. In Northern Ireland, Helen Warnock and her team have been developing new models of schools ministry, especially at secondary level. Rick Hill has been working to help young people engage with the Bible using music

and other media in schools. Several staff are now employed in local districts (Lisburn, East Belfast and the Causeway coast) where they are seeking to build bridges between schools and churches.

3. Internationally, SU's ministry continues to spread. There is now SU work in 140 countries worldwide. New work is emerging in Israel (I visited just before Christmas last year) and in Turkey where a partnership of friends from different churches have started some camps work and distribution of Bible guides. As a movement, we cannot mark time, so the patterns of growth that have been experienced over the past twenty years are now being reflected in new structures of governance to better serve the emerging work.

4. Once again, I would like to thank the Assembly on behalf of the SU movements in Ireland and beyond for the interest, prayers and support over many years.

The Rev George McClelland, National Director of the Boys' Brigade, Northern Ireland, reports:

1. The Boys' Brigade is grateful to the Church for allowing the Organisation to be a part of the mission work of many local congregations. While much work at BB Headquarters relates to administration, Boys' Brigade is and will always be about the work carried out by the Company at the local level, under the oversight of the Church. I am thankful for the support received especially from ministers and for the prayers of those who take an active interest in boys and leaders.

2. During 2006/2007, Christianity Explored (a new Youth Edition) was used for the first time in Boys' Brigade Northern Ireland. Over 4,000 workbooks were given out to boys free of charge due to generous donations received. My prayer is that many boys will come to faith in Jesus Christ. Sincere thanks are due to leaders for committing themselves to this course and for the instruction given using the Gospel of Mark. It is encouraging to see many taking a real interest in the work of the Boys' Brigade at congregational level, asking leaders about how things are going, and praying regularly for them. It is hoped that many more individuals and groups within congregations will show similar interest.

3. Many leaders have asked for a training day on 'one to one personal evangelism'. This help and training will equip our leaders to further our object - 'The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys.' The Boys' Brigade continues to help leaders to teach the Scriptures to boys and to be able to talk with confidence about the Saviour. It is hoped that Companies will continue to take the work of mission through the Boys' Brigade seriously.

4. I thank the Church for continuing to support and encourage the work of the Boys' Brigade, and on a personal note, the support and encouragement given to me as National Director.

The Rev John Peacock, Youth Project Officer for Youth Link: NI, reports:

1. Central to Youth Link is the Christian faith which commits us to the personal, social and spiritual development of young people, the encouragement and support of leaders in their personal and professional development, the

development of effective and strategic partnerships within the church and youth sectors and the building of relationships that enable healing in the lives of individuals and communities within this diverse society.

2. As a result of this value base, our core aims are:
 - To meet the changing needs of the churches with regard to youth work and ministry, peace building and reconciliation;
 - To make available to those working with young people, training in youth work and ministry, peace building and reconciliation;
 - To provide opportunities for young people of different traditions and cultural backgrounds to develop mutual understanding, tolerance, acceptance, respect and to be agents of transformation in a divided society;
 - To provide a prophetic voice to the Churches and the wider community on critical and emerging issues in youth work and ministry, peace building and reconciliation;
 - To network strategically with agencies, Churches and youth workers at local, national and international level to enhance best practice in youth work and in the field of reconciliation.
3. As part of a staff team which is supported, valued and developed, I continue to enjoy the work at Youth Link. Over the past year the key highlights of my role have included:
 - Running a venue for young people at Summer Madness in conjunction with CIYD and with the support of YWAM on the theme of 'Forgiveness', followed by the opportunity to support young people demonstrating their active Christian citizenship by participating in the Streetreach project;
 - As chairperson of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry's Reconciliation Working Group, I have been involved in the launch of the revised 'Preparing Youth to be Peacemakers' manual and the recruitment, induction and support of Debs Erwin, the new PYP Officer. It has also been rewarding to bring lessons learned through PYP to the development of the 'Gospel in Crisis', an exciting new peace building programme for adults in PCI;
 - Developing and delivering OCN NI courses in Community Relations Work at levels 2 and 3;
 - Recruiting a new part-time staff member and working with her to develop a Cultural Diversity programme for young adults which we hope will equip churches, particularly in Protestant working class areas, to welcome the increasing number of new neighbours from different ethnic backgrounds into our society;
 - Delivering our Kairos programme, a community relations course for young people, in schools, churches and community groups;
4. I wish to thank the Presbyterian representatives on the council of Youth Link for their encouragement and all who have supported the work through their prayers and practical action.

The 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 and better community relations.

2. My role in Youth Link is to work primarily with the youth departments of the three largest protestant denominations in the provision of training that supports their identified needs and responds to training requests. This year, as in previous years, I delivered training at two of the major youth events run by the denominations, Summer Madness and Autumn Soul.

3. It has been encouraging to play a part in the continued development of opportunities for theological training in Youth Ministry. In the last year this has included one week of intensive training for final year ordinands at the Church of Ireland Theological College; the delivery of a module in Youth Ministry for the Diploma course at Belfast Bible College; and the co-ordination of two modules in Youth Ministry for the Institute of Theology at Queens, which included the rewriting and co-delivery of both modules with Craig Mawhinney from the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.

4. For the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry Course in particular I co-ordinated and lectured on the Youth Ministry Certificate Course offered at UTC and also facilitated the delivery of the course in Coleraine. There were 36 participants this year.

5. The accessibility of the new accredited courses has led to over 300 leaders achieving basic qualifications in Youth Work during the past year. These included leaders for an exciting new outreach project through Harmony Hill Presbyterian Church in preparation for which a course was run at the Church with participants ranging in age from early twenties to late sixties.

6. Through Youth Link I am delighted to be able to continue to play a part in the development and delivery of 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.

7. I wish to thank all who have supported the work through their prayers and encouragement and especially the staff of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry for their support over the past year. In particular Rev Ian McKee and Mr Graeme Thompson for their encouragement through the Youth Link council, Rev Craig Mawhinney for his partnership on the Youth Ministry modules and Miss Pamela Patton for the administrative support that enabled the smooth running of the certificate courses.

TRAINING COMMITTEE

1. The Committee thanks God for His guidance and blessing during the past year.

Certificates in Children's and Youth Ministry

2. The Certificate in Youth Ministry course ran in Belfast and in Coleraine. The course took place on Monday and Thursday nights with over 30 in attendance. A residential weekend (at Loughry College, Cookstown) has again been central to the effectiveness of the course.

3. The Children's Ministry Course ran at Union Theological College, with 22 attending. For the first time a residential element was added as part fulfilment of the course. The Committee is delighted with both the excellence and success of these courses.

4. The Board of Youth and Children's Ministry has been working in partnership with Union Theological College to facilitate a Graduate Certificate in Youth Ministry.

Delivery of Youth Ministry Modules as part of BTh Degree at Union College

5. Two modules have been facilitated this year at Union Theological College. It is planned that these will once again be offered in the next academic year.

Development of Youth Ministry Degree through Oxford Brookes

6. Discussions regarding the implementation of a Youth Ministry degree continue. This would be 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.

'Building Blocks' Conferences

7. Building Blocks is an exciting partnership with other Christian denominations and organisations. The two conferences, held on Saturday 18 November 2006 in Belfast, and on Saturday 25 November 2006 in Dublin, were once again very successful. Marlene le Fever was the keynote speaker at both events. This year's conferences will take place on Saturday 24 November 2007 in Jordanstown and on Saturday 1 December in Dublin. The keynote speaker will be Bob Hartman. Bob has been working for over twelve years as a performance storyteller for children. He has been using his dynamic and interactive style to entertain and educate audiences on both sides of the Atlantic.

Youth Ministry Summer School

8. From 20–24 August 2006 at Loughry College, Cookstown, YAC facilitated the first Youth Ministry Summer School in partnership with the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Church of Ireland. The Committee expressed delight in being able to attract excellent youth ministry specialists – in particular, Professors Duffy Robbins and Chap Clark. The teaching team was further strengthened with Dee Clark, Maggie Robbins, Andy Hickford and Heather Morris. This first school was a great encouragement to all who attended and plans are in place to run the second one from 30 August - 2 September 2007 when Duffy Robbins and Chap Clark will be welcomed back.

Road Trip Training

9. In September 2006 and January 2007 a new training venture was carefully planned and implemented whereby training seminars in both youth and children's ministry were facilitated in 12 different venues around Ireland. Over 500 people attended these training events and responses have been positive and encouraging.

Youth Link: NI

10. Youth Link continues to support and complement the work of our Board and the Committee would wish to express gratitude to its representatives for their input into our working groups and Committee.

CRAIG MAWHINNEY, Convener

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The Research and Education Committee have had a useful and productive year. God's guidance has been very much seen in the work that has been undertaken. The Convener is grateful for the collective experience and expertise of the Committee and commends them for their commitment and input.

Current Research

2. Under the auspices of this Committee, Graeme Thompson, Youth Development Officer, has begun research into the effective discipleship of teenagers within the Northern Ireland Presbyterian context. This is through King's College in London and it is hoped that it will form part of a Doctoral thesis. Although at an early stage, it is hoped to identify key factors in keeping young people strong in their faith and connected to church life.

Sunday School and Bible class questionnaire

3. Following the devising, production and distribution of the Sunday School and Bible Class questionnaire, members of the Committee worked very hard to evaluate the results, which will be increasingly helpful in planning for future teacher training.

Issues arising for the education of the church

- There is a serious decline in the teaching of the catechism. The Committee seek the opportunity to explore why this is, and to make these findings available to the Church. They also propose exploring the use of more contemporary language in the catechism.
- There is an increase in the number of Sunday Schools meeting during church which has implications regarding the participation of children and young people in congregational worship.
- There is a request to revisit the issue of children's presence at and participation in communion.

Kirk Session Survey

4. Members of the Committee are working through the Kirk Session response to the survey, analysing and evaluating its findings.

“Our Place”

5. The Committee are exploring research models which are suitable for use with children. It is hoped to use these in the incoming year to gather information from children’s perspectives on aspects of church life which affect their spiritual formation. This will focus on relationships, the church environment and resources.

Information Gathering

6. Statistics have been made available to the Board on young people and stress. Published material on the variety of theological perspectives on conservation and environmentalism has been gathered and made available to the Steering Committee.

HEATHER LYLE, Convener

MINISTRY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. This year the Committee has been examining the areas of the Board’s strategy development process which apply particularly to our work. One such area is the question of the support YAC gives to parents. While recognising the good work done at congregational level by ministers, elders, pastoral workers, and others, together with the excellent work of organisations such as ‘Care for the Family’, the Committee wishes to examine the degree of further support that could be given to parents and families, not least with reference to resources which are currently available but which are often not known about by those who could most benefit from them. The Committee commends the event for parents being organised by the Training Committee on 24 May with Dr Marv Penner.

2. The working groups of the Committee continue to give support to those working with children and young people and gratitude is expressed to them and thanks to God, for the good work being done. The Committee is also very appreciative of the work done by YAC’s full time staff whose workload is at times very heavy, but who are such a very valuable resource to the youth and children’s ministry of our denomination.

Websites

3. The websites, <pci youth.org> and <pci yac.org>, continue to be a valuable resource and the Committee intend to further develop these resources, exploring ways of further ensuring their effectiveness in advancing YAC’s ministry, including the still to be commenced children’s site.

Youth and Children’s Projects

4. The YAC ‘Wings’ Project 2006-2007, supporting the Aksza Mission’s after care house for older teenagers in Cluj, has once again been well

supported by the Church. Two members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Darren and Nicola Aitcheson, have been appointed by the Board of Mission Overseas to be the house parents in the after care house. This continues YAC's link in a very practical way.

Next year's YAC Project 2007-2008, in partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan, has two parts – literacy and music. The literacy part of the project in cooperation with ABES, will give education to girls aged 7-12, bringing them up to Grade 5 standard and thus entitlement to a place in state education. The music part of the project will help to realise the dream of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan to have a music academy in Karachi – bringing good Christian songs to children and young people in their own language and culture.

Youth and Children's Workers

5. The Board continues to provide support for those in full time youth work within congregations, by arranging training days and retreats throughout the year. Thanks are expressed to Graeme Thompson and Barbara McDade for the vital support they provide to full time workers. Ways are being explored by which ministers can be better supported and equipped in the management and care of the youth workers in their congregations.

Youth Centres

6. The Centres' Review Panel, under the auspices of the General Board, has continued its work and reported to the General Board on 15 March 2007. The General Board will report to the General Assembly. The Guysmere Management Committee were sincerely thanked for their hard work over many years and discharged, the responsibility for taking bookings for Guysmere being transferred to the Youth and Children's Office.

Preparing Youth to be Peacemakers

7. The Committee notes that the work of PYP has been very encouraging. Four groups are currently involved in training, one taking place in the Royal and Prior School in Raphoe with more possibilities lined up for the rest of the year. Deborah Erwin, PYP Officer, has been working recently in partnership with Youth Link in Slemish Integrated College, Ballymena and this partnership is proving to be very productive. The DVD should be available shortly. Spring facilitator training starts on 14 March. In September the adult peacemaking programme will run in Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church in conjunction with PYP. It is hoped that this could prove to be an effective model for other churches.

Resources Production and Promotion

8. With the development of the Christianity Explored course for young people, the area of Christian basics and youth evangelism has a very valuable new resource which could be used to great effect throughout our denomination. Steering Committee have discussed how best to further develop the area of discipleship for Christian young people. A small group from the Steering

Committee is looking at ways to advance our understanding of the issues and help young Christians who are seeking to live out their faith in an ever more complex world.

GRAEME KENNEDY, Convener

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE

1. As the name suggests, this Committee aims to provide a variety of opportunities through which young people can serve the Lord and pass on the good news Jesus brings. This can involve models of ministry that are both well-known and innovative, as we seek to effectively reach the current generation with the gospel. The Committee invites any Board member to forward suggestions regarding ministry opportunities, promising that they will be seriously considered.

Camps

2. The camps being run this year are:

Surf the Rock, Guysmere Boys' Sports and Adventure, Guysmere Girls', Creative Arts, Adventure and Tech.

These are times of great enjoyment with the opportunity to learn more about Jesus.

Summer Outreach Teams

3. Plans are in place to send summer teams to the following congregations:

Newry, Lucan, Mullingar, Conlig, Bailieborough, Lowe Memorial, Donemana, Lisnabreen, OC Randalstown, Ballyholme, Tobermore, Letterkenny, Kilcooley and Woodvale. These teams are an encouragement to their members and host congregations alike and the Committee is pleased to see increased interest in placements for them. The Committee would wish to encourage Board members to promote these as a means through which young people can grow in their faith as they engage in outreach work.

Overseas Teams

4. Teams this year are being sent to the Ukraine and Uganda, to engage in work with projects that YAC has previously been involved with.

5. A procedural document has been compiled to provide guidance on every aspect of planning for and running of such teams. This will provide a framework to help with assessing possible team destinations and help with many aspects of organisation that sometimes cause concern. The Board highly commends this document.

Year Team and Volunteers

6. A complete review has been taking place regarding the Year Team with a view to strengthening its discipleship element and widening the variety of

placements that could be offered to future team members. A re-launch is scheduled for the autumn of 2007.

7. The SWIM volunteers (Servants Working In Mission) are continuing to be of great benefit to those congregations who are hosting them.

8. These two schemes provide amazing opportunities to young adults to learn from those around them while serving the Lord and assisting the youth and children's work in local congregations – all of which greatly assist in matters of personal discipleship and guidance about future service.

Concorde Fund

9. This Fund provides small travel grants to Presbyterians engaged in short term mission service and is of great benefit to many such volunteers.

Thank You

10. All of this work could not go on without the willing help of those who staff the office and the many volunteers who spend countless hours planning and preparing for all these opportunities to become reality. The Committee expresses its thanks to them for all their hard work, long hours and spiritual dedication, knowing that their service in Christ's name will bring forth great fruit.

JOHN FLAHERTY, Convener

MINISTRY EVENTS COMMITTEE

1. The Ministry Events Committee continues to oversee the major events of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry. This is an exciting year for the Events Committee as a new event is being added. The Kids' Praise Party will take place on the afternoon of Saturday 9 June, at the end of the General Assembly week. There will only be one Youth Night on the Saturday evening this year. The Bible Conference Route 66 (for ages 17+) will be held in August and the MAD weekend in October. The Committee looks forward with great expectation to what God will do through these events in the coming year.

Fun Day

2. The Fun Day has now become a bi-annual event. Although there will be no Fun Day in 2007 it was felt necessary to keep things moving and begin preparations for the event in 2008. The working group will greatly miss the Rev Ian McKee in his role as Chair of the Fun Day Working Group and the Committee wishes him every blessing in his future ministry at High Street Presbyterian Church, Antrim.

Youth Night

3. The biggest change for Youth Night is the change from being a two night event to a one night format. This year Youth Night will be on Saturday 9 June 2007. This has been for a number of reasons, but mainly the falling numbers of young people attending. Youth organisations are encouraged to

bring their young people along so that the need to revert to a two night format will become pressing. This year the speaker will be Scott Woodburn, Assistant Minister in Gardenmore Presbyterian Church.

Route 66

4. The Bible conference held at Loughry College continues to fulfil its remit to provide high quality and relevant Biblical teaching for 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 at previous conferences, we are tapping into Biblical knowledge from far and near. The speakers for 2007 are John Samuel from Grosvenor Baptist Church and the Rev James Burnett from Lowe Memorial Presbyterian Church. The dates for the conference are 23 – 27 August 2007.

MAD

5. The purpose of the MAD weekend remains the same, to present a clear evangelistic message to young people under the format of a youth weekend, so removing the organisation from leaders and allowing them to work on relationships and evangelism with their own young people. After nine years the event continues to change and develop but never loses its purpose. 'Mad 8' saw incredible blessing with over twenty young people giving their lives to the Lord, and over fifty young people and leaders recommitting their lives to Christ. The Committee gives praise to God for the way this weekend is being used to change lives through Christ. 'MAD 9' will be welcoming back Mark Oestreicher from Youth Specialities. The dates of the weekend are 26 – 28 October 2007.

Kids' Praise Party

6. There has been great enthusiasm as the Committee has sought to develop new events for our children. This new event is for those from P1 to P7 and will be held on Saturday 9 June 2007, at the end of the General Assembly week from 2.00pm to 3.45pm. The title of the event is 'Great Big God' and will explore God's redemptive plan throughout the Bible. The Committee looks forward to this event and seeks God's blessing on all that will be done.

Future Events

7. New ventures and events are being explored for both young people and children.

JONATHAN MOXEN, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That a grant of £8,652 be paid from the Incidental Fund to Youth Link: NI.
3. That the General Assembly approve the Youth and Children's Project 2007-08, focusing on literacy and music, in partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan.

4. That the General Assembly ask the Doctrine Committee to re-examine the Church's position on children's presence at and participation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and report to the General Assembly in 2008.

5. That the resignation of Rev Edward Hyndman as Convener of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that _____ be nominated in his place.

6. That the resignation of Mrs Heather Lyle as Convener of the Research and Education Committee be accepted, that she be thanked for her services and that _____ be nominated in her place.

7. 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

1. The Irish churches have a long history of involvement in education and over the years have invested vast amounts of energy, commitment and resources to the development of schooling for children and young people. Therefore it is understandable that the churches should feel aggrieved when they believe they are being excluded or their role is diminished.

2. Various views are expressed as to why churches became involved and continue to be involved in the running of schools. Whatever reasons are put forward, the fact remains that churches are involved and they believe they have an important contribution to make. Presbyterians commit significant amounts of time to serve on Boards of Governors in schools in Northern Ireland and Boards of Management in schools in the Republic of Ireland. At a time when major changes are being proposed for the education system in Northern Ireland, the Board invites the General Assembly to affirm its desire for the Presbyterian Church to continue to have a meaningful role in schools and the education system.

3. In the 1930s, 40s and 50s the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland transferred the majority of their school buildings, pupils and staff in Northern Ireland into state control. As a result, Transferors were given rights of representation on school management committees (now called Boards of Governors) and Education Authorities (now Education and Library Boards). Transferors were also given rights of representation in the management of new Controlled schools built subsequently by the state. Today Transferors regard their role as one of partnership with other education stakeholders, including government. For the Protestant churches any notion of churches 'controlling' schools is part of a debate confined to history.

4. The Board recognises that the context in which schools are working today is changing; pluralism and secularisation are influencing the views of parents, teachers, governors and policy makers. It is most likely that all sectors in the education system will be called upon to make compromises if they are to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse and rights-conscious human community.

5. The Christian Churches may not have the same level of community support as they had in the past; however, the Church believes that many parents want their children to be educated within an environment which affirms the importance of Christian worship and values. The context in which learning and teaching take place is as important as the content of the curriculum itself, therefore, any move by government, whether intentionally or unintentionally, which will lead to the erosion of the spiritual dimension to the life of the school community is unwelcome. Neither should schools be permitted to become secular by default because of the impact of equality legislation. It is incumbent

upon politicians and policy makers to give due recognition to the values and beliefs that have framed our society and continue to have widespread support.

6. Last year the General Assembly agreed that University Chaplaincy would become the responsibility of the Board of Social Witness. The Board is asking this year's Assembly to thank and discharge the University Education Committee. This does not mean that third level education is no longer a concern of the Board but it does mean that another means must be found to advise the Church concerning higher and further education matters.

The Rev Dr Robert Buick

7. The Rev Dr Robert Buick has completed six years as Convener of the University Education Committee. During his convenership Robert has highlighted the importance of the work of our university chaplains and promoted the opportunity for shared chaplaincy with other churches, particularly in the Dublin area. Also, he has advised the Board on policy matters regarding third level education. The Board expresses thanks to him for his service and wishes him well in his new role in the Student Services Committee of the Board of Social Witness.

The Rev Nancy Cubitt

8. The Rev Nancy Cubitt has been Director of Primary Education in the Republic of Ireland since 2003 and has been the link between the Board and the Department of Education and Science for National Schools under Presbyterian Patronage. She has also served as a member of the Executive Chairpersons' Committee of the Church of Ireland's Board of Education. Nancy has stressed the importance of training for members of the Board of Management of schools and has arranged training for patron's representatives. The Board is grateful to her for advocating the cause of Presbyterian National Schools and for the advice she has given to schools and patrons during her time as Director of Primary Education.

STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NORTHERN IRELAND

Introduction

1. Educational structures in Northern Ireland are facing changes unprecedented in quantity, scope and rapidity. If current proposals are implemented the wide-ranging effects for curriculum and administration will quickly become apparent at local and national level and in almost every aspect of educational life. In the midst of frenetic change the focus must remain on an educational enterprise that is not about sleek policies and structures, but is about providing optimal resources and outcomes for children, young people, their families and this society. Whatever our views on particular aspects of the present range of proposals church members are surely committed to a rewarding

experience of education for our children and the resources to empower our educational professionals in their strategic calling.

2. This report must by necessity be provisional and contingent on a series of mainly political decisions to be addressed by the Legislative Assembly and Executive. Representations and discussions with government and other stakeholders are continuous. The Board continues to work in productive partnership with the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) to foster our historic and dynamic contribution to the educational landscape of our community.

Governors

3. The Board commends the contribution made by approximately 800 Presbyterians as Transferor Representatives on Boards of Governors in their local schools. They should by now be fully acquainted with the TRC ethos document "Moving Forward Together: Core Values in Controlled Schools in Northern Ireland – Transferors' Perspectives." Such governors should also be attentive to training opportunities provided by their local Education and Library Board as well as by TRC.

4. If there are vacancies on school Boards, the Committee would urge members to consider filling the gaps and thereby exercise a potentially vital ministry.

Review of Public Administration (RPA)

5. Educational administration is included in this sweeping review of the provision of public services. Local government and health structures are also within the purview of this extensive bureaucratic realignment. In November 2006 the Department of Education published policy papers undergirding the development of legislation enabling the Review in Education. The TRC produced a paper in January 2007 responding to these Policy Papers (see Appendix I). Matters of particular concern were comprehensively signalled. On these matters discussions and representations continue. The Committee was heartened by the considered response of several Presbyteries to the TRC paper and their ongoing commitment to the current educational issues, not least as it affects their local schools and communities.

6. In the proposed scheme local schools will be given "maximised supported autonomy". The Board understand this to mean that schools will be supported and held to account by the new Education & Skills Authority (ESA). This body will in essence replace the Education & Library Boards. An Education Advisory Forum, consisting of various stakeholder groupings, including TRC, has been proposed, but details of its remit and effectiveness remain vague.

7. The RPA proposals are being justified in terms of greater coordinated effectiveness and efficiency savings. However, in the absence of clear structures and assurances, there is a concern that such centralisation of administration and services could lead to a practical deterioration of local provision and a perception of isolation.

8. Some of the proposals relating to governance will effectively diminish the Transferors' representation on Boards of Governors. Ironically, the Department of Education have cited equality legislation as a reason for excluding Protestant Transferors from more recent school Boards that were not historically "transferred". The TRC awaits details of precisely which schools could be affected and have sought the legal basis upon which this advice rests.

9. The RPA policy papers are still insufficient to assuage our great concerns about advocacy for what are presently termed "controlled" schools. Ambiguity about ownership of the school estate and arrangements for sectoral support are not conducive to nurturing confidence and morale.

10. However, the Department of Education have indicated their willingness to support a form of secretariat for the TRC in keeping with arrangements for other sectoral interests. Given a genuine role and remit (and adequate resources) this is a promising prospect.

Independent Strategic Review of Education: The Bain Report (December 2006) & A Policy for Sustainable Schools (January 2007)

11. The Bain Report and the consequent government consultation document have engendered considerable publicity, not all of which has been entirely accurate. The Review, which cannot be considered in isolation from the other proposals, questions the viability of our current arrangements and postulates movement towards a future of fewer and larger schools, characterised by strategic collaboration and effective area-based planning. With a falling school population Bain points to the inappropriateness of several sectors ploughing their own furrows, thereby duplicating provision in an economically irresponsible manner.

12. In partnership with our TRC colleagues the Board acknowledges the need for prudent structures and the wisdom of local area planning and collaboration. This process should not be primarily finance led. If it is to have integrity it must be driven by an overarching concern to optimise the educational provision for all our children and young people.

13. As yet no definition of "area" has been given. Will an "area" correspond to one of the proposed newly amalgamated councils? Or will it be a much smaller geographically defined area? At time of writing we do not know.

14. After many years of studied vagueness the Bain Report did offer benchmark figures for what enrolment figures amounted to sustainability: Primary School: 140 pupils in urban areas and 105 pupils in rural settings and Post-Primary: 500 pupils, and a new sixth form in an 11-18 yr school to have at least 100 pupils. Sir George Bain is on record as offering these figures as minima, not optima. It is at these figures that schools would be reviewed – not inevitably closed. Nevertheless the concern of the Committee is that smaller schools in rural areas will feel under a constant and debilitating threat. Moreover, vulnerable minority communities will come under such pressure that a geographic sectarianisation could be the eventual outcome. If we are committed to a shared future we must be sure that the Bain proposals are applied with a challenging blend of consistency and sensitivity.

15. The TRC, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Council for Catholic Education, have made provision to observe contemporary collaborative

and cooperative models operating elsewhere in the United Kingdom. It is hoped that the Department of Education will assist in a thoroughgoing research project dealing with collaboration issues.

Education (NI) Order 2006

16. The Education (NI) Order became law on 19th July 2006 and has provided the legislative framework to implement the revised statutory curriculum. New arrangements for post-primary education, such as the Entitlement Framework and powers to introduce new admissions arrangements, were enabled. The curricular implications of the Entitlement Framework will require careful evaluation of resources that are actually available to schools and colleges. The Framework is tied in to meaningful local provision and collaboration.

17. The Order, as amended by the Northern Ireland (St. Andrews Agreement) Act 2006, makes provision for the abolition of academic selection, but subject to a vote in the Northern Ireland Assembly if the Assembly is restored by 28th March 2007. Uncertainty and bewilderment have led to a perplexing confusion about the status of academic selection and the future of post-primary schools.

RE Core Syllabus

18. The production of the revised core syllabus had been delayed whilst subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. However the Education Minister, Maria Eagle, has accepted the churches' draft syllabus. The core syllabus provides a minimum upon which schools can build depending on the needs of pupils and the ethos of the school.

19. An Advisory Group has been set up, co-chaired by the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Churches. It is presently representative of the Education and Library Boards, CCMS, NICIE, Inter-Faith Forum, St. Mary's and Stranmillis University Colleges, Queen's University, University of Ulster and RE teachers. CCEA have also appointed an RE Officer. The Group, assisted by the RE officer, are tasked with developing RE guidance materials, including resources for the world religions component at Key Stage 3. A draft scheme of work has been produced and a rolling programme of work will mean that Key Stage 3 resources will be followed by similar work for Key Stage 4. Key Stage 2 will then be addressed.

20. The resources will helpfully present the RE syllabus in the format of the emerging new curricular framework. Legislation to enable the revised core syllabus will require careful scrutiny to remove some anomalies and archaic definitions. Nevertheless the Committee would encourage government to proceed with legislation at the earliest opportunity.

Acknowledgement

21. In last year's report the Board referred to the impact of a high level of change in education. Once again the Church recognises the valuable contribution made by many people in the education system.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Primary Schools

Rev Nancy Cubitt, Director of Primary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:

1. During the past year a National Schools' Working Group has been established. The group has met on two occasions and the main subject of concern has been patronage. The Patron of Presbyterian schools is normally the Presbytery in which the school is situated and two representatives of the Patron sit on the Board of Management, one of whom acts as chairman. Several schools claiming to be Presbyterian have not been operating in this way.

2. The Working Group has made contact with the Department of Education and Science to see which schools, according to their records, are under Presbyterian patronage. Steps are now being taken to bring all of these schools under the patronage of the Presbytery and already one school has requested to do this.

3. Concern has been expressed about the liabilities of Presbytery being Patron and it is important that presbyteries are adequately insured. Consultation is taking place with the Church of Ireland Education Department about support for Boards of Management as employers. PCI is grateful to the Church of Ireland for advice and support. As Director of Primary Education, I continue to be invited to sit on their Executive Chairpersons' Committee.

4. All ancillary staff in national schools now must undergo a Garda Vetting process. Vetting can be processed through the Board of Social Witness.

5. Whole School Evaluation now replaces the old School Inspection system. As the name suggests this process involves everyone connected to the school - parents, board of management, children, and teachers. The evaluation team will meet with all groups and conduct interviews. There are three stages: the pre-evaluation, the in-school evaluation and the post evaluation. All evaluations are to be posted on the Department of Education and Science's web site.

6. Some discussion has taken place about the role of the church's Board of Education in supporting primary schools in the Republic. Board members and Patrons feel the need for adequate support and encouragement in this demanding role. We commend all who serve on such boards for their willingness to serve the church and schools in this way.

7. This is my last report as Director of Primary Education in the Republic. I trust that a successor will be found soon and that the Board will give them the support and guidance they need to fulfil this role in a satisfactory way.

Secondary Education Committee

Mr Brian Duffy, Director of Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:

1. The Secondary Education Committee 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. It distributes the Block Grant received from the Government and coordinates education policy among the above Churches. PCI is represented by Brian Duffy and the Rev Mary Hunter.

2. In the school year 2005/06 the total received from the Department of Education & Science, was €5,571,568. The Committee agreed to increase grants for the school year 2007/08 on a scale from boarding €1,140 - €5,250, (€1,140 - €4,725 in 2006/2007) and day €480 - €1,998, (€480 - €1,800). An increase in certain allowances was also agreed in relation to the reckoning of assessments. This has resulted in improved access to grants for a number of families.

3. The Committee exists in part to support necessitous Protestant families to access education. For many years the term "Protestant" did not pose any difficulties in relation to the allocation of grants. In recent years, with a wide range of church memberships it has become increasingly difficult to make an objective decision as to the appropriateness of one membership over another. The Committee is obliged to be objective and careful in the administration of State funds in relation to the purpose for which they were granted. It has therefore decided to study how best to define "Protestant" in the future.

4. Unfortunately, there has been no further progress on the issue of the provision of state-funded chaplains to voluntary secondary schools although some schools have continued to make such appointments from their own funds. The existence of such chaplains in other types of schools, along with inequity of state funding for general school purposes, represents a continuing discrimination against voluntary secondary schools.

5. Recently, the Department of Education & Science has expressed a wish to negotiate a cross-sectoral redeployment scheme for all teachers. This could have serious implications for schools under Protestant management which have been outside previous redeployment schemes.

6. Your prayers are requested for the continuing work of all of the bodies which seek to maintain and improve educational standards for our children.

School Chaplain's Report

Royal & Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe

Rev Stanley Stewart reports:

1. I express gratitude to God for the opportunity to minister to almost 600 students and 40 staff in the context of a school environment. The main points regarding my work this year have been:

- (a) Professional duties: I teach 40% of a full-time teacher timetable, mostly Religious Education and have introduced the new Leaving Cert. course in Religious Education as an examination subject option to the senior students. The first class taking this 2 year course will be examined this year.
- (b) Pastoral Care: As part of the Pastoral Care Team, I guide, support and

counsel students – especially in the context of relationship difficulties, bullying, behavioural problems, suicide prevention, teenage pregnancy and substance abuse. Currently I am developing a student peer mentoring programme with the help of Hope North-west.

- (c) **Worship & Proclamation:** I present the Christian message in this multi-faith school community in Morning Assembly and in conjunction with the student-led Christian Union. A highlight of the year was again the Worship Ireland led Gospel Concert during the school day in December when 150 students attended. There is on going work with Child Evangelism Fellowship and Miss Ruth Mitchell, the Donegal Presbytery Youth Support worker. Ruth has delivered the PYP programme to Transition Year students. Operation Mobilisation will also be involved in follow-up work from the Amazing Grace film and explore the issue of child slavery as part of the Church of Ireland Synod RE Project.

2. Frequently I take Sunday Services in support of ministerial colleagues with many vacancies on their hands. I am fully involved in the work of the Donegal Presbytery and have been appointed Moderator. Also, I support Boards of Management in National Schools, under Presbyterian patronage, in the appointment of staff. I take deputation-type meetings, updating congregations of current issues and needs within the education system in the Republic.

3. I give thanks for the openness and support available within the school, the community and the local churches and ask for prayer that the work for God will continue to bring blessing. I am thankful that the contractual issues with the Department of Education and Science are nearing resolution. Thank you for your concern in this regard.

COLIN MCCLURE, Convener

APPENDIX I

Transferor Representatives' Council comments to The Department of Education (NI) regarding The Review of Public Administration (RPA) Policy Papers

The Transferor Representatives' Council welcomes this process of consultation and the opportunity to offer our considered reflection on these RPA policy papers. We offer the following points:

Positive comments

1. The TRC commends the Department for the involvement of key stakeholders in the development process of these policy papers, and believes that this partnership model is a useful precursor for future engagement.

2. The TRC welcomes the recognition of the Protestant churches as 'an important leading voice for the current controlled sector' (Paper 4, para 13).

3. The TRC welcomes the inclusion of Transferors as members alongside Trustees, NICIE, GBA, CnaG and others on the Education Advisory Forum (Paper 4, para 2).

Negative comments

1. As churches we are alarmed that the spiritual dimension is absent across these papers especially in the ethos and values statement of Paper 2, Annex A. By contrast the 1986 Order states - 'it shall be the duty of each board, so far as its powers extend to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout those stages is available to meet the needs of its area'.

2. We note that that the Board of the Education and Skills Authority will be 'appointed by the Minister on merit for the skills and experience they bring', (Paper 5, para 7). As Transferors have had the right to representation on local education authorities and area boards since the transferring of Protestant schools into state control, the TRC believes that under the new proposals the right of representation on the authoritative body is being removed.

3. Paper 5, para 20 poses major difficulties for transferors, because at present transferors have nomination rights for all controlled primary and secondary schools. This proposal will effectively remove transferor rights of nomination for new controlled schools provided by the state, most likely all built since 1947.

We understand that the Department has been advised that it is not legally possible, in forming new legislation under Equality provisions, to afford the status of foundation governor to churches in schools which they never previously owned. The view of the TRC is that this should be independently tested as it represents a significant loss of transferors' rights conferred by earlier legislation and decades of custom and practice. Initial estimates indicate that in some areas this loss of transferor rights of nomination will be very significant.

The public perception of this loss will be seen as a huge inequality for Protestants, given that the Catholic Church will still have foundation governor status on all maintained schools including all new schools. Following the Bain proposals, the ESA may be required to develop ideas for collaboration; these will have greatest potential if there is engagement at a local level through the community influence of church governors. Due to the nature of religiously divided schooling in NI, without church governors on schools, moves towards collaboration may be hampered.

Transferors believe that this issue goes to the heart of the vision for education, and the importance of a spiritual dimension to governance. The proposals take no cognisance of the fact that church involvement in schools is a formal recognition of a contribution to a spiritual aspect to education and in the ethos of the school. In addition, much has been made in the policy papers of the need for effective governance of schools. Good leadership is vital on a school board of governors; over the decades transferors have provided strong and consistent leadership, and contributed a long term community interest. If the proposals are implemented without amendment many schools, especially in the post-primary sector, may not have access to that community-focussed and willing group of church representatives.

The hoped-for strong interest in being a community governor may be misguided. A recruitment process can be very off-putting for people who might otherwise be willing volunteers.

4. We note the key concept in the relationship of schools with the ESA is ‘maximised supported autonomy’ (Paper 2, para 4). In the Controlled sector we do not detect any desire for an increase of autonomy by Boards of Governors.

Particular concerns

Many of our concerns arise from the absence of specific information. For example:

1. There is no indication of the level of local support and services for schools. Schools will need to be assured that centralisation of administration will not lead to a loss of local provision of services.

2. Paper 20 dealing with proposals for the ownership and management of the controlled schools’ estate has not yet been published. Clearly church transferors would have an important involvement in this body given their commitment to, and investment in, the controlled schools estate through historic transfer arrangements.

3. Details of the role of the Education Advisory Forum (Paper 4, para 2) are sketchy. We note that a Review of Advice project has begun to look at details of the form and function of the Forum. It is essential that there is full consultation with stakeholders on any proposals which follow the outcomes of this review.

4. Paper 4, para 14 indicates a strong argument to provide sectoral support. We look forward to the proposed engagement with DE, mentioned in Paper 4, para 15, to agree arrangements for such support.

5. Clarification is needed concerning accountability and autonomy throughout the proposals.

6. It is noted that the relative proportions are not disclosed in the proposals for categories of school governors (Paper 5, para 20).

7. Paper 15 proposes introducing charges to parents for the provision of school transport. The TRC is concerned about the impact of this proposed charge on the rural community and would like to know how this can be done without having equality implications.

8. It is proposed that the responsibility of recruitment and selection of staff in future will be held by the school alone (Paper 7). Whilst we agree that appointments of staff are best made at a local level, we are concerned that there must be built-in quality control mechanisms especially around senior appointments.

Conclusion

The TRC has attempted to be positive in its response and acknowledges that such a review is required. However, the Council has serious concerns that the established contribution of transferors, especially in governance, is being substantially eroded by the application of some proposed policies. There appears to be a contradiction in the stated objective of strengthening the capacity of

church transferors as an important leading voice in the controlled sector, while at the same time diminishing their role in governance.

The Council needs to be persuaded that following this review, services to schools will be delivered in a more efficient way and that resources will be released to improve the quality of services at the frontline.

We look forward to further engagement on the further outworking of these policies and assure the department of our continued commitment as an educational partner.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The University Education Committee met twice during the past year and the work has been dealing with the transition period as university chaplaincy became the responsibility of the Board of Social Witness. Updates were given on the various chaplaincy situations and discussions have taken place with the Board of Social Witness as that Board puts in place new arrangements to support university chaplains. Chaplaincy matters and individual chaplain's reports are included in the Assembly Report of the Board of Social Witness.

Future of the University Education Committee

2. It was agreed by the Board that the need for the University Education Committee is considerably diminished now that responsibility for chaplains has been handed over to the Student Services Committee of the Board of Social Witness. Therefore, the Board of Education is asking the Assembly to have the University Education Committee discharged.

3. It is recognised that a group or panel will be required to advise the Board of Education on matters of higher and further education. It was suggested that this group should be able to draw on the knowledge of our University Chaplains. Members of the Committee felt that the Board should decide how this business could be addressed in consultation with the Board of Social Witness and when the local arrangements for supporting chaplains are in place.

Variable Deferred Fees

4. One area of concern to the Committee is the impact of the Variable Deferred Fees scheme which has been introduced this year. Although the number of students entering universities for the first time does not appear to have changed significantly, there is considerable concern regarding the high levels of student debt. There are indications that many students are spending much more of their time in part time employment, which is having a detrimental effect upon their leisure activities, social life and also upon the time they have available for studies and even their attendance at lectures. The Committee is concerned about the long term effect of this scheme on our young adults and especially those from lower income families.

Finally

5. The members of the University Education Committee would like to express their thanks to the Board of Education for the interest and support for students, staff and chaplaincy to third level education which has been demonstrated on behalf of the church over past years.

ROBERT BUICK, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That, recognising the many changes and pressures in education provision, the General Assembly acknowledge and thank those people in the education system, including teachers, support staff, administrators and policy makers who work very hard to achieve high quality education services for our children and young people.
3. That, at this time when major changes are being proposed for the education system in Northern Ireland, the General Assembly affirm their desire for the Presbyterian Church to continue to have a meaningful role with other educational partners in schools and the education system.
4. That the General Assembly encourage Transferor Governors to become fully acquainted with the TRC ethos document “Moving Forward Together: Core Values in Controlled Schools in Northern Ireland – Transferors’ Perspectives” and to promote its use when formulating aims and objectives for schools in the Controlled Sector.
5. That the General Assembly commend the RE Core Syllabus (NI) and encourage governors to ensure that RE is adequately resourced and competently taught.
6. That the General Assembly thank and discharge the University Education Committee and note with appreciation the service given by the Rev Dr Robert Buick as Convener.
7. 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 has had another busy but interesting and worthwhile year. The Committee on Ministerial Studies has had two panels working under its remit one panel reviewing Ministerial Training and the other looking at Presbytery Guidelines in response to the Armagh Memorial presented at last Assembly. The Board committee on Ministerial Development has begun the process of looking at how we might encourage ministers in their ministerial development as we seek to develop life long learning.

2. The Board remains encouraged by the number of candidates seeking to explore God's will in regard to ordination but realises that a steady supply of ministers is essential for the Church's wellbeing. Believing that a sense of call usually emerges within the context of the local Christian fellowship we would urge ministers and Kirk Sessions to keep this issue before their congregations as a matter for prayer, as we would also encourage those members who have the appropriate gifts to listen for God's call.

3. The Board is indebted to those ministers who so readily agree to facilitate applicants and candidates required to undertake congregational placements. The provision of such opportunities remains a vital component in the initial selection and training process.

4. The Board is 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 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 Institute of Christian Training has had another busy year running a variety of courses which appeal to a wide variety of church members. The "Prepared to Serve" course, introduced at last Assembly, has been well received in a number of congregations.

6. The Board note the Retirement of the Rev Dr Cecil McCullough as Professor of New Testament from the 31 August 2007.

Rev Prof Patton Taylor writes:

The Rev Prof Cecil McCullough has had a long and distinguished career with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Having studied at Queen's University and at Assembly's College, he was ordained in 1965 and inducted as Assistant Minister in Trinity Presbyterian Church, Bangor. He later went on to serve for six years as Minister of Muckamore Presbyterian Church (1969-75). During this time he completed his PhD research, with a dissertation entitled: *Hebrews and the Old Testament: A comparison of the use which the author of the Epistle to*

the Hebrews makes of the Old Testament with the use made by other writers of his day.

In 1975, Cecil McCullough was called by the Overseas Board to serve as a missionary in Lebanon, as Professor of Biblical Studies (and later as Academic Dean) at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut. Very shortly after his arrival in Lebanon, the country was engulfed in full-scale civil war. Cecil and his family displayed great courage as he continued to serve in Lebanon for almost nine years, with only two brief periods of respite at the height of hostilities. During this period, Cecil served for several periods as acting Chaplain to the British Embassy in Beirut and was a member of the Ambassador's Security Committee and of the Board of the British School.

In addition to his teaching responsibilities in the Near East School of Theology, Cecil undertook research on Syriac manuscripts, including several major cataloguing projects and also a translation of and commentary on the epigraphs of the frescoes of the Syrian Monastery of Mar Moussa in the Palmyra Desert..

Eventually in 1984, Cecil accepted a call from the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand to serve as Professor of New Testament in Knox Theological College in Dunedin, where he taught with distinction until 1987. In his last year in New Zealand, he also served as Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Otago, Dunedin (to which Knox College was linked).

In 1987, Cecil was appointed to the Chair of New Testament in Union Theological College in Belfast, where he has served until the present time. From 1994-1998 he was Secretary of Faculty and from 1998-2002 he was Principal of the College. During his period as Principal, there were two major General Assembly reviews of Theological education and the Magee Institute and the office of Director of Ministerial Studies were incorporated within the College. Cecil brought to his role in Union College his breadth of knowledge of New Testament scholarship, his specialist knowledge of the book of Hebrews, and his considerable experience of academic teaching at university level. His years of living and teaching in Lebanon gave him particular insights into Near Eastern thought, from which many an illustration illuminated New Testament studies for his students. Students across the years speak of lectures marked by scholarly detail and insight, innovative presentation, and challenging exposition. Over the years, numerous students have completed doctoral dissertations under his supervision.

Innovative in every area of his ministry and teaching, one of Cecil's most significant contributions to the College is the lead which he has given in moving the College into the computer-age - from the days of the first computers and early e-mail facilities through to power-point in the classroom and the recently launched new College website. Another significant contribution has been his unrivalled knowledge of College scholarships and endowments.

During his years in Union, Cecil has also made a significant contribution to the Institute (formerly the Faculty) of Theology at Queen's (of which the College is an integral part and plays a leading role). For many years, he was Chair of the Queen's New Testament Board. He participated in several complete reviews of the Queen's curriculum (including the modularisation of courses). Cecil was Principal of the College in 2001, when Queen's Theology achieved a

score of “excellent” in the major Teaching Quality Assessment of all UK University departments which took place at that time.

Since 1988, Cecil has acted as Editor of *Irish Biblical Studies*. He has always maintained his interest in Hebrews and across the years he has published a number of articles in various scholarly journals and compilations. He has also written in the area of “reconciliation in the Bible”.

During his time in College, Cecil continued to be active in the wider life of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, not least in his contributions to the Doctrine Committee, co-authoring several important reports. He continued his involvement with the Overseas Board, serving for a time as Convener of the Europe and Middle East Committee and from 1989-1994 he served as Convener of the University Education Committee. He has also represented PCI on the Executive Committee of the Leuenberg Fellowship.

Cecil’s contribution to Union College has been considerable, both in the classroom and in all aspects of College community life. In Faculty discussions his contributions were always thoughtful and incisive; and during his years as Principal he gave wise leadership. His wit and wisdom, together with his insight and experience, will be missed. On behalf of all in the College community, we wish him well for a long and happy retirement and we hope that he will keep closely in touch with College life in the years to come.

7. The Rev Brian Savage has completed his term of service as Convener of the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee. However, it is proposed this year to move the supervision of this committee to the General Board and it would not be a good time to lose Brian’s experience and wisdom. The Assembly is therefore being asked to extend his convenership for one further year. The Board is grateful that Brian is prepared to accept this extension to his service.

8. The Rev Stephen Moore has completed his term of service as Convener of the Ministerial Studies Committee. This convenership is an onerous one and Stephen has handled it with great wisdom and diplomacy. He has shown great sensitivity in his dealings with both applicant and students. He has been convener at a time of considerable change in the life of the Board and has given wise leadership in this regard. Under his convenership the Committee has moved from simply administering decisions of the General Assembly to being much more proactive in seeking to develop Ministerial Training, in keeping with the Board’s priorities approved by the 2005 General Assembly. We express our thanks and appreciation to Stephen and wish him well in his new ministry in Gilnahirk.

STUDENTS’ BURSARY FUND

The Convener, Rev Stewart Mackay reports:

1. The Students’ Bursary fund Committee continues to administer the Church’s financial provision for students for the ordained ministry and their families.
2. It is encouraging to see that there were again a total 45 students for the ministry in the year Sept 2006 - June 2007. The cost of grants, fees, and other

expenses for this period is over £480,000. This is met through offerings at services of licensing, ordination and installation of ministers and elders, personal and congregational gifts, and the United Appeal Fund.

3. The Committee continues to be thankful for the generosity of the members of our Church, who support the Fund in these ways and would ask those involved in planning services of licensing, ordination and installation, to ensure that full use is made of the literature available at reception in Church House; the bookmark and especially the Gift Aid envelope. It is suggested that these should be given out at the previous service to enable members to come with the information already written on the envelope. The more support given through these services, the less will need to be requested from the United Appeal Fund.

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Convener, Rev Prof WP Addley reports

1. The uptake on the Ministerial Development Fund continues to grow. In the past year 115 ministers submitted claims for In-Service Training, in 2005 the number was 87, and in 2004 62. The number of ministers submitting claims for sabbatical leave was 16, as compared with 8 and 13 in the preceding years. A total of £38,158 was granted in 2006, with comparable figures of 2005 - £25,264, 2004 - £22,652, 2003 - £17,433.

2. Last year the maximum weekly allowance was increased to £250.

3. The Committee has been strengthened with additional members. During the next year it plans to proceed beyond simply reviewing current arrangements to consider how Ministerial Development, including In-Service training, can be proactively encouraged and provided in the PCI. The Committee is encouraged by the fact that some committees and panels of other Boards are examining issues related to ministerial development and spiritual renewal. We look forward to a profitable inter-action and cross-fertilisation of ideas and proposals.

4. It is proposed that the levy for the incoming year upon congregations and participating boards/agencies be 0.25p in the £ of stipend. A resolution is presented to that effect.

ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE

The Convener, the Rev Dr DJ Watts, reports:

At the time of writing all the assignments have been made, including those for ministers transferring from other Churches. The Committee is grateful to those ministers and congregations who see the mentoring of student assistants as an important service to the whole Church.

COLLEGE AND MAGEE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. The Management Committee continues to see a satisfying increase in numbers of students both in the general College courses and through the work of the Institute for Christian Training. This in itself creates challenges for the Committee in the supply of accommodation and manpower.

2. The numbers going through College courses are as follows:

	2006/07
Ministry students & Deaconesses	46
Other full-time under-graduates	103
Other full-time post-graduates	25
Part-time undergraduates	36
Other Queen's Students taking degree modules	54
Part-time post-graduates	52
A-level	29
Youth & Children's Ministry courses	66
Overseas Board	2

In all of this we are seeking to tailor courses suitable for each student and to balance good quality theological education with practical application; to enable theological research; and to encourage the provision of Christian training at every level.

3. The Institute for Christian Training continues to develop. We anticipate a good take up in recent initiatives to provide course-material for local churches, in particular "Preparing to Serve" and "Discover Jesus." The number of course participants for the current year is:

	2006/07
At UTC	429
Courses away from UTC	84
<i>Prepared to Serve</i> – participant's guides	759

4. Plans have been drawn to refurbish the old Principal's house and to provide a student common room. This will provide much needed social/community space for students and staff; additional lecture and seminar rooms; additional office provision (in particular for the Institute of Christian Training); study facilities for post-graduates students; specialised library facilities and a resource centre for church members; and essential storage facilities, including library stacks.

5. The Management Committee is aware of the considerable thinking that the Board is giving to training, both for ministerial students and for the wider church membership, and the Committee agrees with the strategic importance of this. Under God we wish to ensure that the College, including the Institute for Christian Training, plays a significant part in equipping those whom God calls to be effective and fruitful in ministry. To deepen understanding of God's Word remains at the heart of all that we do and we remain committed fully to this task.

6. God works through people and the Management Committee appreciates the dedication and Christian commitment of all those who work

under its care. It is evident that they retain a vision and see their part in the wider work of the church and indeed the Kingdom of God. We wish Professor McCullough well for his retirement: his experience as a biblical teacher and knowledge of the College will be greatly missed by the Management Committee and the church as a whole.

7. Professor Patton Taylor completes his five year appointment as Principal of Union College in August 2007. The College celebrated its 150th anniversary and has seen student numbers rise to an all time high during his term as principal. We wish to thank Patton for his leadership and congratulate him upon two recent awards; an MBE in the New Year Honours List and a PhD from the University of Sheffield.

DAVID BRICE, Convener

RESOURCING CHRISTIANS FOR MINISTRY COMMITTEE

“Prepared to Serve”

1. The three-week course on gifts and service, “Prepared to Serve”, has been well received by participants. From September 2006 to March 2007 around 700 church members in a wide variety of congregations have taken the course. The Prepared to Serve materials are available from the Institute for Christian Training at Union Theological College.

Revision of current PCI pamphlets

2. Given that stock levels for some of the pamphlets that are used widely in the church are now low, the committee is working with the Board of Mission in Ireland panels to revise some of these with the intention of updating and re-designing them. The committee is in the process of revising the pamphlets on baptism and the selection of elders. We are also working on a new pamphlet on the selection of committee members.

“Learning to Lead”

3. We have been slow in developing a new course for the training of elders, but are hopeful that progress is now being made. As part of this, we intend to include some material on the theology of the Westminster Standards.

Future plans

4. There is a real need for some resources to be provided in the area of small group leadership and we are investigating what may already be available and suitable for use throughout the church. We have also noted the need for resources on developing the prayer life of the local congregation, and we believe that a series of short “best practice” articles, available via the internet, may be the best way forward. We are also eager to encourage the sharing of information

on what has been useful and helpful in the area of all-age Sunday School materials.

5. We wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to Dr Desi Alexander for all his work in this important area of providing training and resources for our church.

J STAFFORD CARSON, Convener

COMMITTEE FOR THE RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES

1. The committee has operated the current application procedure now for two years and in the light of experience has made some alterations to the conditions normally attached to acceptance.

2. In future all accepted applicants will be required to make themselves available for assignment to assistantships at the time when the Assignment Committee is allocating ministry students to their assistantships. Applicants who are not placed at the end of two cycles of the assignment process will have their applications reviewed by the Committee.

3. The committee has also concluded that applicants would benefit from undertaking the licentiates' course and this will be made a condition of acceptance.

4. Five ministers applied to the committee and four of them were interviewed. The Board has accepted three of these applicants as eligible for call upon completion of suitable conditions

Rev Kiran Irene Young Wimberly, a minister of the Presbyterian Church of the USA, upon completion of an assistantship lasting two years

Rev Derek McMillan Morrison, a minister of the Presbyterian Church of the USA who is immediately eligible for call

Rev Daniel Reyes Martin, a minister of the Spanish Evangelical Church, upon completion of an assistantship lasting one year

5. Vacancy Commissions of the Presbyteries of South Belfast and Down requested that the committee interview two other ministers with a view to them being placed on lists for hearing by congregations under Code 285(4)(f). Two special interviews were held and the Board subsequently approved:

Rev Alexander Temple Wimberly, a minister of the Presbyterian Church of the USA

Rev David Hyndman, a minister of the Church of England as eligible to be placed on lists for hearing by the congregations concerned.

R BRIAN SAVAGE, Convener

COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL STUDIES

1. The Committee met two times during the year.

2. Through the 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 wishes to record its appreciation to the DMS for his wisdom, graciousness and pastoral support for the students.

3. In the academic year 2006/2007 there were 50 students under the care of Presbyteries as listed in the appended Schedule (Appendix I).

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 students.

5. The Board recommends to the Assembly for approval the Report on the Review of Ministerial Training (Appendix II) and the significant updating of the Code consequent upon it. The Board envisages the work of the Panel on the Review of Ministerial Training as an ongoing process of information gathering; evaluation and assessment; and drawing up of recommendations to be reported for approval.

6. 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 D Patton, BSc, BD

Homiletics, Public Worship and Pastoral Work - The Rev Dr DC Irwin, MA, BD.

However, as stated in the Report on the Review of Ministerial Training (Appendix II), the Board are recommending that the function of the external examiners be taken over by the Panel on the Review of Ministerial Training.

7. The Board considered the content of the Memorial of the Presbytery of Armagh (Reports, 2006, pp 233-234) through the Committee on Ministerial Studies. A sub-committee met with representatives of the Presbytery and addressed the issues in conjunction with drawing up "Presbytery Guidelines with regard to Applicants for the Ordained Ministry, Ministerial Students and Licentiatees" (Appendix III) as requested at a meeting of Presbytery Agents in November 2005. In essence, the Board is now recommending that Presbyteries make enquiries as to an applicant's sense of call, character and gifts, and agreement with the central teachings and practices of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. However, this is to be carried out in the context of the Presbytery's interview being the initial stage in a lengthy process which is designed to increasingly clarify and confirm God's will for the applicant and the Church.

8. The Review of Legislation on Assistants and Associates (Reports, 2004, pp 294-297) created an unforeseen and unfair situation for a small number of applicants who are now approaching their time for serving as licentiate assistants. The relevant resolution seeks to address that inequality.

9. Concern was expressed at the 2006 Assembly in regard to the lack of younger students for the ministry. On the one hand, the Board recognises that there are a variety of reasons for the age profile of students for the ministry in

recent years having risen compared to that of many years ago. Other denominations have experienced a similar scenario. On the other hand, while acknowledging that there has been a perception in sections of the Church that those in their twenties were unlikely to be accepted as students and so some may have been deterred from applying at that stage, the Board affirms its policy of welcoming applications from all age groups provided that the Board's Interviewing Panel are satisfied that they have the necessary maturity and life experience.

10. One of the effects of the Report on the Review of Ministerial Training may be to facilitate the swifter entry into active ministry of some younger applicants, if appropriate. In the past year, the DMS has continued to undertake deputation work, attended the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry "Route 66" event with a ministry student and organised an Information Day at Union Theological College in January 2007 at which a significant number of under-thirties were present among the total of 33 people from different parts of Ireland. Further action is planned through the production of updated attractive literature for distribution to ministers and congregations after the Assembly's decision on the Review of Ministerial Training and the obligatory article in the Presbyterian Herald. The Rt Rev Dr David Clarke has taken many opportunities as Moderator to highlight the need for students and the Board is grateful for his support in this task. The Assembly may be encouraged to discover that the average age of our current first year students is 32 (ranging from 24 to 41) and the average age of this year's 20 applicants being considered by the Board's Interviewing Panel is also 32 (ranging from 23 to 46).

Study In A Missionary Partnership

Rev Dr Ian Hart reports:

11. 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. In the past 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).

Mini School & Interview

12. The 2007 Mini School and Interview was held in Union College from 2-4 April. The Interviewing Panel comprised: Revs Robert Beggs, Gordon Best, Robin Brown, Rob Craig, William Henry, Liz Hughes, John Hutchinson, David Knox, Cheryl Meban, Philip McCrea, Adrian McLernon, Brian McMillan, Noble McNeely, Ian McNie, Adrian Moffett, Colin Morrison, Bill Parker, Brian Savage, William Sinclair, David Thompson; Mrs Mary Robinson, Miss Anne Taylor, Mrs Jayne Wright; Messrs Douglas Cowan, Mervyn Whittle, 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).

13. 19 candidates were in attendance and completed the normal aspects of the interviewing process. 14 are being recommended to the General Assembly of this year.

STEPHEN P MOORE, Convener

APPENDIX I

SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS

ARDS	Colin Anderson	Union
	William Harkness	Union
	Graeme McConville	-
ARMAGH	Ronnie Agnew	Union
	Andrew McConnell	Union
	Roger McElnea	Union
	Robert Orr	Union
	Mark Wilson	Union
BALLYMENA	Thomas Bruce	Union
	Edwin Chestnutt	Union
	Colin Jones	Union
	Linda Keys	Union
	Philip McCullough	Union
SOUTH BELFAST	Rodney Moody	Union
	Graeme Fowles	Union
	Dario Leal	Union
	David McCarthy	Union
	Michael McClenahan	Union
	Karen Mbayo	Union
	Ivan Steen	Union
	Lesley-Ann Wilson	Regent
EAST BELFAST	Janice Browne	Union
	David Clawson	Union
	David Leach	Union
	Mark McKeown	Union
	Liam Rutherford	Union
CARRICKFERGUS	Ben Walker	Union
	William Buchanan	Union
	Grant Connor	Union
	Nick Cooper	Union
	Martin Gracey	Union
	Jonathan McKay	Union
COLERAINE	Mark Russell	Union
	Martin Baxter	-
	David Brownlow	Union
DOWN	Mark Catney	Union

	James Cochrane	Union
	Kathryn Viner	Union
DROMORE	Colin McKibbin	-
	Raymond McKibbin	Union
DUBLIN & MUNSTER	Andy Carroll	Union
IVEAGH	Neil Bingham	Union
	Andrew Faulkner	Union
MONAGHAN	Mary Deatherage	Union
	Clarke Deering	Union
ROUTE	Andrew Mullan	Union
	John Mullan	-
TEMPLEPATRICK	Peter Turton	Union
TYRONE	Stewart Glendinning	Union
	Bryan Kee	-

APPENDIX II

REPORT ON REVIEW OF MINISTERIAL TRAINING

The Panel was established by the Committee on Ministerial Studies under the Board of Studies and Christian Training to review Ministerial Training in accordance with the second of the Board's four priorities:

Revision of ministerial training in light of our own consultations and also in consultation with BMI.

The Board envisages the development of an ever closer working relationship between the Board, the Faculty and the Mission Boards of the Church through an ongoing process of review facilitated by a Panel consisting of between 6 and 10 members with the Board Convener, Committee Convener, DMS and 1 representative of Faculty (chosen in consultation with Faculty) designated as members. The present Review Panel consists of Revs George Moore, Stephen Moore, Ronnie Hetherington, Prof Laurence Kirkpatrick, John Dickinson, Adrian Moffett; and Mrs Mary Robinson.

The review involved the Panel engaging in a 3 stage process:

1. Information gathering through contact with focus groups representing the following bodies - current students, current licentiates, ministers who are in their seventh year since licensing, Faculty and representatives of BMI.
2. Evaluation and assessment of the feedback gathered from the focus groups along with any other information considered relevant by the Panel eg General Assembly Reports, materials from other churches or colleges, etc.
3. Drawing up of recommendations to be reported through the Committee on Ministerial Studies to the Board for approval or for recommendation to the General Assembly as appropriate.

The Panel has not sought to look into issues such as the theology of "ordained ministry", but rather has attempted to assess the current effectiveness of the preparation of students for the ministry on the understanding that the Presbyterian ministers of the 21st century will be pastor-teachers whose main roles will be to provide servant leadership to their congregations, the wider Church and society; and to encourage the development and exercise of the gifts

of God's people in worship, service and witness. On the basis of this assessment, the Panel is recommending changes to the current system where necessary. We envisage that the training of these ministers will not just be undertaken during their time in College but also through life-long learning.

The Panel is convinced of the absolutely vital nature of the work of ministry for the future of PCI and considers the training of our students for the ministry to be one of the Church's utmost priorities. It demands and deserves our very best!

The review has appraised the following areas: application procedure, pre-theological, theological and licentiate training.

1. Application Procedure

While the Panel recognises the primary importance of divine guidance and the work of the Holy Spirit in individual members of the Church, leading them to apply to be accepted as students for the ministry, we nevertheless wish to urge ministers, elders, other congregational leaders and representatives of the Board and the Church to exercise their human responsibility of seeking to identify people with the potential gifts and Christian character for ordained ministry so that they may be encouraged and given appropriate opportunities for service in order that they might usefully explore God's will for their lives. The Panel affirms the Board's policy of welcoming applications from all age groups, provided that the members of the Board's Interviewing Panel are satisfied that they have the necessary maturity and life experience.

The new application procedure seems to be working for the benefit of applicants and the Church. No changes to the proposals agreed by the General Assembly in 2004 are being recommended, other than that the Code is brought into line with current practice. We would encourage all Presbyteries to follow the "Presbytery Guidelines for Ordained Ministry Applicants, Students and Licentiates".

2. Pre-theological Training

It is important that the Church has the freedom and flexibility to recommend an applicant who possesses the appropriate gifts, experience and educational ability as a candidate for ministry.

The Panel considers that a radical adjustment to the Pre-theological requirements for students for the ministry is now necessary. To this end, the Panel recommends that applicants should be able to demonstrate to the Board's Interviewing Panel that they have sufficient life experience and aptitude for a course of academic study in theology.

As an academic element has been removed from the applicants' course of a few years ago with no essays now being required, the Panel recommends that an exercise in spiritual reflection be required of applicants prior to their Board Interview eg the reading of and reflection on an appropriate book.

3. Theological Training

In summary, it is recommended that the following academic requirements are to be met by students for the ministry:-

- (a) For those under 30 years of age -
 - (i) A non-theological degree followed by three years Theological Studies (six years, at least); or
 - (ii) A degree in theology followed by two years General and Pastoral Studies (five years, at least).

- (b) For those over 30 but under 40 years of age -
 - (i) A non-theological degree followed by three years Theological Studies (six years, at least); or
 - (ii) A degree in theology followed by two years General and Pastoral Studies (five years, at least); or
 - (iii) Shortened course (for candidates who have not commenced a degree in theology prior to application), consisting of a degree in theology (three years, at least).

- (c) For those over 40 years of age -
 A course of, at least, two years of Theological Studies.

All students for the ministry will be required to successfully complete appropriate courses in elocution and in the study of the Scriptures and the Subordinate Standards of the Church. In addition, those under 40 years of age will be required to successfully complete an Elementary Course in Hebrew and Greek.

The Panel is not recommending the maintenance of the status quo nor is it envisaging the breaking of the link with QUB. Rather we wish to ensure our ministerial training is refocused by taking on board the various submissions of the different focus groups and incorporating them appropriately within the existing training structure.

It is recommended that the course continues to last for 3 years with the bulk of the teaching taking place in UTC from Tuesday to Thursday, with Friday being a day for the further development of ministry training based in UTC or in situ, and Saturday to Monday being the opportunity for the students to be in congregational settings and have time for their families. The students will also continue to undergo placements in congregational (and other) settings during their first 2 years with the student assistantship in their third year.

The bulk of the course currently taught at UTC will continue. The Review Panel recognises and warmly commends the Faculty for the significant progress that has been made in UTC in recent years towards making the training for the ministry more relevant and effective. Members of Faculty are encouraged to continue to review the teaching of their own discipline to ensure that it makes best use of the time allocated and prepares students for the ministry to be the pastor-teachers that PCI needs for the 21st century by assisting them in the development of their gifts. Students should have the opportunity to engage in rigorous academic study, spiritual formation and training for practical ministry.

The Professor of Practical Theology (in consultation with the DMS) is currently assessing the priorities of his department's curriculum with a view to significantly developing the following areas as appropriate (in addition to the major elements of homiletics/worship and pastoral care): leadership (including teamwork, managing change and resolving conflict); spiritual formation

(including the maintenance and development of one's own personal spiritual life and the role of the minister as mentor, discipler, spiritual director, etc); understanding Ireland in the 21st century (including the main issues facing PCI today and the web of other agencies alongside which PCI works for the betterment of the whole community); and human hermeneutics (ie the process of understanding human persons and situations including listening skills, question asking skills, cultural interpretation, etc.)

One of the issues highlighted by BMI and others was the need to provide a core of General Practitioner-type courses for all students for the ministry to have a grounding in the foundational aspects of ministry. However, this then needed to be supplemented by the offering of options for specialization. The Panel is persuaded of the value of such an approach and is supportive of the Professor of Practical Theology in his aim of developing such a core basic course with specialist options such as: evangelism, community development, church planting, rural ministry, urban ministry and cross cultural ministry.

The Panel acknowledges the benefits of study of the Biblical languages for all students and their on-going use in ministry. However, the Panel has concerns in regard to the amount of time that students spend on the Biblical languages. Pending further consideration we are recommending that the current regulations remain, ie students under 40 are required to complete an Elementary course in Hebrew and Greek (on the understanding that computer aided learning reduces the amount of study time that these require and serves to greatly enhance the potential on-going usefulness in ministry of the understanding of the Biblical languages obtained), while it is optional for students over 40.

It is essential that all students for the ministry continue to be required to take their final year at UTC regardless of where they have undertaken their studies up until that point.

Serious consideration was given to a 4 year ministry training course but for financial and other reasons it was decided to recommend exploration of further short courses outside of the normal semester time. We will seek to establish a number of focused learning experiences for current students, licentiates and ministers in conjunction with the Ministerial Development Committee.

4. Licentiate Training

The Panel recommends that Licentiate Training continue as a follow-on from the 3 years of theological training, in effect viewing the licentiate "year" as the fourth year of the training experience. However, as it is envisaged that the practical training for ministry during the 3 years at UTC will be refocused so that it will be more effective, this will in turn allow further development of licentiate training to increase its relevance and to provide greater opportunities for those concerned to become reflective practitioners.

The Review Panel considers that the Church needs urgently to embrace and promote the concept of ministerial training as a life-long learning process.

APPENDIX III

PRESBYTERY GUIDELINES WITH REGARD TO APPLICANTS FOR THE ORDAINED MINISTRY, MINISTERIAL STUDENTS AND LICENTIATES

INTERVIEW: CONTEXT

The interview conducted by a Committee, Panel or Commission appointed by a local Presbytery is regarded as the initial component of a *process*, which is intended to inform and clarify an applicant's perceived sense of call.

That process can be outlined as follows:-

- (a) Presbytery Recommendation – based on application form, Kirk Session questionnaire and personal interview
- (b) Congregational Placement – resulting in applicant's reflection and supervising minister's feedback
- (c) Emotional Intelligence tests - followed by a private conversation with the Vocational Consultant
- (d) Two Day Mini-School – designed to introduce applicants to theological study and ministerial insights
- (e) Interview by a Panel (appointed by Board of Studies and Christian Training) – whose members are provided with the application form; Session questionnaire; Presbytery report; placement reflection; supervising minister's feedback; and vocational consultant's observations.
- (f) Panel Report to the Board of Studies and Christian Training
- (g) Nomination of Recommended Candidates to the General Assembly for approval
- (h) Course of Theological Study and Ministerial Training, as appropriate
- (i) Licensing by Presbytery
- (j) Congregational Assistantship and Licentiates' Course
- (k) Eligibility for Call and Ordination

INTERVIEW: PROCEDURES

Although Presbyteries are not interviewing candidates for job vacancies and are therefore not bound by employment legislation, it is only right that, as a church, we should embrace the concept of 'best practice' in our selection process. The following procedures are suggested with that in mind.

- (i) Interviews should be conducted in a comfortable and relaxed setting, where applicants can feel at ease. It will be helpful if a candidate is introduced to the members of the interviewing panel.
- (ii) An interviewing committee, panel or commission should be comprised of both male and female members, irrespective of the gender of the applicant; and it should include ruling elders in addition to ordained ministers.
- (iii) Every participant in the interview should have an opportunity to read the application form and Session questionnaire beforehand.

- (iv) Before the interview concludes, the applicant should be asked if s/he has any questions.
- (v) Should either the documentation or the interview raise issues that might give cause for concern, it is essential that such issues are clarified with an applicant.
- (vi) The Moderator or Chairperson is encouraged to offer a pastoral prayer for the applicant at the conclusion of the interview.
- (vii) Members of the committee, panel or commission are to regard both the details of the interview and the information disclosed in any related documents as strictly confidential.

INTERVIEW: GUIDELINES

These are offered as a general outline for Presbyteries - indicating which areas should be explored, yet allowing them to frame their enquiries as best suits the local context and the particular applicant.

Formal Questions

Attention is drawn to the following questions on the Application Form:-

Q.9 So far as you know your own heart, have you felt the need of a personal Saviour, and have you been persuaded and enabled by God's Spirit to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to you in the gospel?

Q.18 So far as you know your own heart, have you been induced to apply for the office of the Ministry from a personal sense of call, from love for God, and from a sincere desire to promote His glory and to win people to Christ through the Holy Spirit?

Q.21 The central teachings and practices of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland may be found in the Shorter Catechism and Westminster Confession of Faith. Are you in agreement with these?

Suggested Additional Questions

These can be rephrased and supplemented as required.

Background and Personality

1. Can you tell us something about your home, family and current employment/study?
2. What do you regard as your main strengths and weaknesses?

Christian Commitment and Maturity

3. When and how did you come to personal faith?
4. What has helped to deepen that faith and your understanding of it?

Gifting and Experience

5. How do you feel that your involvement in your home congregation, and other Christian activities, has prepared you for ordained ministry?
6. What gifts do you think you have for the ordained ministry and how have you sought to develop them?

Doctrine and Ministry

7. How familiar are you with the doctrinal standards of the PCI?
8. How do you understand the role of an ordained minister in the PCI?

Practical Matters

9. In applying to be received as a student for the ordained ministry of the PCI, have you:
 - (a) given serious consideration to the financial and housing implications;
 - (b) discussed with your spouse and family the impact your decision will have on them;
 - (c) understood that acceptance for training affords no guarantee of a call to a local congregation (or any other form of ministry) at the end of that process?

PRESBYTERY RECOMMENDATION

As a result of its interview procedures, the Presbytery has three options: to recommend an applicant; to decline to recommend an applicant; or to recommend an applicant with reservations. However, the latter decision should be taken only if a Presbytery considers that such reservations are of a relatively minor nature and so are capable of being addressed by the normal course of study and training.

PASTORAL CARE

Although the Director of Ministerial Studies, and other members of College Staff, will seek to offer personal support as appropriate and when requested by a candidate, s/he is regarded as “under the care” of the local Presbytery and it is assumed that pastoral care will also be exercised there, not least through the candidate’s home congregation.

LICENSING

Presbyteries are reminded that the licensing of candidates for the ministry is their decision and responsibility, in accordance with the Code. Prior to licensing, a student must have completed satisfactorily a “piece of trial” as required by the Code and obtained a certificate from the Board of Studies and Christian Training to the effect that s/he has fulfilled all its requirements.

Once licensed a candidate is received under the care of the Presbytery in which s/he is serving as an assistant. On completion of the required period of service, s/he will become eligible to receive a call, subject to the normal criteria and regulations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. 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.

3. That the General Assembly express their appreciation of Professor Cecil McCullough for his work as Professor of New Testament and wish him a long and happy retirement.

4. That the General Assembly express their appreciation of Professor Patton Taylor's work as College Principal over the past 5 years and wish him well in his on-going work in the College.

5. That to assist with re-organisation of the committee structures, the Rev Brian Savage be re-appointed convener of the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee for one further year.

6. That the resignation of Rev Stephen Moore as convener of the Committee on Ministerial Studies be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that _____ be appointed in his place.

8. 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:

Andrew Boreland	Knock	East Belfast
Peter Bovill	Granshaw	East Belfast
Jonathan Boyd	High Street	Hollywood, Ards
Jonathan Cowan	Stranorlar	Donegal
Daryl Edwards	Ballygawley	Omagh
Richard Houston	Rathcoole	North Belfast
John McConaghie	Trinity	Route
Alistair McCracken	Stormont	East Belfast
David McCullagh	2nd Keady	Armagh
Noel Mulholland	Castledawson	Tyrone
Jane Nelson	Rosemary	North Belfast
Norman Smyth	Buckna	Ballymena
Jackie Spence	Eglinton	North Belfast
John Stanbridge	1st Coleraine	Coleraine

9. That candidates for the ordained ministry who applied before or by 15 December 2003 be permitted to undertake a period of licentiate assistantship as required by the regulations pertaining on the date of application.

10. That the following grants be paid from the Incidental Fund:

To cover the expense of the Mini School & Interview	£2,745
To cover the expense of the Pre-Term College Retreat	£3,650
To cover the expense of the Applicants' Study Day	£400
To cover the expense of Licentiate Courses	£1,350
To cover the expense of the Information Day	£635
To cover the expense of meetings for students and spouses	£900
To provide teaching in Communication Skills for students outside Ireland	£100
TOTAL	£9,730

11. That the General Assembly approve the Report on the Review of Ministerial Training.

12. That the General Assembly approve the “Presbytery Guidelines with regard to Applicants for the Ordained Ministry, Ministerial Students and Licentiates”.

13. That the General Assembly express appreciation for the service of the external examiners.

14. That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be 0.25p per £ of stipend.

15. 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:

NOTICE OF MOTION

That notice of motion be received to include the Board of Studies and Christian Training in the United Appeal.

GEORGE MOORE

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

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Commission on Trusts for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 130 of the Code as follows:-

BOARD OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Convener: JOHN MILLAR

1. Although this Report deals in detail with the many aspects of the Board's responsibilities, a major issue for the General Assembly will be to consider the Resolutions arising from the Report of the Pensions Review Panel (Appendix 1).

The Board reported last year that it was of the view that the ever increasing cost of pensions to the Church had become unsustainable. After long consideration by the Review Panel, the Board is of the view that the Ministers' Pension Scheme, the Staff Scheme and the PWA/Overseas Board Scheme should merge to become one scheme with a standard level of benefits which will be reduced from present levels.

The new arrangements, if approved, will not remove the financial risk to the Church. In spite of this, the proposal is to retain a more modest Defined Benefit Scheme which offers Scheme members the advantage of knowing prospective benefits. This would not rule out the introduction of a Defined Contribution Scheme in future if the situation warranted it.

Due to a number of reasons, not the least of which is the Government's tax policies, the wellbeing of pension schemes has suffered greatly in recent years. Schemes throughout the nation are having to cut expectations and commitments and, sadly, our Schemes are not exceptions.

2. A valuation of the Ministers' Pension Scheme is in progress and, to an extent, the outcome of this has been estimated in the proposals in the preceding paragraph but we cannot be sure what might arise requiring attention. In addition, some of the details of the proposed pension scheme alterations may have to be amended to meet legal requirements.

In order to ensure that we can deal with any significant issue that might arise from the completed valuation or the implementation of the changed benefits, a Resolution is attached asking that the General Board be authorised to deal with this before the next General Assembly.

3. A new Job Evaluation Scheme has been approved by the Board and the major task of implementing this is under way.

4. The new Charities legislation (The Charities (Northern Ireland) order 2007) is in place but detailed Regulations and implementation arrangements are awaited. The Board hopes to be soon in the position to recommend software to enable Congregations to cope with these and to facilitate preparation of Statistical Returns.

5. The Property Management (formerly Assembly Buildings') Committee has been marking time pending the outcome of the deliberations on the future of Church House. If the decision is to remain in Church House, external repairs are needed and a resolution is appended for an assessment so

that the financing and carrying out of these can begin. Further, additional funds will be required to carry out any internal work resulting from such a decision.

6. The Board is pleased that a Lands Tribunal case relating to Sunday trading has been satisfactorily resolved. However, we cannot be sure that the issue will not arise again and believe that the Church will have to review its direct involvement in commercial property.

7. The proposed assessment in respect of Church House will, if required and approved, result in an overall increase in assessments of 2.50p over 2006 despite other modest reductions. The Incidental Fund assessment remains at 6.00p and includes the likely costs of the proposed pension arrangements.

	2007	2006	2005
Central Ministry Fund	16.00p	15.00p	16.00p
Retired Ministers' Fund	7.00p	8.50p	9.50p
Widows of Ministers' Fund	6.25p	7.00p	7.75p
Prolonged Disability Fund	0.50p	0.75p	0.75p
Incidental Fund			
(incl. 0.25p re Peninsula)	6.00p	6.00p	4.75p
Ministerial Development Fund	*0.25p	0.00p	0.25p
Special Assembly	*0.25p		
Church House External Work	3.50p	0.00p	0.00p
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
SUB – TOTAL	39.75p	37.25p	39.00p
Ministers Pension Scheme(1978)	22.50p	22.50p	22.50p
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	62.25p	59.75p	61.50p

** These figures are set by other Boards and are provisional at the time of writing.*

8. So many people contributed to the work of the Board, including the staff in Church House and the members of the Pensions' Review Panel, and the Board is grateful to all of them.

FINANCE LEGAL AND IT COMMITTEE

1. We have pleasure submitting the report of the Finance Legal and IT Committee.

2. **General Expenses** – General Expenses for the year ended 31 December 2006 were below budget and considered to be satisfactory.

Budgeted expenses for the year ended 31 December 2007 reflect a budgeted increase of about 13.4% compared to 2006. This was primarily due to approved staffing related matters. Overall the budget was considered to be satisfactory.

3. **Auditors/SORP accounts** – For year ended 31 December 2006 two sets of SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice) accounts have been prepared. One for the activities under the General Assembly and the other for the Trustees who have separate legal status. The audit opinion is expressed on these accounts rather than those of the individual agencies. The audit opinion was qualified with respect to certain technical disclosures required under Financial

Reporting Standard 17 relating to Pensions Liabilities but the Board has decided to postpone further consideration of this until the General Assembly has made a decision on the proposed changes re pensions.

4. **Statistics** – see appended tables

5. **Statistics Form and Statement of Recommended Practice** – The sub-committee set up to consider revising the statistics form in line with the requirements of those who use the statistics and the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities has made good progress during the year. Discussions are ongoing with two software companies. No recommendations have been made yet.

6. **Regulation of Charities** - The Charities (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 has been laid before Parliament but no appointed day has been set as yet for its introduction. This will result in significant accounting and regulatory changes for congregations.

7. **Risk Assessment** – The General Assembly passed a resolution in 2005 to have a Risk Assessment for the Central Church carried out and for a report to be made to the General Assembly no later than 2006. The auditors facilitated a risk assessment review meeting with representatives of Boards last year to identify the key risks facing the church. Following the meeting the auditors prepared a Risk Register where key risks were identified. Some of the root causes were summarised in a separate report. There is a risk that the Risk register would become another report sitting on the shelf. To avoid this it was recommended last year that Risk Assessment should be a recurring item on Board agendas and that once a year Boards should submit a report to The Board of Finance and Personnel confirming that they are not aware of any factors which would cause one of the risks identified to materialise. In addition they were to report on possible new risks or risks which have ceased during the year. To that end, a questionnaire was developed and was passed to all Board Conveners/Secretaries to enable them to report to the Finance and Personnel Board.

8. **Bank Overdrafts** – The Committee continued to receive reports on overdrafts.

9. **Ministerial expenses** – New Ministerial Expense Procedures have been developed and sent out to Treasurers. Some Presbyteries have requested meetings to discuss these further.

10. **Handbook for Treasurers** – As the handbook has not been updated since 2002, it is planned to review the Handbook once the new Charities legislation regulations are made available during the coming year.

11. **Information Technology** – Mr McMurray has made an extremely valuable contribution with respect to IT and is now providing valuable support to IT systems in PCI projects outside Church House. In particular a new Church House database has been implemented.

12. The committee continues to work on a number of other tax, finance, legal and IT matters.

13. Special thanks go to the team in the Financial Secretary's Office for their hard work and assistance to the committee during the year.

MICHAEL FITCH, Convener

PENSIONS AND ASSESSMENTS COMMITTEE

Central Ministry Fund

1. At the end of 2006, the CMF had a retained balance (excluding investments) of £2,327,472, a decrease of £389,605 on 2005.

2. The decrease has come about because of a number of factors. Firstly the assessment was reduced from 16p to 15p per £ of stipend. This costs in excess of £90,000 over the year.

3. Secondly the increase in the Ministerial Minimum, over and above the increase specified by the operation the Tyrone Memorial, places a greater and continuing burden on CMF. Augmented grants in 2006 increased by £102,494 over the total in 2005.

4. Thirdly an increase in the number of licensed and ordained assistants required additional expenditure of £96,964 in 2006 over expenditure in 2005.

5. In addition, part of the deficit arises where augmented charges continue to receive augmentation despite increases in specified sources that would enable them to afford to make a greater contribution towards stipend. This point was 'flagged' in Reports 2006, p 264 par 16. The Committee will seek to have conversations with the Union Commission to discover whether there is a simple way in which such congregations can be persuaded to meet their fair share of the burden.

6. The Committee has been looking at the impact on the Fund of bonus payments to Ministers under Code Par 315 and intends to examine this in greater detail in the coming year.

7. The proposed rate of assessment for 2007 is 16p per £1 of Stipend, an increase from 15p in 2006, but still less than the assessment of 17p in 2004.

8. The following increases were set by the Board, under the Tyrone Memorial Scheme:

Stipend	% Increase
£ 0 – 23,000	3.30%
£23,001 – 25,000	2.75%
£25,001 - 30,000	2.40%
£30,001 - 35,000	2.00%
£35,001 – 40,000	1.75%
£40,001 and over	1.00%

9. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2007:

	Northern Ireland		Rep of Ireland	
	2007	2006	2007	2006
(a) Ministerial Minimum	£20,660	£20,000	€32,302	€31,000
After 5 years' service	£21,176	£20,500	€33,110	€31,775
After 10 years' service	£21,693	£21,000	€33,917	€32,550
After 15 years' service	£22,210	£21,500	€34,725	€33,325
After 20 years' service	£22,726	£22,000	€35,532	€34,100
After 25 years' service	£23,243	£22,500	€36,340	€34,875
After 30 years' service	£23,759	£23,000	37,147	35,650

(b) Family Grants 2007	N Ireland	Rep of Ireland
Birth to 10 years	£305	€900
11 to 15 years	£460	€1,420
16 years and over		
- at school	£692	€2,625
- at university	£2,305	€4,375

Bands for joint***Incomes***

<i>Reduction Nil</i>	£23,965	€36,120
<i>Reduction £1 for every £5</i>	£32,240	€48,580
<i>Reduction £2 for every £5</i>	£32,240	€48,580

- (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 £4,160, under Par 316(2)(d)(i) of the Code, or £2,170 under Par 316(2)(d)(ii). The maximum under the above paragraphs shall be £4,160.
- (e) Bequests and endowment income no longer have any relevance with regard to augmented grants.
- (f) In reckoning augmentation for 2007, 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).
- (g) As there is now, in effect, a Euro Ministerial Minimum, the Euro differential scheme no longer needs to be separately stated. Augmented grants now in effect take the Euro Differential into account.

Widows of Ministers' Fund

10. At the end of 2006, the WMF had a retained balance (excluding investments) of £849,543, an increase of £97,371 on 2005.

11. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2007:

- (a) That the assessment for 2007 be 6.25p per £1 of Stipend, a reduction from 7 00p in 2006.
- (b) That the maximum Widows' Pension be £5,682.
- (c) That widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension receive £5,682 plus £475.
- (d) That widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension or PWFA receive £5,682 plus £500.
- (e) That widows whose husbands were not eligible for Northern Ireland State Pension receive £5,682 plus £4,381 (2007/2008 rate to be announced by Government).

Presbyterian Widows' Fund Association

12. 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 annual annuity to widows, which is currently £1,164.

Retired Ministers' Fund

13. At the end of 2006, the RMF had a retained balance (excluding investments) of £1,567,115 an increase of £163,886 on 2005.

14. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2007:

- (a) That the assessment for 2007 be 7.0p per £1 of Stipend, a reduction from 8.5p in 2006.
- (b) That Basic Retirement Allowance be £10,330.
- (c) That Supplemental Grant for those living in the Republic of Ireland with no State Pension is currently £7,007 married, £4,381 single. (Rates for 2007/08 not yet announced by Government).

Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)

15. The Trustees' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2006, are included in the published accounts.

16. Since the last Assembly, the following were granted leave to retire, at or over age 65, by Presbyteries: Rev John Harold MacConnell (1st Ballyeaston), Rev David Samuel McIlwrath (Killyleagh), Rev Dr William John Patterson (Killinchy) and Rev Victor Sinclair (Ballycairn).

17. The Trustees did not award any discretionary increase for pensions in payment, accrued pre 1997, in excess of the Guaranteed Minimum Pension.

18. The following recommendation was approved by the Board for 2007:
That the assessment for 2007 remains at 22.5p per £1 of Stipend.

Ministers' Prolonged Disability Fund

19. At the end of 2006, the fund had a retained balance of £719,845 an increase of £ 75,072 on 2005.

20. The following recommendation was approved by the Board for 2007:

- (a) That the assessment for 2007 be 0.5 p per £1 of Stipend, a decrease from 0.75p in 2006.
- (b) That the maximum level of grant for 2007 increase to £10,415.
- (c) That Family Grants are paid to Ministers in receipt of benefit from the Prolonged Disability Fund on the same basis as for active ministers.

21. Currently 5 ministers are receiving benefits under the fund.

22. In addition to annual grants, pension contributions to MPS are paid by the fund until the beneficiary returns to work or attains his or her normal retirement age. In broad terms the cost to the fund, for each person receiving benefit, including pension contributions, is in excess of £15,500pa.

The Staff Pension Scheme

23. The Trustees Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2006, are included in the published accounts.

24. Results of the triennial actuarial valuation of the scheme, as at 31 December 2005, showed an actuarial deficit. Under regulations this now has to be calculated on a scheme specific basis and the actuary presented 3 different bases each of which has slightly different assumptions. The trustees consider all the bases but for the purposes of this report, using the 'intermediate' basis, the deficit is £1,395,000, an increase from £217,000 at the last valuation in 2002.

25. The scheme actuary recommended and the trustees requested a combined funding rate of 40.1% (35.1% employer 5% employee) of scheme salaries, which would, on the assumptions made, repay the deficit over 14 years.

26. Following consideration, the Board asked the Trustees to reconsider the requested funding rate subject to the following provisos:

- (a) Allowance to be made for equity out-performance of 1.5% in service and 0.5% in retirement, above the return on long term gilts.
- (b) Scheme rules to be changed to provide that increases in deferred pensions, accrued after the change, be limited to statutory limits.
- (c) Scheme rules to be changed to provide that increases to pensions in payment be reduced to the rate of increase in RPI with an upper limit of 2.5%
- (d) Scheme rules to be changed to provide that employees' contributions increase from 5% to 6%. (This level of contribution is consistent with the MPS and the PWA/Overseas Board scheme.)

27. On these bases the revised funding rate is 31.1% (25.1% Employer 6% Employee). The required 'Funding Schedule' had, by law, to be 'signed off' by 31 March 2007. These changes were submitted to, and agreed at the Board meeting in March. Consultation with the members needs to be carried out before these changes can be implemented and this will be completed at the same time as the consultation of the proposals from the Pension Review Panel (Appendix 1).

Incidental Fund

28. At the end of 2006, the Incidental Fund had a retained balance of £108,876 an increase of £45,781 on 2005.

29. The principal reason for the surplus is that, whilst a budget of circa £90,000 had been set for costs in connection with the Pensions' Review, expenditure had amounted to circa £45,000.

30. Assuming that income and expenditure matches budget during 2007, the retained balance at the end of the year is forecast to be circa £42,700.

31. Grants from the Incidental Fund are approved by General Assembly under resolutions pertaining to individual Boards. It is the role of the Board of Finance and Personnel, acting on advice from its Pensions and Assessments Committee, to recommend an appropriate assessment, sufficient to meet the grants agreed and to maintain a prudent reserve.

32. The following requests for grants were received:

Business Board (Arrangements Committee)	£17,000
Board of Social Witness	
– PCI Holiday Week	£6,000
– Other	£2,000
Board of Youth and Children’s Ministry (Youth Link)	£8,652
Board of Communications	
– Historical Society	£15,700
– Architecture Committee	£1,500
Board of Studies and Christian Training	£8,500
General Board	£76,400
Board of Finance and Personnel	£210,950
TOTAL	£346,702

33. The Board of Finance and Personnel budget includes £190,000 in respect of Legal, Actuarial, Advisory and administrative costs which would be incurred, should General Assembly approve the changes proposed in the Report of the Pensions’ Review Panel.

34. The following recommendation was approved by the Board for 2007: That the assessment for 2007 be 6.0p per £1 of Stipend, the same as in 2006.

The Ministerial Development Fund

At the end of 2006, the Ministerial Development Fund had a retained balance of £370,015. Responsibility for recommending any assessment for this fund lies with the Board of Studies and Christian Training.

DOUGLAS CROWE, Convener

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Following the Notice of Motion to rescind the decision of the 2004 General Assembly to sell the Church House complex, it has been impracticable to make major decisions on the long term maintenance or use of the building until such time as the matter has been finalised at the 2007 General Assembly. The continual indecision has made it difficult for the Committee to move forward on the stonework and other external repairs, on internal work related to disability and health and safety requirements and on the management of long-term lease renewals.

2. During the past year there has been a small number of vacant units at all times, but the rentals for the Shopping Mall, the Fisherwick Buildings offices

and the significant income from the letting of the Assembly Hall and other associated rooms contribute to a reasonable income.

3. There has been substantial discussion on the role, remit and person specifications for the new post of Property Manager, approved in principle at the 2006 General Assembly. It is anticipated that, subject to Appraisals Committee approval, this post will be advertised in the early summer.

4. If the 2007 General Assembly ratifies the decision not to sell Church House, it will be essential to be ready to move forward on the major repairs to the stonework, windows and roofs of the entire building. The net cost of this (at 2006 prices), noted at the last General Assembly, is in the region of £4.1 million. The Committee agreed that this amount should be paid by a congregational assessment over a 10 year period, estimated initially at 3.5p per £ of stipend, assuming that interest rates and commercial and other income remain as at present. It should be noted that this assessment is for external repairs only and a further assessment will be required for additional costs associated with development and use of Church House when plans and costs are agreed.

5. In the autumn of 2006, the commercial tenant trading as Carter, made application to the Lands Tribunal in respect of 7 day trading at 43 Howard Street. The Committee agreed that this matter had to be opposed and a substantial amount of work was completed by the Clerk, our Managing Agents and our legal advisers. However, just before the hearing commenced, agreement was reached whereby Carter agreed to a 10 year lease (from 2004) with the Sunday trading restriction in place, and each party agreed to pay its own costs in relation to the action. Following the agreement a letter was received from Stephen J Shaw QC, acting on behalf of the Church, explaining that the battle had merely been postponed and not avoided. Mr Shaw recommended that PCI will need to give consideration to its long-term property interests in the light of continual trends towards Sunday opening. The Committee agreed that this matter should be forwarded to the General Board for consideration.

6. The Committee is grateful to the staff directly involved with the management and operation of the building and thanks them for their professionalism, hard work and dedication during the year.

HUBERT MARTIN, Convener

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met on two occasions during the year.

2. Despite having to cope with a reduced staffing level for a significant part of the year, Mrs Eileen McClenaghan, Head of Personnel, and her team continued to provide a professional service and they all deserve our thanks.

3. Thanks are also due to Rev Ivor Smith and Mr Herbie Smyth, supported by Mr Ian McIlhenny from the Financial Secretary's office, for their work in respect of the Retired Ministers' House Fund. Rev Ivor Smith has decided to step down from his role and the Committee would record their thanks for all his work on behalf of the Fund.

Personnel matters

4. The development of the Job Evaluation Scheme has continued and, at present, the administrative posts are being re-evaluated using the new scheme. This work will take some time as the job descriptions and personnel specifications are being reviewed as part of the exercise.

5. Congregations in Northern Ireland have received a health & safety handbook provided by Peninsula Business Services Ltd. Plans for training at Presbytery level are being considered.

6. New and changing legislation has meant that the task of developing and updating personnel policies and procedures has continued throughout the year.

7. An intranet site to facilitate staff access to employment policies and other relevant information is under construction.

Retired Ministers' House Fund

8. Work has continued on the application for outline planning consent in respect of the property in Cullybackey that was bequeathed to the Fund by Miss Jane Megaw. It is expected that this will be marketed in 2008.

9. The rules of the Fund were amended to reflect the rise in property prices. The maximum loan value was increased from £30,000 to £50,000 and the maximum equity share level was also increased, from £75,000 to £100,000

10. Although liquid funds have been quite limited, the Fund has been able to satisfy the approaches made during the year.

DAVID LAMB, Convener

TABLE ONE

PERSONS AND AGENCIES

	2005	2006	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	213	211		2
Ministers in Active Duty	378	382	4	
Retired Missionaries	9	9		
Missionaries in Active Duty	56	54		2
Total Ministers and Missionaries	656	656		
Licensures	11	13	2	
Congregations	551	549		2
Total Families	110,485	109,489		996
Persons of All Ages	266,581	261,745		4,836
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	89,646	88,179		1,467
Baptisms	1,857	1,740		117
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	1,889	1,931	42	
Communicants	112,497	110,422		2,075
Attended at Least One Communion during year	70,485	68,759		1,726
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	6,958	6,959	1	
Number on Rolls in Sunday Schools and Bible Classes	28,332	27,928		404

TABLE TWO
CONGREGATIONAL INCOME

	2005		2006		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R. of I.
Specified Sources	27,585,653	2,550,977	29,265,381	2,766,837	6.1%+	8.5%+
Building Fund etc. "For Others"	14,775,432	1,768,989	17,279,315	1,990,321	16.9%+	12.5%+
	8,931,501	657,803	7,190,897	555,980	19.5%–	15.5%–
Raised from other sources	4,825,667	1,303,753	5,534,255	1,306,142	14.7%+	.2%+
Bequests etc.	9,650,964	661,559	11,502,494	760,761	19.2%+	15%+
Total Receipts	65,769,214	6,943,079	70,772,343	7,380,041	7.6%+	6.3%+
Total Receipts Less						
Bequests etc.	56,118,250	6,281,520	59,269,849	6,619,280	5.6%+	5.4%+
Bequests	1,596,922	377,578	1,785,614	305,032	11.8%+	19.2%–

TABLE THREE
CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE

	2005		2006		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R. of I.
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	14,488,187	1,267,570	15,018,534	1,288,805	3.7%+	1.7%+
Payments under Assembly Assessments	5,095,762	478,758	5,087,482	524,646	.2%–	9.6%+
Building, Repairs, etc.	18,683,003	1,945,751	20,174,812	2,735,207	8.0%+	40.6%+
United Appeal Schemes	3,123,619	202,103	3,144,001	222,301	.7%+	10.0%+
Supplementary Schemes Other Religious and Charitable Objects	7,481,503	784,012	4,918,175	551,997	34.3%–	29.6%–
General Expenses	8,496,359	1,130,706	9,079,736	1,150,025	6.9%+	1.7%+
Total Payments	57,368,433	5,808,900	57,422,740	6,472,981	0.1%+	11.4%+

TABLE FOUR
CONGREGATIONAL BALANCES

	Closing 2005		Opening 2006		Closing 2006		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R. of I.
Credits	30,826,530	4,714,070	32,260,515	4,734,797	37,092,428	5,132,382	15.0%+	8.4%+
Debits	3,941,321	100,353	3,949,068	99,596	4,812,446	560,956	21.9%+	63.2%+
Net Credits	26,885,209	4,613,717	28,311,447	4,635,201	32,279,982	4,571,426	14.0%+	1.4%–

TABLE FIVE

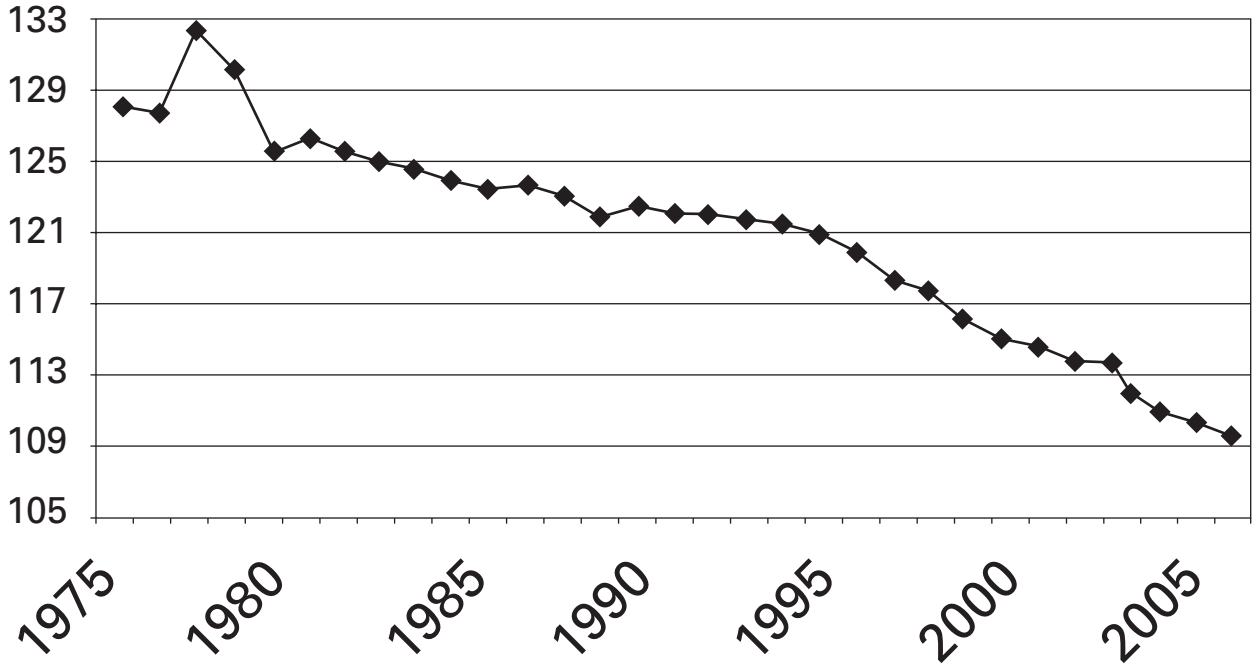
MINISTERS' INCOME AND ALLOWANCES (SEE NOTES)

	2005 £	2006 £	% Difference
Total Ministerial Income (Active Duty — Note 2)	9,676,676	9,944,760	2.8%+
Retired Ministers' Income	2,047,752	2,163,058	5.6%+
Stipend Paid	7,785,503	7,856,250	.9%+
Allowances			
Light, Heat, etc			
Ministerial Duties			
Total	2,187,556	2,252,482	3.0%+

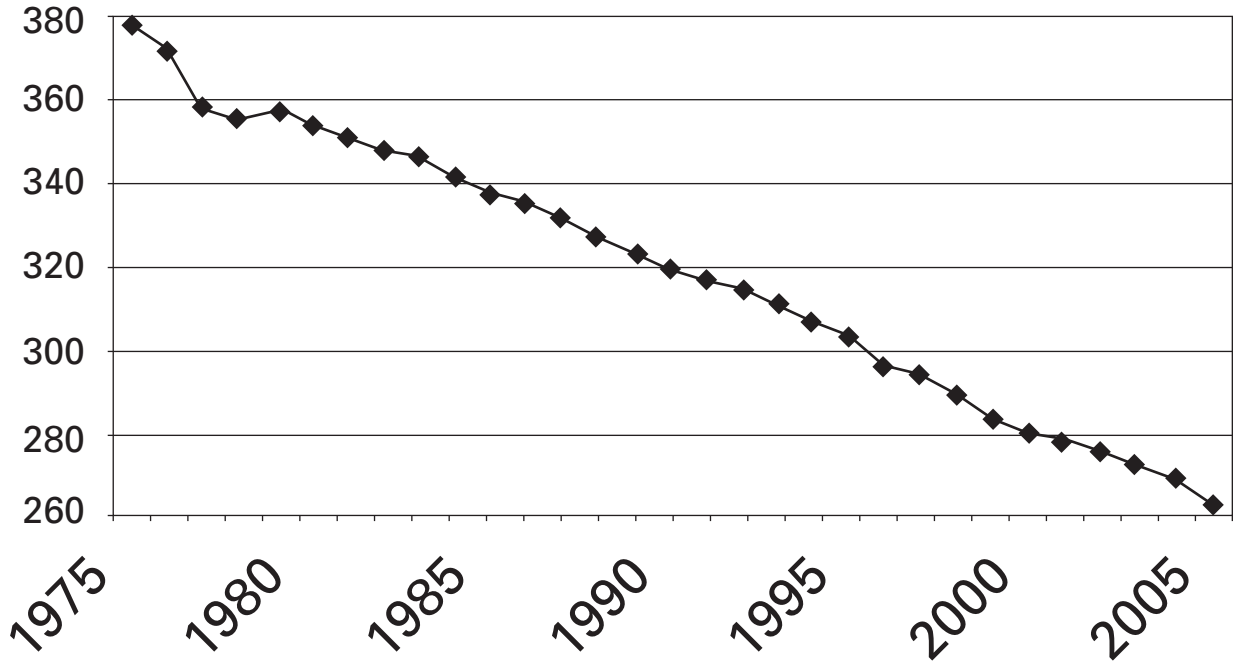
Note 1 Figures for the Republic of Ireland have been converted into £STG using the average value of the Euro for the year.

Note 2 This refers only to 342 ministers in charge of congregations, excluding Assistants, Chaplains, Missionaries, Professors, Administrative Officers and Ministers in recognised service in special work.

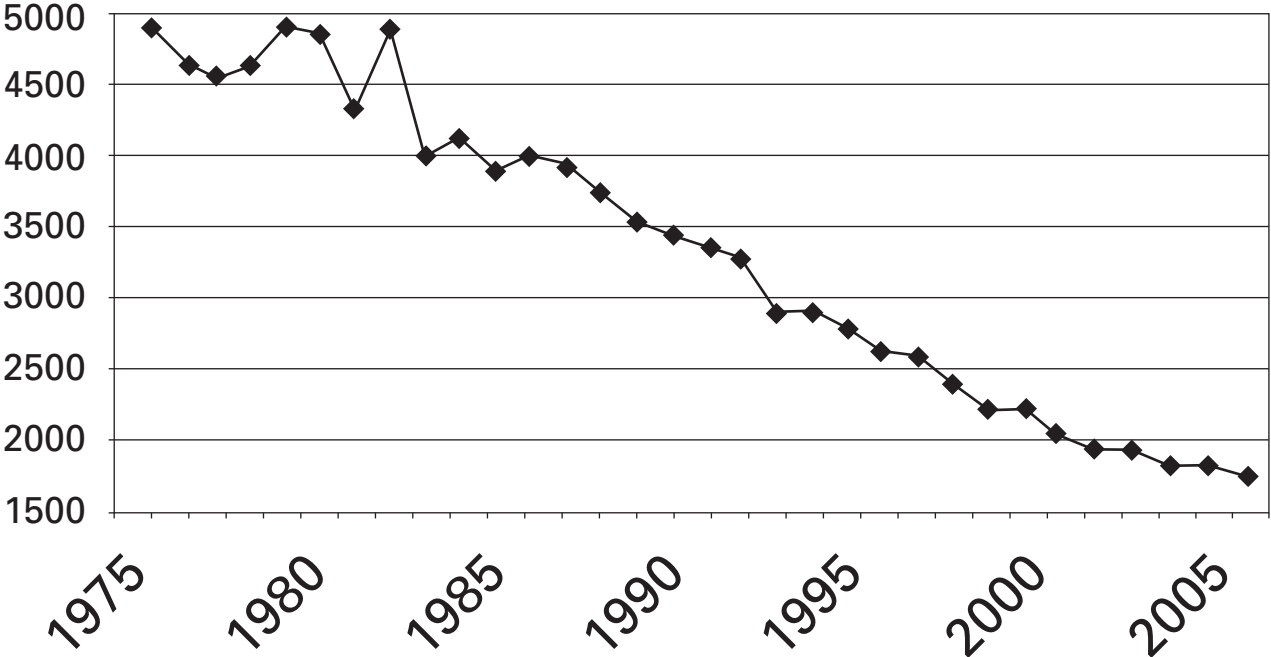
FAMILIES ('000)



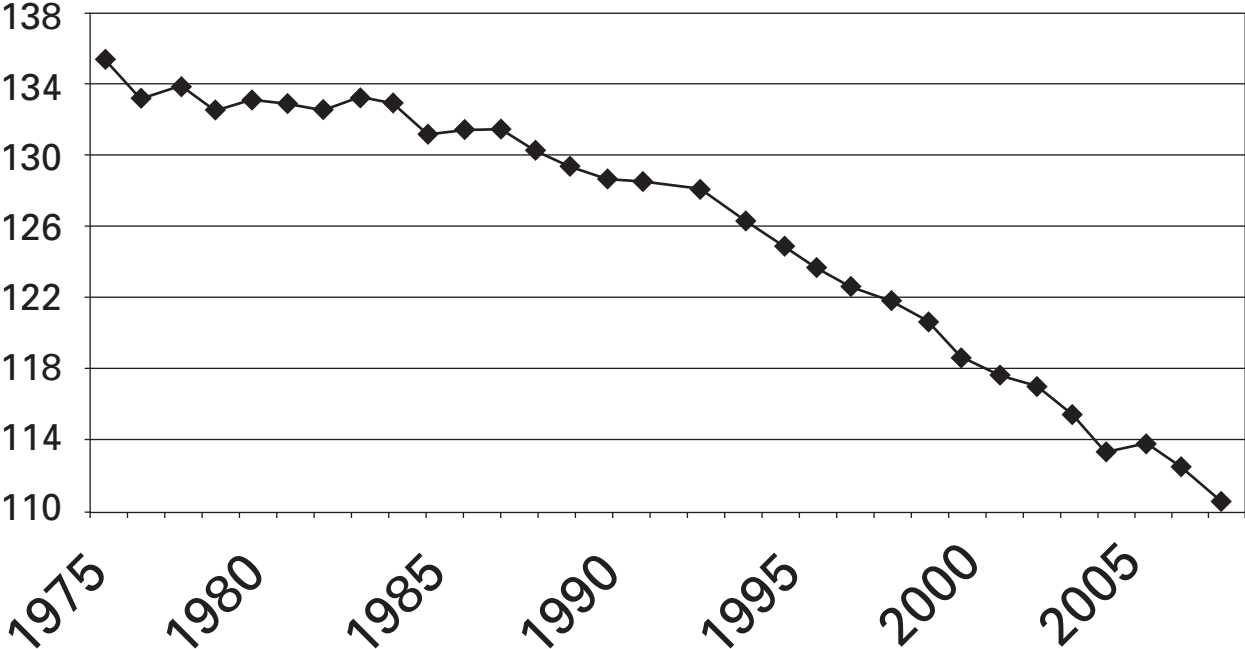
PERSONS ('000)



BAPTISMS



COMMUNICANTS ('000)



APPENDIX 1

REPORT ON REVIEW OF PENSIONS - 2007

The General Assembly passed the following resolution in June, 2006:-
'That the General Assembly request the Board to bring detailed proposals for pensions to the General Assembly in 2007'

Summary of Proposals

1. Members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension and Life Assurance Plan (the "Staff Scheme) and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland PWA / Overseas Board / Irish Mission Retirement and Death Benefits Scheme (the "PWA Scheme") should transfer into the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) ("MPS (1978) Scheme") (to be appropriately renamed). We have been advised that this legally permissible.

2. The benefits of the new Scheme should be significantly revised. A summary of the proposed benefits is given in this Report and a Schedule showing the proposed benefits, compared with existing benefits, is attached to this Report. (Appendix 1)

3. The new scheme would be implemented on 1 January, 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.*

* for brevity, further references in this report to '1 January, 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter' are shown as '1 January, 2008'.

Definitions

There are two types of Pension Schemes referred to in this Report:

Defined Benefit - These include final salary and career average earnings schemes. The principle is that members are entitled to a particular level of benefit depending on their length of service and their salary. It is the pension benefit which is defined and it is then necessary to ensure that the contributions from both the employer and the employee are sufficient to provide that benefit.

Defined Contribution - These are pension schemes into which an employer and employee pay regular contributions fixed as an amount or percentage of pay. The contributions paid into the scheme are invested and the value of the investments at retirement is applied to the provision of a pension. The pension benefit is not defined.

Background

The review of Pension arrangements commenced following the General Assembly of 2005, prompted by a deteriorating funding position of Defined Benefit schemes generally and of the three such PCI schemes in particular.

During the past year, the situation has not improved dramatically and more and more companies and organisations are taking action to minimise the risks inherent in Defined Benefit Schemes.

Already in 2007, the following high profile decisions have emerged:

January, 2007	WH Smith	Scheme closed
January, 2007	Marks & Spencer	Closed to new members. Higher contributions with lower benefits
February, 2007	Royal Mail	Closed to new members
February, 2007	Church of England	Review of Defined Benefit Scheme launched

It is now estimated that only one third of Defined Benefit schemes are open to new members and that two thirds of businesses operate Defined Contribution (money purchase schemes).

Present Pension Arrangements of Presbyterian Church in Ireland

PCI operates the following Pension arrangements:

Scheme	Nature of Scheme
MPS (1978) Scheme	Defined Benefit based on revalued average salary (CARE)
Staff Scheme	Defined Benefit based on final salary
PWA Scheme	Defined Benefit based on final salary
Pensions' Trust (some Board of Social Witness employees)	Defined Contribution
Standard Life Stakeholder Pension	Contributory – no employer contribution

The contributions to the Schemes are:

Scheme	Employee - £000	PCI - £000
MPS (1978) – y/e 31.12.06	636	1,666
Staff Scheme– y/e 31.12.06	88	367
PWA Scheme – y/e 31.03.06	50	226
Pensions' Trust	24	36

Contributions to the schemes, based on pensionable income in the year of contribution, are:

Scheme	From	Employee - %	Employer - %
MPS(1978)	01.04.99	4.40	12.20
(next valn 31.12.06)	01.01.02	5.00	14.00
	01.04.05	6.00	15.60*
Staff Scheme	01.01.98	3.75	15.25
(next valn 01.01.09)	01.01.01	3.75	15.25
	01.01.04	5.00	20.85
To be agreed	01.07.07	6.00	25.10**
PWA Scheme	01.04.97	4.00	13.50
(next valn. 01.04.08)	01.04.00	4.00	13.50
	01.04.03	5.00	22.50
	01.04.06	6.00	26.20**

* ceased funding for discretionary increases otherwise a higher rate. Valuation pending.

** rates reduced by changes in benefits.

Scheme Funding Positions

Despite ever increasing contributions by PCI, as well as by Scheme members, and various alterations to benefit structures, deficits have persisted. The recent valuation of the Staff Scheme has necessitated some immediate revision to benefits to contain costs and we await the outcome of the valuation of MPS (1978) as at 31 December, 2006.

The three Schemes having differing valuation dates complicates matters but the Schemes' Actuary has calculated that deficits in the Schemes at 31 December, 2006, were £2m in MPS, £0.5m in the Staff Scheme and £1m in the PWA/Overseas etc Scheme. These deficits reflect 'savings' from benefit changes made in an effort to contain contribution rates.

	MPS (1978)	Staff Scheme	PWA Scheme
Valuation date	31/12/2003 updated to 31/12/2006	01/01/06 updated to 31/12/06	01/04/05 updated to 31/12/06
Assets	£59m	£7.7m	£5m
Liabilities	£61m	£8.2m	£6m
Deficit	£2m	£0.5m	£1m

The way forward

In its initial Report in 2006, the Panel enumerated its conclusions, thus:

- (a) The current costs of pension provision and the risk of even higher costs are unsustainable. Urgent consideration should be given to a more efficient and affordable pension policy for PCI.
- (b) As a general principle, every effort should be made to have some pension provision for all employees. Indeed, there are proposals currently before Government that, if adopted, would make it compulsory for employers to contribute at least 3% towards an employee's pension if the employee also contributes.
- (c) There is no obvious benefit from or justification for 3 separate Defined Benefit Schemes. The benefit structures are different and the administration is more involved and costly. Whatever future policy is adopted, the number of Schemes should be reduced.

As to a) – the Panel confirms its conclusion and, in its proposals, seeks to reduce costs and minimise future risks.

As to b) – whilst still holding to this view, the Panel believes that no widening of the provision of pensions should take place pending the introduction in 2012 of the Government's recent proposals.

As to c) –the Panel reiterates the view that, whatever future policy is decided, benefits for those who would normally be covered by the 3 Schemes should be similar and provided under one 'umbrella'.

Future Provision

The important word here is FUTURE – no proposals by the Panel will affect any benefits accrued by members prior to any change.

The Panel debated, at considerable length, whether the recommendation for future benefits should be by way of Defined Benefits (as at present where benefits are calculated by a known formula) or Defined Contribution ('money purchase' where future benefits depend on the value of an individual's fund at the date of retirement and the amount of benefit such a fund will provide).

Clearly, a Defined Contribution scheme has attractions for PCI in that the level of contribution is predetermined and will not vary irrespective of investment performance or other factors. The disadvantages for employees are that it is difficult to forecast pensions and pensions can fluctuate depending on investment and annuity conditions at date of retirement. This could have the effect of members on similar pensionable salaries retiring within a short time of each other having different pensions.

However, in spite of the attractions of defined contributions, the Panel concluded that, if at all possible, a Defined Benefits' Scheme should be maintained. Accordingly, whilst seeking to minimise, as far as possible, the risk of having to fund massive future deficits and to introduce more affordable PCI contributions, the Panel is recommending that:

- (1) Members of the Staff and PWA Schemes transfer into the MPS (1978) Scheme (to be appropriately renamed). We have been advised that this legally permissible.
- (2) The benefits of the new Scheme will be significantly revised. A Schedule showing the proposed benefits, compared with existing

benefits, is attached to this Report but the main benefits proposed are as follows:-

Defined Benefits

Commencing 1 January, 2008

Employee Contribution 7%

Normal Retirement Age 67 (members may still retire at 65 but the benefits arising after 1 January, 2008, will be actuarially reduced).

Normal Retirement Pension calculated at 1/60th of CARE for each year of service (Career Averaged Revalued Earnings). The annual revaluation based on the UK Retail Prices' Index (RPI).

Part of pension may be exchanged for Normal Retirement Cash (currently tax free) – up to 25% of applicable fund.

Death in Service – Spouse's pension 50% of member's prospective pension at normal retirement date plus child pension
Life Assurance Benefit of four times member's pensionable salary at date of death.

Death after Retirement – Spouse's pension 50% of member's.

Early Retirement – actuarial reduction will apply

Pensions in payment for service after 1 January, 2008, will increase annually by Limited Price Indexation ie RPI up to maximum of 2.5%.

Implications of the proposed changes

For PCI

If approved, the proposals will take effect from 1 January, 2008. There is substantial legal and actuarial work to be carried out as well as consultation with Scheme members.

The initial PCI contribution rate is estimated at 14.2% and this will reduce the cost of pensions by some £250,000 per annum (based on total pensionable remuneration of £12.5m). Whilst this is a significant sum, it only arises because contributions have risen exceptionally in recent years and the proposal is aimed at restoring a more reasonable cost. The reduced contribution rate should, in due course, be reflected in congregational assessments and United Appeal Targets of Honour.

The proposed employee contribution rate is 7% and it is proposed that any future increase in costs of the Scheme be borne 2/3rds to PCI and 1/3rd to Scheme members.

The Panel considered the question of Contracting back into the State second pension and, based on advice taken, decided not to recommend a change from the present Contracted Out position at this stage

For Members of the Schemes

Benefits accrued to the date of any change will not be affected by these proposals. However, it will be apparent from the Schedule of proposed and comparative benefits that the prospective pension of members will be less than heretofore. Benefits will accrue at a lower rate and these will be based on Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE). The revaluation will be based on the RPI (ministers currently have a revaluation at Average National Earnings and the Staff, PWA, etc members accrue benefits on Final Salary).

In keeping with increasing longevity, it is proposed to increase the Scheme retirement age to 67 (this does not mean members have to work to 67, but if benefits are taken at 65 those in respect of service in the “new” scheme will be actuarially reduced for early payment). Changes are also proposed to reduce the rate of increase to pensions in payment into line with statutory levels.

The financial impact of the change in pension arrangements will depend on individual circumstances and their length of service. It is not possible within this report to cover all circumstances but as a guide

- Members close to normal retirement date will see less of an impact on their pension as they have already built up most of their pension entitlement whereas
- Members with long future service will have lower pension.
- An option to surrender pension for cash on retirement will, if exercised, give opportunity for higher cash sums than at present. Such sums are presently tax free but future payments will be subject to appropriate legislation at the date of payment.

Schedule 1 attached gives a general guide as to the impact of the proposed changes. The impact will depend on whether the member is a member of the Staff or PWA Scheme or the MPS(1978) Scheme. *(Please note these figures are for illustrative purposes only and are not guaranteed)*

Sensitivity of the Scheme Benefit Proposals

The panel considered at length the accrual rate within the proposed scheme and decided upon a rate of 1/60th. If the accrual rate was reduced to 1/70th the contribution rate to the scheme would decrease by 2.3% or if the accrual rate was reduced to 1/80th the contribution rate would reduce by a further 1.9%. In spite of the extra cost, the Panel believed that members would want to maximise benefits even if contributions would rise to 7%.

The panel also considered the age of retirement and proposed this should be increased from 65 to 67. If the retirement age was left at 65 the cost of the scheme would increase by 1.9%.

An employer contribution rate of 1% would cost approximately £125,000.

Cost of implementing proposals

To date, the estimated cost of actuarial and legal advice is £38,000 and it is anticipated that the final cost of implementing the revised Scheme, if approved, will be approximately £190,000. This includes legal fees of £60,000, Actuarial fees of £60,000 and Administration and Consultancy fees of £70,000. £90,000 has already been financed through the Incidental Fund in 2006 and the Assembly

will be asked to agree a further Incidental Fund Assessment of 1.5p in the £ of stipend.

Conclusion

The Panel has spent a lot of time wrestling with a difficult issue and, despite good reasons for succumbing to the 'easy way out' of a Defined Contribution Scheme, has opted to ask the Church to accept the inbuilt risk of continuing a Defined Benefit Scheme.

The proposals will reduce the attractions of existing benefits, but there is no guarantee that congregations could continue to fund the current costs and underlying commitments being made. The Panel believes that members should recognise that many employers are taking pragmatic decisions to remove their commitment to Defined Benefits and that these proposals reflect the desire of the Church to provide benefits that compare favourably with those of many other companies and organisations.

The change to providing for increases in future earnings to RPI (rather than National Average Earnings) will have the effect of the new arrangements starting with an actuarial surplus! In view of the volatility of all the factors involved in the calculations, no regard is being paid to the surplus in calculating the contribution rate for the proposed scheme at this time.

It is hoped that the proposals, if approved, will be followed by a prolonged period of stability. The situation will, of course, continue to be closely monitored so that, if necessary, further corrective action can be taken.

SCHEDULE 1

ESTIMATED EFFECT OF PROPOSED PENSION SCHEME CHANGES

STAFF and PWA SCHEMES

Age at 1 JANUARY 2008	Accrued Pensionable Service to 1 January, 2008 (Years)	Pension from age 65 – Existing Scheme in today's terms £pa (Note1)	Proposed Annual Pension in today's terms – £pa			
			From age 65	% Reduction in Pension	From Age 67	% Reduction (Increase) in Pension
35	0	19,500	13,800	30	17,000	13
35	10	26,100	17,900	31	21,100	19
45	10	16,800	12,600	25	14,900	11
45	20	22,500	16,800	25	19,100	15
55	20	14,500	12,300	16	13,800	5
55	30	19,300	16,400	15	17,900	7
60	20	11,200	10,200	9	11,400	(1)
60	30	15,700	14,400	8	15,600	1
60	40	20,200	18,600	8	19,700	2

(Note 1 – assumes no change to existing scheme)

MINISTERS' PENSION SCHEME (1978)

Age at 1 JANUARY 2008	Accrued Pensionable Service to 1 January 2008 (Years)	Benefits from age 65 – Existing Scheme in today's terms £pa (Note 1)		Proposed Annual Benefits in today's terms – £pa					
					From Age 65			From Age 67	
		Pension	Tax-free lump sum	Pension (after tax- free lump sum)	Tax-free lump sum Assuming max taken	% overall reduction (increase) in Pension*	Pension (after tax- free lump sum)	Tax-free lump sum – Assuming max. taken	% overall reduction (increase) Pension
35	0	14,660	43,970	9,740	64,910	21	11,770	78,450	3
35	10	19,540	58,620	12,360	82,380	25	14,370	95,770	12
45	10	12,630	37,880	8,620	57,460	19	10,070	67,140	4
45	20	16,840	50,510	11,240	74,940	20	12,670	84,470	10
55	20	10,880	32,650	8,020	53,470	12	8,970	59,800	1
55	30	14,510	43,520	10,640	70,950	13	11,570	77,130	4
60	20	8,420	25,250	6,580	43,870	7	7,320	48,780	(5)
60	30	11,790	35,360	9,200	61,360	7	9,920	66,110	(1)
60	40	15,150	45,460	11,830	78,840	7	12,520	83,450	1

(Note1 – assumes no change to existing scheme)

* this is the reduction (increase) in pension after converting tax-free cash to pension
(Please note these figures are for illustrative purposes only and are not guaranteed)

The Board appreciates that many may find these illustrations complicated. Further explanations will be available during the consultation period prior to changes taking effect.

SCHEDULE 2

COMPARISON OF EXISTING PENSION SCHEME BENEFITS WITH PROPOSED BENEFITS

Pension Review Panel

	MPS	PWA/OB/IM Scheme	Staff	Proposed
Eligibility Conditions	Scheme specific	Scheme specific	Scheme specific	Admission on application to Licentiates, Ministers, Irish Mission Worker, Deaconess. Missionary, or those employed on a Board of Finance and Personnel salary scale. Those declining to join must complete a waiver form. <i>(Note : consideration was given to a probationary period but there was no actuarial justification for this)</i>
Normal Pension Age	65	65 (prior to 1 April 2006, 60)	65	67 <i>(Note : if a member decides to retire at 65 they must take all their benefits at that stage)</i>
Salary Definitions	CARE	Standard Definitions	Standard Definitions	CARE (Career Revalued Average Earnings) to exclude endowment income, overtime payments or other one off payments. Annual revaluations to be based on RPI

Pension Review Panel

	MPS	PWA/OB/IM Scheme	Staff	Proposed
Pensionable Service	Excludes service before start date of scheme on 6 April 1978	Can include service before start date of scheme on 1 September 1972	Can include service before start date of scheme on 15 December 1971, for members who joined the scheme before 1 February 1995	Service after 1 January 2008
Normal Retirement Pension (subject to HMRC limits)	1/80th x Revalued Average Salary x Pensionable Service. Salary revalued annually	1/60th x Final Pensionable Salary x Pensionable Service on basis of AEI	1/60th x Final Pensionable Salary x Pensionable Service	1/60th x Revalued Average Salary x Pensionable service. Salary to be revalued annually on the basis of RPI
Normal Retirement Cash (subject to HMRC limits)	3 x Member's pension	1/4 x members pension x commutation factor	3/80th x Final Pensionable Salary x Service with employer	25% of Fund Value. Commutation factors to be cost neutral to scheme.
Payment of Cash	In addition to pension	In exchange for pension	In exchange for pension	In exchange for pension
Post 6 April 1997 scheme pension increases	In line with inflation up to a maximum of 5% each year (LPI)	LPI	The greater of 3% and LPI	LPI (2.5%)
Pre 6 April 1997 scheme increases	Non GMP – discretionary increases only, Post 1988 1988 GMP -3% each year, Pre 1998 GMP No increase	3% each year on whole benefit (LPI applies to Spouses death in service pensions)	3% each year on whole benefit	N/A
Early Retirement (other than incapacity)	Between ages of 50 & 60 for members in the scheme at 6 April 1992 No consent is required for such members on requesting	Between age of 50 & 60 for members in the scheme at 1 April 1993 Male members who left the scheme before 1 April	Between age of 50 & 65 for members in the scheme at 1 July 1994 Female members who left the scheme before 1 July	Between ages of 50 (from 2010 increases to 55) and 67 with actuarial reduction

Pension Review Panel

	MPS	PWA/OB/IM Scheme	Staff	Proposed
	early retirement on or after age 60 – however para 223 of Code may prevent members from exercising this right	1993 need consent to take early retirement between 50 & 60	1994 need consent to take early retirement between 50 & 60	
Reductions on early retirement (non-incapacity)	Complex methodology adopted. Early reduction factors applied to equalise benefits between male and female members for pensionable service after 16 May 1990	For members in active service at 1 April 1993 early reduction factors apply based on period between early retirement date and age 60 (65 from 1 April 2006). More complex methodology applies for male members who left the scheme before 1 April 1993– method adopted should be confirmed.	For members in active Service at 1 July 194 early retirement reduction factors apply based on period between early retirement date and age 60- no reduction applies on early retirement between 60 and 65 if employer consent to retirement given, otherwise early retirement reduction apply	Early reduction factors to apply - to be cost neutral to the scheme
Life assurance benefit on member's death in service	4 x Minimum stipend at date of death	4 x members pensionable salary at date of death	4 x members pensionable salary at date of death	4 x members pensionable salary at date of death
Spouse / Dependants death in service pension	Greater of 2/3 x prospective members pension at Normal pension date , and 25% x Minimum Stipend	1/2 x members pre – commuted pension at date of death	1/2 x members pre – commuted pension at date of death	1/2 x members prospective pension at Normal Retirement Date)

Pension Review Panel

	MPS	PWA/OB/IM Scheme	Staff	Proposed
Additional Child Pensions on members death after retirement or death in service	1/4 x Spouses pension for each Child (maximum 4)	None	None	1/4 x Spouses pension for each Child (maximum 4)
Spouses/ Dependant's Death in deferred pension	1/2 x members revalued to date of death	A Spouses pensions at the members date of death – complex and confusing definitions apply as to the amount of spouses pension payable	1/2 x members pension revalued to date of death	1/2 x members pension revalued to date of death
Revaluation of non-GMP benefits in deferment	Increased in line with inflation up to a maximum of 5% per annum compound based on the number of complete years between the members date of leaving pensionable service up to the date payment of benefits commences, subject to any adjustments that may be necessary to achieve equality of benefits between men and women for pensionable service completed after 16 May 1990	Increased in line with inflation up to a maximum of 5% per annum compound based on the number of complete years between the members date of leaving Pensionable Service and Normal pension date	Increased at a fixed rate of 5% per annum compound for the number of complete years between the members date of leaving Pensionable Service up to the Members 60th birthday. If the members actual retirement date s after age 60 increases at the rate of 5% per annum compound will continue to be added until the earlier of the member's retirement date and the members 65th Birthday	Increased in line with inflation up to a maximum of 5% per annum compound based on the number of complete years between the members date of leaving pensionable service.

Pension Review Panel

	MPS	PWA/OB/IM Scheme	Staff	Proposed
Leaving service – less than two years pensionable service completed	Net Refund of member contributions	Net Refund of member contributions	Net Refund of member contributions if the member leaves the scheme for any reason other than as a result of redundancy On redundancy the member may choose a preserved pension or a net refund of member contributions	Statutory provisions
Employer contribution rate	15.6%	26.2%	15.85% (under review proposed 25.1%)	14.2%
Member Contribution rate	6%	6%	5% (under review proposed 6%)	7%
Permanent Health Insurance	No scheme in place – but Note prolonged Disability Fund	No Scheme in place	Scheme in place (UNUM)	This matter needs to be considered separately from this pension review
Additional Voluntary Contributions	Norwich Union / Abbey National	Norwich Union / Abbey National	Norwich Union / Abbey National	Not offered – exiting members can continue. No transfers in to be accepted.
Widows benefits	2/3 for retirements after 1 January 1994 (prior 50%)		50%	50% of members

APPENDIX 2

Sterling Salary Scales of Staff in post on 1 January 2007 (inclusive of a discretionary 4% increase with effect from 1 January 2007, following the annual review of salaries.

EXECUTIVE POSTS**Scale 1 (£20,923 - £25,037)**

Payroll & Assessment Manager
 Secretary for Education & Promotion BMI, (FT)
 Taking Care Trainer / Co-ordinator
 Programme Officer, Peacemaking, Youth Level, (FT)

Scale 2 (£23,752 - £28,763)

Assistant Residential Services Manager
 Buildings Manager & Safety Officer
 Children's Development Officer
 Director of Nightlight
 Financial Manager
 Finance & Office Manager
 Programme Officer, Peacemaking, Adult Level, (FT)
 Project Manager, Willowbrook
 Training Officer, YACB, (FT)
 Youth Centres Director, (FT)
 Youth Development Officer

Scale 3 (£26,688 - £32,732)

Deputy Director of Youth & Children's Ministry
 Director for Congregational Life
 Director for Personnel (BMI) – Protected Scale 4
 Education in Mission Officer, BMO
 IT Development & Support Manager, (FT)
 Minister & Superintendent, Kinghan Mission
 Personnel Officer, BMO

Scale 4 (£29,510 - £37,102)

Head of Personnel
 Residential Services Manager
 Senior Financial Accountant
 University Chaplain (QUB)

Scale 5 (£32,732 - £40,092)

Information Officer
 Director of Christian Training
 Director of Youth & Children's Ministry

Scale 6 (£35,224 - £43,119)

Deputy General Secretary
Executive Secretary, BMO
Director of Social Service

Scale 7 (£40,092 - £51,842)

General Secretary
Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS**Scale 1 (£11,503 - £13,430)**

Clerical Officer
Handyperson
Secretary/Receptionist
Telephonist/Receptionist

Scale 2 (£12,448 - £14,543)

Caretaker and Warden, Youth Centres
Clerical Officer
Secretarial/ Clerical Officer
Secretary
Telephonist/Receptionist

Scale 3 (£14,084 - £16,432)

Co-ordinator-Counselling Services
Deputy Building Manager
Nightlight Development Officers (one FT)
Payroll & Clerical Assistant
Senior Clerical Officer
Senior/Personal Secretary
Wages Clerk

Scale 4 (£16,085 - £18,666)

Administrative Assistant
Assistant to the Information Officer
Departmental Secretary
Finance Development Officer, United Appeal Board, (FT)
Lay Assistant-Kinghan
Personal Secretary

Scale 5 (£17,687 - £20,564)

Assistant Accountant
Assistant Chaplain, QUB
Co-ordinator PCI Year Team & Volunteers

Development Officer, PWA, (FT)
 Financial Assistant
 Personal Assistant
 Production Manager
 Regional Youth & Support Workers (Euro Scale), (FT)
 Resident Manager, Tritonville Close (Euro Scale)

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£20,923 - £22,575)

Senior Administrative Officer
 Personal Secretary & Office Supervisor
 Personnel Officer

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That members of the Staff and PWA/Overseas Board etc Pension Schemes transfer into the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) (to be appropriately renamed) on 1 January, 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.
3. That the Benefits of the newly merged Scheme be as proposed in Schedule 2 of Appendix A attached to this Report.
4. That 1.5p in the £ of stipend be included in the 2007 assessment for the Incidental Fund in respect of the costs of production and implementation of proposals for pensions.
5. That the rate of assessment for the Incidental Fund for 2007 be 6p in the £ of stipend.
6. That the rate of assessment for the Central Ministry Fund for 2007 be 16p in the £ of stipend.
7. That the rate of assessment for the Retired Ministers' Fund for 2007 be 7.0p in the £ of stipend.
8. That the rate of assessment for the Widows of Ministers' Fund for 2007 be 6.25p in the £ of stipend.
9. That the rate of assessment for the Ministers' Prolonged Disability Fund for 2007 be 0.50p in the £ of stipend for Ministers, Licentiates and College Professors and of Basic Ministerial Minimum for Ministers who are Missionaries.
10. That the rate of assessment for the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) for 2007 be 22.5p in the £ of stipend as shown in the column 'Stipend paid to Minister' or as fixed by the Union Commission in the case of a vacancy.
11. That, in the event of the General Assembly deciding to retain Church House, the rate of assessment for the Church House External Work for 2007 be 3.5p in the £ of stipend.
12. That the General Board be authorised to act for the General Assembly in any necessary situation, arising before the June, 2008, General Assembly, in

connection with the Actuarial Valuation of Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) or with the proposed changes to Pension Schemes.

13. That the Board of Finance and Personnel, with its associated working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 286 of the Code as follows:

UNITED APPEAL BOARD

Convener: REV TREVOR D GRIBBEN

The 2006 United Appeal

1. The Board again wishes to express its thanks to all Congregations who so generously supported the United Appeal during the past year. As in previous years, 2006 saw some Congregations exceeding their target by substantial amounts thereby supporting those who struggle to reach their targets.

2. We regret to report once again that the Appeal for 2006 was below target by £12,205 (£36,795 under in 2005) when the accounts were prepared for that year. However, we did receive £106,245 in 2006 (£115,831 in 2005) in respect of the previous years appeal. In addition up to the time of writing this report £105,274 has been received from 47 Congregations as late payments for the year 2006 (£103,752 for 2005). 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. Nonetheless the Board was pleased to be able to pay in full the proposed allocation of grants for the year 2006.

Review of the work of the United Appeal

4. During the past year the Board has carried out a detailed review of all of its functions and procedures. We are indebted to the professional and efficient support we receive from the Financial Secretary's Office both during such reviews and in our ongoing work.

5. As a result of our deliberations, and of discussions with representatives of the various mission agencies, from next year onwards we are making changes to the budgeting time-table. This will hopefully both facilitate other Boards in their work, and also further encourage each Board to see itself as a 'budget holder', rather than merely as the recipient of an annual grant.

6. From next year we also hope to have moved all Boards to consolidated budgets, therefore enabling them to have flexibility to manage their internal budgets in the light of changing priorities. There will be an appropriate resolution in respect of the new Board of Christian Training.

7. The review of our work has also led the Board to consider the best way for the Church to fund the work of the General Secretary's Office, the Finance Office and indeed the Board of Communications. This is a complex issue, and at the time of writing discussions are continuing with representatives of the Board of Finance and Personnel as to the best way forward.

8. One other area the Board has sought to further develop is that of providing suitable materials to encourage the support of the United Appeal at congregational level. A new Promotions Committee has been formed, with plans for improvements to the United Appeal Briefing, posters and short PowerPoint presentations and DVDs, being amongst the many new initiatives that will come on stream over the next year or so. In all of this we are indebted to Mr Stephen Lynas for his professional and creative input.

Moving into the future

9. The United Appeal Board continues to see 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 mission priorities of the Church. We do this in cooperation with the Mission Boards and see ourselves as partners in that mission.

10. Mission Boards have been seeking to take account of the new priorities of the Church and this is to be commended. Further emphasis needs to continue to be placed on encouraging Boards to see their need to radically review their current and historic work, to free resources for new work.

11. The requests from agencies for grants in respect of the year 2008 amounted to £3,691,700 which was an increase of approximately 8% over the approved grants of the previous year. After discussions with requesting Boards, the amount was reduced by £230,500 to £3,461,200. A sum of £80,000 has been added to the target sum as a contingency for possible expenditure not yet approved and a further £175,000 has been released from reserves. The net effect of these adjustments is a target for the year 2008, as set out in Schedules III and IV, of £3,366,200, which is an increase of 4.64% over the previous year.

12. We commend the 2008 United Appeal to the General Assembly for approval and the 2007 United Appeal to the prayerful and financial support of all of our congregations.

Appraisals Committee

The Rev Dr DJ Watts reports:

The Appraisals Committee met as required and approved the following posts and projects:-

Assistant Chaplain QUB – temporary post made permanent.

Additional Irish Mission Worker.

Executive Secretary for Education and Promotion, BMI – extension of contract.

Executive Secretary to the Board of Mission in Ireland.

Personal Secretary/Office Manager, BMI.

Arklow Manse.

IT Support Assistant – fixed term, initially 2 years.

Centres' Director – extension of contract.

Personnel Executive for Training and Policy Development – fixed term; reviewable in 3 years.

Personnel Secretarial Support.

Topley Court.

Press Officer.

Video/Director/Cameraman/Editor – fixed term, 2 years.

Taking Care Administrator.

Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly.

SCHEDULE I

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2005	Specified Sources 2005 £	United Appeal 2007 £
Ards.....	9,485	2,937,469	331,261
Armagh.....	3,999	1,469,296	152,321
Ballymena.....	7,561	2,628,333	279,788
Belfast North.....	6,146	1,705,343	203,787
Belfast South.....	3,245	1,282,181	128,532
Belfast East.....	8,110	2,778,185	297,856
Carrickfergus.....	5,801	1,566,652	189,992
Coleraine.....	4,552	1,600,758	169,453
Derry & Strabane.....	3,449	1,047,773	119,339
Donegal.....	1,223	433,390	45,709
Down.....	4,604	1,278,838	152,733
Dromore.....	5,101	1,751,029	187,543
Dublin & Munster.....	1,431	811,590	70,179
Foyle.....	2,939	760,809	94,452
Iveagh.....	3,787	1,266,439	137,394
Monaghan.....	980	341,480	36,309
Newry.....	2,753	1,022,690	105,476
Omagh.....	2,549	829,435	91,218
Route.....	3,653	1,093,092	125,484
Templepatrick.....	4,434	1,402,174	156,446
Tyrone.....	3,844	1,325,941	141,678
	89,646	29,332,897	3,216,950

50% of the allocation for 2007 has been based on contributing families and 50% 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 2005 of 1.46.

SCHEDULE II

	Requested 2007 £	Proposed Grant 2007 £
BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND	968,000	888,000
Home Mission	400,000	370,000
Irish Mission.....	500,000	450,000
Congregational Life	68,000	68,000
BOARD OF EDUCATION	190,000	175,000
BOARD OF STUDIES & CHRISTIAN TRAINING	630,950	479,950
Union Theological College	230,950	164,950
Students Bursary Fund.....	400,000	315,000
BOARD OF YOUTH & CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	495,000	465,000
BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS	324,000	319,000
Social Witness Board	194,000	179,000
Social Issues & Resources Committee	3,000	3,000
ADE Committee.....	0	(30,000)*
PCI Enterprises.....	0	(25,000)*
Kinghan Mission	95,000	95,000
PCI Counselling (Marriage & Family Project).....	32,000	42,000
Chaplains Committee	0	(40,000)*
BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS.....	1,123,000	1,050,000
BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS		
Department of Communications	180,000	130,000
	3,910,950	3,411,950
Contingencies		80,000
Allocation from reserves		(275,000)
	3,910,950	3,216,950

* previous grants returned to United Appeal Board

SCHEDULE III

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2006	Specified Sources 2006 £	United Appeal 2008 £
Ards.....	12,114	3,066,630	351,930
Armagh.....	4,638	1,620,934	158,887
Ballymena.....	9,289	2,777,180	292,861
Belfast North.....	7,859	1,769,646	216,435
Belfast South.....	4,176	1,392,197	139,424
Belfast East.....	10,061	2,936,522	313,340
Carrickfergus.....	7,060	1,667,731	198,646
Coleraine.....	5,572	1,693,494	177,165
Derry & Strabane.....	3,998	1,090,946	120,409
Donegal.....	1,458	456,571	47,085
Down.....	5,455	1,352,493	156,940
Dromore.....	6,324	1,859,108	197,673
Dublin & Munster.....	2,115	884,103	80,286
Foyle.....	3,557	777,481	96,692
Iveagh.....	4,286	1,344,436	138,535
Monaghan.....	1,071	368,212	36,361
Newry.....	3,173	1,111,358	108,830
Omagh.....	2,805	877,904	90,558
Route.....	4,446	1,189,872	132,642
Templepatrick.....	5,581	1,479,568	165,744
Tyrone.....	4,451	1,431,196	145,758
	<u>109,489</u>	<u>31,147,582</u>	<u>3,366,201</u>

50% of the allocation for 2007 has been based on contributing families and 50% 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 2006 of 1.47.

SCHEDULE IV

	Requested 2008 £	Proposed Grant 2008 £
BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND*	1,030,000	1,000,000
Home Mission	175,000	175,000
Irish Mission.....	450,000	420,000
Congregational Life	75,000	75,000
Property Committee (Church Extension).....	100,000	100,000
Home Mission General Account	230,000	230,000
BOARD OF EDUCATION*	10,000	10,000
BOARD OF STUDIES & CHRISTIAN TRAINING		
Board of Studies and Christian Training	16,500	16,500
Union Theological College	195,700	165,700
Students Bursary Fund	344,000	344,000
BOARD OF YOUTH & CHILDREN'S MINISTRY*	465,000	395,000
BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS		
Social Witness Board	145,000	145,000
Kinghan Mission	50,000	25,000
PCI Counselling (Marriage & Family Project).....	10,000	10,000
Chaplains' Committee.....	60,000	60,000
University Chaplains'	160,000	160,000
BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS*	1,092,000	1,000,000
BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS*	130,000	130,000
	<u>3,708,200</u>	<u>3,461,200</u>
Currency losses		
Contingencies (max 5% of Total Appeal)		80,000
Allocation from reserves		(175,000)
	<u>3,708,200</u>	<u>3,366,200</u>

* Board operating on a consolidated budget

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the United Appeal for 2008 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:

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 24 April, 2007.

2. The Report of the Executive Committee and the Statement of audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2006 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 John Millar, OBE, seconded by Sir Eric McDowell and unanimously agreed, that the Report and the Statements of Accounts be adopted, signed by three Trustees, inserted in the Appendix to the Minute Book and lodged with the Clerk of Assembly to be laid before the Assembly in June. The Report and the Statement of Accounts were, therefore, signed by Mr Oliver Greer, Mr Alan Speer and the Rev Dr RJT McMullan 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 2006 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 Oliver Greer, seconded by the Rev Robert Cobain, this report was received.

5. During the year the Executive Committee elected the Very Rev Dr Samuel Hutchinson as a member of the Executive Committee in place of Mr JJ Bill. Three retiring members of the Executive Committee were re-appointed for a further three years, these being Sir Eric McDowell, Mr AT Ross and the Very Rev Dr Samuel Hutchinson.

6. Mr David Bell, CB, and Mr Wilson Erwin, CBE, were nominated members of the General Assembly, according to the provision of the Code Par 97 (h) (iii). It was agreed that the Executive Committee would nominate a

member of the College and Magee Management Committee on behalf of the Trustees.

7. The Trustees record with regret the death of Mr James Jenkins who had served as a Trustee since 1993.

Trust Funds

A summary Account of the various Trust Funds is included in the Book of Accounts 2006. 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 2006 available for distribution is £7,647.00. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Union Theological College	£3,300.00
Church House Repairs	£3,247.00
Youth/Sunday School	£1,100.00
	<hr/>
	£7,647.00
	<hr/>

9. **Sir Wm V McCleery Estate:** The total income for 2006 available for distribution is £39,925.20. 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 2006 available for distribution is £8,272.20. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Board of Social Witness	£3,872.20
Church House Repairs	£4,400.00
	<hr/>
	£8,272.20
	<hr/>

11. **Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown:** The total income for 2006 available for distribution is £5,308.80. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Church House Repairs	£2,908.80
Board of Social Witness	£2,400.00
	<hr/>
	£5,308.80
	<hr/>

12. **Estate of Mr Victor Morrow:** The total income for 2006 available for distribution is £1,702.40. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Union Theological College	£851.20
Church House Repairs	£851.20
	<hr/>
	£1,702.40
	<hr/>

13. **Estate of Miss Sheila Cole:** During the year the Trustees received a bequest of £1,000 from the estate of Miss Sheila Cole “to be applied either as to capital or to income for such charitable purposes in connection with the Church as the Assembly in their absolute discretion may decide”. The Trustees recommendation to the General Assembly is that the bequest is applied to the Trustees Discretionary Fund.

GENERAL INVESTMENT FUND

14. Declaration of Dividend	15.4.06	15.10.06
Number of shares qualifying	4,926,764	4,954,211
	£	£
Income from investment for distribution and income tax recoverable less administrative charge and Investment Advisers’ Fees	785,068	960,805
Dividend per share	14.00p	16.00p

In the year 2006 £168,130 was transferred to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve and the balance on the Dividend Equalisation Reserve at 31 December, 2006 is £734,280.

15. The combined annual Dividend of 30.00p per share is to be compared with 27.00p per share for 2005; 27.00p for 2004; 29.30p 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.

16. Valuation	15.4.06	15.10.06
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	30,466,635	32,104,378
Cash on Deposit	3,750,046	3,761,347
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	661,471	734,280
Property and Ground Rents	2,720,000	2,720,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£37,598,152	£39,320,005
	<hr/>	<hr/>

No of Shares Issued	4,939,898	5,038,533
Share Value	£7.6111	£7.8039

General Investment Fund

17. During 2006 the Trustees invited tenders for the provision of investment management services and Newton Investment Management Limited, London were appointed to manage the funds on a discretionary basis. The

Executive Committee of Trustees meet with the Investment Advisers to review investment performance on a regular basis.

The Trustees requested a valuation of the properties in the General Investment Fund at 31 December, 2006. The valuation indicated an increase from £2,720,000 to £3,000,000 and this has been included in the accounts of the General Investment Fund.

Following detailed discussion and a report from the property agent, the Trustees decided to sell the properties held and they were auctioned on 23 March, 2007 and sold for £3,000,000.

Crescent Church Loan Fund

18. No requests for loans were received or approved during 2006. A loan for £25,000 was approved in January 2007. Interest is currently charged on loans at bank base rate on the average balance outstanding over the term of the loan.

Getty Bequest

The allocation of grants out of the income of the Trust Estate of John Getty for the year ending 31 December, 2006 was as follows:

Overseas – Foreign	2,850
Overseas – Jewish	1,550
Home Mission	3,750
Belfast City Mission	2,850
TOTAL	£11,000

Familybooks Limited

20. At the June 2003 General Assembly a resolution was passed requesting the Trustees to “retain and invest the nett proceeds of the sale 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”. The June 2006 General Assembly accepted notice of motion to rescind this resolution.

21. At 31 December, 2006 £195,636 was held on deposit. The original share capital of £150,000, for Familybooks Limited was provided by the Incidental Fund £50,000 and £100,000 from the Trustees Discretionary Fund.

If the notice of motion on the books is passed the Trustees will distribute the proceeds in the following proportion:

95/195 to the Incidental Fund (in respect of capital provided by the Incidental Fund and the amount received in respect of the restrictive covenant, £45,000).

100/195 to the Trustees (in respect of capital provided by Trustees’ Discretionary Fund). The Trustees will meet an ongoing pension commitment to a former employee out of their share of the proceeds.

Appointment of new Trustees

22. The present custom and practice is that Synods bring most nominations to the General Assembly for appointment of new Trustees. The Executive Committee considered the situation if Synods are abolished and

forwarded a suggestion to the General Board. The matter will be dealt with in the General Board report.

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 the recommendation regarding the Miss Shiela Cole Bequest be adopted.
8. 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 DJ Watts, RJA Bell, WJ Orr; Mr Wilson Ervin, CBE, Sir Eric McDowell, Mr David Bell, CB, Mr AT Ross, Mr John Millar, OBE.

Motion On The Books

9. That the General Assembly rescind the decision requesting the Trustees to “retain and invest the nett proceeds of the sale 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.”

HYMNAL COMMITTEE

Convener: Rev WTJ RICHARDSON

1. In contrast to the hectic pace of previous years, this past year has been quiet for the Hymnal Committee. It has been a year of waiting as patiently as humanly possible for the appearance and launch of the hymnbook in electronic format. This had been initially promised by the publishers – SCM Canterbury Press Ltd – within a year of the launch of the hymnbook. Not so!! Many in ignorance assumed that when copyright was granted for the book, the same would be forthcoming for the CD Rom. Again, not so!! A number of copyright holders granted permission for the inclusion of their materials only on condition that the customer's CCL reference number would be part of the CD registration process. CCL were, understandably reluctant to release this information to SCM Canterbury Press Ltd, as it had never in the past been available to outside interests. Hence an avalanche of time-consuming and patience draining negotiations and delays.

2. Thankfully, these frustrations are now in the past. On Tuesday 13 March, Andrew Moore and Andrew Parker from SCM Canterbury Press Ltd travelled to a meeting of the Hymnal Committee in Church House. After its potential was demonstrated to the Committee, the CD was launched by the Moderator of the General Assembly – the Rt Rev Dr David Clarke – to the wider church. It is the prayer of the Committee that this form of presentation will be at least as popular as the three editions of the book presentation, and that all who use this format will know the fullness of God's blessing in the expression of their praise to Almighty God.

3. The CD will prove an invaluable resource to ministers, organists and worship leaders. It features a double page spread taken from the full music edition and, in addition, allows for words of hymns to be taken directly into the projection systems which are increasingly being used in our congregations to display the words on screens, rather than using hymnbooks. It also includes easily accessible author and first line indexes. CCL have given assurance to our publishers that licenses issued to congregations will cover all material within the CD, copies of which are currently available in the Wesley Owen bookshop priced £25.00, plus VAT.

4. This brings to a conclusion the work committed to the Public Worship/Hymnal Committee by the General Assembly in the year 2001. That was to proceed towards the production of a hymnbook by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As Convener, I take this opportunity to thank all those who worked so hard and contributed so much time and effort to achieving our goal and fulfilling our task. It has been a privilege to work alongside such a fine body of people whose aim, right from the beginning of the undertaking, was to provide our denomination with a hymnbook that would assist its members to offer worship to Almighty God in a vibrant, meaningful and relevant way. It has been such an encouragement to see how well our denomination has adopted it as its official hymnbook. To date

somewhere in the region of 100,000 copies [all three editions] have been sold and somewhere in the region of one half of our congregations are using it. As a Committee we continue to pray that it will be used – “in the salvation of souls, the encouragement of believers, the upbuilding of God’s Kingdom and in the bringing of glory to the One to whom all glory is due – the Lord Jesus Christ –sole King and Head of the Church.”

The Rev Dr DJ Watts writes:

5. Tribute was paid last year to the hard work, tenacity and insight of the Rev Jack Richardson, MBE, in guiding the production of the Irish Presbyterian Hymnbook. That work has finally reached its conclusion and the General Assembly should express thanks to the Convener of the Hymnal Committee and all who worked with him.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Hymnal Committee be discharged and that its members, especially its Convener, Rev Jack Richardson, MBE, be thanked for their services.

2010 SPECIAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE

Co-Conveners: Revs D MONTGOMERY, TC MORRISON

Introduction

1. The Committee has met on four occasions since last Assembly. In most aspects, the Assembly remains a work in progress.

Assembly Theme

2. The theme is shaping up as follows:
- strike a note of confidence in God and his gospel
 - encourage and inspire the delegates in their Christian life
 - focus on “being” not “doing”
 - proclaim the wonder of grace and its implications
 - be a joyous experience and celebrate the good news

Venue and Date

3. Lengthy discussion at several meetings considered various possible venues, most of which had their own merits. These included various venues in Dublin and Belfast, the University of Ulster at Coleraine, and Sligo.

Where necessary, sites were visited by Rev David Montgomery (Co-Convenor) and Mr Stanley McDowell (Assembly Administrator).

The Committee was finally unanimous that the Special Assembly should be held at Dublin City University.

4. It was agreed in principle that August was the preferred month, and after significant discussion as to whether or not we should bring the Assembly forward to 2009 to maintain momentum the Committee decided to stick with 2010, in order to maximise the opportunity of finding the most appropriate speakers.

Structure of the Assembly

5. There was full discussion on the duration, starting and finishing days, the broad structure of a daily programme and the need to avoid overload. It was agreed that starting on a Monday evening and finishing on a Thursday evening was the optimum arrangement and that the undernoted could form the basis of the Assembly.

Morning (Tues-Thurs)	9:30 am	Bible Reading
	11:00 am	Seminars
Afternoon (Tues-Thurs)	2:30 pm	Optional opportunities eg stand alone workshops of a practical nature, space for corporate and personal reflection, resource for ministers & paid

		congregational workers and organised social outings
Evening (Mon-Thurs)	7:30 pm	Celebration
	9:30 pm	Informal fringe event (not Thursday)

Finance

7. The initial costs quoted by the University for the use of its facilities in 2007 are slightly higher than those of the University of Ulster at Coleraine. Some of the other costs will also be higher because of the economics of the Dublin area. However, the balance carried forward from the 2004 Special Assembly is more than enough to cover any such additional expenditure.

At the time of writing, the Committee is in discussion with the University about its charges for 2010 and the outcome of this, together with estimates of the other costs, will be used to produce an outline budget which will be presented to this General Assembly. The method of funding the 2004 event proved adequate, ie an assessment of 0.25p in the £ on stipend, over a period of 4 years. On the basis of 2007 stipend figures that would yield approximately £22,500 per year for a period of 4 years.

Other Matters

8. There is a desire to consider contributors from the church in the Third World and the persecuted church.

9. There is a need to give time and space for delegates to process what they hear, both individually and together with others from their congregation.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly approve the recommendation that the venue for the Special Assembly in 2010 be Dublin City University.
3. That the General Assembly authorise an assessment of 0.25p in the £ of stipend, for four years, to finance the Special Assembly.
4. That the 2010 Special Assembly Committee be re-appointed as follows:

MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED

Bloomfield Kirk Session	71
Grange Kirk Session	145

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

Pars.	19(1); 19(2); 43(1); 43(1); 59(2)(c); 65(1); 66(2)	44
	67(1); 67(4); 79(b); 79(c); 79(d); 86-92; 94-96;	45
	93(1); 105(c); 106(a); 106(b); 109; 134(1)	
	85(1)	48

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Pars	29(1)(b); 97(h)(iii); 137	46
	142(1); 142(2); 145(3); 165(5); 172(3); 195(8); 198(5);	46
	228(2); 229(b); 229(2); 239(2); 253(1)(b); 254(4); 258(d)(iii);	
	259; 260; 260(f); 260; 261(1); 261(1)(f); 262; 264; 265;	47
	267(1); 269(1); 269(4); 269(5)(a)(b)(c); 269(6); 272(1);	
	274(8)(b)(i); 275(5)(c); 275(5)(d); 275(12); 301(3); 302(3)(c);	
	306(3); 309(5)	
	63; 126(5); 127	48
	129; 207(1); 207(2); 268(4)(a); 269(3); 270(3)(a); 272	49
	280; 281(3)(a); 281(3)(b); 283; 283(2)(a); 284	50
	284(2)(f); 284(3)(b)	51
	308(5)	152

INDEX TO REPORTS

Addiction Services	160	Home and Irish Mission	123
Applicants for ordained ministry, Presbytery guidelines	224	Hymnal	277
Appraisals	266	Leadership Development	102
Assessments		Ministerial Studies	216
Church House, External	238	Ministry Events (YAC)	195
CMF	233	Ministry Opportunities (YAC)	194
Incidental Fund	236	Ministry Resources (YAC)	192
Ministerial Development	213	Mission Involvement	106
MPSF (1978)	235	Moderator's Advisory	10
Prolonged Disability	235	Older People Services	165
RMF	235	Outreach Ministries	100
WMF	234	Pensions and Assessments	233
Assembly Boards		Personnel	238
Business	83	Priorities	5
Communications	92	Property Management	237
Education	198	Reception of Ministers and Licentiates	216
Finance and Personnel	230	Recognised Ministries	13
General	1	Research and Education (YAC)	191
Mission in Ireland	120	Resourcing Christians for Ministry	215
Mission Overseas	99	Shankill Road Mission	125
Social Witness	154	Special Assembly	279
Studies and Christian Training	210	Specialist Ministries	158
Trustees	272	State Education	199
United Appeal	265	Training (YAC)	189
Youth and Children's Ministry	185	University Education	208
Assembly Commissions		World Development	104
Judicial	52	Assignment	213
Trusts	229	BBC Charter	96
Union	56	BMI Finance	129
Assembly Committees		BMI Personnel	126
Adult Services	173	BMI Property	128
Arrangements	90	Candidates Recommended	227
Church and Society	15	Centres Review Panel	32
Church Architecture	96	Chaplains Panel	158
Church Relations	26	Christian Lifestyle Conference	21
College and Magee Management	214	Church House Panel	30
Communications Administration	93	Community of Protestant Churches in Europe	27
Communications Development	94	Conciliation Panel	10
Congregational Life	121	Conference of European Churches	28
Doctrine	6	Conveners Resigning	
Education and Promotion	124	TR Buick (199); AD Davidson (5); EJ Hyndman (186); H Lyle (185); SP Moore (212); WTJ	
Family Services	167		
Finance, Legal and IT	231		
Global Concerns	20		

Richardson (278); TJ Stothers (56); TJ Wilson (157).		
Deaths		
WT Agnew (74); JE Barr (80); WM Boland (78); GE Cromeey (77); K Gregg (80); WM Jackson (78); DP Kirkwood (80); JW McAuley (76); JI Mairs (76); DAG Milligan (79); TH Mullin (76); WJ Watson (77); CF Young (76); H Young (74).		
Deal or No Deal Conference	22	
Deputy Clerk Appointment	1	
Environment Panel	25	
Familybooks	275	
Family Grants	234	
Forces Panel	159	
General Investment Fund	274	
Getty Bequest	275	
Gospel in Conflict	22	
Historical Society	94	
Homosexuality; Pastoral Guidelines	174	
Independent Strategic Review of Education	201	
Indigent Ladies Fund	166	
Inducted		
WJP Baillie (73); CWP Kennedy (79); JE McDowell (75); JWD Rogers (77); RB Savage (81).		
Installed		
D Bannerman (77); A Best (81); DJM Boyle (74); MR Burnside (79); NAL Cameron (75); RA Campbell (80); G Connor (78); J Coulter (76); CI Dickson (80); A Gibson (78); CM Glover (77); MCA Gray (78); WG Hamilton (80); SJ Hanna (80); GJ Kennedy (73); L Kennedy-Ritchie (81); K McConnell (75); DB McCorriston (75); NJ McCullough (73); PL McKelvey (73); JI Mairs (76); WB Martin (74); SP Moore (78); JH Robinson (74); DM Shaw (79); W Sinclair (75); J Sloan (80); ME Taylor (78); RB Thompson (79); MJ Welsh (73); AC Wilson (80); PB Wilson (77); A Wimberley (78).		
Inter-Church Marriage	28	
Irish Council of Churches	26	
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	27	
Judicial Commission, Appointment of	3	
Kinghan Mission	160	
Learning Disability	171	
Licensed		
M Cowan (74); ME Donald (75); RSJ McIlhatton (76); D McIlwaine (78); J Montgomery (74); W Montgomery (76); MD McNeely (79); K Nelson (74); NJE Reid (79); HM Rendell (76); I Thompson (73); SA Woodburn (79).		
Manse Guidelines	97	
Manse Panel	32	
Methodist Conference (2006)	88	
Memorial Record	37	
Memorials Transmitted	281	
Ministerial Training Review	220	
Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)	235	
Ministers' Prolonged Disability Fund	235	
Ministers without Charge	13	
Ministerial Development Fund	213	
Ministerial Minimum	233	
Ministries Panel	35	
Moderator of the General Assembly, Nomination of	11	
Multi-faith Events	6	
National Forum on Europe	19	
Nightlight	126	
Old Age Fund	166	
Ordained		
A Best (81); RA Campbell (80); CI Dickson (80); WG Hamilton (80); CWP Kennedy (79); DB McCorriston (75); JE McDowell (75); PL McKelvey (73); JWD Rogers (77); DM Shaw (79); J Sloan (80); MJ Welsh (73); AC Wilson (80); PB Wilson (77).		
Overtures		
On the Books	281	
Transmitted	281	
Pastoral Care Panel	34	
PCI Counselling	169	
PCI family Holiday	171	
Peace and Peacemaking Panel	22	
Pensions, Review of	248	
Presbyterian Church of Wales Assembly (2006)	89	
Presbyterian Herald	94	
Presbyterian Mutual Society	130	
Presbyterian Women's Association	147	
Presbytery Bounds Panel	33	
Presbytery Reports	73	
Principal of Union College	3	

Professor of New Testament Studies	3	South Belfast Friendship House	172
Primary Education in the Republic	203	Statistics	240
PWFA	235	Student Services	162
Race Relations Panel	23	Students' Bursary Fund	212
Recognised Ministries		Students, Schedule of	219
DJ Bruce (186); MG McClelland (187); JD Maxwell (14);		Supply Fees	64
MR Patterson (15); JA Peacock (187); D Stanfield (188).		Synod Reports	73
Resigned		Synods' Future	3
D Bannerman (77); MR Burnside (81); NAL Cameron (74);		Taking Care	168
G Connor (78); A Gibson (78); CM Glover (78); MCA Gray		Training Issues Panel	35
(81); RJ Greer (74); SJ Hanna (75); LWH Hilditch (79);		Trustees, Appointment of	4
GJ Kennedy (73); NJ McCullough (73); K McConnell (77);		United Reformed Church	
J McVeigh (78); JI Mairs (80); SP Moore (76); JH Robinson		Assembly (2006)	86
(73); RB Savage (75); W Sinclair (73); IF Smith (80);		University Chaplains' Reports	162
ME Taylor (78); RB Thompson (77); WJ Todd (73).		Urban Mission Panel	130
Retired		'Vibrant Communities of	
J Carson (81); JL Casement (80); DS Irwin (80);		Christ' Report	131
WA Kennedy (73); JH MacConnell (77); WJH McKee (79);		Women's Fund	166
WTJ Richardson (74); GD Simpson (80); WJ Steith (77).		World Alliance of Reformed	
Retired Ministers House Fund	239	Churches	28
Review of Public		Young Womens Groups	151
Administration	200, 205		
School Chaplain's Report	204		
Secondary Education in			
the Republic	203		
Sexual Offences in N Ireland	19		
Sexual Orientation Regulations			
(N Ireland)	17		
Social Issues and Resources	174		