

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



ANNUAL REPORTS



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ORDER OF BUSINESS

- Notes:**
- (i) Business commences at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 9.15 a.m. on Wednesday and 9.30 a.m. on Thursday.
 - (ii) An “Introduction to Assembly Business” will be given in the Assembly Hall on Tuesday at 9.00 a.m.
 - (iii) Communion will be held on Tuesday at 11.45 a.m. and Worship on Wednesday and Thursday at 12.15 p.m. The break for lunch will be at 1p.m. each day.
 - (iv) Figures in brackets refer to page numbers in the Annual Reports.

Tuesday

General Council (section A)

Finance and Staffing Commission

Social Witness

SPUD Youth Assembly

Trustees

Listening to the Global Church

Church in Society

Wednesday

General Council (sections B + C)

Training in Ministry

Congregational Life and Witness
Alternative Presentation

Congregational Life and Witness

Union Commission

Thursday

Judicial Commission

Special Judicial Commission

Commission on Applications

Global Mission

Mission in Ireland

General Council (section D)

NOTES

MONDAY, JUNE 1

Assembly Buildings

7.00 p.m. –

Service of Worship
Constitution of Assembly
Election of Moderator

TUESDAY, JUNE 2

9.30 a.m. –

1. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section A of Report and Resolutions 1-4 (pages 5-13 and 51).
- General Assembly Business Committee (initial report & debate).
2. Reports of Presbyteries (pages 63-70).
3. Reception of Corresponding Members and Delegates.
Church of Scotland: Rt Rev Dr Angus Morrison, Rev Douglas Nicol; Mr Angus Macpherson
United Reformed Church: Rev David Grosch-Miller
Presbyterian Church of Wales: Rev Neil Kirkham
Church of Ireland: Rt Rev John McDowell; Mrs Roberta McKelvey
The Methodist Church in Ireland: Rev Dr Heather Morris; Mr Norman Uprichard
Irish Council of Churches: Mr Deji Coo
Religious Society for Friends: Eleanor Gaw
CCAP, Livingstonia Synod, Malawi: Rev Levi Nyondo
Scripture Union Malawi: Mr Amon Chanika
Presbyterian Church of East Africa: Rt Rev Julius Mwamba
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan: Rev Maqsood Kamil
Transylvanian Reformed Church District, Romania: Rt Rev Béla Kató, Rev Tibor Kiss
The Christian Presbyterian Church of Portugal: Rev Manuel Luzia
- (10.15) 4. FINANCE & STAFFING COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (pages 71-115).
5. OVERTURES: Finance & Staffing Commission (pages 116-131).

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

NOTES

(11.30) Intermission.

11.45 a.m. **Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper**

including the Memorial Roll.

1.00 p.m. **LUNCH**

(SPUD will be hosting an informal lunch in the Minor Hall –
‘Grow Your Own Spud’)

2.00 p.m. –

6. **COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS: Report and Resolution (pages 199-212).**

(2.45) 7. **SPUD YOUTH ASSEMBLY: Report and Resolution (pages 240-241).**

(3.00) Intermission.

3.30 8. **TRUSTEES: Report and Resolutions (pages 242-246).**

3.45 9. **LISTENING TO THE GLOBAL CHURCH**
Alternative Presentation focusing on the ‘persecuted church’.

(5.00) 10. **COUNCIL FOR CHURCH IN SOCIETY: Report and Resolutions (pages 213-229).**

Lapsed Business (if any).

(6.00) Close of Business.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3

9.15 a.m. –

11. **GENERAL COUNCIL: Section B of Report and Resolutions 5-7 (pages 13-19 and 52).**
Charities Legislation Task Group; Church Relations; Doctrine; Priorities; Moderator’s Advisory

12. **OVERTURES: Charities Legislation - General Council (pages 53-55).**

(10.15) Intermission.

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

NOTES

- (10.45) 13. **GENERAL COUNCIL:** Section C of Report and Resolutions 8-13 (pages 19-26 and 52).
Communications Review; Commercial Use of Assembly Buildings; General Business of the Council; General Assembly Solicitor; Guysmere Centre Redevelopment; Redundant Properties & Graveyards; Historical Archiving; 2017 Residential Assembly; Engagement & Consultation;
- 11.30 14. **COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY:** Report and Resolutions (pages 173-182).
- 12.15 p.m. – Worship.**
- 1.00 p.m. – Lunch.**
- 2.00 p.m. –**
15. **COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & WITNESS**
Alternative Presentation
- 3.30 Intermission.
- 4.00 **COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & WITNESS (cont)**
Alternative Presentation
- (4.30) 16. **COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & WITNESS:** Report and Resolutions (pages 165-172).
- (5.00) 17. **UNION COMMISSION:** Report and Resolutions (pages 136-164).
18. **OVERTURE:** Union Commission (page 164).
Lapsed Business (if any).
- (6.00) Close of Business.

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

NOTES

7.45 p.m. – Evening Celebration – A Caring Fellowship

Speaker: Rev. Dr. John Woodside

SPUD will be hosting an informal gathering in the Mall at the conclusion of the Wednesday Evening Celebration, with some acoustic music and refreshments served.

THURSDAY, JUNE 4

In Private

9.30 a.m. –

19. JUDICIAL COMMISSION: Report and Resolution (pages 132-133).
20. SPECIAL (JUDICIAL) COMMISSION: Report and Resolution (page 134).
21. COMMISSION ON APPLICATIONS: Report and Resolution (page 135).
22. OVERTURES: Judicial Commission (page 133).

(10.00) Intermission.

In Public

10.30 23. COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION: Report and Resolutions (pages 230-239).

(11.30) 24. COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND: Report and Resolutions (pages 183-198).

12.15 p.m. – Worship

1.00 p.m. – Lunch

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

NOTES

2.00 p.m. –

25. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section D of Report and Resolutions 14-18 (pages 26-29 and 52).

Support Services; Nominations; United Appeal

26. OVERTURES:

Central Ministry Fund - General Council (page 55)

Public Worship – Former Board of Ministry in Ireland (pages 55-60)

Conciliation (page 61)

Former Board of Christian Training (pages 61-62)

Former Commission on Trusts (page 62)

Lapsed Business (if any).

27. General Council Introductory Section (pages 1-5 and 53)

General Assembly Business Committee (debate resumed) Final Report and Resolutions 19-21 (pages 52-53).

CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY.

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

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

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. The Assembly quorum is fifty members.
 - (a) Deaconesses, Licentiates, Presbytery representatives of Presbyterian Women and youth, representatives of SPUD and some others are invited to “sit and deliberate” as associates – i.e., to take part with members freely in debate but without voting.
 - (b) 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.

2. **The Moderator** is chairman of the Assembly, in charge of proceedings, but should not take sides in debates. Former Moderators may deputise from time to time, should the Moderator wish to take part in debate or to withdraw from the House.
 - (a) When the Moderator rises to speak at any point all other members must yield to the Chair.
 - (b) 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.
 - (c) 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.

3. **Councils & Commissions:** Work for which the Assembly is responsible is generally entrusted to various General Assembly Councils and Commissions. These must each present a report to the Assembly. Councils normally have a number of General Assembly Committees working under them, along with permanent Panels and ad-hoc Task Groups. A Commission of Assembly is entrusted with the executive powers of the Assembly, within the terms of its appointment. Members of Commissions, Councils and General Assembly Committees are appointed by the Assembly itself, on the nomination of the General Assembly's Nominations Committee. Councils and Commissions are led by a Convener, supported by a Secretary, with the latter often being a senior member of staff.

4. **Reports of Councils:** While the Assembly is obliged to "receive" the report of each Council, it does not "adopt" or accept responsibility for the contents of any report. Reports carry only the authority of the Council concerned and not of the Assembly.
 - (a) If found too unsatisfactory the report, or a section of it, may be received and referred back. This is done by an amendment to the resolution "That the report of the [name of Council] be received". 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 reports and speeches. Similarly, speeches in the Assembly carry the authority only of the speaker.
 - (b) Reports are first of all "presented" and the appended resolutions "proposed" en bloc, usually by a Council Convener who will make a speech in support highlighting aspects of the Council's work. The resolutions are then "seconded" en bloc, usually by another officer of the Council, who again speaks in support and usually addresses a different aspect of the Council's work. There is then an opportunity for questions to be asked.

5. **Questions to Councils:** 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 Council carries responsibility; they should not be rhetorical or

debating “questions”, to score a point. Questions should be written out and placed in the box provided as early as possible during the Assembly. They can also be submitted by e-mail to the Deputy Clerk (deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org) in advance of the Assembly or during the Assembly, up to 15 minutes before the report in question is scheduled. Questions will normally be limited to two per person and ten minutes in all, unless the Moderator judge that a particular subject merits an extension of these limits.

6. **Resolutions of Councils:** These are then taken in succession, as printed in the General Assembly Reports, and on occasion also in the Supplementary Reports. Resolutions are called by number. Those wishing to speak should at once come forward, or otherwise indicate to the Moderator their desire to speak: it will be helpful if they move in good time to sit on one of the seats reserved for the purpose on the front row, ready for the Moderator to call them. The final resolution of a Council is “that the report of the [name of Council] be received”. This is the point where members may discuss (not ask questions about) any matters in the report or for which the Council, etc., should bear responsibility, but which do not arise under any previous resolution.

Timings during debate: Unless otherwise arranged, speeches are limited as follows:

Presenting a group of reports and resolutions	6 minutes
Seconding a group of reports and resolutions	6 minutes
All other speeches	3 minutes

- (a) If lapsed business accumulates, these timings can be shortened.
- (b) A flickering light is given 1 minute before the end, a steady light for 30 seconds and a buzz when the time is up. Before commencing, speakers should announce their name and Congregation (or PW, SPUD etc) 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.

8. **Alternative format:** The Assembly may decide from time to time to conduct a particular item of business using an alternative format. This is usually on the recommendation of the General Assembly Business Committee. In such circumstances alternative rules of debate and timings may apply.
9. **Amendments:** These 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 debate on an amendment commences, the amendment must be given in writing to the Clerk's desk (or be submitted electronically to *deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org*).
 - (a) Amendments can be submitted to the Clerk of Assembly in advance of the business concerned, and if received in sufficient time and licensed by the General Assembly Business Committee, will take precedence over any other amendments.
 - (b) 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.
 - (c) 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.
10. **Additional resolutions:** When a matter is not covered by existing resolutions from a Council an additional 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.

- 11. Voting:** This will normally be by voice, when the Moderator calls for those in favour to say “Aye” and those against to say “No”. The Moderator may also call for a standing vote, with voting cards displayed, to be counted. A vote by ballot will be held when asked for by not fewer than twenty-five members or at the discretion of the Moderator, by the use of voting tickets, to be counted by tellers. Proxy voting for an absent member is not allowed. A member who has spoken or voted against any decision may intimate his or her personal dissent or protest immediately after the decision has been pronounced, but does not thereby free himself or herself from obligation loyally to implement the decision taken.
- 12. Overtures:** These are proposals for a change in the Code, 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 with no one voting against. If approved by a lesser majority it is “placed on the books”, to be decided upon 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 significant constitutional change it must also be sent down to Presbyteries to be voted on during the intervening year.
- 13. Memorials:** These are petitions 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.

GENERAL COUNCIL

Convener: Very Rev Dr RL CRAIG
Secretary: THE CLERK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The General Council has met on two occasions since its formation. At its initial meeting on 28th January 2015 members acquainted themselves with the work in hand, noting the remit of the Council itself and of its eight Assembly Committees. The Council also appointed a number of Panels for the Support Services Committee, covering initially the areas of Finance, Personnel and Property, and set up nine Task Groups to carry forward five ad-hoc pieces of work coming from the former General Board and take forward four new ad-hoc areas of work.

2. At its meeting on 25th March 2015 the Council received reports from each of its Assembly Committees and from the Task Groups it had appointed. A summary of each of these reports is included below. It will be noted that many of the Committees and Task Groups are either just beginning their work or are carrying out a review of their area of work.

3. At the 2015 General Assembly the General Council report will be taken in four sections as follows:

- Section A (9.30am on Tuesday 2nd June):
 - Initial Report of the General Assembly Business Committee
- Section B (9.15am on Wednesday 3rd June):
 - Charities Legislation Task Group; Church Relations; Doctrine; Priorities; Moderator's Advisory
 - followed by overtures relating to - Charities Legislation
- Section C (10.45am on Wednesday 3rd June):
 - Communications Review; Commercial Use of Assembly Buildings; General Business of the Council; General Assembly Solicitor; Guysmere Centre Redevelopment; Redundant Properties & Graveyards; Historical Archiving; 2017 Residential Assembly; Engagement & Consultation
- Section D (2.00pm Thursday 4th June):
 - Support Services; Nominations; United Appeal
 - followed by overtures relating to - CMF Bonus; Public Worship; former Board of Christian Training; former Commission on Trusts.

4. The Council draws particular attention of members of Assembly to the following:

- the report of the General Assembly Business Committee, including changes that have been agreed by the General Council for implementation at the 2015 General Assembly and a series of recommendations for subsequent Assemblies (see also resolutions 1-4 & 19-21);
- the report of the Charities Legislation Task Group, the necessary decisions and their implementation, which will have far-reaching

consequences for every congregation (see also resolution 5 and the overtures transmitted on pages 53-55);

- the report of the Nomination of the General Assembly Solicitor Task Group (see also resolutions 11 & 12 and the supplementary report which will be printed in Daily Minutes);
- the recommendation regarding the Central Ministry Fund Bonus, contained in the report of the Support Services Committee (see also General Council Appendix 4, resolution 14 and the overture transmitted on page 55);

5. The Council report also includes the Memorial Record, which recognises the life and service of those ministers who have died since the last Assembly.

CONVENER'S INTRODUCTION

6. As with all new Councils, the period since 1st January 2015 has been incredibly busy for the General Council. To coordinate the meetings of the eight new Committees and nine new Task Groups was a major challenge in itself. Added to this was the need to give the necessary space for new groups and people to get to grips with their various remits, while at the same time ensuring important work continued. Thanks are due to the numerous Conveners, Secretaries, Chairmen and members of these groups.

7. The Council has welcomed some new staff to the support services departments, while many other members of the staff team have had their roles redefined as a result of restructuring. The new structure for oversight of Support Services is settling down, under the leadership of the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Financial Secretary. The thanks of the Council is due to all of the staff for their vital support of the Council and its Committees, Panels and Task Groups during these last months.

8. One of the staff members who has joined the support services team is Mark Smith, PCI's new Press and Web Officer. Mark comes to PCI with a wealth of experience as a senior communications officer and, though obviously on a steep learning curve, has already proved his worth. Helping the Presbyterian Church in Ireland further develop its press and media relations, along with its presence on the web and in social media, is quite a challenge in itself. To have to do this while at the same time trying to get one's head round the wide diversity of views held by numerous independently minded Irish Presbyterians, is a big ask. His first General Assembly this coming June will no doubt help Mark sort it all out in his head!

MEMORIAL RECORD

The Very Rev Dr Donald Patton reports:

The **Rev Stewart Robert Jones BD, DipSS, MTh, MA., MSc, DPhil**, died tragically on Saturday 12th July 2014 as the result of a diving accident off Saint John's Point, County Donegal, in the 56th year of his age and the 32nd year of his ministry. He was born at Newry on 8th September 1957 the eldest of three children to James Jones and his wife Isabella, née Stewart. The family were members of the Congregation of Bessbrook. Dr Jones received his early education in Newry

Model Primary School and later attended Newry High School. Persuaded of his call to the ordained ministry during his upper 6th year, he proceeded to the Queen's University, Belfast, where he completed a primary BD through Union Theological College, Belfast, graduating in 1980. While continuing his studies at Union he worked for a Diploma in Social Studies through Queens which he achieved in 1982. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Newry on 4th June 1982 in his home Congregation. This was followed by service as the Assistant Minister in McQuiston Memorial in East Belfast where he was ordained on 16th January 1983. On 1st March 1984 he was inducted as Assistant to the Convener of the vacancy in Second Castlederg and installed there as Minister on 10th March 1985 by the Presbytery of Strabane, also serving as Stated Supply at Alt. During the next six years he ministered to his people and neighbourhood through troubled times of political and social unrest bringing understanding and sensitivity to people's grief and loss born out of his memories of the families in Bessbrook, who lost loved ones in the Kingsmills massacre, on 5th January 1976, when 10 out of 11 textile workers on their way home by minibus were executed by the IRA. In 1990 Dr Jones moved to Bangor, Co Down, where he was installed on 3rd July as the Minister of Kilcooley Congregation by the Presbytery of Ards. Then in 2004 he moved to Donemana where he was installed on 17th June by the Presbytery of Foyle. His outgoing personality and energetic involvement in such community projects as the Churches Together movement in Londonderry and the Irish Churches Peace Project based in Strabane made him a well known and respected figure in the wider neighbourhood. He encouraged his Congregation in their devotional lives with the publication of a series of Bible notes Through the Bible in 365 Days. With his wife Patricia and some others from Donemana Congregation he visited the Congregation of Mthunhanna in Malawi in 2009 forming a link which was followed up with practical help to build a new Church and a facility for orphans. He served as Clerk of the Foyle Presbytery from 2005 to 2009. He was appointed Presbyterian Chaplain to Altnagelvin Hospital, Londonderry, in 2010, where his pastoral ministry to staff and patients alike was greatly appreciated. Throughout these years Dr Jones pursued his academic interests, achieving an MTh in 1986 on Presbyterianism and Unionism, an MA in 1990 and a DPhil in 1995 in Middle Eastern Studies both from the University of Ulster, Coleraine. Based on these studies, he published two works privately, Israel in the Carter Years, and British Policy in the Middle East. Another interest was IT and he completed an MSc in Computer Based Learning in 2006 (QUB). Outside of his working life, among other hobbies and interests, Dr Jones was an experienced diver being an Instructor with the Professional Association of Diving Instructors and the British Sub-Aqua Club. Dr Jones married Patricia Margaret Deakin in 1983 and three children were born to the marriage, Anna Patricia, Esther Sarah and Rachel Deborah. To Mrs Jones, her daughters, Dr Jones mother and their wider family circle, we extend our sympathy and assurance of the continuing prayers of the wider Church in their loss.

The **Rev James Irwin Smyth BA**, Minister Emeritus of Richhill Congregation in the Presbytery of Armagh, died on 12th November 2014 after a short illness, in the ninetieth year of his age and the sixty-fourth year of his ministry. He was born on 17th June 1925, one of three children (two sons and a daughter) at Millbrook House, Drumahoe, to James Smyth, a grain merchant and farmer, and his wife Isabel, née Irwin. He was brought up in connection

with the Congregation of Ebrington, Londonderry, and educated at Foyle College in the city from 1938 to 1943. Responding to the call of God to the ordained ministry he studied at Magee College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, from 1943 to 1947, graduating BA. He then went to Edinburgh to study at New College, and returned to Belfast in 1948 to the Assembly's College, completing his theological training in 1949. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Derry on 19th July 1949 and was assigned to Cregagh Congregation in East Belfast, serving as Assistant to the Rev Arthur Barbour. After two years in the city he was called to the Congregation of Richhill as Minister and ordained and installed there by the Presbytery of Armagh on 9th May 1951. He was to spend his entire active ministry of forty-one years there, during which time he challenged, encouraged and comforted his people by his thoughtful preaching and pastoral care. Under his leadership a church hall was built in 1957 and the Meeting House was completely renovated and other accommodation added in 1972. He was a member of the Local Education Management Committee. Outside of his work he enjoyed several interests – music, reading, gardening, motoring, antiques and paintings.

He retired on 30th June 1992 and returned to his roots settling at New Buildings, County Londonderry.

He leaves behind his sister Amy, (his brother, Jackie, predeceased him) and nephews and nieces, Maurice, Roger, Dianne and Carol. To these we extend our sympathy and assurance of the Church's continuing prayers in their loss.

The Rev Robert (Robin) William Johnston MacDermott, MA, BD, STM, DD, Minister Emeritus of Christ Church, Sandymount, Dublin, died on Saturday 28th March 2015, in the eighty-second year of his age, and the fifty-third year of his ministry. He was born in Belfast on 25th March 1934, the third of four children of John Clarke MacDermott (a son of the Rev John MacDermott, Minister of Belmont Presbyterian Church, 1880 to 1920), later Lord MacDermott of Belmont and Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, and his wife Louise Palmer MacDermott (daughter of the Rev Dr John Corry Johnston, successively of Union Chapel, Dublin, then Abbey, Dublin, the two Congregations being united in 1916).

Dr Robin MacDermott was educated at Campbell College, Belfast, 1947-1952. He undertook his tertiary course of study at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, 1952-1955, graduating MA. This was followed by a period of two years as a teacher at Bishops Diocesan College, Rondebosch, Cape Town, South Africa, an independent Anglican college for boys, founded in 1849 by the Rt Rev Robert Gray, the first Bishop of Cape Town. Returning to the UK he prepared to enter the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland by studying at New College, Edinburgh, 1958-1960, graduating BD, the Assembly's College, Belfast, 1960-1961, and Yale University, New Haven Connecticut, 1961-1962, graduating STM (Master of Sacred Theology).

He was licensed by the Presbytery of East Belfast on 23rd May 1961, and served as Assistant Minister to the Rev Thomas Carlisle in the Congregation of Joymount where he was ordained by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus on 27th November 1962. His administrative abilities were utilised by the General Assembly when he was appointed Assistant Clerk (protem) 1964 to 1965. In 1966 he left Carrickfergus to be installed by the Presbytery of Donegal as the

Minister of St Johnston and Ballylennon on 22nd April of that year. He was to serve his whole ministry within the Republic of Ireland under the Home Mission of the Church, remaining in this, his first charge, for six years. In 1970 he was called to Christ Church, Rathgar, Dublin, and installed there on 11th November. He was to remain for the next nineteen years in this suburb of the Irish capital. A man of wide human and theological sympathies he developed strong ecumenical contacts. He moved to Ballina, Killala and Ballymote in 1989 being installed in this joint charge on 10th March 1989, ministering there for four years before returning to Dublin as Minister of Sandymount from 15 September 1989 until his retirement on 30th June 1999. He also acted as Clerk to the Synod of Dublin 1993-1999. Dr MacDermott served the wider Church as Convener of the Home Mission from 1985 to 1991 and the Home Board from 1990-1996.

A tall, gracious, courteous and quietly spoken man, his gifts of intellect, dedication, efficiency, and humanity, were given gladly in the service of the Church. In the Reports to the General Assembly 1991 the Home Mission recorded thanks for his work commenting on 'His skill as a communicator and sound judgement [which] enabled him to guide the Committee with balanced counsel through the sensitive and intricate decisions which are required.'

In 1991 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland for his work.

Throughout the greater part of his ministry Dr MacDermott was supported by his wife Janet, née Smyth (daughter of the late Rev Dr TAB Smyth) whom he married on September 22nd 1979.

The warmest sympathy is extended to Janet and the wider family circle.

GENERAL COUNCIL: SECTION A

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

1. At the time of writing the new General Assembly Business Committee has met on two occasions, with further meetings planned in preparation for the 2015 General Assembly.

2. An **Arrangements Panel** has been appointed consisting of Moderator, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Very Rev Dr Roy Patton, Rev Gordon Best (Convener); Rev Mervyn Burnside, Mr Gary Nesbitt, Rev George McClelland, Mrs Maureen Patterson, Rev Jim McCaughan. Mrs Joyce Anderson, Mr Harry Orr and other staff as necessary will be in attendance.

3. A **Draft Order of Business for 2015** was agreed and approved by the General Council.

(a) This includes two innovations:

- Time has been set aside on the Tuesday afternoon for 'Listening to the Global Church' which is designed to enable us to hear in a meaningful way from partner churches and some of our own people working overseas, looking at the theme of 'the persecuted church'.

- Most of the Wednesday afternoon has been allocated to the Council for Congregational Life and Witness which will be given the freedom to depart from normal procedures and lead the Assembly in new ways to enable members to engage with aspects of its work.
- (b) The General Council's report and business is divided into four sections taken over two days.
- (c) It is anticipated that most reports will be short and succinct this year and so no business is planned for the Friday.
- (d) The Arrangements Panel has appropriate matters in hand and a budget for 2015 of £19,000 has been authorised. The Panel Convener reports below on some of the practical aspects of this year's Assembly.

4. The **Wednesday night event and the Wednesday and Thursday worship** will address the Fit for Purpose theme for 2015/16, 'A Caring Fellowship'. A group convened by the Rev Daniel Kane to promote the Fit for Purpose theme for 2015/16 has, along with the incoming Moderator, invited the Rev Dr John Woodside to be the main speaker for the Wednesday night. It is also planned to interview, among others, Colin Jenkins of the Seamen's Mission in Cork. **SPUD** have agreed to help host an informal gathering at the conclusion of the Wednesday evening.

5. The **Creative Production Department** is cooperating in finding ways to publicise the Opening Night of the General Assembly with a view to increasing attendance. The service will include recognition of outgoing Conveners of Boards and Committees. Council Conveners and Secretaries have been asked to encourage members of their Councils, Committees and Panel to attend the Opening Night and to create a culture that attendance is part of the role of serving in this way.

6. The Committee brought a number of alternatives to the General Council for implementation at the **2015 General Assembly** and the following were agreed:

Prayer

- (a) That focused prayer points be sent out in advance of Assembly e.g. prayer cards, email, social media.
- (b) That the Moderator be encouraged to take breaks in the business at appropriate times for prayer in small groups (maybe a couple of times during the week).

Ordering of Business

- (c) That in the presentation of all reports, both the proposer and seconder shall speak prior to questions.
- (d) That questions may be submitted either directly to the relevant Convener, placed in the relevant pigeon hole, or sent to by email to deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org up to 15 minutes before a report is presented.
- (e) The Moderator, with advice from the Clerk, will seek to prioritise questions within an agreed time limit.
- (f) The resolution 'That the Report be received' will be taken at the end of the resolutions, rather than at the beginning, to let general debate take place after specific debate on important resolutions has finished.

Speaking times

- (g) On the proposal of the Committee, the General Council agreed to recommend revised timings for speeches for the 2015 General Assembly as follows:
- Proposer – 6 minutes
 - Seconder – 6 minutes
 - Other speeches – 3 minutes

The Clerk and Convener of the General Assembly Business Committee were authorised to amend ‘the yellow pages’ in the Reports Book, and bring any necessary resolution(s) to the General Assembly with regard to suspending standing orders.

7. The Committee brought a number of suggestions to the General Council for recommendation to the 2015 General Assembly for implementation in **2016 and subsequent Assemblies**. After discussion at the Council, the following recommendations are presented to the General Assembly:

- (a) That each Congregation be permitted to nominate an additional named Elder to sit and deliberate (but not vote) when the representative Elder is *not* available to attend;
- (b) That Councils restrict their reports to strategy and implementation, not ‘showcasing’ their work;
- (c) That each report begins with an executive summary, then, briefly, report on the implementation of previous decisions, then moving on to decisions to be made;
- (d) That each Council’s non-controversial resolutions be blocked together and taken as one item (without speeches unless challenged) along with the remainder of that Council’s more significant business;
- (e) Where appropriate, opportunity is given for cross-council discussion of topics, especially those identified as priorities;
- (f) That the General Assembly Business Committee reflect on the Council for Congregational Life and Witness’s alternative presentation in 2015 and report to the General Council with authority being given to the General Council, to implement related changes at the 2016 General Assembly.

It should be noted that the appended resolution (General Council resolution 19) asks the Assembly to adopt all of these recommendation, (a) – (f). This may of course be amended by the Assembly, to leave out any of the recommendations that the Assembly does not wish to adopt.

8. Following the Committee’s report the General Council agreed that three options should be presented for decision at the 2015 General Assembly, regarding a start and finish time for the General Assembly in 2016:

- (i) Current: Opening Night Monday. Close late Thursday afternoon (3 business days);
- (ii) Opening Night Monday. Close Friday lunchtime or late afternoon (3½-4 business days);
- (iii) Opening Night Sunday. Close Thursday lunchtime or late afternoon (3½-4 business days).

It should be noted that in the appended resolution (General Council resolution 20) the Assembly is being asked to decide upon which of these three options it wishes to adopt.

REPORTS FROM OTHER CHURCH ASSEMBLIES etc**The United Reformed Church 2014**

The Rt Rev Dr Michael Barry reports:

1. The United Reformed Church biennial General Assembly was held from 3rd-6th July 2014 in St David's Hall, Cardiff. Esther and I drove to the Welsh capital down through the middle of the country which provided us with spectacular views often from a great height. We received a warm welcome and quickly settled into our accommodation.

2. The Assembly began on Thursday afternoon with a service constituting the Assembly and communion. The URC has two Moderators, and during the service the Rev David Grosch-Miller was inducted as Minister Moderator of the General Assembly 2014-2016, and along with Mr John Ellis, Elder Moderator, will lead the denomination over the next two years. During the Assembly voting took place for the next two Moderators for 2016-18!

3. The Assembly dealt with the usual matters of business which would be familiar in our reports. However, one major difference was the methods of voting used. Some non-contentious resolutions were voted upon en bloc; some by majority decision; some by consensus voting. In this last method members of Assembly are issued with an orange and a blue card which they hold up at various points in a debate. If all the cards are orange, agreement has been reached by consensus. If there are some blue cards, those members are invited to express their concerns. After this they are invited to show an orange card so that consensus can be declared as the mind of the Assembly. This year electronic voting was trialled.

4. Friday and Saturday mornings began with worship and Bible Study on the theme "Drink Deeply" and the Assembly closed on Sunday afternoon with a final service.

5. During the Assembly various special interest meetings were held on such topics as mission, religious selection at state funded faith schools, evangelism, Westminster College, ecumenical relations.

6. An interesting World War I commemoration was held on Friday morning when Michael Pernt-Weigal, Minister of a Church in Winnweiler within the Church of the Palatinate, gave a German perspective.

7. The issue of same sex marriage was debated at length on Friday afternoon. A booklet 'One plus One'; written by the human sexuality task group had been circulated to members prior to the Assembly. There was much discussion on the subject, although the vast majority of it was in favour of same sex marriages being available in the Church. No resolution was brought to the Assembly, but during the debate it was decided to appoint a facilitation group to draw up a resolution on the issue, to be put the next day.

8. On Saturday, the majority of members were still in favour, but a small minority showed their concern by raising blue cards in the consensus voting. After several attempts, no consensus was achieved, and the matter was adjourned until Sunday's business.

9. "A clear majority of members of Assembly expressed the view that local Congregations should be permitted to offer same-sex marriage to those who

seek that opportunity. However, because our decision-making process is based on the seeking of full consensus, Assembly was unable to reach agreement.” The Church is having further discussions with the option of holding a “one issue, one day” General Assembly to decide without waiting for the next stated meeting in July 2016.

10. At present 68,000 people make up 1500 Congregations, with nearly 700 Ministers, paid and unpaid. Like all Churches, the URC is going through trying days as it seeks to discern its place in the world. We face similar situations and so we offer our prayerful support to God’s people there, that he would bless them in their daily walk with him.

The Welsh Assembly 2014

The Rt Rev Dr Michael Barry reports:

1. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales was held in the Great Hall, University of Wales Aberystwyth from 7th-9th July 2014 under the theme ‘Why do you stand looking into heaven?’ (Acts 1:11). Following directly on from the URC Assembly in Cardiff, Esther and I had a pleasant two and a half hour drive up to Aberystwyth on Sunday afternoon and found a warm welcome and comfortable lodgings in our hotel overlooking the bay.

2. That night a service of praise had been arranged in Capel y Morfa, to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of Howell Harris, who was associated with Daniel Rowland and Williams Williams in the Welsh Revival of the 18th century. This was our introduction to listening to a translation through headphones (something we had to get used to quickly for all the business was conducted in Welsh). One disappointment was the absence of the Mizoram Synod Youth Choir from India which was to have taken part in the service, but due to visa difficulties, was delayed until Tuesday.

3. The Assembly started on Monday morning with registration followed by the inaugural service at noon. During this service the corresponding members were received and presented with a gift to mark our visit.

4. One of the items of business was the Church’s response to the Marriage Act (Same Sex Couples). Concern was expressed about the Declaratory Articles and Constitution and the recommendation of the Civil Partnership Commission was to defer further discussion until the General Assembly Board meets in September 2017. However, this was amended and will be discussed at the 2015 General Assembly.

5. Other business considered was the work of the Commission of Covenanted Churches in association with Churches Together in Wales, which was considering visible unity in the Church Uniting in Wales. Various concerns were expressed but the matter passed without comment.

6. The business of the Assembly would have held no surprises for us in PCI – pensions, youth work, review of structures and more. A report was presented on the authority of the Bible. Although described as a balanced paper, this would have raised more than a few eyebrows in our Church, especially when it stated that “nowhere does the Bible claim to be infallible, and any careful and detailed study of the Bible shows that there are factual errors, inconsistencies and counter statements which suggest that it is impossible to accept it in all its details as a literally true account.” The paper was sent down for discussion.

7. On the Monday evening a service of communion was held during which members who had passed away during the year were remembered.

8. On Tuesday and Wednesday mornings the Assembly opened with worship led by the Chaplain, Moses Tutesigensi, who is originally from Uganda.

9. Two notable addresses were delivered to the Assembly. On Tuesday the Rev Richard Brunt who was once a missionary in China, delivered the Davies Lecture entitled “The Lord’s Song in an Alien Country – some missionary connections between Wales and China.” Then on Wednesday saw the annual meeting of the Historical Society. This year’s lecturer was Dr Eryn M White who spoke on “‘Faith, Fire and Fervency’: Howell Harris and the development of Methodism”. This was another opportunity to hear more of the life and work of a remarkable man whose life and witness makes interesting and exciting reading and sent one listener back to reread a paper by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones on the subject.

10. The Presbyterian Church in Wales recognises its declining numbers present major problems. There was discussion surrounding the proceeds from the sale of property as a result. The statistics for 2013 show a membership of 23,840 with 627 Churches, of which 38% have fewer than 20 members. In the 30 years from 1982 to 2012 membership has decreased by 70% whilst the number of Churches fell by 45%. Today 41% of Churches are served by a full-time or part-time Minister and 49% have no Minister.

11. One notable difference from our own Assembly was on the Tuesday evening when the outgoing Moderator, the Rev Trefor Lewis, gave his valedictory address and the new Moderator, the Rev Neil Kirkham was installed. (The Moderator Elect was chosen at the beginning of the Assembly and will take up his position in 2015).

12. In the Presbyterian Church of Wales we find many similarities and many differences, but we pray for them as they face many of the problems we face. May God bless our brothers and sisters in Wales as they seek his will and his way in living out their faith in a changing society and world.

The Methodist Conference 2014

The Very Rev Dr Rob Craig reports:

1. I attended the 2014 Methodist Conference, which was held in Lesson Street, Dublin from Wednesday 11th June to Sunday 15th June. I was accompanied by Mr Alan Foster, and Elder from the Greystones congregation. Also present was the Rev Dr Donald Watts, attending in his capacity as the President of the Irish Council of Churches.

2. The theme for the Conference was “Moving Out Together”. At the opening service the Rev Peter Murray from the Clooney Methodist congregation in Londonderry was elected and installed as President of the Conference. His predecessor, the Rev Dr Heather Morris, who had been the first woman to hold the office of President, retired from her year in office to assume the role of secretary of the Methodist Home Mission.

3. An agreement on Interchangeability of Ministry was passed by the Methodist Conference in 2013 and by the Church of Ireland General Synod in June 2014. As a result, the Installation service for the Methodist President in June 2014 was the first time that Church of Ireland Bishops had participated.

4. The business of the Conference began each day with a time of worship including a Bible address given by the Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh. With the titles, “Warm Hearts”, “Wet Feet” and “Tough Hands” his addresses proved to be imaginative, challenging and a good start to the business of the day.

5. Given the location in Dublin there was a decidedly residential feel to the Conference which was expressed both in the conduct of the business and the sense of fellowship experienced by all at coffee and meal times.

6. On the Friday morning the business of the day was interrupted to receive greetings from the Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. There was a warm evangelical tone to his remarks as he acknowledged that so many of those who had been catechised now needed to be evangelised.

7. The Methodist Conference came to its customary conclusion with the Ordination Service for new ministers. This was indeed inspirational as each in turn had the opportunity to testify of his personal sense of call to the ministry.

The Rev Gordon Best, Convener of the Arrangements Panel, reports as follows:

Guidelines for New Members

1. There will be an opportunity for Elders and Ministers who are attending the General Assembly for the first time to be given an introduction to Assembly procedures. This briefing will take place in the Assembly Hall at 9.00am on Tuesday 2nd June, immediately prior to the first Business Session of the Assembly. Members of the Arrangements Panel are situated at the Carrickfergus Window desk to help members with general arrangements and information. The Convener’s desk is located in front of the platform on the Main floor of the Assembly Hall, close to the Clerk’s desk.

Opening Night

2. Doors will open to the General Public at 6.00pm. Members of Assembly are strongly encouraged to be present at this service to hear the outgoing Moderator reflect on his year in office and welcome the incoming Moderator. During the evening the outgoing Moderator will be thanking the former Board and Committee Conveners who stood down at the end of 2014.

Tuesday lunch-time

3. **SPUD** will be hosting an informal lunch in the Minor Hall on the Tuesday of Assembly week at which they will be doing a short presentation on their ‘Grow Your Own SPUD’ initiative. This will begin immediately after the close of the morning session and a ‘packed lunch’ will be provided for the first hundred or so members of Assembly who come along – first come first served!

Wednesday Evening Event

4. This will be based on the Fit for Purpose theme for the incoming year – ‘A Caring Fellowship’, with the Rev Dr John Woodside being the speaker. The evening will begin at 7.45pm, with the doors opening at 7.00pm. **SPUD** have

agreed to help host an informal gathering in the Mall at the conclusion of the Wednesday evening, with some acoustic music and refreshments served.

Communion and Worship Services

5. The Communion Service will commence at 11.45am 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 11.35am. There will also be worship on Wednesday and Thursday 12.15pm, open to the public.

First Aid

6. St John's Ambulance personnel will be in attendance on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Others trained in First Aid will be in the building at all other times. Please notify the Convener or any of the stewards at the doors if First Aid is required.

Exhibition

7. Various exhibition stands will be displayed in the foyer area adjacent to the Reception desk. These will feature the wider work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Please take a few moments to browse around these during the Assembly.

Web Streaming and Twitter

8. The public sessions of the General Assembly will be streamed through the PCI Website, and you can also follow proceedings on @pciassembly. The Private Session and certain other items of business will not be streamed.

Tea/Coffee Breaks

9. Tea and coffee will be served during intermissions. We ask you to move away from the serving areas once you have been attended to, to allow others following you to be served quickly.

Queuing to Speak

10. The row of seats directly in front of the rostrum is reserved for those queuing to speak in debates. In the interests of efficiency and courtesy, members are asked to respect this.

Voting Cards

11. These should be obtained as soon as possible from the desk located in the Foyer where they are available on Monday evening/Tuesday morning, after which members should contact the Financial Secretary's Department. Ministers please note that when obtaining your voting cards, you are asked to produce the Registration Card which is enclosed with these Reports.

Admission

12. Admission to the Private Session is by voting card only. 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. Entrance to and exit from the Private Session is not normally permitted during an item of business.

Expenses

13. All members may claim a daily allowance but travel expenses cover the cost of only one return journey in the week. Claims should be made on the appropriate form obtainable from the Reception. Full details of rates are printed on the form.

Evacuation Procedures

14. Please listen carefully to all announcements regarding the evacuation of the building in the event of an emergency.

Thanks

15. Sincere thanks are expressed to Assembly Buildings administrative staff, stewards, time-keepers, musicians, and many others, who work very hard behind the scenes to ensure that everything runs smoothly throughout the Assembly.

ROY PATTON, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL: SECTION B**CHARITIES LEGISLATION TASK GROUP****Northern Ireland**

1. Since the 2014 General Assembly discussions have continued with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on the registration of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Presbyteries and Congregations (within Northern Ireland) as Charities. Regular reports have been given by the former Panel to the General Board and by the new Task Group to the General Council. Significant progress has been made on a range of issues, as reported below, but there remains a legislative difficulty in regard to disqualification clauses relating to individual charity trustees (see par 6 below).

2. At its meeting on 7th October 2014 the General Board received the report of the then Panel on Charities Legislation and agreed that its revised proposals be approved and that the then Panel be requested to continue its work as outlined.

3. Those revised proposals are as follows:

CHARITY	REVISED CHARITY TRUSTEES <i>(with approximate membership)</i>
General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland	Members of the General Council (see Note 1) <i>(approximately 70 members)</i>
Individual Presbyteries <i>(17 in Northern Ireland)</i>	Members of Presbytery <i>(average approx. 40 members per Presbytery)</i>
Individual Congregations <i>(approx. 450 in Northern Ireland)</i>	The Kirk Session <i>(could range from a small number of members in some congregations to around 50 in a larger congregation)</i>

Note 1: The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church is only constituted for a few days at the start of June each year. The General Council can however, in certain circumstances, act for the General Assembly between its annual meetings. It also has a role in co-ordinating the work of all other Councils.

4. The Charity Commission has signalled its broad agreement to these proposals. It should be noted that the Commission had earlier rejected a proposal that the Congregational Committee should constitute the Charity Trustees for a Congregation, on the grounds that the Commission requires that the Trustees have the ultimate authority over all of the affairs of the charity i.e. all of its business of the charity not just the ‘business end’ of the charity. In the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, “the Kirk Session is the governing body of a Congregation in its Christian calling” (Code par 34) and therefore the Commission has agreed that the Kirk Session should constitute the Charity Trustees, with a change in the Code making the Congregational Committee ultimately accountable to the Kirk Session. Appropriate overtures to the Code to enact all necessary changes are transmitted (see pages 53-55).

5. The Charity Commission has also agreed that it would be sufficient for PCI to register under the “advancement of religion” charitable purpose only: other charitable purposes undertaken by PCI arise out of “advancement of religion”. Associated with a charitable purpose is a “public benefit statement”. It has been agreed with the Commission that a common “public benefit statement” for all Congregations in Northern Ireland could be agreed with the Commission in advance of registration, thereby simplifying the registration process.

6. During discussions with the Commission it became apparent that the legislation in Northern Ireland differs from that in Scotland in regard to eligibility to serve as a Charity Trustee. Under PCI’s Church law an Elder is appointed for life, but the Northern Ireland legislation contains provisions in regard to the disqualification of individual Trustees. This means that the Charity Commission could remove an individual Elder from office in a Congregation, so undermining the right of the PCI to oversee the appointment and discipline of its own Elders. The equivalent Scottish legislation provides for an exemption from the disqualification

provision in the case of a designated religious charity. Therefore in Scotland, a charity trustee of a designated religious charity would not be removed by the Scottish Charity Commission, thereby removing an unwarranted intrusion by the state in the internal governance of the Church. Clearly this matter lies outside the competence of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. Representations have therefore been made to the Department for Social Development seeking a change in the Northern Ireland legislation to mirror that which exists in Scotland in Section 69 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. A positive meeting has taken place with the Minister for Social Development, the position of the Church recognised and acknowledged and a solution is currently being sought. Further meetings will take place in coming weeks and an updated report will be given at the General Assembly.

7. At the time of writing a number of matters are still under discussion, including a draft ‘public benefit statement’ for PCI, Presbyteries and Congregations. There was some discussion regarding Education Boards of Presbyteries and their role as “custodian” or “holding” trustees. The Charity Commission agreed to consider whether they would need to register. The position of cross-border Presbyteries was also discussed with the Commission, in particular Derry and Donegal Presbytery. The Commission representatives indicated that this was an issue being raised by other denominations and they agreed to consider the matter and advise.

8. The Charity Commission has indicated that “if all goes to plan” (i.e. General Assembly approval of Charity Trustees) that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland would be called forward for registration around 30th June 2015 and this would then give 3 months to complete registration process (although the Charity Commission could request that PCI do this as quickly as possible. It is then envisaged that the Charity Commission and PCI would, from September 2015, run a number of joint workshops for Congregations to explain the registration process. Registration of Congregation / Presbyteries would follow on a Presbytery by Presbytery basis with the aim to have all registrations completed by around 30th June 2016 at the latest. At the time of writing, because of the issues PCI have raised with the Minister of Social Development (referred to above) this time-table may slip. Again an update will be given at the General Assembly.

Republic of Ireland

9. Members of the former Panel met with representatives of the Republic of Ireland’s Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA), which was established on the 16th October 2014 under the terms of the Charities Act 2009. While matters are proceeding at a slower pace in the Republic and processes will be slightly different from Northern Ireland, nonetheless the work outlined above will form the basis for registration by Congregations and Presbyteries in the Republic of Ireland.

10. The Financial Secretary, at the start of January 2015, wrote to each Congregation in the Republic of Ireland on behalf of the Task Group, making them aware of the establishment of the CRA and indicating the need to register individually with the CRA, to obtain a separate CHY number, as an initial stage in the overall charity registration process. Step by step guidance was given as to

carry out this initial individual registration. A reminder was sent to all Treasurers and Ministers at the start of March 2015.

11. Congregations were advised not to proceed to the next stages in the charity registration process until after the 2015 General Assembly, when the issues outlined above will be decided. As in Northern Ireland, the Task Group will be seeking to work with the CRA to assist Congregations with regard to these next stages.

Concluding Remarks

12. Ultimately the General Assembly need to give approval to the proposals outlined above and the appended overtures. However, members of Assembly should note that the proposals are the result of detailed and lengthy negotiation and have been thoroughly debated and approved by both the former General Board and the General Council. It must also be recognised that it is vitally important that PCI is in a position to proceed with the process of charity registration as to fail to do would put at risk the charitable status of the whole Church, including all Congregations in Northern Ireland. This would not only have a very significant financial impact, but would also call into question the ability of Congregations to carry out aspects of their work and witness.

JOHN HUNTER, Convener

CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The new Church Relations Committee held its first meeting on Monday 16th February 2015 and appointed the Very Rev Dr Ivan Patterson as Chairman. The Clerk gave an outline of the role and responsibilities of the Committee and highlighted the various inter-church relationships in which PCI exists. There was general discussion about how these and new relationships might usefully be developed.

Irish Council of Churches

2. The ICC AGM was held on Thursday, 26th March, 2015 at the Salvation Army Centre in Sydenham, with 17 representatives present from PCI. The theme for the day was “With Heart to God and Hand to Man”. The keynote address was delivered by Major Anne Read, the Salvation Army’s Anti-Trafficking Response Co-ordinator, and workshops throughout the day considered the issues of Anti-Racism, Homelessness, Dementia, Family Breakdown and Child Protection.

Irish Inter-Church Committee

3. PCI membership of this body, along with the Executive Committee of the Irish Council of Churches, will need to be updated now that the new Committee is in place. A resolution is appended.

World Communion of Reformed Churches

4. The Rev Cheryl Meban continues to assume responsibility for reporting to the Committee in this area. The European Committee of the WCRC met on

19th and 20th February 2015 and was hosted by PCI in Assembly Buildings. PCI was represented by the Clerk, with the Rev Cheryl Meban also being present as a member of the Central Executive Committee. Representatives from a wide range of member Churches were present, as was the new General Secretary of the WCRC, the Rev Chris Ferguson.

Conference of European Churches

5. Restructuring is currently underway and the Clerk will manage PCI's relationships in this area, with the Clerk Emeritus, the Rev Dr Donald Watts remaining involved.

Meeting with Church of Ireland

6. A Meeting with representatives of the Church of Ireland has taken place and a brief report was received. (This followed on from an earlier meeting with representatives of the Methodist Church.) The Committee propose to further facilitate this process.

JOHN BRACKENRIDGE, Convener

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

1. The new Doctrine Committee held its first meeting on Friday 27th February 2015. There was some discussion on the work and purpose of the Committee. The Clerk explained that the Church in Society Council was often required to respond to topical issues quite quickly and it could use the advice of individual members of the Doctrine Committee in making those responses. There were other issues that required more thorough theological reflection which has traditionally been provided by the Doctrine Committee.

2. The Clerk indicated that it was likely that the Committee would be asked to assist with some issues later in this year, particularly the abortion and conscience issues which were likely to be debated further by the Northern Ireland Assembly. It was agreed that Prof Stephen Williams and Dr Cindy Brown from the Doctrine Committee would be nominated to assist any task group set up to deal with the question of fatal foetal abnormality, and that the Rev Dr Michael McClenahan and Prof John Gillespie from the Doctrine Committee would be nominated to assist any task group which may deal with the issue of conscience.

3. Members of the Committee also discussed several big issues affecting the Church. The consideration of these issues from a theological perspective would benefit the Church. Among those mentioned were the doctrine of God, God and ethics, the Christian mind, the Christian world and life view, human rights, and justice.

4. It was agreed that the Doctrine Committee should request that the General Council would approve the preparation of a paper by the Doctrine Committee under the title "Being Human". This was approved by the Council. The purpose of this paper would be to help the Church articulate what it believes on a number of issues related to the doctrine of man. The Principal will prepare a brief outline and plan of action for this paper.

STAFFORD CARSON, Convener

PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

1. The new Priorities Committee held its first meeting on Monday 23rd February 2015.

2. There was some discussion on the work and purpose of the Committee and the remit as outlined in the Code Par 272(6)(c) was noted. It was agreed:

- that the Committee needs to have its focus on assisting the General Assembly to actually prioritise;
- that the Committee will on occasions need to be available to advise the United Appeal Committee on specific matters;
- that there is a need to review the 'Fit for Purpose' process – while this did not produce priorities that could be used to prioritise the work of the former Boards, the focus on an overall theme, and five yearly sub-themes, was felt to be useful.

3. Consideration was given to the Committee's modus operandi:

- It was noted that there was a need to identify what Councils were currently doing (though this wouldn't fully emerge until the new Councils worked through their own internal processes).
- It was noted that there was a need then to identify any 'gaps that need to be filled' and the identify areas of work that need to be scaled back or even cease.
- It was agreed that the Committee should be focussed on policy and review and therefore not be overly side-tracked into overseeing detailed implementation of any new initiatives (e.g. any successor to Fit for Purpose).

4. **Priorities Reference Panel** – The remit of the Reference Panel was noted, as outlined in the Code, and it was recognised that this would be 'rolled out' over the next 6-12 month period. It was agreed that in the interim the Panel should meet to work through its approach, taking cognisance of the closely related work of the United Appeal Committee. It was agreed that the Panel membership be as follows:

Moderator, Clerk, Council Convener, Martin Hampton (Convener), David Irvine, Cherry Poynton and Rosemary Wilson, with power to co-opt up to two additional members.

5. **Remaining 'Fit for Purpose' themes** – It was agreed that, while the Priorities Committee will have a role in reflecting on the 'Fit for Purpose' initiative and planning the way forward, it would be useful that the oversight of the delivery of the final two sub-themes (2015-16 and 2016-17) should pass to the Council for Congregational Life and Witness. The current Task Group working on the 2015-16 theme of 'A Caring Fellowship' would transfer to that Council. These recommendations were agreed by the General Council

THE CLERK, Convener

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. At the time of writing, due to pressure of other business, the newly constituted Moderator's Advisory Committee had not formally met.

Some assessors were however approved for appointment through written communication.

2. It is noted that the task of overseeing the Conciliation Service has now transferred to the new Council for Training in Ministry.

3. The Committee will meet after the General Assembly to pick up other pieces of work and plan its business for the ensuing session.

THE CLERK, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL: SECTION C

COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW TASK GROUP

1. Following on from the review of the General Assembly's Structures, a Task Group was appointed by the General Council to carry out a comprehensive review of communications policy, including 'corporate identity', publications, use of social media, direct communication with Congregations (inc prayer items) etc.

2. A Task Group held its first meeting on Thursday 5th March 2015 and, following group introductions, the Clerk provided background information to the Task Group and answered several initial questions.

3. Members carried out a **SWOT analysis** of the communication needs of PCI. **Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats** were identified and discussed. To continue the exploration of the communication needs of the Church, feedback from a **brief survey** that had been carried out on **public and personal perceptions of PCI** was discussed.

4. The group then briefly considered some of the tasks that have been suggested. The Task Group concluded that before specific work on communications could be carried out, a clear understanding of the **core spirit** or **'brand' essence** of PCI was required. What is the essence of PCI and what are the **'brand' values** we are trying to communicate? A clear understanding of these values will help guide the work of the Task Group.

5. A number of further meetings are planned and the group hopes to report to the General Council during the ensuing year, with its substantive report and recommendations coming to the 2016 General Assembly.

6. One issue however will most likely need to be resolved prior to June 2016, namely that regarding PCI's main publications and in particular with regard to the future of ReachOut. A resolution is appended seeking authorisation for the General Council to take any necessary decisions on behalf of the Assembly.

PHILIP THOMPSON, Convener

COMMERCIAL USE OF ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS TASK GROUP

1. The Task Group has built on the work of the previous Panel and met twice since its appointment by the General Council in January 2015.

2. Following on from last year's report (General Assembly Reports 2014, p 36, par 3) it is unlikely that any recommendations will include retention of the shopping mall.

3. It is however likely that Fisherwick Buildings, which has never been used directly by the Church, will continue in use as at present, with the physical division from Assembly Buildings which existed before 1991 being reinstated.

4. The General Council authorised an expenditure of up to £8,500 for the provision of sketch plans and costings for different options for the ground floor/mall area of Assembly Buildings. The General Assembly is being asked to request the Task Group to work up options to present to the General Council with a view to the Council bringing a definite recommendation to the 2016 General Assembly for decision. An appropriate resolution is appended.

THE DEPUTY CLERK, Convener

GENERAL BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

A. Supervision of the interest of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland.

1. The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland has its origins at the beginning of the twentieth century. While the General Assembly was instrumental in setting up the society, it has never been under the direct control of the Assembly. The Society has its own governing Council and has representation from the Reformed and Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Churches, as well as from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

2. From the start the General Assembly appointed a Committee to supervise its interest in the Society. In this century the Committee was replaced by an individual 'Convener' who was nominated by the Business Board to the General Board. With the change in structures a new way is needed to enable the General Assembly to ensure supervision of its interest in the Society, and for a report and, where necessary, appropriate resolutions to be presented to the General Assembly.

3. It is noted that under the Constitution of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland, the General Assembly has the right to appoint up to six members of the Church to sit on its Council. The General Council appointed five people to so serve at its meeting on 28th January 2015 for a period of three years, namely: the Very Rev Dr John Dunlop, Mr George Gillespie, the Rev Jack Lamb, the Rev Scott Moore and the Rev Scott Woodburn.

4. Following further consultation, at its meeting on 25th March 2015, the General Council further agreed that the following recommendations should be presented to the General Assembly (see resolution 10):

- (a) That the General Assembly instruct the General Council to appoint, from among its members, an individual to be the main link person relating to the General Assembly's interest in the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland.
- (b) That he/she will be included among the six persons appointed to serve on the Society's Council.

- (c) That the term of service will be for as long as he/she remains a member of the General Council, up to a maximum of four years, with the possibility of renewal for one further period of four years.
- (d) That he/she will have the responsibility to:
 - (i) Call a meeting, at least annually, of the representatives of the General Council on the PHSI Council, along with the office bearers of the PHSI Council who are members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, to discuss aspects of the operation of the Society which relate specifically to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
 - (ii) Submit a report annually to the General Council on the operation of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland, on the basis of which the Council will report to the General Assembly.

B. Overtures

1. At the 2014 General Assembly a number of overtures were received and placed on the books, to be dealt with at the 2015 General Assembly. To facilitate business the following has been decided:

- (a) Overtures on the books originally presented by the Judicial Commission should be submitted and dealt with alongside its report (see page 133);
- (b) Overtures on the books relating to restructuring, including the substance of the Overture on the books relating to the soon to be discharged Union Commission, should be submitted and dealt with alongside the Finance and Staffing Commission report (see pages 116-117);
- (c) All other overtures on the books, originally presented by bodies no longer in existence or which have moved, should be submitted and dealt with alongside the General Council report (see pages 61-62).

2. Public Worship Overtures:

- (a) At the 2014 General Assembly the Board of Mission in Ireland reported on the ongoing revision of the Book of Public Worship (2014 Reports, pages 124 & 147-152) and transmitted two overtures to amend the Code Pars 10-14 and Par 212. These were both sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, the second in a slightly amended form.
- (b) With regard to the overture anent Pars 10-14, at the time of writing 16 Presbyteries had voted in favour and 2 against. There were a total of 456 votes cast in favour and 103 votes against, with 3 abstentions. The result of one Presbytery is awaited and will be reported in Daily Minutes.
- (c) With regard to the overture anent Par 212, at the time of writing 12 Presbyteries had voted in favour and 6 against. There were a total of 374 votes cast in favour and 179 votes against, with 4 abstentions. The result of one Presbytery is awaited and will be reported in Daily Minutes.
- (d) Under the terms of the Barrier Act (Code Par 112(6)) the overtures anent Pars 10-14 and anent Par 212, are now submitted to the 2015 General Assembly for final decision (see Reports pages 55-60).

THE CLERK, reporting on behalf of the Council

FOR INFORMATION**PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

The Presbyterian Historical Society is not under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly. This report is for information only.

The Very Rev Dr Godfrey Brown reports:

1. The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland reports that it has had a busy programme of lectures, supplemented by a number of other events in addition to the annual Field Trip which was held in Belfast. Full details of all our activities can be found on our website, and on the Programme Card available from our Librarian, Valerie Adams.

2. The headquarters of the Society continues to function busily at 26 College Green. In spite of somewhat limited space, we are able to run an efficient library, and in our strong room we have an excellent facility for the safe-keeping of our most valuable material. Much work still remains to be done, and we are currently discussing with management of the College about the possibility of some additional space.

3. A further grant from the Ministerial Advisory Group, Ulster Scots Academy enabled us to redesign the Society's website and create a user interface that will make the early issues of Presbyterian magazines recently digitized accessible.

4. We are grateful as ever for the gift of various papers and artefacts and warmly thank the donors. One of the more interesting items received this year was a photograph of the late Rev WP Nicholson and his wife taken on his final mission trip to Ireland in 1958, along with his Decision Card for Christ in 1899. We also received papers relating to the Rev Henry Montgomery and the Shankill Road Mission which he founded, and Minutes of the Munster Presbytery 1840-1844.

5. The Society is always anxious to encourage Congregations and Presbyteries to entrust to its custody their historic records which are no longer in current use.

6. The Society welcomes its new relationship with the General Council of the Church, with the Very Rev Dr John Lockington as its link person. The following have been appointed by the General Council to serve on the Council of the Society for a four year period: the Very Revs Dr John Lockington, Dr John Dunlop, Revs Jack Lamb, Scott Woodburn, Scott Moore and Mr George Gillespie.

7. The Society would urge Presbyteries and Congregations to become more active in advertising our events, and helping to sell our publications. Presbyteries in particular are asked to appoint an Historical Agent, and in a few months time we hope to host one or more meetings to brief historical agents and Presbytery Clerks about our work, and encourage new historians and researchers to explore what it has to offer, and how they might become involved.

NOMINATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SOLICITOR TASK GROUP

1. During the past year the current General Assembly Solicitor, Mr Alastair Rankin, intimated his intention retire from that post, by the 2015 General Assembly, at the latest. At its first meeting the General Council appointed a Task Group to oversee a new appointment, namely:

- Moderator, Clerk (Convener) and General Council Convener;
- 2 General Assembly Trustees – Mrs Avril Heenan and the Rev Dr Donald Watts;
- 2 members of the Judicial Commission – the Rev Dr Derek McKelvey and Mr Robin Tweed;
- 2 members of the General Council – the Revs Tom Conway and Robert Herron;
- 1 additional member – the Very Rev Dr Sam Hutchinson.

2. At the time of writing the Task Group has met on three occasions and has finalised a document on the role and remuneration of the new General Assembly Solicitor. The role will include certain core duties (e.g. attendance at the General Assembly and Judicial Commission; providing legal advice to the officers of the General Assembly) and a number of additional duties (e.g. general legal work for the General Assembly).

3. An advertisement, requesting expressions of interest, was placed in the April Presbyterian Herald and was on the PCI Website. It was also e-mailed to all Ministers.

4. The General Council, at its meeting on 25th March 2015, granted authority for the Task Group to proceed to carry out interviews and bring a recommendation directly to the 2015 General Assembly for appointment. In light of this the Task Group finalised an Applicant's Information Form and drafted questions and a scoring grid for use at interview. It is planned to bring a further report in 'Daily Minutes', along with a nomination for appointment by the Assembly.

5. The Task Group recommended, and the General Council approved, that the Clerk write and request the current General Assembly Solicitor, Mr Alastair Rankin, to remain in post until the 2015 General Assembly and possibly for a short hand-over period. The Task Group also proposed, and again the General Council approved, that it be recommended to the 2015 General Assembly that Mr Rankin be made a life member of the General Assembly. A suitable resolution is appended (see resolution 11).

THE CLERK, Convener

GUYSMERE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT TASK GROUP

1. The Guysmere Redevelopment Task Group met on the 19th February 2015.

2. The Task Group members were brought up to date with the historical background surrounding the development of the Guysmere site.

3. It was noted that the demand for a denominational Youth Centre or Conference Centre had been previously surveyed and while it was clear that a residential facility would be used for youth ministry and conference type ministry in the future it was not generally felt, by those surveyed, that the denomination needed its own centre.

4. The Task Group discussed various options regarding the future use of the site.

5. It was agreed that the site should ideally be retained by PCI unless circumstances proved otherwise.

6. It was further agreed to research different options and to report the outcome to the General Council at a future meeting.

IVAN PATTERSON, Convener

REDUNDANT PROPERTIES AND GRAVEYARDS TASK GROUP

1. The Task Group met twice. Advice was obtained from the Financial Secretary and the General Assembly's Solicitor.

2. Draft Guidelines for Presbyteries have been developed and were presented to the Council and approved (see General Council Appendix 1). The Task Group was thanked for its services and discharged.

THE DEPUTY CLERK, Convener

HISTORICAL ARCHIVING TASK GROUP

1. The Task Group was appointed by the General Council at its meeting on 28th January 2015 and has met on two occasions.

2. Permission has been requested from all Presbyteries and from Congregations which have material stored in the ground floor Strong Room to open and examine any material held in locked boxes. All who have replied have given such permission.

3. The Task Group has updated on the professional survey of the material in the Strong Room which was carried out in 2013 in conjunction with the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland. The survey lists the material in the Strong Room as well as in the first floor Secure Room, and in Union Theological College, apart from what is catalogued in the Gamble Library there. This has proved very useful and has saved the Task Group a lot of work. However, some of the comments in the survey are very disturbing. To quote: *'This location is wholly unsuitable for the storage of archival material. It is overpacked, very cold and damp, and both black and white mould is widespread. The volumes on the shelves are too tightly packed, placing undue stress on the bindings and damaging the material. The material in the metal boxes needs to be repacked and moved to archival boxes. Many of the boxes in this room can no longer be removed, as shelving has been built around the entrance. This location presents many health and safety issues – apart from the danger of mould to both human*

health and the preservation of the material, there is very little ground space to access material, or even to open a ladder. Consequently, the archivists often had to climb on the metal boxes to access material. Many of the boxes are also extremely heavy. It is imperative that all material is moved from this location as soon as possible. However, any material taken from this room needs to be treated and cleaned before being moved to another archival strongroom to stop the spread of mould spores.'

4. The Task Group has given permission for Miss Valerie Adams, of the Historical Society, to write to Presbyteries and to Congregations which have material in the Strong Room, offering to receive items in the Strong Room into permanent loan with the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland. This would not include items which have a current status, such as deeds.

5. In consultation with the Financial Secretary, Mr. Harry Orr has removed a large quantity of no longer current financial documents from the first floor Secure Room and much of it has been shredded. Some rooms previously used to store IT equipment will also be cleared and will be available for storage.

6. It has been agreed that as much remaining material as possible be removed from the Strong Room and, after cleaning, placed in archival boxes on the first floor either in the Secure Room or the former IT store as appropriate. Advice is being sought from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland over procedures to follow in moving material from the Strong Room to the first floor.

7. The General Council, at its meeting on 25th March 2015, approved the removal of material which is at risk of damage or destruction due to the conditions in the ground floor Strong Room to the first floor Secure Room and former IT storage area or, subject to permission from Presbyteries and Congregations, to the care of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland.

8. Consideration continues to be given to the siting of an historical display in the Reception Area with the cooperation of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland. The Task Group is aware that the Commercial Use of Assembly Buildings Task Group is considering a use of the Reception Area which may be similar.

THE DEPUTY CLERK, Convener

2017 RESIDENTIAL ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE TASK GROUP

1. The 2017 Residential Assembly Task Group has held an initial meeting and as well as getting to know one another, reflected on past Residential Assembly Conferences and had an initial discussion in regard to 2017.

2. It is anticipated that the Assembly will take place at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, in the month of August depending on availability, ensuring that it does not clash with any other major events such as New Horizon.

3. By Summer 2017 the 5 year Fit for Purpose programme will have been completed. It is therefore hoped, following on from that, to ensure that the theme of the Assembly will be such that it will assist the Congregations of PCI in their life, ministry and mission, and encourage leaders and key people to be effective followers of Christ. Looking forward to the next few years that lie ahead, the

Task Group are looking at possible themes, straplines etc. – and obviously getting the right keynote speaker/s will be a priority.

4. As it is an Assembly, there will be a limit to the number of delegates that can be sent from each Congregation – that number will be determined by the final venue. One of the major issues that the Task Group will want to give careful consideration to is how a 3 or 3½ day conference, which only a small representation of PCI can realistically attend, can be effectively followed up, through materials and resources, so that its vision can filter down through the rank and file of our denomination and have a long-lasting impact way beyond the conference itself.

5. The 2017 Residential Assembly Task Group have two further meetings scheduled for before this year's General Assembly so that we can hopefully give some more concrete information, ideally in Daily Minutes.

GORDON BEST & JOHN KIRKPATRICK, Co-Conveners

ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATIONS TASK GROUP

1. The General Council appointed an Engagement and Consultations Task Group to carry forward the examination of the issue of engagement (between Presbyteries and the new Councils and between Presbyteries and Congregations) and agreed that this group subsume the work of reviewing consultations.

2. The membership of the Task Group is as follows:

Moderator, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, General Council Convener; the Rev Norman Cameron (Convener);

The Revs David Bruce, David Thompson, Philip McCrea;

3 Presbytery Clerks – the Revs Stuart Finlay, Tom Conway, Albin Rankin;

3 elders (involved in Presbyteries) Mrs Margaret McKenna, Miss Edith McConnell, Mr Roy Courtenay;

Plus up to two additional General Council members: the Revs Jonathan Boyd and Mairisine Stanfield.

3. An initial meeting of the Task Group has been convened and it is planned that it will bring a substantive report, through the General Council, to the 2016 General Assembly.

THE CLERK, on behalf of the Task Group

GENERAL COUNCIL: SECTION D

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

1. At the time of writing the Support Services Committee had met on two occasions, with a third meeting planned.

2. At the inaugural meeting of the Committee remits and membership were agreed for a Finance Panel, Personnel Panel and Property Panel. It was

also agreed to appoint an initial IT Task Group to plan the way forward and that a Creative Production Panel would not be appointed until the General Council's Task Group reviewing communications had completed its work. A paper was also tabled outlining work which was carried forward from the former Board of Finance and Personnel.

3. At the meeting of the Committee on 12th March the Committee received reports from its three Panels and from the IT Task Group, which included the following:

- (a) **Finance Panel** – The Panel noted the decisions of the former Board of Finance and Personnel regarding the rate of assessments for 2015 (see par 23 of the report of the Finance and Staffing Commission, page 74). Accounts of various agencies for 2014 were examined and discussed. A report from the Pension Trustees regarding the triennial valuation would be received shortly and the Support Services Committee would be required (as Scheme Employer) to consider the Trustees' recommendations regarding funding levels and discretionary payments. (A further report regarding this matter will be included in Daily Minutes.) A copy of the draft budget for the Support Services was approved and the Finance Panel empowered to finalise the Incidental Fund budget. The 2015 budgeted expenditure for the Incidental Fund is detailed in an appendix (see General Council Appendix 2A), and an appropriate resolution also appended (see resolution 15). Tables summarising the annual statistical returns for 2014 are appended (see General Council Appendix 2B).
- (b) **Personnel Panel** – An overview of the work of the Personnel Panel has been taken and a work plan is in progress of being drawn up. An overview of current staffing is appended (see General Council Appendix 3).
- (c) **Property Panel** – Reports were received in relation to lettings in the Mall and Fisherwick Buildings; the lettings of the Conference facilities; some work which had been carried out in the PCI offices as a result of restructuring; and the work of the Retired Ministers House Fund.
- (d) **IT Task Group** – A way forward in addressing some of the significant problems with the delivery of the IT service was agreed, including the involvement of an outside IT company (ANSEC). This would be actioned with immediate effect, with work being carried forward initially within the current IT budget.

4. **Review of the Central Ministry Fund Bonus:**

- (a) The Board of Finance and Personnel's proposal to incorporate part of the bonus into stipend and which had been presented to the 2014 General Assembly had not been approved, as there had been a split decision when the matter had been put to the vote. The Board therefore reconsidered this matter at its meeting in the autumn of 2014.
- (b) The Board consulted some who had spoken against its proposals at the 2014 General Assembly and had noted their view that since "the role of a Minister is within the structure and community of the whole Church rather than the local fellowship" that there should therefore be some "central remuneration of Ministers to remind them and Congregations

of this historic Presbyterian view.” The Board acknowledged this point but felt its original proposals met it, in that the part of the “bonus” historically linked to the Regium Donum, and funded through income from the Sustentation and Commutation Funds, would continue to be paid to all ‘qualifying Ministers’. The Board also noted that while the bonus is paid to Ministers from the Central Ministry Fund the income required to pay it actually comes from Congregations being collected through the assessment system. The Board therefore resolved to recommend that the 2014 report on the Central Ministry Fund Bonus be re-tabled at the 2015 General Assembly, with the recommendation that it be adopted.

- (c) The Support Services Committee, following further detailed discussion, agreed to recommend that the General Council support the recommendation of the Board of Finance and Personnel, with the only change being an implementation date of 1st January 2016 rather than 1 January 2015 and with the figures in the original report being updated where appropriate. This was agreed by the Council and an updated report is now resubmitted (see General Council Appendix 4) with an appropriate resolution (see resolution 14 and the overture transmitted, pages 52 and 55).

5. The General Council, on the recommendation of the Committee, supported the request of three Ministers to have permission to retire at the age of 64. An appropriate resolution is appended (see resolution 16).

JOHN HUNTER, Convener

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Nominations Committee met on 24th July and 8th October 2014 to carry forward its remit with regard to the nomination of members to the new General Assembly Councils and Committees. The Convener and Secretary also carried out a number of delegated tasks on behalf of the Committee.

2. At its first meeting the Committee agreed a process to identify and nominate Council Conveners Designate. It was agreed to recommend to the Finance and Staffing Commission that where a Council Convener is a congregational Minister, their Congregation should receive a contribution of £1,200 per annum. The Committee also agreed a similar process to identify and nominate Committee Conveners Designate and a process to nominate membership for the Councils and Committees themselves. All of these nominations would be forwarded to the Finance and Staffing Commission for appointment, on behalf of the General Assembly, to take up post on 1st January 2015. The Committee agreed to carry out these tasks in small groups, one focussing on each Council, with a process to resolve overlaps and/or conflicts.

3. At its second meeting the Committee formally nominated to the Finance and Staffing Commission, Council Conveners Designate and Committee Conveners Designate, giving power to issue to a small group to bring forward nominations for a small number of vacancies. The Committee also ratified its processes for the task of populating the Councils and Committees from the direct

Presbytery nominees and the 'pool' nominees. Council Conveners and Secretaries Designate joined the Committee, which then split into small groups to carry out the task of populating the General Assembly's Councils and Committees.

4. The Committee is due to meet again prior to the General Assembly and will report further in a supplementary report in Daily Minutes.

TONY DAVIDSON, Convener

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE

1. The first meeting of the United Appeal Committee was held on Tuesday 17th February 2015 and Mr Martin Hampton was appointed as Committee Chairman.

2. The Committee discussed its detailed role with reference to its remit as set out in Par 287 of the Code. This more detailed overview of the United Appeal Committee's role was presented to the General Council and approved.

3. The Committee agreed to establish two Committee Panels: Promotions Panel and Appraisal Panel. The Promotions Panel is responsible for developing promotional material for the annual United Appeal. The Appraisal Panel is to examine requests for new projects and staffing posts.

4. The Committee reviewed the 2014 appeal and approval of grants. The Financial Secretary reported that 23 Congregations had not contributed to the 2014 Appeal, but that over all, having taken late contributions into account the deficit for 2014 was £17,600, and this could be met from reserves. The Committee agreed that the outstanding balance of the 2014 grants be paid.

5. The Committee noted the re-allocation of 2015 grants as undertaken by the Finance and Staffing Commission. The Financial Secretary reported that, as the new Councils only came into operation on 1st January 2015, and to give the Councils time adequately to assess their areas of work, the Finance and Staffing Commission had agreed that it would not be possible to undertake the United Appeal budgeting process as normal in March/April 2015. The Commission therefore agreed that for 2016 the Councils would provisionally receive an inflationary uplift in their re-allocated 2015 grants, with any necessary minor adjustments made in the autumn of 2015. The Commission also agreed that the 2016 the Appeal to Congregations should increase by 2.25% over the 2015 Appeal i.e. from £3,325,000 to £3,400,000. The Finance and Staffing Commission will report on this to the General Assembly.

DAVID IRVINE, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL – APPENDIX 1

REDUNDANT PROPERTIES AND GRAVEYARDS

1. **Principles**
 - (a) The Code gives Presbyteries a definite role concerning the property of congregations within its bounds. Presbytery must ensure both that it carries out its own responsibilities and that those under its authority,

including Ministers, Kirk Sessions and Congregations carry out their responsibilities.

- (b) Care must be taken to follow Church law and, if appropriate, advice sought from the Clerk's office.
- (c) Equally, care must be taken to follow statute law and if appropriate, qualified legal advice sought.
- (d) Property and graveyards do not normally become redundant without some advance indication, usually a period of several years, so Presbyteries should monitor, record and regularly review situations that are likely to move towards redundancy of one or the other or both and take appropriate action, rather than wait until the redundancy has occurred when options are more limited.

2. Code

Paragraphs 53-58, 232, 241-245, 256, 273 and 300 are all relevant, but Pars 55(1)(a), 55(1)(b), 57(3), 232(3), 232(3)(c), 243(1), 243(2)(a), 243(2)(c), 245 (1), 245(2), 256(3), 273(6)(c) and 300(4) are particularly pertinent and are quoted in full in Appendix 1. [*Sc. of the published guidelines: it has not been published in the General Assembly Reports to save space.*]

3. Dispersal of assets

- (a) **General** – The Linkage Commission has power to determine the future ownership or dispersal of property and assets. In this it will consult with representatives of the Congregation(s), if any are identifiable, and with the Presbytery [Code Par 57(3)]. It will give consideration to the existing assets, future needs and mission plans of the new Congregation arising out an amalgamation; of other neighbouring Congregations; of the Presbytery, including any funds supporting local Presbyterian Church in Ireland mission; of the Council for Mission in Ireland; and, where there has been significant financial input by Central Ministry Fund into the provision of ministry in the area, the needs of CMF.
- (b) **Manses** – Following an amalgamation or dissolution, any income or proceeds from a sale of a manse may be applied to the acquisition, upkeep or repair of a manse in the new Congregation unless the terms of the deeds say otherwise and subject to certain other provisions [Code Par 245].
- (c) **Council for Mission in Ireland** – Where property, including a manse, was held in connection with the Home Mission, or Church Extension, the assets will go to the Council for Mission in Ireland, [Code Par 300(4)]. In the case of Church Extension CMI is also liable for any debts [Code Par 232(3)].
- (d) **Prior considerations** – It is important that Presbyteries are aware of what property is owned by Congregations and on what terms so that when a redundancy occurs the necessary information is readily to hand. When a redundancy occurs due to an amalgamation or dissolution it is often too late to trace documentation. At Consultations/Visitations Presbyteries are required to ascertain that deeds exist and are properly stored. Where deeds cannot be traced Presbyteries should not simply note that but ensure that steps are taken to draw up new deeds as soon as reasonably possible. Where trusts have not been declared Presbytery

should ensure that the Congregation draws up a deed in conformity to Code Par 243(2). [See explanatory note at the end of this paragraph.] No arrangements regarding the sale of a Congregation's property and distribution of the proceeds or the income therefrom may be made when a dissolution or amalgamation is being considered without first obtaining the agreement of the Linkage Commission [Code Par 273(6)].

NOTE: The wording in Pars 55(1) and 243(1) refer to the documents of title. Where individuals have bought property on behalf of a Congregation the deed should declare that they are acting as trustees for XXX Congregation. If there has been no declaration in the purchase deed (that is the meaning of 'trusts have not been formally declared') then a separate declaration of trust should be signed by the trustees. This is what Code Appendix 7B is for. Conveyancers, for legal reasons, like to keep trusts off the title so the purchase deed may not declare that the purchasers are acting as trustees. If at some time after a purchase has been completed there has been no declaration of trusts it is in order for one to be signed using the wording in Appendix 7B upon discovery of the omission.

- (e) **Safeguarding Property** – It is the responsibility of the Linkage Commission to ensure that adequate steps are taken to safeguard Church property after an amalgamation or dissolution. This will include proper maintenance and securing of premises, along with insurance. This does not mean that the Commission will itself do these things, but that it will ensure that those responsible (normally a Congregation through a Presbytery, or the Council for Mission in Ireland) carry out their responsibilities. The Commission will previously have determined who has this responsibility (see above 3a) [Code 256(3)]. The Support Services Committee of the General Council has no responsibility for congregational property.

4. **Graveyards**

- (a) **Graves and Gravestones** – It is permissible to move graves and gravestones (and other markers such as in a Garden of Remembrance) but the statutory local authority should be consulted over correct procedure and reasonable efforts made to trace and consult with living relatives of those interred or whose ashes may have been scattered in the site. There may be a considerable expense incurred if several graves have to be moved.
- (b) **Insurance** – Particular attention should be given to ensuring that those responsible take out public liability for a graveyard and maintain it according to the terms of the insurance.

5. **Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland**

The Presbyterian Historical Society should be given good notice of an impending amalgamation or dissolution and the opportunity to record historical information such as gravestone inscriptions and the wording of plaques and to conserve items of interest such as Pulpit Bibles and communion ware. Documents and artefacts which are properly the property of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in some form should not be allowed to fall into private hands.

GENERAL COUNCIL – APPENDIX 2A

2015 BUDGETED EXPENDITURE FOR THE INCIDENTAL FUND**(i) General Council**

General Work	5,000	
Assembly Arrangements	19,000	
Church Relations Committee		
- Irish Council of Churches	20,600	
- Irish Inter-Church Meeting	11,400	
- Conference of European Churches	5,400	
- Communion of Protestant Churches Europe	1,300	
- World Communion of Reformed Churches	12,800	
- General Church Relations	900	76,400

(ii) Council for Global Mission

Embrace	1,000	
Churches Asylum Network	500	
Diakonia, South Africa	750	
Vuleka Trust (South Africa)	750	
Environmental Panel	1,500	4,500

(iii) Council for Church in Society

General Work incl conferences		20,000
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(iv) Council for Congregational Life and Witness

General Assembly Priorities - Themes	7,500	
Good Relations Panel	2,000	9,500

(v) Council for Training in Ministry

Conciliation Panel		5,500
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(vi) Linkage Commission

General Work	9,000	
Church Architecture Committee	1,000	10,000

Moderator expenses allowance		28,000
Printing for General Assembly		11,700
Travel General Assembly & Councils etc.		7,500
Legal fees		25,000
Costs of General Secretary's Department		391,663

Home Office (UK Borders Agency)		1,000
Presbyterian Historical Society		18,750
Youth Link NI		10,332
Churches Legislation Advisory		2,500
Peninsula Employment Law & Health & Safety		17,600

TOTAL		<u>639,945</u>
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GENERAL COUNCIL – APPENDIX 2B

TABLE ONE

PERSONS AND AGENCIES

	2013	2014	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	225	234	9	0
Ministers in Active Duty	403	384	0	19
Retired Missionaries	15	15	0	0
Missionaries in Active Duty	37	39	2	0
Total Ministers and Missionaries	680	672	0	8
Licensings during year	17	11	0	6
Congregations	545	545	0	0
Total Families	100339	98919	0	1420
Persons of All Ages	233602	230068	0	3534
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	78414	76734	0	1680
Baptisms	1571	1460	0	111
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	2044	2087	43	0
Communicants	100721	100834	113	0
Attended at Least One Communion during year	62715	61466	0	1249
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	6313	6198	0	115
Number on Rolls in Sunday School and Bible Classes (Note 1)	41074	40934	0	140

Note 1 - from 2011 includes numbers enrolled in childrens and youth ministries under control of Kirk Sessions

TABLE TWO
CONGREGATIONAL INCOME

	2013		2014		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R.of I.
Assessable Inome (gross)	34,045,794	3,575,006	34,767,152	3,550,233	2.1%	-0.7%
Building Fund etc	15,775,145	1,090,594	16,090,829	1,625,301	2.0%	49.0%
Missions and Charities	7,556,339	555,722	7,318,977	492,546	-3.1%	-11.4%
Raised from other sources	6,967,793	1,280,575	5,979,166	704,902	-14.2%	-45.0%
Organisational Income	6,530,720	290,918	6,295,338	224,986	-3.6%	-22.7%
Total Receipts	70,875,791	6,792,815	70,451,462	6,597,968	-0.6%	-2.9%

TABLE THREE
CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE

	2013		2014		€	N.I.	% Difference	R.of I.
	£	€	£	€				
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	18,133,291	1,515,247	18,119,432	1,505,174		-0.1%	-0.7%	
Payments under Assembly Assessments	6,443,791	732,124	6,669,880	713,755		3.5%	-2.5%	
Building, Repairs etc.	16,922,552	1,123,635	14,652,699	1,119,169		-13.4%	-0.4%	
United Appeal Schemes	2,961,981	229,615	3,075,248	219,272		3.8%	-4.5%	
Supplementary Schemes								
Other Religious and Charitable Objects	8,335,971	830,667	7,119,115	761,916		-14.6%	-8.3%	
Organisations	6,202,307	291,618	6,120,627	217,804		-1.3%	-25.3%	
General Expenses	11,220,830	1,325,722	11,266,699	1,457,806		0.4%	10.0%	
Total Payments	70,220,723	6,048,628	67,023,700	5,994,896		-4.6%	-0.9%	

TABLE FOUR

CONGREGATIONAL FUND BALANCES

	Opening 2014		Closing 2014		% Difference
	£	€	£	€	R. of I.
Unrestricted Funds	20,852,983	2,029,140	21,880,831	2,079,049	4.9%
Restricted Funds	70,826,814	5,870,114	76,939,248	6,846,810	8.6%
Total Fund Balances	91,679,797	7,899,254	98,820,079	8,925,859	7.8%
					13.0%

TABLE FIVE**MINISTERS' INCOME AND ALLOWANCES (SEE NOTES)**

	2013	2014	
	£	£	% Difference
Total Ministerial Income (active Duty - Note2)	11,343,583	11,150,217	-1.7%
Stipend Paid	9,687,552	9,588,327	-1.0%
Allowances			
Light, Heat, etc			
Ministerial Duties			
Total	2,783,403	2,745,739	-1.4%

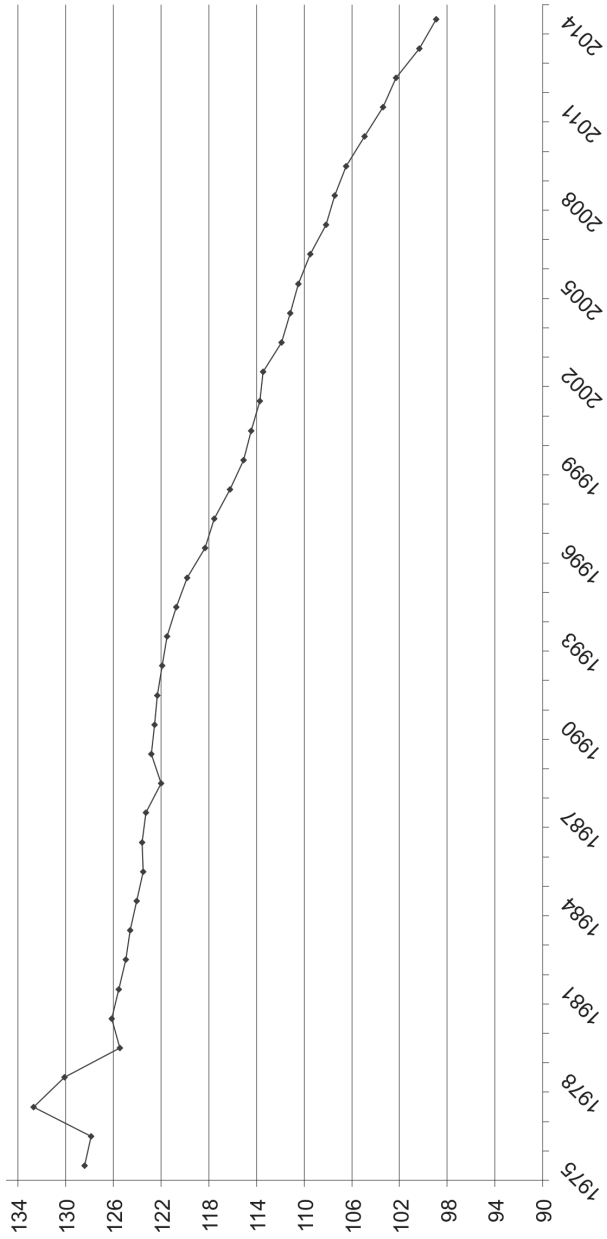
Note 1 Figures for the Republic of Ireland have been converted into £STG using the average value of the Euro for the relevant year (£1/€1.2406)

Note 2 This refers only to 344 ministers in charge of congregations, excluding Assistants, Chaplains, Missionaries, Professors, Administrative Officers and Ministers in recognised service in special work.

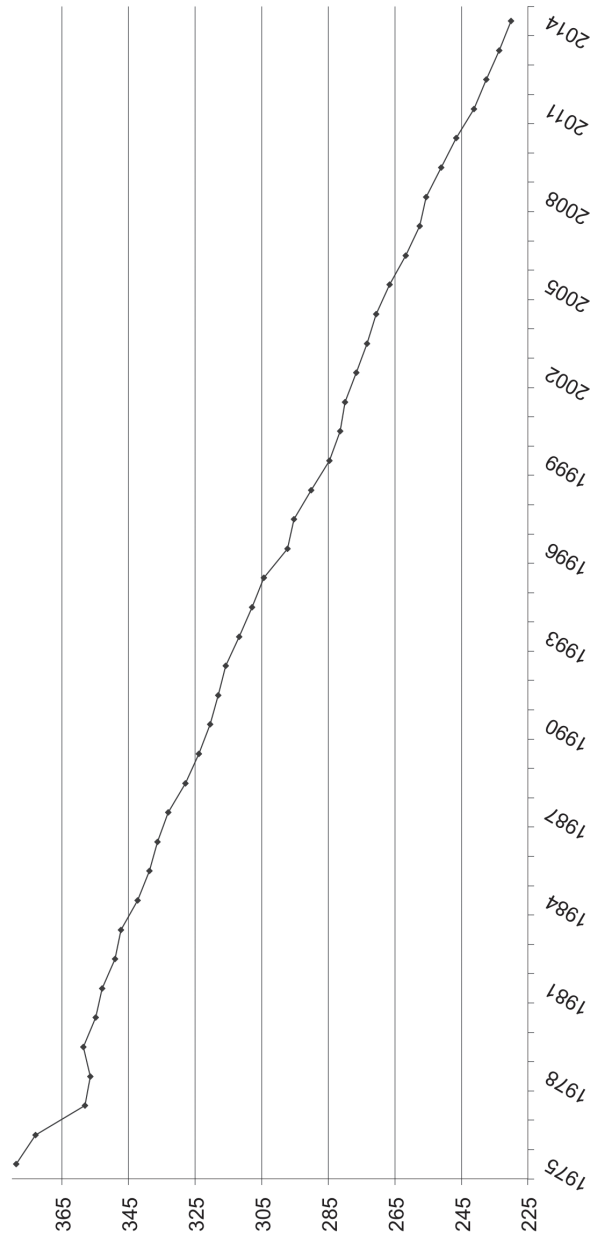
TABLE SIX**PERSONS**

	2013	2014
Persons who are aged 18 and under	41,801	40,918
Average attendance at Sunday Worship - Morning	74,956	74,111
- Evening	18,327	17,629

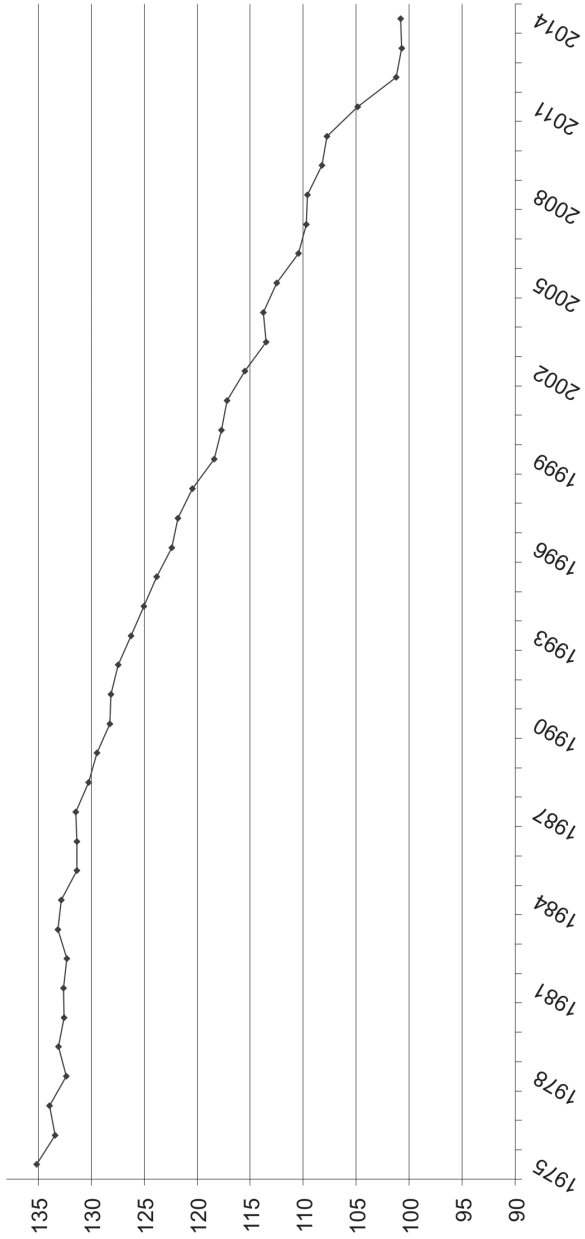
FAMILIES ('000)



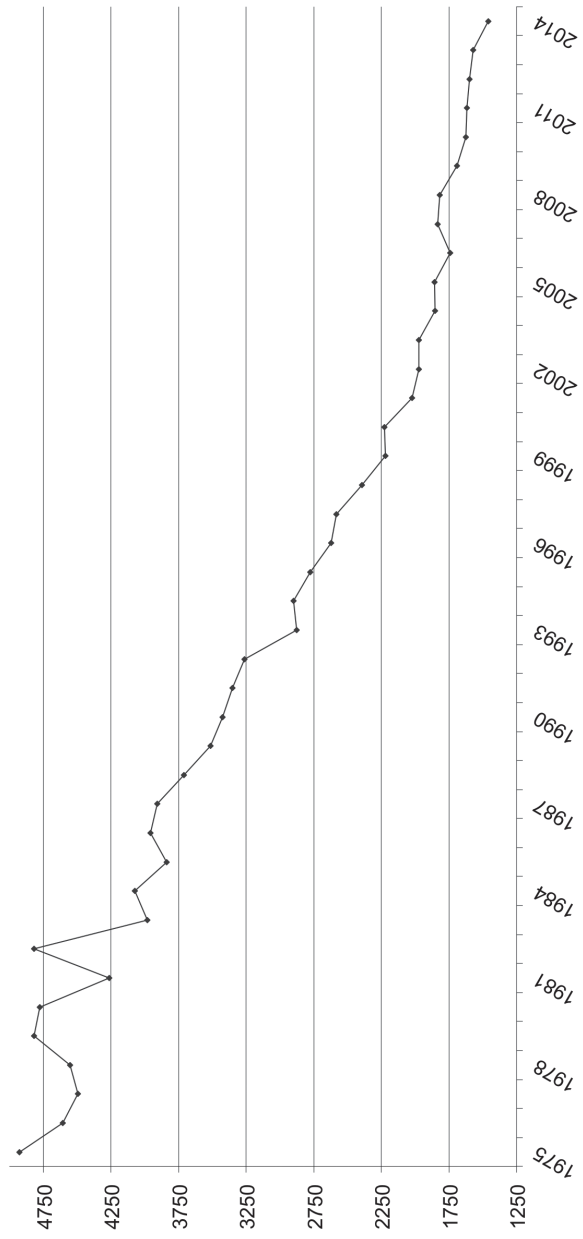
PERSONS ('000)



COMMUNICANTS ('000)



BAPTISMS



GENERAL COUNCIL – APPENDIX 3**OVERVIEW OF CURRENT STAFFING****STERLING SALARY SCALES OF STAFF IN POST IN ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS ON 1st JANUARY 2015.****EXECUTIVE POSTS****Scale 1 (£23,664 - £28,116)**

IT Support Manager, (ITD)

Scale 2 (£26,725 - £32,149)

Property Support Officer (0.8 post) (FSD)

Children's Development Officer (CL&W)

Finance Manager (FSD)

Assistant Residential & Supported Services Manager (CSW)

Creative Production Support Officer (Editor) (CPD)

General Secretary of PW (CL&W)

Finance Manager (FSD)

Creative Production Support Officer (Press and Web) (CPD)

Payroll & Assessment Manager (FSD)

Youth Development Officer (CL&W)

“Taking Care” Programme Co-ordinator

Young Adults Development Officer (CL&W)

Scale 3 (£29,902 - £36,445)

Mission Support Officer (Member Care) (MD)

Head of Creative Production (CPD)

Programme Development Officer (CL&W)

Public Affairs Officer (GSD)

Training Development Officer (CL&W) (higher salary protected)

Building Manager (PSD)

Scale 4 (£32,957 - £41,174)

Senior Finance Manager (FSD)

Head of Personnel (PD)

IT Development & Support Manager (ITD)

Residential & Supported Service Manager (CSW)

Scale 6 (£39,141 - £47,685)

Deputy Clerk of Assembly & Deputy General Secretary

Secretary of the Council for Mission in Ireland

Secretary of the Council for Social Witness

Secretary of the Council for Global Mission

Secretary of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness

Scale 7 (£44,410 - £57,126)

Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary
Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS**Scale 1 (£13,469 - £15,555)**

Telephonist (0.4 post) (PSD)

Scale 2 (£14,492 - £16,760)

Administrative Assistant (0.68 post) (Sales Ledger) (FSD)
Personnel Assistant (0.74 post) (PD)
Administrative Assistant, PW (CL&W)
Administrative Assistant (GSD)
Administrative Assistant (Job Share) (MD)
'Taking Care' Administrator (CSW)
Administrative Assistant (0.7 post) (FSD)
Handyperson (PSD)
Personnel/Administrative Assistant (0.8 post) (PD/CSW)
Assistant Receptionist & Telephonist (PSD) (higher salary protected)

Scale 3 (£16,263 - £18,804)

Senior Personnel Assistant (PD)
Senior Administrative Assistant (job share 1.2 post) (CSW)
Senior Administrative Assistant (0.5 post) (MD)
Deputy Buildings Manager (PSD)
Senior Administrative Assistant, PW (CL&W)
Information Officer/Receptionist (0.6 post) (PSD)
Senior Administrative Assistant (Partnerships)
Senior Administrative Assistant (Member Care) (MD)

Scale 4 (£18,427- £21,221)

Payroll & Administrative Assistant (1.77 posts) (FSD)
Senior Administrative Assistants (x 2 job share) (CL&W)
Senior Communications Assistant (Press & Web) (0.6 post) (CPD)
Senior Administrative Assistant (0.6 post) (FSD)
Senior Communications Assistant (Pub) (0.6 post) (CPD)
Senior Administrative Assistant (CL&W)

Scale 5 (£20,161 - £23,275)

Senior Creative Production Technician (CPD)
Personal Assistant and Senior Administrative Assistant (MD)
Assistant Accountant (FSD)
Senior Personnel Administrator (PD)
Personal Assistant & Senior Administrative Assistant (job share) (GSD)
IT Support Officer x 2 (ITD)
Financial & Administrative Assistant (0.74 post) (FSD)
IT Support & Development Officer (0.8 post) (ITD)

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£22,265 - £25,452)

Personal Assistant & Office Supervisor (GSD)
 Personal Assistant & Office Supervisor (CCLW)
 Personal Assistant & Office Supervisor (MD)
 Personal Assistant & Office Supervisor (CSW)

STERLING SALARY SCALES OF STAFF IN POST IN OTHER LOCATIONS ON 1st JANUARY 2015**EXECUTIVE POSTS****Scale 2 (£26,725 - £32,149)**

College Registrar/Bursar, Union College
 College Librarian, Union College
 Minister/Ministry Co-ordinator, Kinghan Church (CSW)
 Project Manager, Willow Brook, (CSW)
 Chaplain in Residence (MD)
 University Chaplain UUJ, (MD)

Scale 4 (£32,957 - £41,174)

Dean of Ministerial Studies & Development (CTM)

Scale 5 (£36,445 - £44,410)

Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Director of Post-Graduate Studies,
 Union College

Scale 6 (£39,141 - £47,685)

Professor of Old Testament, Union College
 Professor of Church History, Union College
 Professor of New Testament Studies, Union College
 Professor of Practical Theology, Union College
 Professor of Systematic Theology, Union College
 (All current Professors higher salary protected)

Scale 7 (£44,410 - £57,126)

Principal of Union Theological College

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS**Scale 1 (£13,496 - £15,555)**

Clerical Officer (5 p/t) OPS (CSW)
 Receptionist (Term Time – part time), Union College

Scale 2 (£14,492 - £16,760)

Clerical and Resource Officer, Nightlight, (MD)
 Clerical Officer - Carlisle House (part time) (CSW)

Clerical Officer, (1 FT & 2 PT) OPS (CSW)
 Clerical Officer, Kinghan Church (part time) (CSW)
 Custodian, Union College (CTM)
 Library Assistant (part time), Union College

Scale 3 (£16,263 - £18,804)

Marriage & Guidance Co-ordinator (CSW)
 Administrative Assistant (part time), Union College
 Nightlight Development Officer (2 posts) (MD)
 Senior Clerical Officer (part time), Carlisle House (CSW)
 Senior Secretary, Union College (0.6 post)

Scale 4 (£18,427 - £21,221)

Administrator, Derryvolgie (MD)
 Senior Secretary, (2 posts) Union College
 Deputy Librarian, Union College

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£22,265 - £25,452)

Assistant Chaplain, QUB (CSW)
 Resident Manager, Tritonville Close (Euro Scale) (CSW)

GENERAL COUNCIL – APPENDIX 4

REVIEW OF THE CENTRAL MINISTRY FUND BONUS

During 2013 the Priorities Committee of the General Board asked the Board of Finance and Personnel to undertake a review of the expenditure of the Assessment Funds of the Church. In particular the Board was asked to identify if there were ways in which expenditure could be reduced or the money applied in another way. One of the significant issues identified during this review was the cost of the Central Ministry Fund “bonus” under The Code Para 315. This Report outlines the present “bonus” arrangements and sets out proposals for changes (it is as presented to the 2014 General Assembly with updated figures included as far as possible).

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

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

1.3 Using the 2015 Basic Ministerial Minimum the amount of the “bonus” that every qualified minister could receive is calculated as £1,638.00 (being £23,884 less £4,300 equals £19,584 divided by £50 = 391 parts, 391 parts at £2.50 plus £300 plus £30/month for 12 months).

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

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

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

1.7 The cost to the Central Ministry Fund of the “bonus” in 2014 was £879,177, which equates to approx. 580 ministers being in receipt. Per the Statistics Report for 2013 there are 225 retired ministers and 403 active ministers i.e. a total of 628. Some ministers are not entitled to the bonus e.g. College Professors, Chaplains, Ministers serving overseas and Ministers based in “Church House”.

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

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

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

	2014 £	2013 £	2012 £	2011 £	2010 £
Cost of “Bonus” (monthly and annual)	879,177	882,016	876,626	881,627	881,017
Net Income from Sustentation Fund (includes income from Commutation Fund)	(230,715)	(224,473)	(224,457)	(210,301)	(207,460)
Net Cost to Central Ministry Fund	649,002	657,543	652,169	671,326	673,557

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

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

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

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

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

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

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

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

To achieve this the ministerial minimum would be increased from £23,884 (for 2015) to £25,042 (i.e. add £1,158 – this assumes the monthly bonus of £360 would still be paid by the Central Ministry Fund out of income from the Sustentation/ Commutation Funds). It was noted that:

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

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

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

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

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

d) Whether the “bonus” should be pensionable?

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

3. IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE – INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

(a) After considering the various options in Section 2 the proposal that was **initially** acceptable to the Committee was to move the annual bonus part of the bonus (i.e. £1,158) into the basic ministerial minimum in a phased way over a period of ten years, e.g. (*note: no account has been taken of possible increase in the ministerial minimum*)

TRANSFER OF CMF BONUS TO MINISTERIAL MINIMUM				
	Ministerial Minimum £	“Regium Donum” £	CMF Bonus £	Total £
2016	23,884	360	1,158	25,402
2017	23,942	360	1,100	25,402
2018	24,042	360	1,000	25,402
2019	24,142	360	900	25,402
2020	24,242	360	800	25,402
2021	24,342	360	700	25,402
2022	24,442	360	600	25,402
2023	24,542	360	500	25,402
2024	24,642	360	400	25,402
2025	24,742	360	300	25,402
2026	24,842	360	200	25,402
2027	24,942	360	100	25,402
2028	25,042	360	0	25,402
2029	25,042	360	0	25,402

(b) It was recognised however, that other payments are “linked” to the ministerial minimum (e.g. *Deaconesses, Irish Mission Workers, Students, Retired Ministers, Widows of Ministers*) and therefore it may be necessary to retain the “basic ministerial minimum” to avoid additional costs to those funds. One option would be to incorporate the Non-Regium Donum element of the bonus or the “annual bonus” into the minimum stipends after one year’s service and thereby retaining the present basic ministerial minimum. However, to ensure ministers

in their first year do not “lose out”, as they would no longer receive the annual bonus, a special grant would need to be awarded for that year only.

4. IMPLEMENTING THE CHANGE – FINAL PROPOSALS

In summary it is proposed that with effect from 1 January 2016 the Central Ministry Fund no longer covers the cost of the current annual bonus (£1,158) but that all qualifying ministers continue to receive the payment due from the Commutation / Sustentation Fund (approx. £360 per year). The proposals are designed to ensure there is no additional cost to congregations or reduction in the income of ministers in congregations or those in retirement. The detailed proposals are as follows:

4.1 PROPOSAL 1 – THE ANNUAL BONUS

That with effect from 1 January 2016 the annual bonus is no longer paid.

4.2 PROPOSAL 2 - STIPENDS PAID BY CONGREGATIONS

That with effect from 1 January 2016 all Congregations will be expected to increase their minister’s stipends by £1,158 i.e. in line with the proposed reduction in the bonus.

4.3 PROPOSAL 3 – CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

In order to ensure that there is no additional cost to congregations it is proposed that rather than implementing the reduction in the annual bonus over a ten year period, as outlined in 3(a), that it would be fully implemented in 2016 i.e. all congregations will be expected to increase their ministers stipend by £1,158. The additional cost to congregations of £1,595 (being £1,158 plus the employer’s national insurance and pension contribution) will be offset by a reduction in the Central Ministry Fund Assessments. It is proposed that this will be achieved by introducing a new Nil rate assessment band of £11,000 which would ensure the level of assessment is reduced by the increase in stipend i.e.

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

4.4 PROPOSAL 4 – STIPENDS PAID TO ACTIVE MINISTERS

Ministers should have their stipend increased (by £1,158) and will continue to receive the “Regium Donum” monthly payment from the Central Ministry Fund. They will no longer receive the annual bonus from the Central Ministry Fund but overall there should be no change in their remuneration just a change in where it comes from.

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

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

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

4.5 PROPOSAL 5 – RETIRED MINISTERS

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

(a) **Those with pre 78 service**

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

(b) **Those with no pre 78 service**

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

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

4.6 PROPOSAL 6 – THE REGIUM DONUM

It is proposed that the part of the “bonus” historically linked to the Regium Donum and funded through income from the Sustentation and Commutation Funds should continue to be paid to all “qualifying ministers”. It is estimated this would be set initially at £360 per minister per year but would be reviewed on an annual basis in light of income received. Using historical income the annual amounts would have been;

Sustentation / Commutation Fund Income					
Year	Income	Per Qual. Minister	Total Bonus	Bonus	Qualifying Ministers
2014	220,715	380	879,177	1,518	580
2013	224,473	386	882,016	1,518	581
2012	224,454	389	876,626	1,518	577
2011	210,302	363	878,627	1,518	579
2010	207,460	358	881,017	1,518	580
2009	218,558	383	865,413	1,518	570
2008	252,438	442	866,033	1,518	571

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

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

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

4.8 CODE CHANGE

An appropriate Overture to amend Paragraph 315(2) of the Code is transmitted (page 55)

RESOLUTIONS

General Council Section A (Tuesday 9.30am – Business Item 1)

General Assembly Business Committee (initial report)

1. That the Draft Order of Business for the 2015 General Assembly be approved.
2. That the amended ‘Guide to Assembly Procedure’ (yellow pages) be approved, including the amended speaking times, with the appropriate General Assembly Standing Orders suspended.
3. That a grant of £19,000 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Panel of the General Assembly Business Committee.
4. That the initial report of the General Assembly Business Committee be received.

General Council Section B (Wednesday 9.15am – Business Item 11)

5. That the proposals of the Charities Legislation Task Group be approved and that the General Council be empowered to take all necessary decisions regarding registration with the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland's Charities Regulatory Authority.

6. That the General Assembly make the following appointments:

- (a) The Executive of the Irish Council of Churches – The Rev John Brackenridge, the Very Dr Rev Ivan Patterson and the Rev Trevor Gribben.
- (b) The Irish Inter-Church Committee – The Rev John Brackenridge and the Rev Trevor Gribben.

7. That Section B of the report of the General Council be received.

General Council Section C (Wednesday 10.45am – Business Item 13)

8. That the General Council be authorised to make any necessary decisions regarding PCI's main publications (in particular with regard to the future of ReachOut).

9. That the Commercial Use of Assembly Buildings Task Group be requested to present to the General Council with a view to the Council bringing a definite recommendation to the 2016 General Assembly for decision.

10. That the recommendations relating to the Supervision of the interest of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland be adopted.

11. That Mr Alastair Rankin be thanked for his services as General Assembly Solicitor and that in recognition thereof he be made a life member of the General Assembly.

12. That _____ be appointed General Assembly Solicitor from 1st July 2015.

13. That Section C of the report of the General Council be received.

General Council Section D (Thursday 2.00pm – Business Item 25)

14. That the proposals set out in the "Review of the Central Ministry Fund Bonus" be approved and implemented on 1st January 2016.

15. That the 2015 budgeted expenditure of the Incidental Fund (as set out in General Council Appendix 2A) be approved.

16. That the General Council recommend to the General Assembly that, under provisions of the Code Par 223(3), the Revs George McClelland (Tandragee), Kenneth McConnell (Clough) and Prof Patton Taylor (Union College) be given permission to retire on or after their 64th birthday.

17. That the additional nominations to General Assembly Commissions, Councils, and Committees (as tabled by the Nominations Committee) be approved.

18. That Section D of the report of the General Council be received.

General Council Section A (debate resumed) (Thursday afternoon – Business Item 1)

19. That the recommendations (a) – (f) in paragraph 9 of the report of the General Assembly Business Committee be adopted for the 2016 and subsequent General Assemblies.

20. That option (i) / (ii) / (iii) [one option to be chosen] in paragraph 10 of the report of the General Assembly Business Committee be adopted for the 2016 and subsequent General Assemblies.

20(a). That the introductory section of the Report of the General Council be received.

21. That the final report of the General Assembly Business Committee be received.

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED – CHARITIES LEGISLATION TASK GROUP (General Council)

Anent Par 105 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 105 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

105. The Assembly and only the Assembly -

- (a) may enact, alter or abrogate a law of the Church or prescribe rules;
- (b) may amend, rescind or reverse its own sentences, decisions or resolutions;
- (c) may decide the Church's general policy on co-operation or joint action with other Churches and authorise congregations, Presbyteries, councils or committees of the Church to participate in joint projects in accordance with such Scheme or on such terms as the Assembly may from time to time determine (See Par. 60).
- (d) shall delegate to the General Council such powers and decisions as are required in order for the Assembly to comply with the requirements of charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate.

(Note: a necessary related change to Par 272 of the Code, designating the General Council to act as charity trustees for the Assembly, is included in an overture containing other changes to Par 272, presented by the Finance & Staffing Commission – see pages 117-120.)

Anent Par 70 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that following Par 70(c) of the Code a new paragraph be added:

- (d) act as the charity trustees and be responsible for its compliance with the requirements of charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate.

Anent Par 35 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that following Par 35(d) of the Code a new paragraph be added:

- (e) act as the charity trustees and be responsible for the congregation's compliance with the requirements of charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate;

- (f) ensure that the Congregational Committee complies with the decisions of Kirk Session;
- (g) after considering the grounds for disqualification for being a charity trustee under charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate, refer to Presbytery the consideration of removal from office in the congregation of a ruling elder.

Anent Par 47(1) & (2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 47(1) & (2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in their place:

(1) **The duties of the Congregational Committee, delegated by the Kirk Session**, shall be to take care of the poor and administer the temporal affairs of the congregation, and be accountable to the Kirk Session.

- (2) Those duties shall include -
 - (a) administering all funds belonging to the congregation, or held by trustees for its use and apply these funds for the purposes for which they have been created or contributed;
 - (b) administering all other property of the congregation, take care to maintain and insure it and take steps to gather funds needed for these purposes;
 - (c) having charge of the letting or allocating of seating accommodation in the Church building;
 - (d) regulating conditions under which the Church premises, halls or rooms are used, subject to decisions of the Session;
 - (e) promoting the interests of the Central Funds and Missions of the Church;
 - (f) be responsible for appointing or dismissing the sexton;
 - (g) managing the graveyard;
 - (h) having power to borrow against any congregational property, with any security required being given by the Congregational Trustees on the instruction of the Congregational Committee and to authorise up to six members of the Congregational Committee to sign any associated documents required by the lender; and
 - (i) carrying out such other functions as may be prescribed.

Anent Par 161(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 161(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(1) Where for any reason it appears to a Church court that a matter within its jurisdiction ought to be investigated by it, or where it receives a reference from a Kirk Session under Par 35(g), it may make a preliminary enquiry into the relevant facts (including, in the case of an alleged offence, an enquiry into the nature of the offence and the evidence likely to be available to establish or refute it) and subject to these rules, may, after such enquiry -

Anent Par 161 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that following Par 161(h) of the Code a new paragraph be added:

- (i) consider, in the case of a reference from a Kirk Session under Par 35(g), the grounds for disqualification for being a charity trustee under the charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate, and if deemed necessary remove a ruling elder from office in the congregation.

THE CLERK

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED - CENTRAL MINISTRY FUND BONUS (General Council)

Anent Par 315(2) of the Code

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

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

JOHN HUNTER

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS – PUBLIC WORSHIP (former Board of Mission in Ireland)

Anent Pars 10 – 14 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Pars 10 -14 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in their place:

10. The Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the supreme standard of the Church.

11. It is the privilege, right and duty of every person to examine the Scriptures, and each individual is bound to submit to their authority. Having formed a definite conviction as to what the will of God is upon any subject, it is each person’s duty to accept and obey it. In exercising this God-given right of private judgment, individual Christians are not to set their reason above the Word of God, or to refuse light from any quarter. Guided by the Holy Spirit, they are to use their reason to ascertain the divine will, as revealed in Scripture, and are to refuse to subject conscience to any authority except that of the Word of God. In the words of the Westminster Confession “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.”

12. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a witness for Christ, has adopted subordinate standards. In these are found what the Church understands the Word of God to teach on certain important points of doctrine and worship. These subordinate standards are a testimony for truth and against error, and serve as a bond of union for members of the Church.

13. The Confession of Faith (as approved by the Church of Scotland in her Act of 1647), and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, prepared by the Westminster

Assembly of Divines, are the subordinate standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Accepting these subordinate standards, the Church holds that civil rulers must be obedient to Christ in their own area of authority, yet they ought not to attempt, in any way, to constrain any person's religious beliefs or intrude upon their rights of conscience.

14. The Church alone has the right to interpret and explain her standards, under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

Anent Par 212 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 212 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

212. The Presbytery having been previously constituted by prayer, the order of service shall include the following:

(1) opening worship, including praise, prayer and the reading of the Word, an appropriate sermon, or an address or statement dealing with the principles of the Church, its ministry and government, shall be delivered.

[The minister-elect takes his/her place before the Presbytery.]

(2) *[The Moderator says:]*

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, who, having ascended to the right hand of the Father, has given gifts for building up the Church, which is his body, we are meeting as (a commission of) the Presbytery of *PP* (to ordain *NN* to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and) to *install/induct him/her* to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or - to install *him/her* to the Home Mission and induct *him/her* to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or - to induct *him/her* as *assistant minister/associate minister* in *CC*.

or - to *install/induct him/her* to the position of *Principal/Professor of* [or other post] in this College to which *he/she* has been appointed.

or - to *install/induct him/her* to missionary [or other] service in *XX*.

or - to *install/induct him/her* as a minister in recognised service in *his/her* appointment as

(3) As required by the Law of the Church, the Clerk will now read the Statement of the Standards of the Church, including the Rule of Faith. (Code Chapter I, section III, paragraphs 10-14).

(4) *[Thereafter the Moderator shall put to the minister-elect the prescribed questions as follows:]*

(5) *[The Moderator addresses the minister-elect:]*

NN, Having heard the statement of the Standards of this Church, including the Rule of Faith, I now require you to answer the following questions. The first two are a public profession of your personal faith and sense of call.

(i) Do you believe in one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and do you confess the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?

I do.

(ii) So far as you know your own heart, are the call of God, zeal for His glory, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire for the salvation of men and women through the power of the Holy Spirit, your central motives as you offer yourself for this new sphere of service?

They are.

And now three questions concerning your understanding of the Church of Jesus Christ and this Presbyterian Church in Ireland in particular.

(iii) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and as such, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

I do.

(iv) Do you promise to uphold Reformed doctrine, worship, government, and discipline in a spirit of love towards all your brothers and sisters in Christ, in a way that seeks to preserve the peace and unity of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as part of the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ?

I do.

(v) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland adheres to the fundamental doctrines of the faith, set out in the Supreme and Subordinate Standards of this Church. Do you promise to teach them and defend them to the utmost of your power, against all error?

I do

(vi) Do you accept the Presbyterian form of Church government to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and do you promise to yield submission in the Lord to the courts of this Church and to take your due part in the administration of its affairs so long as you remain a minister of this Church?

I do

Now, two questions on the conduct of your ministry.

(vii) Do you commit yourself, in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, to live a godly life; and faithfully, diligently, and graciously to discharge the duties of your ministry, seeking in all things the advancement of the kingdom of God?

I do.

(viii) Having accepted the call of this Congregation, do you promise, through the grace of God, to be a faithful minister of the Gospel among this people; preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, administering the Sacraments, nurturing children and young people, visiting and teaching, pastoring all the people, especially those in need, aiding in the government of the Church and discharging all other duties incumbent upon you as a minister of Jesus Christ?

or

Having accepted the call of the Council for Mission in Ireland to this Home Mission charge, do you promise, through the grace of God, to be a faithful minister of the Gospel among this people; preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, administering the Sacraments, nurturing children and young people, teaching and pastoring all the people, especially those in need, aiding in the government of the Church and discharging all other duties incumbent upon you as a minister of Jesus Christ?

or

Having accepted the call to become associate minister/assistant minister in this Congregation, do you undertake to retain your appointment for a period of not less than twelve months, in support of the minister; and do you promise through the grace of God, to be a faithful minister of the Gospel among this people; preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, administering the Sacraments, nurturing children and young people, teaching and pastoring all the people, especially those in need, aiding in the government of the Church and discharging all other duties incumbent upon you as a minister of Jesus Christ?

or

Having accepted the appointment of the General Assembly, do you promise, through God's grace, to be faithful in your ministry in the position in Union Theological College to which you have been appointed and in all the other duties and opportunities falling to you as a minister of Jesus Christ?

or

Having accepted the call of the Council of the General Assembly, do you promise, through God's grace to be faithful in your ministry in the position to which you have been appointed?

or

Having accepted the call of the Council of the General Assembly, do you promise, through God's grace, as a minister in recognised service to the Church in your appointment as to be faithful in your ministry, discharging your duties and using your opportunities of witness and of service with all diligence as a minister of Jesus Christ?

I do.

(6) Subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith

[The Moderator addresses the minister-elect in these words:]

You have confessed your belief that the Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible rule of faith and life. It is under that supreme standard, which alone is final, that this Church holds its subordinate standards. This being understood, are you now prepared to subscribe, in terms of the General Assembly's Formula, 'I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code, Chapter I, paragraphs 12-14, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith.?'

I am

[The Formula is signed in the Minute book of Presbytery.]

[In cases certified by the Council for Global Mission, where the spouse is to be commissioned with the person being ordained or installed, the following question shall be asked of the spouse:]

Do you, *NN*, commit yourself to be a partner with your *husband/wife* in the missionary service to which *he/she* is being appointed?

I do

(7) *[The Congregation stands and the minister-elect kneels.]*

(a) *[For services which include ordination those who are to participate in the laying on of hands take their places. The Moderator shall lead in prayer saying the following or similar:]*

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you call us in your mercy; you sustain us by your power.

Through every generation, your wisdom guides your people.

You sent your only Son, Jesus Christ, to be the apostle and high priest of our faith and the shepherd of our souls. By his life, death and resurrection he has declared your love for the whole world, satisfied your justice, and demonstrated his victory over sin, and death. Having ascended into heaven, he has poured out his Spirit, making some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip all for the work of ministry and to build up his body, the Church.

[The Moderator and an appropriate number of other members of Presbytery including at least two other ministers lay hands on the minister-elect.]

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us the Presbytery of *PP* and this your servant *NN*, whom we now, in your name and in obedience to your will, by prayer and the laying on of hands, ordain to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament within the Church Universal; and

install/induct him/her to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or - install *him/her* to the Home Mission and induct *him/her* to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or - induct *him/her* as *assistant minister/associate minister* in *CC*.

or - *install/induct him/her* to the position of *Principal/Professor* of [or other post] in this College to which *he/she* has been appointed.

or - *install/induct him/her* to missionary [or other] service in *XX*.

or - *install/induct him/her* as a minister in recognised service in *his/her* appointment as

May *he/she* be faithful in preaching your word, administering the sacraments and sharing in the government of the Church as *he/she* fulfils the ministry which you have called *him/her* to undertake.

We pray through Christ who lived and died for us, who rose again, and who reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

(b) *[For all other services, the Moderator shall lead in prayer saying the following or similar:]*

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you call us in your mercy; you sustain us by your power.

Through every generation, your wisdom guides your people.

You sent your only Son, Jesus Christ, to be the apostle and high priest of our faith and the shepherd of our souls. By his life and his teaching he has declared your love for the whole world, by his death he has satisfied your justice; by his resurrection he has demonstrated his victory over sin, and death. Having ascended into heaven, he has poured out his Spirit, making some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip all for the work of ministry and to build up his body, the Church.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us the Presbytery of *PP* and this your servant *NN*, whom we now, in your name and in obedience to your will, by prayer *install/induct* to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or - install to the Home Mission and induct to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or - induct as *assistant minister/associate minister* in *CC*.

or - *install/induct* to the position of *Principal/Professor* of [or other post] in this College to which *he/she* has been appointed.

or - *install/induct* to missionary [or other] service in *XX*.

or - *install/induct* as a minister in recognised service in *his/her* appointment as

May *he/she* be faithful in preaching your word, administering the sacraments and sharing in the government of the Church as *he/she* fulfils the ministry which you have called *him/her* to undertake.

We pray through Christ who lived and died for us, who rose again, and who reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

[The Aaronic Blessing (said or sung)]

(8) [*The Moderator, addressing the minister-elect, says:*]

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church, and by authority of this Presbytery, I now declare you *NN* to have been (ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and)

installed/inducted to this pastoral charge of *CC*.

or - installed to the Home Mission and inducted to the pastoral charge of *CC*.

or - installed as *associate minister/assistant minister* in this Congregation.

or - *installed/inducted* to the position of *Principal/Professor of* [or other post] in this College to which *he/she* has been appointed.

or - *installed/inducted* to missionary [or other] service in the field to which you have been called [*and in cases so certified by the Council for Global Mission add, 'and together with your wife/husband'*], to be commissioned for this task.

or - *installed/inducted* as a minister in recognised service to the Church in your appointment as

As a sign of this I, as Moderator, on behalf of the Presbytery, extend to you the right hand of fellowship.

(9) [*When the minister is being installed or inducted into a Congregation, the Moderator says the following or similar;*]

Members of the Congregation of *CC*, I am going to ask you two questions. These questions invite you to express your fellowship with your new minister and your commitment to work with *him/her* as you serve Christ together.

Do you, the members of this Congregation, in receiving *NN* whom you have called to be your minister, offer *him/her* your welcome and promise *him/her* your loving encouragement and prayerful support?

We do.

Will you join regularly with *NN* as *he/she* leads worship and preaches the Word; will you share together with *him/her* in mutually enriching fellowship and will you, together with *him/her*, take up your responsibility for Christian mission in the local community and throughout the world?

We will.

[*The Moderator says:*] Having committed yourselves, Presbytery, minister and people, to each other and to living for the glory of God in this place, we join with one voice in prayer: Our Father ...

(10) Charge. The minister appointed by Presbytery preaches a sermon as a charge to the new minister and to the Congregation.

(11) The service and the meeting of Presbytery shall conclude with the Benediction.

PP is used for the name of the Presbytery and *CC* for the name of the Congregation. *NN* is used for the name of the minister-elect or spouse. *XX* is the name of the country to which the minister-elect will go.

DAVID J BRUCE

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS – CONCILIATION**Anent Par 75(a) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 75(a) of the Code the words “in cases of difficulty;” be deleted and the words “in cases of difficulty and seek conciliation where it is appropriate;” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 132 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 132 of the Code the following paragraph be added: “(4) A court shall always consider the possibility of conciliation before entering into a formal process of discipline.” and the subsequent paragraphs renumbered.

THE CLERK

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS – FORMER BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING**Anent Par 30(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 30(1) of the Code the following words be added at the end of the paragraph:

“In exercising this leadership the Kirk Session shall oversee and work along with other members who have leadership roles in the congregation.”

Anent Par 30(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 30(3) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

“(3) In the discharge of their duties each elder should be assigned by the Kirk Session pastoral responsibilities and/or other leadership roles in the congregation.”

Anent Par 30 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that following Par 30(3) of the Code a new paragraph be added:

“(4) The Kirk Session, along with the Minister, should seek to ensure that all elders are equipped to fulfil their duties.”

Anent Par 35 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 35 of the Code the following new paragraph be added and subsequent paragraphs be renumbered accordingly:

“(b) ensure a scheme for pastoral care is in place in the congregation, in line with current General Assembly guidelines.”

Anent Par 73(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 73(b) of the Code the word “discharged;” be deleted and the words “discharged and that elders are suitably equipped;” be substituted in its place.

Anent Par 72(e) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 72(e) of the Code the word “deaconesses” be deleted and the words “deaconesses, auxiliary ministers” be substituted in its place.

JNI McNEELY

**OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS –
FORMER COMMISSION ON TRUSTS
(in a slightly amended form, in Par 126(5) changing ‘Union’ to ‘Linkage’)**

Anent Par 122 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 122 of the Code the following be added:

“(7) The Trustees shall have Assembly powers to deal with all cases where trustees or others desire to transfer any property, real or personal, to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland under the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Acts, 1871 and 1901 and to accept any such transfer on such terms as it deems expedient.”

“(8) The Trustees shall provide for a compilation annually of an abstract of bequests received by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and an abstract of bequests notified but not yet received.”

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 Union Commission and the Commission on Trusts” be deleted and the words “and the Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 130 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 130 of the Code be deleted.

ALASTAIR J RANKIN

REPORTS OF PRESBYTERIES

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev WJ Carlisle is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr Charles Presho, former Executive of the Bible Society in Northern Ireland, died on 18th April 2014; that the Rev Dr RA Russell, Minister of Ballywalter, retired on 31st August 2014; that the Rev Douglas Bradley, Minister of Ballycrochan, retired on 8th September 2014; that the Rev DM Spratt, Minister without Charge, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down having received a call to the Congregation of Kilmore; that the Rev AW Carson, Minister of Strean, resigned his Charge on 22nd January 2015 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that Mr AJ Galbraith was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that the Rev CG Anderson, Minister of First Donaghadee was released from his Charge on 3rd February 2015; that the Rev Graeme McConville was inducted to the work of Chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces (Land) on 26th September 2014; that the Rev David Stanfield presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was received as a Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery; that Mr NDH Stewart, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Trinity, Greyabbey on 9th May 2014; that Mr Aaron Ditty presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Scrabo, Newtownards, on 30th May 2014; that Mr RS Hamilton was licensed on 6th June 2014 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that Mr JP McWatters was licensed on 8th June 2014; that Mr GW Clinton presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster and was received as a Licentiate; that Mr JW Frazer was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that Mr John Mullan was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs CG Anderson, CD Mawhinney, Dr SI Dennis, David McKee (retired), David Stanfield and Dr MJ Welsh; as Licentiates Mr DP Burke, Mr GW Clinton, Mr JS McCrea, Mr JP McWatters, and Mr JK Ward; as Licentiate without Charge Mr Edward Kirwan; that they held Consultations at Ballyholme and Helen's Bay; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 0, Against: 35; anent Code Par 212: For: 0, Against: 36.

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev WJI Thompson is their Moderator; that the Rev JI Smyth, Minister Emeritus of Richhill died on 12th November 2014; that the Rev James Gordon, Minister of Second Keady and Drumhillery retired on 31st March 2014; that the Rev DR Byers, Minister of Cladymore and Tassagh, retired on 25th October 2014; that the Rev SW van Os, Army Chaplain, resigned on 30th November 2014, and was presented with credentials to Presbytery Central, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand; that Mr LW Webster presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Craigavon on 25th April 2014; that they have under their care: as a Minister without Charge the Rev JWP McConnell; as Licentiates Mr PG Cleland and Mr BS Preston; as Students for the Ministry Mr Edwin Frazer and Mr Craig Jackson; that they held

Consultations at First Keady and Armaghbreague; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 19, Against: 6; anent Code Par 212: For: 22, Against: 1.

The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DB McCorrison is their Moderator; that the Rev AL Kirk retired from the duties of the active ministry in First Ahoghill on 31st May 2014; that the Rev CK McDowell resigned his Charge as Minister of Killymurriss on 26th February 2015, having received and accepted a call from High Street Antrim and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that the Rev JD McGaughey, a Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery was inducted as Associate Minister in Cuningham Memorial on 9th January 2015; that Mr MJO Currie, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was ordained to the Office of the Christian Ministry and installed to the Charge of Churchtown on 11th April 2014; that Mr DA McMillan was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 1st June 2014 and remains under the care of Presbytery; that Mr NDH Stewart, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, having received and accepted a call to Trinity, Greyabbey, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that Mr RMP Simpson, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, having received and accepted a call to Claggan and Orritor, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that they have under their care as Licentiates Mr PA Kerr, Mr SW Orr and Mr DA McMillan; as Students for the Ministry Mr JJ Boyd, Mr M Boyd, Mr WN Kennedy, Mr JR Kernohan, Mr RC Patton and Mrs HAS Marshall; that no Consultations were held during the year; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 27, Against: 14; anent Code Par 212: For: 0, Against: 42.

The **NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev AV Stewart is their Moderator; that the Very Rev Dr TN Hamilton, Minister of Ballysillan, retired on 30th April 2014; that the Rev AW Carson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed in Abbey, Monkstown on 23rd January 2015; that JM Warburton presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was received as a Licentiate; that they have under their care: as Ministers without Charge the Revs LH Eagleson, CI McKnight, (retired), WA Shaw, WM Smyth, (retired) and FW Vincent; as Licentiates Mr DR Cromie, Mr SD Currie, Mr MW Dodds, Mr MA Johnston, Mr MJ Warburton, Mr RJ Watt, and Mr David McCarthy (without Charge); as a Student for the Ministry Mr Jonathan Newell; that Consultations were held with the Congregations of Carnmoney and West Kirk; that Congregational Financial Reports are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 15, Against: 13; anent Code Par 212: For: 6, Against: 22.

The **SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev RS Stockman is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr Ian Hart retired as Minister of Great Victoria Street on 31st October 2014, that the Rev JH Wilson, RVH Chaplain, retired on 31st January 2015; that Mrs KH Viner, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery,

was ordained and installed as Minister of Malone on 7th March 2014; that the Rev MRJ Anderson, presented credentials from the Dublin and Munster Presbytery and was installed as Minister of Fisherwick on 21st June 2014; that the Rev BJ McCroskery presented credentials from the Dromore Presbytery and was installed as Minister of McCracken Memorial on 12th September 2014; that Mr SD Conkey, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, having received and accepted a call to Wexford and Enniscorthy, was given credentials to the Dublin and Munster Presbytery; that Mrs FMA Forbes, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, having received and accepted a call to Cairncastle was given credentials to the Carrickfergus Presbytery; that Miss SJ Moore was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 22nd June 2014 and given credentials to the Dromore Presbytery; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs KA Drury and JD Maxwell; as Licentiates Mr Jonathan Abernethy-Barkley, Mr Gary McDowell and Mrs CE Heron; as Students for the Ministry Mr A Alvis-Averia, Mr B Van der Linde, Mr John Martin and Dr Seth Wright; that they held Consultations at Cooke Centenary and Windsor; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 21, Against: 6; anent Code Par 212: For: 24, Against: 0.

The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev NS Harrison is their Moderator; that the Rev PP Campbell, Minister of Belmont, resigned his Charge on 28th February 2015 and was placed as a Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery; that the Rev TJ Stothers presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus following his appointment as Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly; that Mr JW Frazer, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Garnerville on 22nd June 2014; that Mr MTW McMaw was licensed on 8th June 2014 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry & Donegal; that Mr JT Blue presented credentials from the Presbytery of Newry and was received as a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery; that Mr Aaron Ditty was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs DR Baker; PP Campbell, WJ Harshaw, PG McDowell and Dr DJ Montgomery; as Licentiates Mr JT Blue, Mr GJ Ball and Mr Gareth Simpson; as Licentiates without Charge Mr Stephen Cowan and Mr Paul Orr; as Students Mr Alan Dickey, Mr Alan McQuade, Mr Alastair McCracken, Mr Ben Johnston, Mr David Gray, Mr David Kelly, Mr Andrew Downey and Mr Steve Kennedy; that they held Consultations at First Holywood and Strand; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 30, Against: 0; anent Code Par 212: For: 30, Against: 0.

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev JE McDowell is their Moderator; that the Rev WJ Johnstone, Minister Emeritus of Craigyhill, died on 1st April 2014; that the Rev TJ Stothers resigned from the Charge of Greenisland on 14th September 2014 and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that the Rev RJ Gilkinson was loosed from the Charge of Craigy Hill on 22nd April 2014; that Mrs FMA Forbes presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was ordained and

installed to the Charge of Cairncastle on 16th May 2014; that Mr JM Warburton was licensed on 8th June 2014 and given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that Mr RS Hamilton presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was received as a Licentiate; that Mr LW Webster was given credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh; that Mr RJ Collins was given credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady; that Mr AW Moore was given credentials to the Presbytery of Omagh; that under their care are: as a Minister without Charge the Rev RJ Gilkinson; as Licentiates Mr AR Adger, Mr CMS Barron, Mr RS Hamilton and Mr RE McCormick; as Students Mr Bobby Orr, Mr Ian Cahoon and Mr Stuart Hawthorne; that they held a Consultation at First Larne; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed individually and in pamphlet form; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 22, Against: 0; anent Code Par 212: For: 22, Against: 0.

The **COLERAINE AND LIMAVADY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev SA McCracken is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr TD Allen resigned the Charge of Ballyrashane Congregation on 28th February 2015, following his appointment as Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development, Union College, Belfast; that the Rev DH Brown presented credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone and was installed to the Pastoral Charge of Hazelbank on 12th December 2014; that the Rev ATF Johnston was inducted for Missionary Service in Italy on 8th June 2014; that Mr TAS Graham presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was ordained and installed to the Pastoral Charge of Banagher Congregation on 11th April 2014; that Mr GI Linton, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was ordained and inducted as a Chaplain in Her Majesty's Forces on 25th April 2014; that Mr SA Morrow presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick and was ordained and installed to the Pastoral Charge of Moneydig Congregation on 16th May 2014; that Mr RJ Collins presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was ordained and installed to the Pastoral Charge of Ballywatt Congregation on 30th May 2014; that Mr GA McCracken, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was ordained and inducted as Associate Minister in Ballywillan Congregation on 28th September 2014; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge the Rev JD Mark; that they have under their care: as Students for the Ministry Mr Alan Burke, Mr Robert McClure and Mr John Torrens; that no Consultations were held during the year; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 42, Against: 1; anent Code Par 212: For: 42, Against: 0.

The **DERRY AND DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev SJ Hanna is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr SR Jones, Minister of Donemana died on 12th July 2014; that the Rev MWJ McKeown, Ordained Assistant Minister of Kilfennan, resigned from his Charge and from the Office of Minister of Word and Sacrament on 31st July 2014 and was commended to the Church of Scotland; that the Rev RA Mulholland, Minister of Donagheady, was loosed from his Charge on 30th September 2014; that the Rev WA Watson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh and was inducted to the Charge of Carrigart and Dunfanaghy on 9th January 2015; that Mr KH Hibbert, presented credentials

from the Presbytery of Tyrone and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Cumber and Upper Cumber on 2nd May 2014; that Mr Graeme Orr, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Magheramason on 19th September 2014; that Mr MTW McMaw presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was received as a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs KG Patterson and JC Teeney; as a Licentiate Mr MTW McMaw; as a Student for the Ministry Mr JD McKane; that they held Consultations at Strabane, Fannet, Milford and Rathmullan Congregations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 43, Against: 1, Abstentions: 3; anent Code Par 212: For: 38, Against: 3, Abstentions: 3.

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Dr AF Nel is their Moderator; that the Rev DM Spratt, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed to the Charge of Kilmore on 11th April 2014; that the Rev JJ Currie, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone and was installed to the Charge of First Saintfield on 16th May 2014; that Mr Owen Patterson, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery was ordained and installed to the Charge of Ardglass & Downpatrick on 9th May 2014; that Mr AJ Galbraith, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was ordained and installed to the Charge of First Ballynahinch on 23rd May 2014; that the Rev David Stanfield was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that Mr SW Moore was given credentials to the Presbytery of Route; that Mr EJB McKenzie was given credentials to the Presbytery of Newry; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs Samuel Armstrong, JM Casement, RN Stewart, GR Stockdale; as a Licentiate Mr DT McNeill; as a Licentiate without Charge Mr MC Cowan; that they held no Consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 24, Against: 4; anent Code Par 212: For: 0, Against: 27.

The **DROMORE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev LA Patterson is their Moderator; that Miss SJ Moore presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was received as a Licentiate; that Mr TA Conway, a Licentiate, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Newry; Mr TAS Graham, a Licentiate, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady; that the Rev BJ McCroskery, Minister without Charge, was given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that under their care are: as Licentiates Mr SM Hamilton, Mr NW Duddy and Miss SJ Moore; as Students Mr R Aiken, Mr J Maguire and Mr P Poots; that they held a Consultation at Harmony Hill; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 38, Against: 0; anent Code Par 212: For: 38, Against: 0.

The **DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** that the Rev Andy Carroll is their Moderator; that the Very Rev Dr TWJ Morrow, Minister of Lucan, retired on 28th February 2014; that the Rev CM Hunter, Minister of Rathgar, retired on

30th September 2014; that the Rev MJR Anderson, Minister of Arklow, resigned his Charge on 20th June 2014 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that the Rev SD Conkey, presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Enniscorthy & Wexford on 29th March 2014; that Mr Gerry Clinton was licensed on 22nd June 2014 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that no Consultations were held during the year; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev MG McClelland is their Moderator; that the Rev WA Watson, a Minister without Charge under their care, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal; that Mr NJ Kane presented credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone and was ordained and installed in Magherally and appointed Stated Supply in Katesbridge on 13th June 2014; that under their care are: as a Minister without Charge the Rev EG McAuley (retired); as a Licentiate Mr A Boreland; as Students Mr G Mullan, Mr M Rutledge and Mr K Parke; that they held Consultations with the Congregations of Bannside and Ballydown; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 20, Against: 0; anent Code Par 212: For: 19, Against: 2.

The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Molly Deatherage is their Moderator; that Mr Stephen McNie presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Ballyalbany and Glennan on 27th June 2014; that they have under their care as a Student for the Ministry Mr Jonathan Porter; that no Consultations were held during the year; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 19, Against: 0; anent Code Par 212: For: 19, Against: 0.

The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev FJ Gibson is their Moderator; that Mr TA Conway presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was ordained and inducted as Moderator's Assistant in First Newry on 27th April 2014; that Mr EJB McKenzie presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Warrenpoint and Rostrevor on 17th May 2014; that Mr JT Blue was licensed on 30th May and given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that they have under their care as a Student Mr SD Kennedy; that they held Consultations at Clarkesbridge and First Newtownhamilton, Garmany's Grove and McKelvey's Grove and Mourne; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 29, Against: 0; anent Code Par 212: For: 28, Against: 1.

The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the JA Gordon is their Moderator; that the Rev HJ Honeyford, Minister of Second Castlederg and Alt, retired on 31st May 2014; that Mr AW Moore presented credentials from the Presbytery

of Carrickfergus and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Cavanaleck and Aughtentaine on 12th September 2014; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge the Rev CI Dickson; that no Consultations were held during the year; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 42, Against: 0; anent Code Par 212: For: 42, Against: 0.

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Kenneth Henderson is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr Nancy Cubitt presented credentials from the Presbytery of Lackawanna, Presbyterian Church USA, having been received through the Committee on Reception of Ministers and Licentiates of the General Assembly and was installed to the Charge of Bushmills on 20th February 2015; that Mr SW Moore presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Dervock on 21st November 2014; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge the Revs Dr Victor Dobbin (retired) and William Brown (retired); that they held Visitations at St James's and Bushvale; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 34, Against: 0; anent Code Par 212: For: 34, Against: 0.

The **TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DJ Steele is their Moderator; that the Very Rev Dr WD Patton, Minister of Old Congregation, Randalstown, retired on 31st January 2015; that the Rev CK McDowell, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was installed to the Charge of High Street, Antrim, on 27th February 2015; that Mr SA Morrow was given credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady; that Mr Stephen McNie was given credentials to the Presbytery of Mongahan; that under their care are: as Licentiates Mr RJ Edgar, Mr MPR Fryer and Mr PWA McClelland; that they held a Consultation at Second Ballyeaston; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 25, Against: 0; anent Code Par 212: For: 10, Against: 14 Abstention: 1.

The **TYRONE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev JD Montgomery is their Moderator; that the Rev JJ Currie, Minister of Union Road, Magherafelt and Lecumpher, resigned his Charge on 15th May 2014 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that the Rev DH Brown, Minister of Castlecaulfield and Eglis, resigned his Charge on 11th December 2014 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady; that Mr JB Mullan presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Castledawson and Curran on 29th August 2014; that Mr RMP Simpson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Claggan and Orritor on 14th November 2014; that Mr KH Hibbert and Mr Graeme Orr were given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal; that Mr NJ Kane was given credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; that under their care are: as a Licentiate without Charge Mr Jonathan Dunn; as Students Mr David Clarke, Mr Bryan Kee and Mr Philip Leonard;

that Consultations are being held at Bellaghy, Knockloughrim, and Dungannon; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed; that voting on Overtures sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: anent Code Pars 10-14: For: 6, Against: 23; anent Code Par 212: For: 0, Against: 31.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Presbyteries be received.

FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMISSION

Convener: Very Rev Dr RL CRAIG
Secretary: THE CLERK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Finance and Staffing Commission was appointed by the 2014 General Assembly with the following membership:

Moderator and Clerk Designate (Secretary); the Very Rev Drs Rob Craig (Convener), Roy Patton, Ivan Patterson; the Revs Colin Morrison, Tom Conway; John Hunter, Dr Rosemary Hamilton, Edgar Jardine, Mrs Sadie Somerville. (The Financial Secretary, Head of Personnel and Convener of the General Assembly's Personnel Committee to sit and deliberate.)

2. The Commission was appointed with full Assembly powers to:

- formally appoint, on behalf of the Assembly, the new Councils and Committees (and their Conveners), on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee;
- agree initial budgets for the new Councils, reallocating all current budgets and resources as necessary;
- oversee the finalising and implementation of the new staffing structure, making all necessary redeployments and appointments of staff and any other necessary related tasks;
- carry out any other necessary tasks to implement the restructuring, including any necessary preparatory arrangements for the new Councils.

3. To carry forward this remit the full Commission met on nine occasions and its work is reported on below.

CONVENER'S INTRODUCTION

4. Presbyterians believe that the Church should not only be Reformed but that she is in constant need of being Reformed. The programme of restructuring has been a process by which we, as a denomination, have been seeking to examine and revise our organisational life so that we might as a church fulfil the Mission given to us by our Risen and Ascended Lord. Restructuring has not been an end in itself; rather it has always been and must always be the means to an end – a Church, fit for purpose. The 1st January 2015 marked an important moment in this process when the new Councils replaced the former Boards.

5. The Finance and Staffing Commission believes that restructuring has been and continues to be an ongoing process. These are early days in the implementation of the Council structure; it is to be expected that there may be teething troubles and that it will take time for the whole church to value and embrace the new structure.

6. The Commission has, in all discussions and decisions made, been acutely aware of the stress upon the Assembly Building staff, brought about

not only by the delay in implementing staffing changes but also by months of uncertainty regarding security of employment. The Commission greatly values all the staff team and appreciates the patience displayed by them through this protracted period of time.

7. It is the hope and prayer of the Commission that within the structure of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland there will be an increased accountability, engagement and communication; that congregations will feel a greater sense of identity with the decisions of the General Assembly and with the administrative centre of the denomination; and that, most of all, together the Church will be better equipped to discern priorities in serving Christ and his Kingdom – and act appropriately.

FORMER BOARDS AND NEW COUNCILS

8. The 2014 General Assembly appointed Boards and Committees to continue their work until 31st December 2014, at which point they were thanked and discharged by the Finance and Staffing Commission. Their final reports were received by the Commission, acting on behalf of the Assembly, and are included as Appendix 2 to this report.

9. As agreed by the 2014 General Assembly, the Commission appointed the new General Assembly Councils and Committees, along with their Conveners, on the recommendation of the General Assembly Nominations Committee. A membership booklet was sent to all Ministers and made available on the PCI Website. An updated version will be available at the 2015 General Assembly.

10. The Commission agreed that, when a Minister in a congregation is appointed to convene a General Assembly Council or Commission, a payment of £1,200 per annum be made to their congregation, to provide for a small amount of additional resource for pastoral work or pulpit supplies.

11. The Commission identified that, in a very small number of cases, the changes to the Code agreed by the 2014 General Assembly were not appropriate and that a few necessary changes had been omitted. The Commission therefore resolved as follows:

- (a) The Clerk should include the new Par 273 but referring to ‘Union Commission’, changing it by overture to ‘Linkage Commission’ at the 2015 General Assembly (along with the enactment of the overture relating to the new Par 128 which is on the books);
- (b) The Clerk should not delete Pars 286 and 287, referring respectively to the Board of Finance and Personnel and the United Appeal Board, but at the 2015 General Assembly merge them by overture into the General Council, Par 272;
- (c) Following the discharge of the Board of Finance and Personnel and the United Appeal Board, on 1st January 2015, the General Council be authorised to exercise the powers contained in Par 286 and Par 287 of the Code through its Support Services Committee and its United Appeal Committee respectively.

12. Necessary overtures to further amend the Code at the 2015 General Assembly in the light of restructuring are transmitted along with this report (see pages 116-131).

13. The Commission agreed to implement some minor adjustments to the agreed structures to enable the new Councils and Commissions to bed down. These include the inclusion of one additional member of the new Linkage Commission, along with 19 additional direct Presbytery nominees for the Council for Congregational Life and Witness. Appropriate overtures to amend the Code in relation to these two bodies are again transmitted along with of this report.

STAFFING

14. Prior to the final decisions at the 2014 General Assembly regarding restructuring, staff in Assembly Buildings had lived through several years of uncertainty as proposals were drafted, consulted upon and redrafted. The Commission therefore sought to carry forward its Assembly remit, of overseeing the finalising and implementation of the new staffing structure, without undue delay.

15. At its first meeting on 10th June 2014, the Commission noted that as some staff had moved on over the previous few years there had been a measure of vacancy control. This had resulted in some posts being left unfilled and some temporary posts being created. As a result it was anticipated that only a very small number of permanent post holders might not be able to be accommodated in the new staffing structure. With respect to those in executive grades the Commission recognised that most, but not all, posts would map across directly into the new structures. With regard to administrative posts, and because of a significant number of vacancies, the changes in structures would likely result in no currently employed administrative grade member of the staff team being without a post.

16. It was agreed that all job descriptions, both executive and administrative, would need to be updated and standardised during the process and all posts re-evaluated. This required a significant amount of work, including a series of one-to-one meetings with each member of staff, even those whose posts were largely unaffected by restructuring. The Commission also sought to deal with a small number of employment anomalies which existed. Additional resources were provided for the Personnel Department to enable all of this work to be carried forward and completed before 1st January 2015, when the new structures came into place.

17. During its work the Commission took considerable time to discuss its approach to executive staff whose existing roles did not map directly across into the new structures; personnel policies were considered and on occasions enhanced. It is acknowledged that for the small number of staff involved this proved to be a challenging process. The end result was some individuals being redeployed to suitable roles within the new structures and the employment of two members of staff coming to a conclusion.

18. In all some 34 full time equivalent executive posts and 37 full time equivalent administrative posts exist in the new staffing structure within Assembly Buildings, with, at the time of writing, all but 6 of these posts filled. The Commission is confident that this structure will ensure that the General Assembly Councils are adequately staffed to effectively discharge their central role on behalf of PCI as a whole.

19. Recognising that restructuring meant new staff teams coming into being and therefore related office relocations, the Commission approved necessary funds for this task and authorised the Clerk to oversee the relocations. These were successfully completed prior to the end of 2014.

20. The Commission would acknowledge the willing cooperation of all staff in Assembly Buildings during this period of restructuring and recognise the additional work and stress it has caused. The Commission requested the Clerk, in discussion with others, to identify practical ways in which thanks could be expressed to staff.

FINANCE

21. The task of reallocating financial resources from the Boards to the new Councils was overseen by the Commission. This was largely an exercise in the reallocation of United Appeal Funding for 2015, along with ensuring various funds held by the Boards found their home in the correct Council. Initial recommendations were prepared and provisionally accepted as draft reallocations by the Commission. Council Secretaries-Designate were then consulted and the draft reallocations further refined, before being approved by the Commission on behalf of the Assembly. A table setting out the reallocated grants in connection with the 2015 United Appeal is included at Schedule II in Appendix 1 to this report.

22. As the new Councils only came into operation on 1st January 2015, and to give the Councils time to adequately assess their areas of work, the Commission agreed that it would not be possible to undertake the United Appeal budgeting process as normal in March/April 2015. The Commission therefore agreed that for 2016 the Councils would provisionally receive an inflationary uplift in their re-allocated 2015 grants, with any necessary minor adjustments made in the autumn of 2015. The Commission also agreed that the 2016 Appeal to congregations should increase by 2.25% over the 2015 Appeal i.e. from £3,325,000 to £3,400,000. Schedule IV of Appendix 1 to this report sets out the necessary tables for the 2016 United Appeal, as agreed by the Commission on behalf of the Assembly.

23. As part of its work the Commission also received, and agreed on behalf of the General Assembly, the recommendations of the former Board of Finance and Personnel relating to the rates of Assessments for 2015, as follows:

Assessment Band	Assessable Income (£)		Assessment Rate
	From	To	
1	0	64,999	14.50%
2	65,000	129,999	10.75%
3	130,000	194,999	7.25%
4	195,000	259,999	3.50%
5	260,000	and above	0.00%

it also agreed that income collected through the assessment system should be allocated to the various assessment funds on the basis of the following budgeted income requirements for 2015:

Central Ministry Fund	£2,600,000
Retired Ministers Fund	£450,000
Widows of Ministers Fund	£25,000
Prolonged Disability Fund	£25,000
Incidental Fund	£750,000
Ministerial Development Fund	£50,000
Church House External Work	£370,000
Sick Supply Fund	£15,000
Students Bursary Fund	£375,000
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SUB-TOTAL	£4,660,000
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24. The Commission also agreed, on behalf of the General Assembly, the recommendation of the former Board of Finance & Personnel that the assessment rate for 2015 for the Pension Fund should remain at 27.5% of spend.

OTHER MATTERS

25. The Commission took a number of other necessary additional decisions related to restructuring, including the following:

- (a) It was decided that the former BMI, BMO, BSW and YAC websites should be merged into the main PCI central website as soon as practicable after 1st January 2015, with the design and structure of the central website being enhanced as necessary.
- (b) ReachOut Magazine in its former form (as an ongoing standalone publication of the Board of Mission in Ireland) came to an end on 31st December 2014. The Commission therefore resolved that, once the new structures were in place, a strategic review of publications (including magazines, 'mission worker' reports etc.) should be carried out, reporting to the General Council. To allow time for this review to take place, and recognising the significant readership base of ReachOut and the income derived through both subscription and advertising, from 1st January 2015 an interim arrangement was put in place. The Creative Production Department is now overseeing the production of a 'ReachOut magazine', in line with its current format for a strictly time-limited period (ideally for no longer than one year), buying in services as required.
- (c) The Commission allocated additional resources to the provision of IT. It was also decided that that the General Council, and its Support Services Committee, should oversee the implementation of agreed recommendations from the PricewaterhouseCoopers review of the IT services within PCI.
- (d) The Commission agreed that the Audited Accounts and the Accounts of Councils and related Agencies would be made available on the PCI website in advance of the Assembly, with printed copies available

on request from the Financial Secretary's Department. This will be reviewed during the incoming year.

- (e) As a further enhancement to the material available after the General Assembly, the Commission granted permission to the Clerk to produce two separate books, namely the General Assembly Minutes (including the Statistics etc.) and the Directory of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The main reason for this change is that an increasingly diverse number of people are needing to access different types of information. It is therefore envisaged that a copy of the General Assembly Minutes will be provided for each member of the General Assembly (i.e. Minister and commissioned Elders etc.), with a copy of the Directory provided for each Minister and each Congregation. The contents and format of the latter document will be reviewed and amended as appropriate. Following last year's successful pilot, the Creative Production Department also plan to produce again a more 'public facing' Summary Report of the work of the General Assembly. Although primarily designed to communicate something of the work of PCI to those outside of the Church, this year additional copies will be produced to also provide one for each Minister and Congregation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

26. In light of the scale of the restructuring, both with regard to the new Councils and to the new staffing teams, the Commission is recommending to the General Assembly that it be reappointed for one additional year. This will let the Commission, on the recommendation of the United Appeal Committee in the autumn of 2015, make any necessary minor adjustments to the 2016 United Appeal allocations (as intimated above). The Commission will also be in place to make any decisions, and carry out any tasks necessary, to facilitate the ongoing implementation of restructuring, including overseeing further changes to the Code.

27. Humanly speaking, the effectiveness of the restructuring process will depend on both flexibility and goodwill, as we continue to explore how best we can improve accountability, strengthen communications and enhance engagement across the Church as a whole. Church life never stands still – the wind blows where it will. May PCI, as a denomination, continually find the grace necessary to create the structures necessary to be true to our calling.

28. In conclusion, the Commission places on record its acknowledgement of heavy workload borne by the Rev Trevor Gribben. In addition to assuming the office and duties of Clerk of the General Assembly on 1st September 2014 he also had many additional duties in the preparation for the new Council structure. With tireless energy and commitment he has guaranteed that the transition has been as smooth as possible.

APPENDIX 1

REALLOCATION OF THE 2015 UNITED APPEAL GRANTS
AND 2016 UNITED APPEAL

SCHEDULE I

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2013	Assessable Income 2013 £	United Appeal 2015 £
Ards	7,241	3,382,769	307,368
Armagh	3,674	2,023,957	169,945
Ballymena	6,909	3,333,817	298,103
Belfast North	4,773	2,107,135	197,028
Belfast South	3,129	1,754,933	146,154
Belfast East	5,526	3,061,902	256,414
Carrickfergus	4,682	1,817,105	181,908
Coleraine and Limavady	5,383	2,480,844	226,956
Derry and Donegal	4,742	2,058,180	194,145
Down	4,597	1,701,911	174,867
Dromore	4,844	2,124,566	199,325
Dublin and Munster	989	1,397,740	84,538
Iveagh	3,598	1,410,336	140,426
Monaghan	1,106	668,962	53,874
Newry	2,602	1,113,437	105,806
Omagh	3,474	1,465,713	140,316
Route	3,572	1,416,896	140,173
Templepatrick	3,955	1,622,899	157,662
Tyrone	3,618	1,611,338	149,992
	78,414	36,554,440	3,325,000

50% of the allocation for 2015 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Assessable Income. Assessable Income for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2013 of 1.1962.

SCHEDULE II

	2015 REVISED £
MISSION IN IRELAND	1,048,300
GLOBAL MISSION	900,450
TRAINING IN MINISTRY	400,000
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS	698,600
SOCIAL WITNESS	191,000
CREATIVE PRODUCTION	255,000
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Release from reserves	3,493,350
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Appeal to Congregations	-168,350
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	3,325,000

SCHEDULE III

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2014	Assessable Income 2014 £	United Appeal 2016 £
Ards	7,360	3,359,198	316,599
Armagh	3,664	2,122,985	178,211
Ballymena	6,984	3,373,014	308,899
Belfast North	4,486	2,055,149	193,322
Belfast South	3,056	1,823,259	151,042
Belfast East	5,271	3,069,547	257,079
Carrickfergus	4,620	1,944,443	191,230
Coleraine and Limavady	5,335	2,560,152	235,213
Derry and Donegal	4,804	1,934,316	194,844
Down	4,408	1,791,514	179,544
Dromore	4,683	2,163,350	202,632
Dublin and Munster	1,099	1,336,142	85,420
Iveagh	3,486	1,621,610	151,351
Monaghan	1,080	639,212	53,144
Newry	2,260	1,189,655	104,446
Omagh	3,335	1,458,174	140,535
Route	3,417	1,479,065	143,307
Templepatrick	3,899	1,638,679	161,031
Tyrone	3,487	1,611,338	152,153
	<u>76,734</u>	<u>37,192,697</u>	<u>3,400,002</u>

50% of the allocation for 2015 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Assessable Income. Assessable Income for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2013 of 1.1962.

SCHEDULE IV

	2016
	£
MISSION IN IRELAND	1,071,900
GLOBAL MISSION	920,700
TRAINING IN MINISTRY	409,000
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS	714,300
SOCIAL WITNESS	195,300
CREATIVE PRODUCTION	260,700
	<hr/>
Release from reserves	3,571,900
	<hr/>
Appeal to Congregations	-171,900
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	3,400,000
	<hr/>

APPENDIX 2**REPORTS OF FORMER BOARDS AND COMMITTEES****BUSINESS BOARD**

Convener: THE CLERK

The Business Board met on 15th October 2014 to reflect on the 2014 General Assembly and to draw up recommendations and suggestions for transmission to the new General Assembly Business Committee.

GENERAL BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. Since the last General Assembly the General Board met on one occasion on 16th October 2014.

2. The Convener, the Rev Dr Donald Watts retired as Clerk on 31st August and the Rev Trevor Gribben took up the post of Clerk on 1st September and thereby replaced Dr Watts as Convener. The Board places on record its appreciation of all the work Dr Watts did for it and for the wider Church over his eleven years as Clerk and Convener and prays God's blessing on him in what is already proving to be an active retirement.

3. The Board agreed the:

Transition to new structures:

- (a) That the Convener be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Board and that Committee Conveners be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Committee they convene.
- (b) That the Convener be authorised to draw up the final report of the Board, for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014, for presentation to the Finance and Staffing Commission.

4. The work of the Board is presented as it relates to the various different Committees and Panels. Bodies, such as the Doctrine Committee, which did not meet between the General Assembly and 31st December, 2014 are omitted.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE**Church in the Public Square**

5. The Committee took the lead responsibility (alongside Union Theological College) for the Church in the Public Square Conference on 9th October on Equality, Freedom and Religion. 103 people registered for the conference and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with a good level of media coverage. The conference material is available on the PCI website.

Community Relations

6. The Committee made a formal response [see Appendix 1] to the OFMDFM Committee's Inquiry into the current community relations strategy – Together: Building a United Community.

Abortion

7. The main issue for the Committee throughout the year of 2014 was the consultation on abortion, launched in early October by David Ford, the Justice Minister. The document was complex, running to some 65 pages, and so needed careful analysis and consideration.

T NORMAN HAMILTON, Convener

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES COMMITTEE

Returning Ministers

8. The question of ministers licensed and ordained in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland but who had consequently served without the denomination and who were returning back to Ireland and requesting to be received as 'Ministers without charge' was discussed. The Board accepted the Committee's recommendation that the current policy of not receiving such ministers be not changed. They could nevertheless apply to the Committee to be rendered eligible for ministry within the Church through preaching in vacancies, acting as a Stated Supply or as Assistant to a Convener.

Global Perspective

9. The 2014 General Assembly's resolution requesting "the Committee on Reception of Ministers and Licentiates to prayerfully review current guidelines with the aim of facilitating and encouraging gifted ministers and missionaries with global Church perspectives to serve with PCI on the island of Ireland" was discussed. While it was recognised that Church Law already had provision for Boards to call individuals to special ministries it was agreed to do further research.

IVAN J PATTERSON, Convener

GLOBAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

10. The matter of a Panel for the Middle East was referred to the Council for Global Mission.

ENVIRONMENTAL PANEL

11. Two delegates attended a conference in Budapest facilitated by the European Christian Environmental Network.

GOOD RELATIONS PANEL

12. A response was given to the Stormont Executive's Document "Together, Building a United Community". The Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton represented the Church at the General Synod of Budapest in November.

RACE RELATIONS PANEL

13. Following the 2104 General Assembly Resolution on the issue of Direct Provision for those seeking asylum in the Republic of Ireland, Dr Watts as Clerk sent a letter to the Minister for Justice and Equality in the Republic of Ireland. A similar letter was sent by the Irish Council of Churches and signed by representatives of the main Churches, including the Convener. The Churches, facilitated by the ICC Executive, also responded to the Stormont Executive's Draft Racial Equality Strategy "A Sense of Belonging". The Panel welcome this document, believing it is essential that a clear message is sent out that immigrants living in Northern Ireland are an integral and valuable part of society. Directly relating to this, concern was expressed at the escalation in racist attacks over. The Clerk, Moderator and Convener had a low profile visit to the Belfast Islamic Centre which allowed the Panel to learn more about Islam in Northern Ireland and to build informal relations with Islamic Community Leaders. The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Cllr Nichola Mallon, visited the International Meeting Point on the 24th September. This was an opportunity to show her something of the positive work the Church is doing to integrate immigrants. The Panel believes it needs to be more intentional about getting good news stories into the public domain.

RICHARD KERR, Convener

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

14. The report on the 'Freedom of individuals in leadership' [see Appendix 2] was received and circulated to ministers for distribution to elders and members of congregations. The 1974 General Assembly 'Brief Statement concerning Faith and Order was made available online in an updated format without changing the content. The new Deputy Clerk, Rev Jim Stothers, has taken over responsibility for co-ordination of the Conciliation Service, with the Rev Doug Baker and Mr Joe Campbell serving as Conciliator Supervisors.

TREVOR GRIBBEN Convener

CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

15. The Rev Tony Davidson has replaced the Rev Denis Campbell as the Presbyterian observer on the Anglican/Methodist Covenant Council. The following were appointed as the Presbyterian Representatives to the Irish Inter-Church Meeting on Thursday 27th November, 2014: The Rt Rev Dr Michael Barry, the Rev Cheryl Meban, the Rev Richard Kerr, Mr David McMillan, plus two people representing the Board of Mission in Ireland. Reports were received on the work of various inter-church bodies of which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is a member:

IRISH INTER-CHURCH MEETING

16. The Irish Inter-Church Meeting on 27th November 2014 "Mission and Evangelism" has four themed sessions as follows: Mission as pursuit of Justice; Mission as the reconciliation of Creation; Mission as Evangelism; Ecumenism as

Mission. The Presbyterian Church has six representatives over and above those already on the Irish Inter-church Committee.

IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

17. The upcoming AGM, on the theme of Human Trafficking is to take place in Belfast on 26th March 2015, led by the Salvation Army. PCI can send 20 delegates.

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES

18. The European Committee of the WCRC will meeting in Assembly Buildings in February 2015.

19. The WCRC Executive Committee meeting was held in Hannover, Germany, from 10th-18th May 2014.

The Rev Cheryl Meban writes:

20. I want to share with you recent and encouraging news of developments within the life of the Communion, including opportunities to use the gifts of your church members to assist in some crucial and practical ways to the functioning and wellbeing of our WCRC family.

21. **General Secretary:** The Executive Committee voted unanimously and with clear conviction to elect the Rev Dr Chris Ferguson as the next General Secretary of WCRC, commencing on 1st August 2014. After a thorough search and selection process, Chris was interviewed by the Executive Committee as a whole, and gave a thoroughly convincing account of his abilities, self-awareness of vulnerability, and a clear capacity to lead and unite such a diverse body with passion, conviction and sensitivity. At several points and in particular on the evening of 17th May, the Rev Dr Setri Nyomi was celebrated and thanked for his vision and leadership, humility and commitment to the unity of the Church and its witness for justice and peace in the world. Setri will continue in post until 31st August.

22. **26th General Council** will be held in Erfurt, Germany in June 2017. A planning committee has been appointed to work alongside the German Host Committee. The theme will be 'Living God, Renew and Transform us'.

23. **Theology, Communion and Mission:** The core group reported on dialogues completed (Reformed-Lutheran; Reformed-Catholic) and forthcoming (Reformed-Anglican; Reformed-Pentecostal); exploratory engagement with emerging churches, especially via African and European regions; consultations (Mission in the Frontline; Faith Confessions in the life of WCRC member churches; Communion); networking new generations of theologians (Europe; the Global Institute of Theology) and publications (Reformed World; Reformation Sunday Brochure; 2017 preparatory documents for public as well as for member churches).

24. **Partnership Fund** The Partnership Fund reported on projects from Kenya, Rwanda, Morocco, Greece, Cuba, Argentina, Philippines, Malaysia, Syria, Egypt, Uganda, Bolivia/Spain and Burma. Projects included: consultations with churches facing inter-religious violence ('Churches on the Frontline');

South American consultation on water and climate issues; capacity-building, storytelling and income generation projects of the Evangelical church amongst migrants in Morocco; addiction detox centre in Athens, Greece; a home for teenage mothers in Bolivia supported by the Spanish Evangelical Church; a Presbyterian project for pre-school education for indigenous children in Malaysia; women's health, empowerment and peacemaking programme with Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya; training in micro-finance and trauma counselling amongst women in Rwanda; theological conference in Africa, emergency support for the refugee crisis to the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon and for the Typhoon relief to the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines.

25. **Justice and partnership:** The 10th anniversary of the Accra confession/declaration is being marked with Regional celebrations of Accra, and a Global Consultation on the Accra Confession in Hannover from 2nd-6th November, 2014, to study the theological, historical, regional social political and economic impacts, contexts and challenges in the light of Accra, together with analysis of the Accra Declaration's assessment of social reality. Each region's event will connect Accra to the Strategic Plan for WCRC, and launch a Lenten Campaign Against Human Trafficking for use by churches in 2015 and beyond.

26. **Communications:** Excom welcomed our new Communications officer, Phil Tanis, whose fresh approach to gathering stories and using social media, as well as other strengths in technologies and strategising, promises to continue making progress in making WCRC's communication widespread, useful and effective.

27. **Staffing:** Excom members were impressed by the quality and attitude of the new administrative staff team in Hannover, who have given many additional hours in order to facilitate an efficient meeting. In addition, two volunteers have greatly added to the smooth-running of the excom and office administration, as well as translation and very useful local knowledge.

28. **Finances:** The situation of the finances of WCRC was critical in 2011-12, but thanks to Treasurer Johann Weusmann and the team and extra generous gifts, continues to stabilise. The new systems put in place in Hannover promise to greatly assist in the accounting and finance function of the office, and in clarity for those tasked with oversight, so that energy can be put towards WCRC's core calling of communion and justice through the Gospel, rather than to mere survival.

29. **Membership and constitution:** We welcomed two South African churches into membership, including the NHKA, which had been suspended over apartheid. This marks the significant progress gained by courageous leadership. Excom discussed formal constitutional changes to bar members of Churches which underpay from nomination to excom, but chose to prioritise the quality of relationships and the advantages of wholehearted participation in the Communion. As per the constitution, a number of churches which had not communicated with the Office since 2010 were declared inactive, and excom member churches within the regions and the General Secretary would seek to reignite contact with these members 'to express concern' for them, to 'request information for prayer', in order 'to maintain the relationship' and build the communion. The only church within Europe which has not been in contact is the Evangelical Lutheran Reformed Church of Latvia.

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES

30. The Rev Dr Donald Watts is the proxy for the Church of Scotland representative. The CEC is undergoing a period of great change, all the offices have moved to Brussels. They no longer work with commissions and they are about to reform the working groups. It is recommended that we at least have one representative on one of these groups.

LORRAINE KENNEDY-RITCHE, Convener

PANEL ON CHARITIES LEGISLATION

Mr John Hunter reports:

31. The Panel continued to work towards the preparation of a report for presentation to the 2015 General Assembly.

GRACE OF GIVING PANEL

The Very Rev Dr John Dunlop reports:

32. The Panel continued to gently drip feed the “Grace of Giving” initiative into the minds, hearts and priorities of Presbyterians using and depending upon the existing structures of the Church. It is encouraged that due to demand the Leaflet “The Grace of Giving – Be Generous Be Joyful” has been reprinted with a message from this year’s Moderator, Dr Barry. The Convener, and members of the Panel have been involved in three Presbytery conferences. The Convener has preached in some congregations and has been invited to speak at two Presbytery meetings and is willing to provide any assistance which may be useful. An animation and PowerPoint slides have been made available through the Church website and social media. Attention has been drawn to the Bible Study booklet “Seasons of Giving” available on the internet, published by “10 of those.com”.

STRUCTURES REVIEW PANEL

The Rev Trevor Gribben reports:

33. The work flowing from the Structures Review report will be carried forward by the Finance and Staffing Commission, the Nominations Committee, the Business Committee of the General Council and the Engagement and Consultations Panel. The Panel has been thanked for its services and discharged.

Review of the Alternating Ministry Scheme

34. The following were appointed as the Presbyterian representatives on the Review Panel for the Alternating Ministry Scheme with the Methodist Church: the Rev Brian Colvin, the Very Rev Dr John Lockington, the Rev Dr Keith McCrory.

Irish Churches Peace Project

35. The following were appointed to represent the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at a meeting to discuss the present project and the question of sustainability

into the future on 20th November 2014: The Clerk, the Rev Dr Donald Watts, the Rev Stephen Johnston.

Outstanding Areas of Work

36. The Board recommended the following outstanding areas of work for consideration to the General Council.

- (a) Charities Legislation Panel
- (b) Guysemere Redevelopment Panel
- (c) Commercial Use of Church House Panel
- (d) Engagement & Consultations Panel
- (e) Redundant Properties and Graveyards Panel
- (f) Grace of Giving Panel

GENERAL BOARD

CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE APPENDIX 1

Response to the OFMDFM Committee Inquiry on Together: Building a United Community – October 2014

1. As the Church and Society Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we are grateful for the opportunity to offer this relatively brief paper to the Committee, along with the offer to appear before you to expand on the points raised in this paper and on other issues in TBUC.

2. There is much in TBUC that is worthy of real commendation. In particular we note the emphasis on young people; the development of 10 shared educational campuses and the emphasis on raising the hopes and opportunities for NEETS, along with the aspiration to remove the physical barriers in interface areas over a ten year period.

3. We are also pleased with the explicit recognition in the TBUC Strategy of the huge importance of a forward looking cohesive society.

'The economic, political, cultural and social changes that have been taking place highlight that there is much for us all to be collectively proud of as a society. However, we know that this progress can only continue within the context of a united community. We cannot build a modern, well-equipped society in the absence of good relations, equality of opportunity and reconciliation. This Strategy sets out a vision for the kind of society we want to see and outlines the strategic framework that will shape action in tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance.'

4. This restatement of key aims from the Belfast Agreement in 1998 is very welcome: There it was agreed that :

'we make a fresh start in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all.'

5. As a church-based submission to your Committee we will confine ourselves at this juncture to offering comment from a macro and longer term perspective.

6. We invite the Committee to explore the implications of the Strategy NOT being implemented either in full or in part, for we sense that this might well turn out to be the case. What would the implications be for the economy of we were to remain a divided society? For political progress and development to a mature democracy? For the policing and justice systems? For communities already experiencing significant tension? For incoming communities and their ability to contribute to our future?

7. What has been happening to community cohesion, reconciliation and trust over the 17 months since the publication of TBUC has scarcely been encouraging. The Haass talks floundered, and the Executive itself has been described recently by the First Minister as not fit for purpose. These are strong signals that the aims of TBUC are being constantly eroded and set aside in favour of other considerations.

8. This erosion is being accentuated by the very poor quality of public discourse, which seems increasingly to be fractious and ill tempered. For example, in May 2014 the Belfast Telegraph reported: *Speaker William Hay has repeatedly warned MLAs against intemperate language ... He has also warned some remarks had been made which would not be allowed in any other parliamentary democracy.*

9. It is our view that aggressive public discourse mentors and encourages community tensions, by 'normalising' such language and the underlying attitudes. We therefore invite the Committee to comment in its inquiry report on the need for quality in all public debate (whether in the Assembly or on the media) as an essential contribution to the building of a reconciled and cohesive united community.

10. We also have significant concerns about the traction of the strategy at local community level since its publication in May 2013. The strategy largely focussed on the work that government departments and local councils after the RPA would undertake – and this was very welcome. However, there was minimal focus on the contribution expected from wider civic society (except in the area of sport). One of the results of that weakness is that there is minimal understanding of the strategy by the populace as a whole, and therefore little commitment or even sustained interest in it. This weakness needs to be rectified as soon as possible.

11. In this regard, we note that TBUC commits the Executive to an ambitious programme of action. This has been slow to materialise and as a church we are conscious of the frustrations of many community groups, which have been keen to contribute to the implementation of the strategy. The lack of action is undermining confidence in the initiative and implies a lack of commitment on the part of the Executive.

12. Finally, it seems inevitable that the increasing austerity will severely damage the delivery of the strategy... exemplified in this recent DEL Committee hearing:

Committee for Employment and Learning**October Monitoring Round 2014: DEL Officials - 1 October 2014**

The Chairperson:

Did you not even feel that there would have been any Executive support for bidding for the £0.5 million cut from the Together: Building a United Community budget?

Mr McMurray:

Not in the current climate of moneys available.

13. It seems beyond doubt that if the aims of TBUC are not central to the thinking, decisions and working of the Executive as austerity bites, that they will be marginalised in favour of other competing policy and departmental needs. If this happens, and that seems likely, then some of the commitments made in the Belfast Agreement will continue not to be achieved. This would be a very serious development, and the Committee might wish to comment on this in its report.

14. Finally, we would suggest that the Committee itself publishes an annual review of progress on TBUC to ensure that there is proper independent monitoring of the strategy over and above the stated ministerial oversight.

15. We reiterate our willingness to give oral evidence to the Committee if invited.

GENERAL BOARD**CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE APPENDIX 2****FREEDOM OF INDIVIDUALS IN LEADERSHIP
TO EXPRESS OPINIONS**

1. The question raised is to what extent people in leadership in the Church may express views which are contrary to the position expressed and decided by the General Assembly. This may be because the individual has strongly held convictions, or because they hold positions of responsibility in other organisations, e.g. a political party or civic organisation. It should always be made clear on whose behalf the person is speaking.

2. Clearly a leader in the Church may not express a view which is judged to be heretical. A useful “Brief statement Concerning Faith and Order” was prepared in 1974 and commended by the General Assembly for the guidance of the office-bearers and members of the Church. This outlines the areas which are considered fundamental to the Church’s teaching.

3. Accepting that report, the issue is how much freedom a leader in PCI may have on other matters on which the Church may have expressed a view. This may differ depending on the office held on the context in which the statement is made. For clarity, this paper considers the position of a teaching or ruling elder, although it may have implications for other leaders. The Code states: “Decisions of the Assembly are final and binding upon the whole Church, but a member of

the Assembly who dissents from a decision may require a statement of the fact of his dissent to be recorded in the minutes, although he shall not thereby free himself from obligation loyally to implement the decision so long as it stands unaltered". (Par 104(3))

4. What do the words "loyally to implement the decision" imply? Past practice would indicate that it has not been taken to mean an elder should not express a view which is contrary to the Church's stated position, nor would it be sensible for it to be interpreted in that way. To do so would mean that the Church's position could not be debated or changed. Some may argue that the debate should only take place in the Courts of the Church but that is surely impractical. Opinions are formed and changed through private discussion. Also, while discussions may take place in Church courts, transparency calls for positions to be explained and defended in the public sphere. That has historically been the case for PCI.

5. Perhaps some distinctions need to be made in respect of where and how the views are being expressed. If a teaching elder is giving teaching, for example in a sermon or Bible study, they should be expected at least to make clear what the teaching of the Church is on the subject under discussion. If an elder is publicly expressing an opinion it should be made clear in the context that it is a personal view, or perhaps the view of an organisation which is being represented, but not the view of the Church. Private conversations should not be a particular concern. There is a fine line between an individual's right to express a view and their responsibility to their office.

BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS

Convener: Rev CA MEBAN

Secretary: Rev WS MARRS

1. The Board of Mission Overseas met on one occasion on 15th October 2014 and this is its final report for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014.

2. The Board agreed that:

- (i) That the Convener be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Board and that Committee Conveners be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Committee they convene;
- (ii) That the Convener and Secretary be authorised to draw up the final report of the Board, for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014, for presentation to the Finance and Staffing Commission.

Steering Committee (SC)

Para 3 to 12

Main Issues: Mission personnel; Finance, Staffing & Property; Partner Church visits and visitors.

Outreach Ministries Committee (OMC)

Para 13 to 17

Main Issues: Medical mission; New initiatives in Europe; grants.

Leadership Development Committee (LDC) **Para 18 to 21**
Main Issues: Leaders in Training; grants

World Development Committee (WDC) **Para 22 to 24**
Main Issues: World Development Appeal; Moderator-supported special appeals.

Mission Involvement Committee (MIC) **Para 25 to 26**
Main Issues: Recommendations for continuation of key work

STEERING COMMITTEE (SC)

3. **Mission Personnel:** Alan and Tracey Johnston were commissioned for missionary service in Italy in Hazelbank Presbyterian Church on 8th June 2014; Steven Anderson was ordained as a missionary elder and commissioned for missionary service in Spain in Fitzroy Presbyterian Church on 15th June 2014; Calls were issued to Stephen and Laura Coulter for missionary service in Nepal with a view to them being commissioned in Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian Church on 4th January 2015.

4. **Appreciations for missionary service** were recorded in respect of the Rev Robin and Helen Quinn, missionaries to Malawi, 2004-2014; and Derek and Linda Roulston, missionaries to Kenya, 1998-2014.

5. **A Memorial Minute** was recorded and sympathies expressed in respect of Dr George Hughes, Missionary to India, 1948-1965.

6. A full list of BMO Mission Personnel, along with their spheres and category of service will be reported in the Council for Global Mission Report to the General Assembly 2015.

7. **Office Staff:** BMO is deeply grateful to its staff who, in handling a heavy workload, have carried out their work with efficiency, enthusiasm, and adaptability. On 4th July 2014, Nigel Eves retired from the post of Mission Development Officer (Overseas) after 17 years of service. Kathryn Anderson served in temporary employment as Office Secretary from 8th May to 31st December 2014. Appreciation of retiring staff and conveners will be expressed in the Council for Global Mission Report to the General Assembly 2015.

8. **Finance and Property:** The married couples' Ireland allowance (formerly furlough allowance), which is the benchmark to the setting of all other missionary allowances, was set at £23,532 for 2015, an increase of 2% on 2014.

9. **Partner Church Visits:** The following overseas visits were made:

- Raing McCullagh attended the General Assembly of the Christian Church in Sumba, 15th-22nd July 2014;
- Moderatorial and PW visit to the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Kenya, 31st October-17th November 2014;
- The Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton attended the General Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary, 10th-13th November 2014;
- The Rev John Faris and Linda Jackson attended the inauguration of the Gujarat United School of Theology Library and Computer Suite, Church of North India Gujarat Diocese, India, held on 17th November 2014.

10. Visitors from partner churches and mission organisations:

- A team from Mulanje Mission, CCAP Blantyre Synod, Malawi, 28th September-16th October 2014
- Church leaders representing CCAP Zambia Synod, Zambia, 7th-13th October 2014

11. An allocation of Block Grants to partner churches and mission agencies totalling £13,000 was agreed.

12. It was agreed that the property at 39 Mount Prospect Park be placed on the market.

OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMITTEE (OMC)

13. The Outreach Ministries Committee focus for 2014 was 'Medical Mission' culminating in a 'Go...See Medical Team' making a successful visit to Malawi in April 2014. As a follow up to this it is hoped that under the Council for Global Mission PCI's role in medical mission will be further reviewed.

14. As the spotlight falls on Church Planting and Evangelism in 2015 there have been a number of exciting new initiatives with mission personnel involved in the European context, especially in Portugal and most recently in Italy and Spain.

15. It is important that these mission personnel, often serving in isolation, are well supported as they adjust to new and challenging environments. This may mean sending small delegations and teams to provide prayerful and practical support on a more regular basis.

16. The Committee feels there is an ongoing need to publicise global outreach work, considering carefully how best to guide and encourage congregations and Presbyteries to fulfil their role of supporting PCI's mission personnel.

17. Grants totalling £16,000 to partner churches and mission agencies were agreed for 2015 and it is hoped that any review of work under the new Council for Global Mission will include an examination of grants criteria.

DAVID STEELE, Convener (OMC)

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LDC)

18. The Leadership Development Committee continues to support five Leaders in Training based in Belfast and Oxford, the most recent being the Rev Edit Moldvan from the Hungarian Reformed Church who arrived to study at Union Theological College in September 2014. The Committee encourages their involvement in the life of PCI, especially at congregational level. The awarding of scholarships is one element of a broad range of support provided. As the Committee endeavours to bring the need for supporting leadership development to the wider church, it is hoped that more project opportunities will be made available on the PCI website in the future.

19. Looking ahead, it is important that the core work of the Leadership Development Committee reflects the two-way nature of partnership. In this regard it is encouraging that Leaders in Training have become involved in reciprocal ministry within PCI, with the Rev Jorum Mugari having taken up part

time work in Seaview Congregation as New Leaf Mission Development Agent and the Rev Elsy McCrosskery addressing a conference hosted by Presbyterian Women in 2014. PCI's own church leaders can benefit greatly from taking up opportunities to visit and take sabbatical study overseas.

20. A reception for the current Leaders in Training was held on 26th November 2014 in Orangefield Presbyterian Church when Committee members and representatives from the wider church had an opportunity to hear more from the Leaders in Training about their personal and PCI's partner churches' walk with God and to pray together.

21. Grants totalling £71,000 for 2015 were agreed.

MARIE KANE, Convener (LDC)

WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (WDC)

22. As of 30th September 2014 a total of £575,000 has been paid out in connection with the 2013 World Development Appeal. £28,000 was made available to the Board of Mission Overseas for specific development projects undertaken by PCI partner churches: The Diaconia Mission of the Transylvanian Reformed Church District; and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa's Tuum Girls' Secondary School Bus Project in Kenya. Aside from a small amount used to meet travel and material production expenses related to the 2014 Appeal, the balance of funds received has been disbursed to Christian Aid and Tearfund in accordance with the usual practice.

23. £265,000 has been raised for a Moderator-Supported Special Appeal for South Sudan launched in August 2014, in recognition of the growing humanitarian crisis in South Sudan. Funds have been distributed as follows: Christian Aid: £106,000 Tearfund £106,000 and Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan £53,000.

24. The 2014 World Development Appeal, entitled "Building Hope!" was launched on Wednesday 15th October 2014 in Assembly Buildings, Belfast. The Appeal focuses on Christian Aid and Tearfund sustainable development projects in Haiti where people are still recovering following the earthquake in 2010 and Myanmar/Burma focusing on the needs of internally displaced people and disability advocacy. A more detailed update will be provided in the World Development Committee section of the Council for Global Mission Report to the General Assembly 2015.

KATHERINE P MEYER, Convener (WDC)

MISSION INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE (MIC)

25. With a view to keeping the wider church well informed about global mission, the Mission Involvement Committee reviewed its ongoing tasks and projects. It recommended that the following work be continued and developed, until such times as further discussion between the Council for Global Mission, the Global Mission Involvement Committee (Council of Congregational Life and Witness) and/or the Creative Production Department could be taken forward, as appropriate:

Prayerline, Overseas Prayer Diary (Wider World), Take 2 Bulletin, Mission Personnel monthly Bulletins, and the Mission Personnel Poster;

Board of Mission Overseas Website: As work on the integration of websites is progressed, it is important that the global mission profile remains high and useful links and resources are readily available;

Training in Global Mission: That the training programme, especially the 'Prepared to Go' and 'Serving as Senders' training events, be taken forward in conjunction with Mission Agencies Partnership;

Special Annual Projects in 2014-5: Junior BB Appeal; Youth and Children's Project; Presbyterian Women's Special Project.

26. A Celebration of Global Mission entitled 'Body and Soul' took place in Assembly Buildings on Tuesday 21st October in Assembly Buildings. At this event a mission Bible study series entitled, 'God's mission – our mission?' was launched, along with 'Guidelines for Congregational Twinning'.

MAURICE McNICHOLL Convener, (MIC)

BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Rev CHRISTOPH EBBINGHAUS

Secretary: Rev DAVID BRUCE

1. The Board of Mission in Ireland met once on 14th October 2014.
2. The Board agreed that:
 - (i) That the Convener be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Board and that the Committee Conveners be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Committee they convene.
 - (ii) That the Convener and Secretary be authorised to draw up the final report of the Board for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014, for presentation to the Finance and Staffing Commission.
3. Reports from the Assembly and Board Committees were received, and the following specific resolutions were agreed, which would normally be notified to the General Assembly in the Board's report:
 - (i) That a Home Mission call be issued to the Rev Andy Carroll and that the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster be invited to make arrangements for a Service of Induction as Minister of Donabate Presbyterian Church.
 - (ii) That in light of their retirements, Mrs Jean Gwyn Patton, Mrs Jackie O'Neill and Mrs Elizabeth Matthews be thanked for their service as Deaconess and commended to the prayers of the Church.

STRATEGY FOR MISSION COMMITTEE

4. The Committee met once, on 23rd September 2014.
5. Agreed elements of the remit of the Committee regarding strategy will devolve to the Strategy for Mission Coordination Panel and the Home Mission, Irish Mission and Deaconess Committee under the Council for Mission in Ireland (CMI).

6. Specifically, the CMI Strategy for Mission Coordination Panel will carry forward previous BMI work on:

- Urban Mission strategy;
- The Belfast Panel;
- Discussion with Presbyteries regarding Dublin, Cork and Londonderry.
- The Consultation Process review (appointed by the General Board and reporting to the General Council);
- Work with 18s-25s;
- Specific emphasis on involvement of this age-group in new emerging forms of urban mission, including planting and re-planting;
- The Review of the Alternating Ministry Scheme (reporting to the General Assembly and the Methodist Conference through the Mission Partnership Forum);
- Missional Consultancy, involving the Mission Development Officer when appointed;
- Proposals concerning partnership with the Living Waters Fellowship in Toome.

7. The Home Mission, Irish Mission and Deaconess Committee of the Council for Mission in Ireland will carry forward previous BMI work on:

- Home Mission vacancies (current)
- Tenure review in Fermoy and Cahir
- Ministry arrangements in Boyle (in conjunction with the SFMC Panel)
- Deaconess and Irish Mission Worker reviews (current and pending)

BRIAN COLVIN, Convener

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

8. The Committee met once on 16th September 2014.

9. The remit of the Committee is variously transferred to Committees and Panels of the Council for Mission in Ireland, the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and the Council for Training in Ministry. Specifically, the following areas of continuing work are identified, with the Council or Committee responsible for taking it forward:

- Revision of the Book of Public Worship. Receiving responses from Presbyteries to the General Assembly remit regarding services of ordination and the Rule of Faith under the Barrier Act, and reporting to the General Assembly. To the CCLW Worship Committee;
- The work of the Diving Healing Panel. To the CCLW;
- The work of the Worship Panel. To the CCLW Worship Committee;
- Every Day in Every Way pilot follow-up. To CCLW, CMI and CTM. The Board notes that this is flagged as a significant missional emphasis on multiple interfaces for the denomination going forward;
- Missional ministerial development. To CCLW and CTM;
- MDO's training brief. To CCLW and CTM

- Missional networks. To CCLW, and with a strong communications component through Creative Production;
- Rural Mission. To CCLW with a consultative connection with CMI Strategy for Mission Coordination Panel;
- Evangelistic visitation with fringe members. To CCLW;
- Presbyterian mission and ministry in minority situations. To CCLW, and with a reference to the Good Relations agenda.
- Presbyterian mission in the context of a changing Ireland. To CCLW, with a consultative connection with CMI Strategy for Mission Coordination Panel.

STEPHEN RICHMOND, Convener

THE CHURCH ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE

10. The Committee met three times on 26th June, 8th October and 27th November 2014.

11. A number of projects were referred to the Committee under its remit, and decisions made as appropriate.

12. The Committee will continue its work with its current membership on an *ad hoc* basis reporting to the Union Commission, pending the General Assembly appointment of a Linkage Commission in June 2015, to which a new Committee will report incorporating this and additional remits.

TOM REID, Convener

13. The Board Committees met as follows:

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Rev Emerson McDowell (Convener) reports:

14. The Committee met once on 16th September 2014

15. The work of the Communications Committee was concluded, and its continuing projects including ReachOut Magazine, transferred to the Creative Production Department.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Rev David Bruce (Acting Convener) reports:

16. The Committee met once on 24th September 2014

17. The work of the Personnel Committee was concluded. Personnel matters relating to ordained and non-ordained called positions will be carried forward by the CMI Home Mission, Irish Mission and Deaconess Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr Denis Guiler (Convener) reports:

18. The Committee met twice on 25th September and 19th November 2014

19. All current business of the Committee was completed, and continuing matters will be expedited by the Finance Panel of the Council for Mission in Ireland, as appropriate.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Mr Cyril Cavan (Convener) reports:

20. The Committee met twice on 25th September and 19th November 2014.

21. All current business of this Committee was completed, and continuing matters will be expedited by the Property Panel of the Council for Mission in Ireland, as appropriate.

BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev COLIN MEGAW

Secretary: Mr LINDSAY CONWAY, OBE

1. The Board of Social Witness met on one occasion on 14th October 2014 and this is its final report for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014.

2. The Board agreed that:

(i) That the Convener be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Board and that Committee Conveners be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Committee they convene;

(ii) That the Convener and Secretary be authorised to draw up the final report of the Board, for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014, for presentation to the Finance and Staffing Commission.

3. The routine work of the Board continued, with a particular focus on the management of the transition from Board to Council. The majority of the work was being retained within the Council for Social Witness. All of Specialist Ministries (except for the Kinghan Church); PCI Counselling; PCI Family Holiday; Disability, Health and Wellbeing are being transferred to other Councils. A number of major issues impacted on the life and witness of the Board. The uncertainty within a number of Funding Streams places considerable pressure on finances. The “Transforming Your Care” report not being implemented, the ongoing review of Prison Chaplains, the Regional Strategy for Addiction Services, the consultation on Adult Safeguarding Legislation and the issue of Welfare Reform will all result in challenges for future work.

4. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland through the work of the Board makes a considerable impact on the Social Care profile of local communities. The contribution in the provision of Residential Care, Supported Housing and Nursing Services is well established; the work with Offenders and those with Addictions respected. The acquisition of Lawnfield House in Newcastle has added to the Board’s work in the whole area of Disability and Respite Care. The Taking Care programme came of age on the Graduation of Accredited Trainers and will now have to grasp the whole issue of Adult Safeguarding. The General Assembly will receive a report from the new Council for Social Witness on how the Adult Safeguarding Bill will impact on congregations.

5. At the final meeting of the Presbyterian Board of Social Witness, the Convener, the Rev Colin Megaw, welcomed the Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Michael Barry and Mrs Esther Barry, and former Convener, the Rev Bobby Liddle. The Board took the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of its work and give thanks to Almighty God for His call to this work and for blessing us with His resources. Both the Board Secretary and Residential Services Manager took the opportunity to highlight the main achievements of the Board over the years and share some personal thoughts. The Board, reporting to the General Assembly in 1996, quoted John Stott – who writes in his book, “The Guilty Silence” – “Like evangelism, social action must stand on its own feet and in its own right, both as part of dia-kon-ia in the service of Christ and of Christians, as we are called to follow in his footsteps. The two walk together hand-in-hand. Social action is not therefore an “optional extra” for the Church of Christ; like evangelism, social action is “an integral part of the Mission of the Church.” This is as relevant today as it always was. The Board acknowledged its failure in getting its message out to congregations and Presbyteries. Those who know of the Board’s work or experience it as a user are the best ambassadors. The Board celebrated the work of Specialist Ministries and thank all Conveners and Committee Members for their tireless work in this area of Ministry. The Social Issues and Resources Committee has made a powerful impact on the life and work of the whole denomination. Publications over the years, such as the Challenging Issues series, have articulated some of the major social issues of the day – putting some of those big life-changing subjects into a Biblical context. This work will transfer to the General Council and the Council for Church in Society.

BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN’S MINISTRY

Interim Convener: Rev GRAEME KENNEDY
Acting Director: Miss BARBARA McDADE

1. The Board of Youth and Children’s Ministry met on one occasion on 14th October 2014 and this is its final report for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014.

2. The Board agreed that:

- (i) That the Convener be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Board and that Committee Conveners be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Committee they convene;
- (ii) That the Convener and Secretary be authorised to draw up the final report of the Board, for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014, for presentation to the Finance and Staffing Commission.

3. The Board of Youth and Children’s Ministry sought to provide support and resource every congregation, encouraging the church to ensure passing the faith onto the next generation was a key priority. Recognising the challenges, the Board sought to affirm our covenantal responsibilities by taking a thoughtful and biblical approach to the discipling of our children and young people.

4. The Board is grateful for the work of conveners, working group chairs and hundreds of volunteers who worked tirelessly throughout the year planning, thinking, praying and delivering so much of the Board's work.

TRAINING COMMITTEE

5. The Training Committee continued to provide high quality, regional training for those involved in youth and children's ministry, through the Children's and Youth Ministry Certificate Courses; Roadtrip; Mission Outreach Training Day; Communicator's School; and Building Blocks.

DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE

6. The Discipleship Committee sought to provide opportunities for young people and young adults to grow in their Christian faith through service in a variety of ministry contexts. Sixteen home based teams partnered with local congregations across Ireland in 2014 and one team served in Romania. The first ever Worship Camp was held in Wellington Presbyterian Church and Tech Camp made a welcome return in 2014. In September nine young adults were commissioned for service as VIP's and are on placement in local congregations across Ireland.

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

7. The Committee continued to provide relevant and helpful resources for those engaged in ministry to children and young people and was delighted to be able to launch the redesigned catechism resources in September and the 'Belong' membership course at the MAD weekend in October.

MINISTRY EVENTS COMMITTEE

8. The Ministry Events Committee of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry provided a series of events for children, young people and emerging adults in the second half of 2014. Youth Night, The Mix, The Word, MAD and Little Day Out Christmas were all well attended and helped inspire young people and leaders in their faith. The work would not have been possible without the many dedicated volunteers serving on Board working groups and giving freely of their time to make the events happen.

9. The Board wishes to extend thanks to all staff and volunteers who have served so faithfully over the years and prays that God will continue to bless the work of Youth and Children's Ministry under the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Convener: Rev JNI McNEELY
Secretary: Rev TJ STOTHERS

1. The Board of Christian Training met on one occasion on 13th October 2014 and this is its final report for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014.

2. The Board agreed that:

That the Convener be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Board and that Committee Conveners be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Committee they convene;

That the Convener and Secretary be authorised to draw up the final report of the Board, for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014, for presentation to the Finance and Staffing Commission.

MINISTERIAL STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

3. In the academic year 2014-2015 there are 48 students training for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at Union Theological College. Two further students are studying at Westminster Theological Seminary, USA and there are two students on leave from study. There are also two students training at Union Theological College for deaconess service.

4. A Review Panel of the Committee continued to look at the application and interview process with particular reference to the December Study Day, the Pre-Easter Study Day, and the Pre-Easter Interview Day. Two panels for interviewing met with applicants in December and plans are in place for an extended interview programme in March 2015.

5. Along with the Board of Mission in Ireland, the Board has organised a day conference for ministers concerning the subject of Whole-Life Discipleship for April 2015.

WJM PARKER, Convener

COMMITTEE FOR TRAINING AND RESOURCES

The Accredited Preacher Course

6. The 2014 course will be completed early in 2015 with final assessment services, 'exit interviews' and a service of accreditation. A course in Union Theological College is planned for 2015; applicants are to be interviewed and dates and trainers have been organised.

Auxiliary Ministry

7. The existing cohort of 11 trainees are due to complete their training in 2015. The Council for Training in Ministry will need to undertake further discussions with the Union Commission to clarify how Auxiliary Ministry posts are approved and applied for. It is suggested that this course be run every two years with a further course commencing in January 2016.

Handling the Word

8. This course will continue to be promoted to Presbyteries along with a central course organised in Belfast on an annual basis. Both the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and Council for Training in Ministry will be involved with the CCLW being responsible for training coordination and the CTM focusing on course content. The Training Development Officer and the Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development are to liaise on the practicalities of this arrangement.

Electing Ruling Elders

9. Approval was given to a new resource titled 'Electing Ruling Elders'. It has been made available to download from the Church's website.

Prepared to Serve

10. A reformatted 'Prepared to Serve' resource was launched in November.

New Structures

11. All matters concerning congregational life, including the training of elders and the organisation and presentation of 'Handling the Word' has been transferred to the Council for Congregational Life and Witness under the new structures. As indicated above, the content of 'Handling the Word', however, will be the responsibility of the Council for Training in Ministry.

Christian Training Development Officer

12. Due to the restructuring of the Boards Mr Tom Finnegan, Christian Training Development Officer, will be transferring to the Council for Congregational Life and Witness. The Board of Christian Training recognises the significant contribution he made to the Board and the strategic nature of his work, particularly in the development of the Accredited Preachers Course and the provision of training resources.

NJ McCULLOUGH, Convener

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**Curriculum Sub-Committee**

13. Explorations are taking place with regard to a proposed Master of Religious Studies degree programme which would support and enhance the teaching of RE in all schools in N Ireland. The programme envisaged would have 4 elements: historical, biblical, religion and society and world religions. It is hoped to consider definite proposals in 2015.

Finance, Property and Administration Sub-Committee

14. IT issues continue to cause frustration for students, staff and the Management Committee and fall short of the Memoranda of Agreement with QUB, and the demands of QAA.

15. It had been hoped that Phase 1 of the stonework restoration project would be complete by 21st November 2014 but unfortunately this timescale has

slipped. The sourcing of appropriate quantities of matching stone has proved to be a considerable challenge, while the discovery of dry rot in the timbers of the portico roof added to the problems. It is now projected that Phase 1 will be concluded in March 2015.

16. The Committee has decided to proceed with Phase 2A which consists of a reduced plan for the second phase of work and tenders have been sought for this work. The Committee continues to be hopeful that a reduced grant will be available to carry on Phase 2A.

HA DUNLOP, Convener

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING CONFERENCE

17. A Board Conference was held on 13th October 2014 in Assembly Buildings at which the main topic for discussion was the Restructuring of Training for Ministry Course. The Principal, Dr Stafford Carson, presented a paper on 5 options for a new pattern of ministerial training and these alternatives were discussed by the Board members and an opportunity for feedback was available.

18. It was decided that the Committee on Ministerial Studies and Development was to note the results of the discussion; that particular consideration was to be given by the Committee or its Review Panel to moving in the direction of delivering more training in the context of the local congregation rather than in the College; that a further option, which might be combined with the previous one, of a 'sandwich' course (e.g. 2 years in college, 1 year in a congregation, 1 year in college) be examined by the Committee or its Review Panel.

19. As a result of the conference it was also decided that consideration be given to the concept of a number of Supervising Ministers being chosen to be trained as specialist supervisors of assistant ministers and their congregations should be selected and be recognised as churches that provide quality training experiences for students.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Convener: Rev Dr CD McCLURE

Director: Rev TD GRIBBEN

1. The Board of Education met on one occasion on 14th October 2014 and this is its final report for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014.

2. The Board agreed that:

That the Convener be authorised to attest the minutes of the final meeting of the Board;

That the Convener and Secretary be authorised to draw up the final report of the Board, for the period from the 2014 General Assembly to 31st December 2014, for presentation to the Finance and Staffing Commission.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

3. There is a comprehensive review of pertinent issues in the jurisdiction.
4. Statistics indicate that economic factors may be preventing pupils taking a place at Protestant secondary school and opting instead for a local school in the Free Sector.

NORTHERN IRELAND:

Review of Public Administration

5. After many years when the focus was upon establishing ESA (Education and Skills Authority) political agreement has moved the legislative momentum towards reducing the five Education and Library Boards to a single Education Board.

Initial Teacher Training in Northern Ireland

6. Through TRC response has been made to ongoing discussions relating to the reshaping of teacher education in Northern Ireland. The *Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education in Northern Ireland* may provide some impetus to this matter.

Supporting Christians in Education and Supporting Your Local School

7. The “Back to School with God” resource continues to be used by a growing number of congregations.

INTRODUCTION

8. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland’s strategic statutory and institutional engagement must always serve to effectively complement the needs and efforts of members and congregations. As PCI endeavours to maintain Christian values at the core of our educational provision the ever-evolving remit and work of the Board will be furthered through the appropriate Councils and in continued collaboration with colleagues in both jurisdictions, particularly the Transferor Representatives’ Council (Church of Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland).

9. In recent years both jurisdictions have faced unceasing fiscal and governance challenges in education which have impacted at all levels – not least upon those tasked with running schools and providing children and young people with the highest quality of educational experience and opportunity. After years of potentially morale-sapping uncertainty and pressure there appear to be encouraging signs that progress can be made in key areas. Such progress can only be possible on the foundation previously laid. Tribute must therefore be paid to previous office-bearers and officers of this Board who have ensured the Presbyterian input has not only been sought but has also been respected and heard as having integrity and validity.

10. As well as emanating possibilities in educational administration there have recently been innovative conversations and connections around the concept of shared education. Some schemes have emerged within localised contexts. In a wider perspective there have been discussions among educational stakeholders exploring the legal and statutory implications for governance.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Abbreviations

SEC = Secondary Education Committee

DES = Department of Education and Skills

PTR = Pupil/Teacher ratio

Secondary Education Committee

11. The Secondary Education Committee (SEC) is a corporate body comprising representatives from the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Religious Society of Friends. The Committee derives its authority from a resolution passed by the sponsoring Churches in 1965.

12. The functions of the SEC are twofold. The distribution of a Block Grant provided by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) to ensure necessitous Protestant children may attend Protestant secondary schools and the representation of the interests of the member churches in the post primary education system. The Committee operates as a limited company thus allowing both the corporate body and the liability of individual members to be appropriately insured, with members of the Committee being simultaneously directors of the company.

13. The Rev Mary Hunter has represented the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on the SEC for many years and the Committee wished her well in her retirement and thanked her for her many years of valuable service.

Block Grant Scheme

14. In September the Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O'Sullivan TD, announced an increase in the Block Grant for the next two years, from €6.5m to €6.75m, it is hoped that the steady improvement in the country's finances will enable the negotiation of a more favourable Grant in two years' time rather than signing off now on a more lengthy agreement.

15. The first payment of the Block Grant for the year 2014/2015 was received on 24th September. The payment amounted to €2,176,148.00, which has now been distributed. There were a significant number of children who did not take up their grant, this was thought to be due to the present economic climate, that while parents were offered a grant, the balance between the amount received and the schools fees was too great, and consequently the children were placed in a local school in the Free Sector.

Pupil Teacher Ratio

16. The PTR remains unchanged in Budget 2015 at 23/1 for fee-charging schools and 19/1 for schools in the Free Sector. It is hoped that the PTR will

return to parity as the economy recovers. This year both Newtown School in Waterford and St Patrick's Cathedral school in Dublin joined the Free Sector.

Upcoming Legislation

17. The School Admissions Bill, an amendment to the Equality of Employment Act and the Vetting Bureau Bill are expected to pass through the DAIL in the next few months. A number of Submissions have been made on the content of this proposed Legislation from the Protestant Schools Management Bodies.

Temple Carrick School

18. The new secondary school in Greystones, under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, opened in September with 133 first year students. The admissions policy required by the Department of Education and Skills is based on seven feeder schools in Greystones and Delgany with some priority given to Church of Ireland children. This has caused some difficulty and concern as places are in great demand and Presbyterian children must enter the random selection process.

Education Conference and Evensong

19. Representatives of 23 Protestant second level schools in the Republic of Ireland gathered on 26th September to attend a Conference on 'Faith and Partnership in Second Level Schools' organised by the Church of Ireland Board of Education (RI). Minister for Education and Skills Jan O'Sullivan joined participants, who were drawn from the Church of Ireland, Methodist, Presbyterian and Society of Friends. The Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt Rev Dr Michael Barry, was accompanied by the Rev Dr Colin D McClure, Convener of the Board of Education (PCI), at both the Conference and the Service of Worship, which followed.

20. The Conference concluded with Evensong in St Patrick's Cathedral to mark the beginning of the school year. It was a delight to see more than 400 Pupils from the 23 schools joining Conference participants for the event. The President of Ireland Michael D Higgins attended the Service and Minister Jan O'Sullivan read one of the Lessons.

Junior Certificate Reform

21. Considerable work has been carried out by the Department of Education and Skills over the last few years to bring about change in the Junior Certificate – the State Examination taken by students at the end of third year in post primary school. The reform is intended to change both curriculum and the manner in which subjects are examined. The DES originally intended that the exam should move from one which is examined by the State run Examination Commission to a school based exam. However, following considerable negotiation with Teacher Unions the DES have now confirmed that the Junior Certificate will have 60% examined by the State Examinations Commission and the balance of 40% by school based examination, with random checks carried out by the State Examination Commission. Unfortunately the Teacher Unions did not agree to

the revised DES proposal and have decided to take industrial action. They held a one-day strike in December and intend to strike for a second day in January 2015. At the time of writing it is hoped that talks will bring a resolution.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Abbreviations

TRC = Transferor Representatives' Council
 DE = Department of Education (Minister John O'Dowd)
 CCEA = Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
 ESA = Education and Skills Authority
 ELB = Education and Library Board
 ETI = Education and Training Inspectorate
 CSSB = Controlled Sector Support Body
 CSSC = Controlled Schools' Support Council
 FSM = Free School Meal
 CCMS = Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
 ITE = Initial Teacher Education

Review of Public Administration

22. Reports and agendas of this Board have, over many years, provided paragraphs of speculative and often repetitive thoughts about the proposed establishment of ESA. The political consensus has now come to rest upon an alternative structure whereby the five Education and Library Boards, and their Staff Commission, will be replaced by a single Education Board. This Board will assume the powers, duties and functions of the ELBs in line with the concurrent establishment of eleven new Councils in April 2015.

23. In a letter to TRC (dated 3rd September) the Minister for Education confirmed the proposal to include the establishment of a sectoral body for Controlled Schools. This body, for which the Board has long advocated, will have a particular remit within the sector of Controlled Schools which is the sector where the TRC has direct "transferor" interest. It will be funded to:

"provide a representational and advocacy role for Controlled Schools, including advice and support in responding to consultation exercises in respect of education policies, initiatives and schemes, and in regard to relationships with DE, the Education Board and other Departments;

work with Schools within the sector to develop and maintain the collective ethos of the sector including, where appropriate, a role in identifying, encouraging and nominating governors and in ensuring ethos is part of employment considerations;

work with the Education Board to raise educational standards;
participate in the planning of schools estate, assessing current and ongoing provision within the sector, participating in area-based planning co-ordinated by DE and the Education Board (including membership of the Department's Area Planning Steering Group), and engaging, where appropriate, in strategic planning processes, including community planning; and

build co-operation and engaging with other sectors in matters of mutual interest, including promotion of tolerance and understanding."

24. The Board of Education has already invested considerable energy in the establishment of a sectoral body, not least because it provides for the first time a meaningful and resourced advocacy body for Controlled Schools in parity with other sectors. A sectoral body will also provide the vehicle to engage with crucial priorities, such as the identified underachievement within the constituency served by Controlled Schools and the proper resourcing of RE within the sector.

25. The creation of a sectoral body will be a momentous breakthrough!

Teacher Training in Northern Ireland

26. The diverse needs of Northern Ireland's schools, set within the unique societal context, are reflected in the institutions and pathways for producing suitably equipped professional educators. There have been several initiatives, reports and reviews of teacher education provision in Northern Ireland e.g. the Chilver Review (1980), the Taylor/ Usher Review (2004), the Osler Review (2005). The latest – *The Report of the International Review Panel on the Structure of Initial Teacher Education in Northern Ireland* – offers four options:

- (a) A collaborative partnership
- (b) A two-centre model with a Belfast Institute of Education
- (c) A Northern Ireland Initial Teacher Education Federation
- (d) A Northern Ireland Institute of Education

27. These options have obvious differences of character but are proposed around certain common features and have been judged in terms of four key criteria i.e. quality, efficiency continued support for the existing diversity of provision, and with regard to each option's ease of implementation. Throughout the Report there is a clear desire to ensure progress towards an outcome that has the recognised characteristics of a world-class system of teacher education and professional development. The Report has been offered as "a starting point for a constructive engagement between providers, stakeholders and politicians in Northern Ireland."

Supporting Christians in Education and Supporting Your Local School

28. The Board of Education has historically been tasked with the maintenance, enhancement and development of PCI's relationships with educational partners and stakeholders. This is reflected through the engagement and response the Board's officers make with statutory bodies, agencies and other institutional interests. However, the key partnership in education is that which is at a more local and personal level. What happens in families and in the classrooms and staff rooms of schools is of fundamental importance! In recent years the Board of Education has therefore collaborated with the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, and in partnership with Scripture Union, to resource the wider mission of congregations to schools, teachers, pupils, parents, grandparents and significant others within local communities. There are over 300,000 pupils attending schools in Northern Ireland alone – 160,000 at primary level, over 140,000 at post-primary schools and 5,000 in Special Schools. This is surely too big an opportunity for strategic influence to ignore.

29. "Back to School with God" has been a valuable tool in this pastoral and missional approach. The Board continues to commend this material for even wider use.

BOARD OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Convener: Mr JOHN HUNTER, CB

Introduction

1. The Board held one meeting between the June 2014 General Assembly and 31 December 2014 at which it received reports from its various Assembly Committees.

Pensions and Assessments Committee

2. The Board reviewed recommendations from the Committee in regard to the Ministerial Minimums, various grants, the Central Ministry Fund Bonus and Rates of Assessment. It agreed that increases of 2% and 1% should be applied to 2014 Ministerial Minimums for 2015 in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland respectively, with similar percentage increases in Prolonged Disability and Family Grants. It agreed that the CMF Bonus for 2015 should remain at £1,518. In regard to the Bonus, the Board discussed the principle that a proportion of the minister's remuneration should come from central funds (as proposed at the 2014 General Assembly) but decided to confirm its earlier conclusion, which would now be subject to the agreement of the new Support Services Committee.

3. The Board agreed the Rates of Assessment proposed by the Committee, and their apportionment across the various Funds, as set out in the Pensions and Assessments Committee's Report.

Finance, Legal and IT Committee

4. The Board received a report from the Committee, including details of an ICT Strategy Review undertaken on behalf of the Committee by PricewaterhouseCoopers. The Review contained some significant recommendations for strengthening the ICT team, improving customer relations, training and project management, which were noted by the Board. In accordance with the approvals given at the 2014 General Assembly, the resource implications were referred to the Finance and Staffing Commission for consideration and approval.

5. The Board received an update on the work of the General Board Panel and ongoing discussions with the Charity Commission for NI.

Personnel

6. The Board reviewed the accounts to 30th June 2014 of the Retired Ministers' House Fund and received an update on various personnel policies and statistics. In regard to the Annual Review of Executive and Administrative Salary Scales, the Board agreed to the proposal to match the percentage increases in the Ministerial Minimums.

Property

7. The Board noted the continuing difficulty in securing lettings in the Mall, but welcomed the steady increase in lettings of the conference and seminar rooms.

PENSIONS AND ASSESSMENTS COMMITTEE**Stipend Review - New Stipend Arrangements from 1 January 2015**

8. As agreed at 2014 General Assembly, from 1st January 2015 the basic ministerial minimum is to be increased by 1% for each year's service, up to a maximum of 20 years, instead of the current arrangement of 2.5% every five years up to 30 years. The Committee received and approved for issue to Treasurers a paper setting out details of the arrangements and highlighting issues congregations should be aware of.

Ministerial Minimum for 2015

9. The Committee reviewed the Ministerial Minimum for 2015 and agreed to recommend to the Board a 2% increase on 2014 sterling Basic Ministerial Minimum and a 1% increase in the Euro Basic Ministerial Minimum.

Approval of rates of Assessment for 2015

10. The Committee reviewed projected and budgeted income and expenditure amounts for the various assessment funds for 2014 and 2015. The impact of the new stipend arrangements on the cost of augmentation to the Central Ministry Fund is unclear. The Board's report to the General Assembly in 2014 had estimated the overall cost of the new arrangement as circa £275,000 although the extent to which this would have to be covered by congregations was not known. In preparing the Central Ministry Fund budget for 2015 provision for an additional augmentation cost of £150k was made.

11. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that the following rates of assessment, which are the same as 2014, be applied in 2015

Assessment Band	Assessable Income (£)		Assessment Rate
	From	To	
1	0	64,999	14.50%
2	65,000	129,999	10.75%
3	130,000	194,999	7.25%
4	195,000	259,999	3.50%
5	260,000	and above	0.00%

and that income collected through the assessment system should be allocated to the various assessment funds on the basis of the following budgeted income requirements for 2015

	2015
	£
Central Ministry Fund	£2,600,000
Retired Ministers Fund	£450,000
Widows of Ministers Fund	£25,000
Prolonged Disability Fund	£25,000
Incidental Fund	£750,000
Ministerial Development Fund	£50,000
Church House External Work	£370,000
Sick Supply Fund	£15,000
Students Bursary Fund	£375,000
	<hr/>
SUB-TOTAL	<u>£4,660,000</u>

12. It was also agreed to recommend to the Board that the assessment rate for the Pension Fund should remain at 27.5% of stipend.

Congregational Assessments Outstanding

13. The Committee reviewed a list of congregations who have not paid their assessments. Eleven Congregations are in arrears and the total amount outstanding is £89,481.37, the highest amount for some time. Concern was expressed that one Presbytery had now made a formal response regarding a congregation in arrears and it was agreed to refer the matter to the Union Commission.

Family Grants

14. The Committee was very grateful to the Rev David Porter who undertook to summarise the results of a survey into educational costs among those ministers who were in receipt of family grants. The results were summarised under four categories – birth to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, 16 years and over at school, and 16 years and over at University or College. Having carefully discussed and analysed the findings, the Committee agreed that no changes were required to the amounts being offered other than the 2015 rates are being increased to reflect the percentage increase in the basic ministerial minimums. The following rates are to apply for 2015:

	2015	2014
Birth to 10 yrs	£354 (€1,029)	£347 (€1,019)
11 to 15 yrs	£533 (€1,626)	£523 (€1,610)
16 yrs and over		
At school	£800 (€3,006)	£784 (€2,976)
At university	£2,661 (€5,014)	£2,609 (€4,964)
Bands (joint incomes)		
Reduction - Nil	£28,445 (€42,992)	£27,887 (€42,566)
Reduction - £1 for every £5	£38,267 (€57,827)	£37,517 (€57,254)
Reduction - £1 for every £2	£38,267 (€57,827)	£37,517 (€57,254)

Central Ministry Fund Bonus

15. The Committee agreed that the amount should remain at £1,518 for 2015.

Realisation of Investments in General Investment Fund

16. The Committee agreed that the possible realisation of investments in the Retired Ministers and Widows of Ministers Funds will need to be considered again in 2015 in light of cash reserves.

Follow up of 2014 Assembly Report on review of Bonus

17. The Committee reconsidered the proposal to incorporate part of the bonus into stipend presented to the 2014 General Assembly but on which there was a split decision.

18. The issues raised in opposition to the proposal were considered.

19. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board of Finance and Personnel that the proposal should be represented to the 2015 Assembly, but with further comment addressing the issues raised in opposition. This was subsequently approved by the Board.

Applications for Retirement

20. The Convener reported that two applications to retire at the age of 65 have been received. The Rev Donald Robert Byers, Tassagh and Cladymore on 25th October 2014, and the Rev Dr Ian Hart, Great Victoria Street on 31st October 2014.

21. Since the last meeting of the Committee two further applications for retirement have been received. The Rev Hugh Wylie Mullan, Drumreagh and Dromore on 28th February 2015, and the Rev James Henry Wilson, Royal Victoria Hospital on 31st January 2015 (aged 64).

Other business

22. The Committee, in its capacity as “scheme employers” of the PCI Pension Scheme (2009), noted concern expressed that there had been no increase to pensions in payment in respect of that part accrued during 1978 to 1997. Under the rules of the scheme this is at the discretion of the Scheme Trustees and they have not awarded an increase since around 2005.

BASIL McCORRISTON, Convener

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

23. For over 100 years the junction of Howard Street and Fisherwick Place has been dominated by the significant presence of Assembly Buildings. In that time this iconic building has served the Church well as the administrative headquarters of PCI and is recognised as such. However, Assembly Buildings is now acknowledged by a wider national and international audience as an excellent conference and meeting space venue.

24. Given the significant investment in the building in the last decade the Property Management Committee seeks to ensure that all, either working in or visiting the building, have a quality user experience.

25. As a working environment the Committee seeks to ensure that Assembly Buildings is very much fit for purpose. Thankfully maintenance issues are minimal given the significant investment over the last few years. However, planned maintenance is much better than reactive maintenance and so the Committee keeps a close eye on the external and internal fabric of the building.

26. Secondly the Committee believes the visitor experience has significantly improved. Whether a member of the wider PCI family, member of the general public or a conference or event user, the user experience is very positive. Assembly Buildings recently hosted the UKNOF computer conference which came to Belfast for the first time. In choosing Assembly Buildings UKNOF recognised that out of all the possible venues in the city Assembly Buildings had the best Wi-Fi network to accommodate all the necessary technical hardware in a quality and historic setting.

27. However to maintain this level of improvement the Committee does have to generate an income stream and as always that is consistently challenging for the Property Management Committee. The two main sources of income are retail units and offices in Spires Mall and Fisherwick Buildings and secondly conferencing and meeting space hire.

Retail and Office Lettings

28. A sub-group of PMC meet every 4-6 weeks to consider the ongoing issues. While there is a reasonable degree of occupancy in the Mall – retail continues to be on a knife edge. It is the era of longer rent free periods on taking occupancy and intensive management to maintain rental income. As Landlords the Committee seek to be understanding and supportive of the difficult retail climate and try to manage expectations that are unrealistic in the light of rent paid. Thankfully the office accommodation in Fisherwick Buildings is currently let.

Conferencing and Meeting Space Hire

29. The Committee is encouraged by the level of business generated in 2014 and the range and quality of events/meetings hosted. It is delighted to confirm that while the facilities accommodate business, charity and local government business, it also continues to facilitate local Christian events such as M14 and the Irish Women's Convention. The Committee also launched a new brochure and continued with the services of Azure Europe as its marketing consultants.

30. The Committee Convener would like to thank the members of the Committee for their collective expertise and wise judgement over the years of service. A special word of thanks to the Board Convener Mr John Hunter, Committee Secretary, Mr Jonathan Kelly and Buildings Manager, Mr Harry Orr.

ADRIAN McLERNON, Convener

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

31. The Committee met on one occasion.

32. An excellent and professional Human Resources service continues to be provided by the team headed by Ms Laura Kelly, Head of Personnel, and thanks are due to all of them particularly given the added pressures associated with servicing the restructuring process and current staff shortages.

33. Thanks are also due to Mr Ian McElhinny for the sterling work carried out to further the work of the Retired Ministers' House Fund.

Personnel Matters

34. Work on the completion of the Job Evaluation Scheme has continued. Clerical and Administrative Posts have been completed and reviewed. Executive Posts were completed in the context of the organisational review of structures. New arrangements for the regular review of posts have been agreed together with arrangements for the conduct of appeals relating to evaluations.

35. Work on policy development continues to reflect best practice and legislative requirements.

HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

36. The Health and Safety Panel continues to offer encouragement to congregations in this important area and issued a check list for congregations to use when running events on church property. Free carbon monoxide detectors were made available to congregations on production of a gas safety certificate.

RETIRED MINISTERS' HOUSE FUND

37. The Committee continues to oversee the property portfolio and arrangements for assistance through loans or letting of available property. New guidelines relating to equity sharing arrangements have been approved together with criteria to be applied in considering applications for loans.

38. It was agreed to increase rental charges to 2.5% of valuation in line with the Co-ownership Housing Scheme. This rate will be kept under review.

39. The land in Cullybackey continues to be held and routine maintenance carried out as necessary, awaiting sale in better market conditions. Planning Approval on part of the site was renewed up to the end of 2018 and agreement was given to allow a Housing Association to register an interest in acquiring part of the site. The remaining land is let to a local farmer for agricultural purposes.

ROBERT J CAMPTON, Convener

FINANCE, LEGAL AND IT COMMITTEE

40. The Finance, Legal and IT Committee considered the following matters at its meeting on 22nd September 2014:

Pension Auto Enrolment Scheme

41. The Committee noted that 158 people have now been auto-enrolled into the scheme with around 20-25 having opted out. Contributions now indicate that the annual cost to the church will be around £105-110k per annum. The employer contribution rate is 6% with employees contributing 4%.

Support services accounts

42. The Committee reviewed the accounts to August 2014 and noted some adverse variations from budget. This was however mainly due to costs reallocations rather than additional expenditure.

Report on Audit for year ended 31st December 2013

43. No significant issues had been highlighted following the audit of the 2013 accounts and the auditors have been complimentary regarding some changes to the presentation of the accounts. It was noted that the audit had not been tendered for some time and that this may be something that could be considered by the successor Committee under the new structures in 2015.

The Charities (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 and Charities Act 2009(ROI)

44. The Committee received a report on the work of the General Board Panel set up to deal with the introduction of the new legislation as it refers to the various bodies of the church.

Bank Deposits and Overdrafts

45. The Committee reviewed details of deposit account holdings and noted that deposits were with Danske Bank, Santander, Barclays and Bank of Scotland for varying terms and rates.

46. It was agreed that, although interest rates remain low, (0.28%-1.1%) the deposits should still be spread in several accounts, as per the current policy.

47. The Committee noted that Danske Bank have closed branches of National Irish Bank, making it necessary to set up an ROI account with a different bank, though interim arrangements are in place.

National Insurance Employment Allowance

48. From April 2014, every business and charity is entitled to an annual “employment allowance” of up to £2,000 to reduce their liability for Class 1 secondary National Insurance Contributions (NICs). Clearance has been sought from the HMRC as to whether this could apply on individual congregational level. A generic response was received in July, but no response has been received to a follow-up letter sent to HMRC, in early September.

IT Progress Report

49. An IT review had been carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). The main findings of the review included that there is a need to:

- increase the IT staff resources, with a current over-reliance on the IT manager;
- outsource some services and application developments;
- improve communications with user groups;
- improve documentation of systems and procedures;
- improve project planning and delivery;
- urgently provide for a hardware refresh of network storage devices.

50. The Committee noted that there were urgent technical issues relating to antivirus software replacement and server upgrades that needed to be dealt with at an early date. The Committee authorised suitable contingency arrangement to assist with implementation if necessary.

Legal

51. The Committee noted that some subject access requests under Data Protection legislation had been received and, though responded to, may need to be kept under review.

ROBERT McCULLAGH, Convener

UNITED APPEAL BOARD

Convener: Rev RIA ALLELY

Secretary: THE CLERK

1. Since the General Assembly 60 ministers were contacted regarding the poor performance of their congregations (most of which had given less than 60% of their Targets). A number of replies were received, contributing the reason as: (a) the present financial climate, (b) on-going property commitments, (c) declining numbers and consequently givings, and (d) the excessive number of administrative staff in the Assembly Buildings!

2. 30 ministers were commended on the performance of their congregations – some doubling their Targets. One reply was received – thanking the Board for the word of encouragement.

3. The Briefing continues to receive mixed comments – some thought it too long, others not long enough and generally the animated video was very well received.

**RESOLUTIONS OF FINANCE AND STAFFING
COMMISSION**

1. That the Finance and Staffing Commission be continued for one further year to make any decisions and carry out any tasks necessary to facilitate the ongoing implementation of restructuring.

2. That the Finance and Staffing Commission oversee the process of presenting to the Assembly all necessary further amendments to the Code in the light of restructuring; that in the interim all references in the Code to former Boards and Committees be deemed to refer to their successor bodies, as agreed by the General Assembly; and that the Clerk be authorised to interpret this as required.

3. That the Report of the Finance and Staffing Commission be received.

NECESSARY OVERTURES RELATING TO RESTRUCTURING

A. OVERTURE ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 128 of the Code (in a slightly amended form in 128(1)(c) changing nine to ten)

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

128.(1) **The Linkage Commission** shall consist of:

- (a) The Moderator, and Clerk of the General Assembly; Commission Convener and Secretary; the Deputy Clerk; three representatives of the Council for Mission in Ireland; Conveners of the Commission Panels.
- (b) One direct nominee from each Presbytery.
- (c) Ten nominees of the Nominations Committee.

(2) Ten members shall form a quorum for the Commission.

(3)(a) The Commission shall have Assembly powers to determine conditions under which congregations shall be linked, vacant pastorates filled or supplied, associate pastorates established, special ministries provided, auxiliary ministry posts established, additional pastoral personnel posts authorised and to deal with such other matters as the Assembly may from time to time refer to it. The law of the Church shall apply where relevant to associate ministers where ministers of congregations are referred to but the associate minister shall have no entitlement as such to benefits for the minister in active service.

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

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

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

- (a) whether the case is one for continuance, linkage, dissolution, porting or other special provisions as may be appropriate, including dissolution of existing linkages for alternative arrangements;
- (b) what minimum of stipend, Central Ministry Fund contributions, ministerial expenses and other sums shall be paid from local sources or what grants shall be made from central funds;
- (c) what other special terms should be set or arrangements made for leave to call, pulpit supply or pastoral oversight;
- (d) to what Presbytery a newly linked or ported congregation shall belong.

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

- (a) upon report from Presbytery or a request from the congregation, to examine the matter and act accordingly;
- (b) to arrange the retirement from active duty or alternative employment of a minister, upon such terms as may be agreed, to facilitate linkage with a vacant congregation;

- (c) where a minister in active duty proposes to undertake additionally a paid public appointment, to examine the proposal and act accordingly so that his duties to the Church shall be discharged and no improper demand made upon the manpower and resources of the Church.
- (7) In congregations and Charges served by ministers under the Home Mission, ordained assistants or other agents of the Church, the Commission shall have power to –
 - (a) determine the remuneration of those so serving and allocate the cost among the various funds of the Church;
 - (b) determine the contributions to be made by the congregations or charges to various funds of the Church in respect of services received.
- (8) The Commission shall consider church architecture issues and provide for the examination of all plans and proposals for the building, alterations, renovation or demolition of all or part of Churches, Church halls and manses, as well as all proposals and designs for memorials, windows and artificial lighting, and for the seating and furnishings requisite for the conduct of public worship, observing rules agreed by the General Assembly from time to time.

B. OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

SECTION 1 – Relating to the General Council, Linkage Commission and Council for Congregational Life and Witness

Anent Par 272(6)(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that paragraph 272 (6)(d) of the Code be deleted and the subsequent paragraphs renumbered accordingly.

Anent Par 272(7) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that paragraph 272 (7) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(7) The Council itself, or through its appropriate Committee, is authorised to submit nominations for the offices of Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Theological Professors and College Principal.

Anent Par 272 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in paragraph 272 of the Code the following be added:

- (10) The Council, directly or through its appropriate committee, shall:
 - (a) be responsible for the management of all personnel employed by the General Assembly or under the control of the Assembly whether in Assembly Buildings or in other related appointments, including the approval of all contracts of employment and amendments thereto. (In the appointment of the Financial Secretary, the Council, while retaining the power of appointment shall consult with the Trustees to permit the person to be also appointed Secretary to the Trustees).

- (b) ensure that all Councils and officials provide all information necessary for the review of staff matters.
 - (c) ensure that Councils and officials and all staff adhere to any regulations introduced by or with the authority of the Council for the welfare or the general efficiency of the staff or the property of the Church.
- (11) It shall be the duty of the Council, directly or through its appropriate committee, to:
- (a) oversee the finances of the church, including the regulation of the systems for the control of all assets and funds of the Church, except those which are the responsibility of individual congregations or the Assembly Trustees.
 - (b) prepare and present the annual accounts to the Assembly and nominate auditors for appointment by the Assembly.
 - (c) ensure that Councils and officials follow guidelines approved by the Council for the receipt, recording, retention, and payment of monies, and that they provide financial and other information as and when the Council shall require.
 - (d) require Councils and officials to obtain the prior approval of the Council before adopting any policy or change of policy affecting the legal status of the Church, a Council, or an official of the Church.
 - (e) require Councils and officials to take all steps considered necessary by the Council, for the protection of the assets of the Church against all classes of risk.
- (12) The Council shall, directly or through its appropriate committee, superintend the administration of the Assembly's Incidental Fund, as directed by the Assembly:
- (a) for the payment of travelling expenses, postage, printing and administrative costs in connection with the work of the General Assembly or any of its Councils and Committees.
 - (b) for the payment of any other grants or expenses as approved by the General Assembly.
 - (c) to obtain the necessary funds by means of an annual assessment levied on congregations, at a rate which shall be fixed by the Assembly annually.
 - (d) but shall not be normally chargeable with the expenses of any committee for which the Assembly has made other provisions, as through the United Appeal; nor of members of commissions, councils and committees other than conveners or secretaries, unless by special direction of the Assembly; nor of deputations beyond the limits of the British Isles without the directions of the Assembly or decision of the Council itself.
- (13) The Council shall, directly or through its appropriate committee, be responsible for the regular compilation and publication of Church Statistics as follows:
- (a) it shall prepare and issue annually a query sheet to congregations to ascertain their numerical strength and financial condition together with any additional matters which it may decide. It is the responsibility of each Moderator, or interim Moderator, of Kirk Session, to ensure that

all questions are answered and that the query sheets are submitted to Presbytery in time for examination and certification at their stated meeting in March, after which they shall be forwarded to the Council without delay.

- (b) the information thus obtained shall be tabulated and subsequently published by the authority of the Assembly as a supplement to its annual Minutes.

(14) The Council shall, directly or through its appropriate committee, superintend the management of the Assembly Buildings (including the Assembly Hall) and the Fisherwick Buildings, caring for the fabric, effecting necessary repairs and improvements, arranging lettings of the various halls, rooms, and buildings and maintaining the order and cleanliness of the entire property and be responsible for all matters of health and safety within the buildings.

(15) The Council shall, directly or through its appropriate committee:

- (a) administer The Central Ministry Fund (see Pars 313ff)
- (b) administer The Retired Ministers Fund (see Pars 321ff)
- (c) administer The Widows of Ministers Fund (see Pars 324ff)
- (d) administer The Prolonged Disability Fund
- (e) administer The Retired Ministers' House Fund (see Pars 319ff)
- (f) appoint a committee to consider and report to the Assembly the cases of all ministers applying for special leave to retire from active duty. The committee shall have the right to issue a schedule of queries to be answered by the applicant.

(16) The Council shall, directly or through its appropriate committee, administer The Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009) Fund (see Pars 318(A)ff) and shall act as scheme employers for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009) or its successors.

(17) The Council shall have the authority to deal with urgent matters of financial administration, outside the other powers of the Council, which may arise between meetings of the General Assembly.

(18) The Council, directly or through its appropriate committee, shall prepare the annual United Appeal for mission as follows:

- (a) the accounts of the previous year or an estimate thereof, together with the revised budget for the current year and the budget for the succeeding financial year, shall be submitted to the Council on behalf of the relevant Councils and Committees by the date notified by the Council each year. The Council may also request that longer term projections be prepared where appropriate.
- (b) the Council shall satisfy itself, where necessary by interview with the conveners and others concerned, that the amounts so estimated are justified taking into account the General Assembly's guidelines on Priorities and shall have power to increase or reduce them;
- (c) on the basis of the budgets submitted and approved, the Council shall prepare a United Appeal for the following financial year, for submission to the General Assembly in June of the current year.
- (d) in so doing the Council shall endeavour to secure stability in the finances of organisations of the Church and may accordingly provide for a surplus which shall not exceed five per cent of the total Appeal;

- (e) the Council shall also submit to the Assembly proposals for allocation between the Presbyteries of such proportion of the Appeal as shall appear to the Council to be equitable.
- (19) In preparing the annual United Appeal for mission, the Council, directly or through its appropriate committee, shall carry out its work recognising that:
- (a) Except for ex-officio membership, no convener or secretary of a Council or Committee of the General Assembly whose work is supported by the United Appeal shall be eligible for membership of any committee involved in drawing up the annual appeal and shall not be present for consideration of the annual appeal at the Council itself.
 - (b) The General Assembly alone shall have power to include in, or exclude from, the United Appeal any mission, fund, or scheme of the Church, or of Funds or Societies recognised to be organisations of the Church. Such inclusion or exclusion shall normally follow notice of motion received and entered on the books at the Assembly twelve months previously. No mission, scheme or fund whose work is supported by direct assessment shall normally be included.
- (20) After adoption by the Assembly of the United Appeal for mission, with or without amendment:
- (a) it shall become the responsibility of each Presbytery to distribute its proportion of the Appeal equitably among the congregations under its jurisdiction;
 - (b) any congregation believing the amount allocated to it to be excessive may appeal to Presbytery;
 - (c) when a congregation raises a sum in excess of its allocation it may distribute the excess among the funds of the Church included in the Appeal in such proportion as it thinks fit;
 - (d) congregations shall endeavour to transmit all United Appeal contributions received, as soon as practicable to the Church's Financial Secretary and the total amount, in any case, before the 31st December following;
 - (e) in the event of the United Appeal not being fully contributed in any year the Council, or its appropriate committee, shall determine the extent to which each Council or Committee due to benefit shall receive funds for its work less than the amounts adopted by the Assembly;
 - (f) in the event of an emergency arising which necessitates a special appeal to congregations, the Council, directly or through its appropriate committee, may grant permission for such an appeal to be made and state the conditions upon which it is to be made, but without such permission no special appeal shall be launched by any Council or committee participating in the United Appeal.
- (21) The General Council shall act as charity trustees for the Assembly.

Anent Pars 286 & 287 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that paragraphs 286 and 287 of the Code be deleted.

Anent Par 273 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in paragraph 273 of the Code the phrase “Union Commission” be deleted and the phrase “Linkage Commission” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 276(1)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in paragraph 276(1)(b) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(b) Two direct nominees from each Presbytery, one of whom may be from outside the membership of the Presbytery;

SECTION 2 – Relating to financial matters**Anent Par 235(3)**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 235(3) of the Code, the words “Board of Finance and Personnel” be deleted and the words “General Council” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 236(1)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 236(1) of the Code, the words “Board of Ministry and Pensions” be deleted and the words “General Council” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 236(2)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 236(2) of the Code, the words “Union Commission” be deleted and the words “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 237(a) and (b)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 237(a) and (b) of the Code, the words “Union Commission” be deleted and the words “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 238(3)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 238(3) of the Code, the words “Union Commission” be deleted and the words “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 311(3)-(6)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Pars 311(3)-(6) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in their place:

(3) The administration of the Fund (including the administration of the Church’s Commutation, Sustentation and Augmentation Funds, together with any other special Funds or Trusts, accrued to, or which may fall within the objects of the Central Ministry Fund) shall be supervised by the Assembly’s General Council, directly or through its appropriate committee.

- (4) This Council shall also be responsible for the administration of:-
- (a) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009) (in these Rules referred to as the '2009 Pension Scheme');
 - (b) contributions to be made in respect of Ministers' National Insurance;
 - (c) arrangements for the payment centrally of ministers' salaries throughout the congregations of the Church;
- (5) The Treasurer of the Fund shall be the General Assembly's Financial Secretary;

Anent Pars 312(2)-(3)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 312(2)-(3) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in their place:

(2) If any dispute shall arise as to the interpretation of any of the Rules of the Fund, this shall be determined by the Support Services Committee of the General Council; and its decision shall be binding, subject only to review by the General Council and the next Assembly.

(3) No change in financial assessments for the support of the Fund, and no memorial making any pecuniary claim upon the Fund, shall be decided by the Assembly until a report thereon has been received from the administering Council or Committee.

Anent Par 313

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 313 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

313.(1) The Fund shall be made up of quarterly contributions assessed on congregations together with bequests, donations and endowment income received for the objects of the Fund.

(2) Each congregation of the Church shall pay a contribution to the Fund assessed on a basis and at rates determined annually by the General Assembly on the advice of the General Council, or as fixed by the Linkage Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy. The General Council may apply provisional rates of assessment from the first quarter of each year.

(3) Moneys received by the Fund shall also include:

- (a) Income from investments and trust funds, including the Commutation, Sustentation and Augmentation Funds; and other income to which the Central Ministry Fund is, or may become, entitled;
- (b) All donations or bequests for the benefit of the objects of the Fund, which shall, where so directed by the donor or testator, be permanently invested by the Trustees and the income paid to the Fund.

Anent Par 314

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 314 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

314. It shall be the duty of the General Council each year, directly or through its appropriate committee, on the recommendation of the Finance Panel made in the light of moneys available in the Fund or reasonably to be expected, to set a Basic Ministerial Income for ministers of the Church in active duty in congregations.

Anent Pars 315(2)&(4)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 315(2) & (4) of the Code, the word “Board” be deleted and the word “Council” substituted in its place, and that in Par 315(4) of the Code the word “Board’s” be deleted and the word “Council’s” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 315(5)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 315(5) of the Code, the words “Union Commission” be deleted and the words “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 316(1)(b)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 316(1)(b) of the Code, the words “the Minister’s Pension Scheme” be deleted and the words “the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme” substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 316(1)(c) & (2)(a)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 316(1)(c) & (2)(a) of the Code, the words “Union Commission” be deleted and the word “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 316(3)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 316(3) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(3) Where it may appear that exceptional circumstances have arisen or exceptional hardships have been created, either the minister or the congregation may, with the approval of Presbytery, memorialise the General Council. The Council, through its appropriate committee, shall have power, subject to review by the General Council itself and the Assembly, to diminish the assessments due during the current financial year, or to make such other change as appears desirable in the circumstances of the case. In all such cases the action taken shall be fully reported to the Linkage Commission and the Assembly.

Anent Par 317

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 317 of the Code, the word “Board” be deleted and the word “Council” substituted in its place.

Anent Pars 318(2)-(4)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Pars 318(2)-(4) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in their place:

(2) If there is any failure to make the foregoing returns or notifications or any failure to transmit any portion of the quarterly moneys which may be due, either from a congregation or a minister:-

- (a) the Financial Secretary shall immediately refer the case to Presbytery, which shall be under obligation to take such action as it may deem necessary to ensure that the information is supplied or moneys paid up without delay;

- (b) if the Presbytery fails to ensure that the information is supplied or moneys paid without delay, the Presbytery and/or the General Council, directly or through its appropriate committee, shall refer the matter to the Linkage Commission which shall investigate and take whatever action it may deem necessary. This referral shall take place no later than following the third failure within any three year period to transmit any portion of the quarterly moneys which may be due.
- (3) The Linkage Commission shall have the power, in the foregoing circumstances:
 - (a) to instruct the General Council, or its appropriate committee, to reduce the assessments payable by the congregation in the current financial year;
 - (b) to make any appropriate arrangement for future ministry in the congregation;
 - (c) to instruct the Presbytery, under Linkage Commission guidelines, to loose the minister from the charge and declare the congregation vacant, prior to a reconfiguration of ministry;
 - (d) to make appropriate arrangements for the minister. In so acting, the Linkage Commission shall have power to fix a retiring allowance, according to the rules for the time being of the General Assembly, or to fix an allowance for a temporary period.
- (4) The Linkage Commission shall not give leave to call to any vacant congregation, or linkage, which remains in default to the Central Ministry Fund or other funds of the Church.

Anent Par 318(A)(2)(b)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 318(A)(2)(b) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (b) The administration of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009) shall be supervised by the Assembly's General Council, directly or through its appropriate Committee.

Anent Par 318(B)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 318(B) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

318(B)(1) The Fund shall be made up of quarterly contributions assessed on congregations together with bequests, donations and endowment income received for the objects of the Fund.

(2) Each congregation of the Church shall pay a contribution to the Fund assessed on a basis and at rates determined annually by the General Assembly on the advice of the General Council, or as fixed by the Linkage Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy. The General Council may apply provisional rates of assessment from the first quarter of each year.

(3) If any congregation shall be in default of the contribution to the Fund for which it has been assessed according to the Rules:

- (a)(i) The Financial Secretary shall report the default to Presbytery; and
- (ii) The Presbytery concerned shall be under obligation to take such action as it may deem necessary to ensure that the contribution is paid up without delay.

- (b) No leave to call shall be given by the Linkage Commission to a vacant congregation which remains in default to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009).

Anent Par 318(C)(1)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 318(C) (1) of the Code, the word “Board” be deleted and the words “Council, directly or through its appropriate committee” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 319(3)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 319(3) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(3) The administration of the Fund shall be supervised by the Assembly’s General Council, directly or through its appropriate committee.

Anent Par 320

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 320 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

320.(1) The Fund shall be made up of quarterly contributions assessed on congregations together with bequests, donations and endowment income received for the objects of the Fund.

(2) Each congregation of the Church shall pay a contribution to the Fund assessed on a basis and at rates determined annually by the General Assembly on the advice of the General Council, or as fixed by the Linkage Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy. The General Council may apply provisional rates of assessment from the first quarter of each year.

(3) If and when the Fund shall be no longer required to complement pensions accruing under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009), any remaining assets shall be transferred to assist with contributions towards the retirement pensions provided by that Scheme.

Anent Par 321(1)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 321(1) of the Code, the words “Pensions and Assessments Committee of the Board of Finance and Personnel” be deleted and the words “General Council, directly or through its appropriate committee” substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 321(5)-(7)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 321(5)-(7) of the Code, the word “Board” be deleted and the word “Council” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 322(2)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 322(2) of the Code, the words “Union Commission” be deleted and the words “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 323(1)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 323(1) of the Code, the word “Board” be deleted and the word “Council” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 324(3)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 324(3) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(3) The administration of the Fund shall be supervised by the Assembly’s General Council, directly or through its appropriate committee.

Anent Par 325

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 325 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

325.(1) The Fund shall be made up of quarterly contributions assessed on congregations, together with bequests, donations and endowments income received for the objects of the Fund.

(2) Each congregation of the Church shall pay a contribution to the Fund assessed on a basis and at rates determined annually by the General Assembly on the advice of the General Council, or as fixed by the Linkage Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy. The General Council may apply provisional rates of assessment from the first quarter of each year.

(3) If and when the Fund shall no longer be required to complement pensions accruing under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme, any remaining assets shall be transferred to assist with contributions towards the widows’ pensions provided by that Scheme.

Anent Pars 326(1)(d), (2) and (3)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 326(1) (d), (2) and (3) of the Code, the word “Board” be deleted and the word “Council” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 327(2)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 327(2) of the Code, the words “Union Commission” be deleted and the words “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 328(1)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 328(1) of the Code, the word “Board” be deleted and the word “Council” substituted in its place.

SECTION 3 – Relating to the Basic Code**Anent Par 23 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact Par 23 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

23.(1) Any Church court may appoint a commission or committee, the latter being sometimes called a council, for such purposes as the court may determine, or may resolve itself into a committee of the whole court.

(2) In every case the commission, committee or council shall report to the court.

(3) Nothing in sub-paragraph (2) shall operate to prejudice any powers conferred on commissions of the Assembly under paragraphs 126-128.

Anent Par 24 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 24 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

24. Rules may make such provision as the Assembly shall think proper for the holding and functioning of Church courts, including provisions for -

- (a) the appointment, powers and duties of commissions, committees, councils or members or officers of such courts and the fixing of a quorum for, or the appointment of an assessor to, any such court, commission, committee or council;
- (b) the practice and procedure to be followed in or in connection with proceedings before such courts, commissions, committees or councils, or on appeals or references arising therefrom; or
- (c) the records to be kept and reports to be made by such courts, commissions, committees or councils.

Anent Par 61(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 61(c) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (c) chaplains to the Forces, ordained ministers and elders serving under the Council for Global Mission and other ministers serving under any Assembly Council in special work outside Ireland, who have been installed or inducted to their charge by Presbytery or have retired from active duty with the consent of the Assembly;

Anent Par 74 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 74 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

74. The Presbytery shall -

- (a) inquire into and deal with reports affecting the character, usefulness or soundness in the faith of ministers in its congregations or in special work under the jurisdiction of the Assembly, and into the character and soundness in the faith of ministers retired or without charge or in work not under the jurisdiction of the Assembly, of deaconesses and auxiliary ministers, and of licentiates and students under its care. In the general case of ministers in special work or of students, the Presbytery shall invite four representatives of the appropriate Assembly Council to sit with them as assessors in the case, who shall for this purpose have the full powers of members of the court. In the special case of theological professors this procedure shall be followed if the College

Management Committee, following preliminary investigation, requests the Presbytery to act;

- (b) receive formal charges or complaints against ministers, licentiates, ruling elders, deaconesses or auxiliary ministers, summon witnesses and take evidence in cases of complaint or charge, and pronounce and publish judgment, in accordance with the disciplinary procedures of the Church.

Anent Par 78(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 78(b) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (b) co-operate with the Council for Training in Ministry in supervising the life and conduct of the students under its care. Where the character or work of a student is considered unsatisfactory, the Presbytery may proceed as in paragraph 74 or, if it deem it advisable, delegate its authority to the Council for Training in Ministry.

Anent Par 97(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 97(c) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (c) chaplains to the Forces, ordained ministers and elders serving under the Council for Global Mission and other ministers serving under any Assembly Council in special work overseas, or retired from active duty with the consent of the Assembly;

Anent Par 97(h)(ii)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 97(h)(ii) of the Code, the word “Boards” be deleted and the word “Councils” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 97(j) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 97(j) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (j) such elders as are direct nominees from Presbyteries or nominees of the Nominations Committee to Commissions of the Assembly, or whose membership is desirable in the interest of Assembly, and who are not otherwise members of the Assembly;

Anent Par 109(c)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 109(c) of the Code, the word “board” be deleted and the word “council” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 109(d)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 109(d) of the Code, the word “boards” be deleted and the word “councils” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 113(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 113(4) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(4) The administration of the Church's missions and agencies shall be entrusted to commissions, councils, committees, and conveners or secretaries appointed by the Assembly.

Anent Par 114(1)(c)

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

Anent Par 114(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 114(2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(2) Presbyterian Women, under the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and in association with the Council for Mission in Ireland, shall -

Anent Par 114(3)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 114(3) of the Code, the words "Board of Mission in Ireland" be deleted and the words "Council for Mission in Ireland" substituted in their place.

Anent Par 115(1)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 115(1) of the Code, the words "Board of Mission Overseas" be deleted and the words "Council for Global Mission" substituted in their place.

Anent Par 115(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 115(2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(2) Presbyterian Women, under the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and in association the Council for Global Mission, shall seek to further the work of the Church, especially amongst women and children, wherever the Overseas Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is at work and in such other places as the General Assembly may from time to time determine.

Anent Par 126(4)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 126(4) of the Code, the word "board" be deleted and the word "council" substituted in its place.

Anent Par 127(1)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 127(1) of the Code, the words "Business Board" be deleted and the words "Nominations Committee" substituted in their place.

Anent Par 127(2)(b)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 127(2)(b) of the Code, the words “Business Board” be deleted and the words “Nominations Committee” substituted in their place.

SECTION 4 – Relating to the general changes**Anent Par 252(1)**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 252(1) of the Code, the word “board” be deleted and the word “council” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 253

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 253 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

253(1) Minutes of proceedings at each meeting shall be presented at the close of the meeting or at a subsequent meeting, either by being read or, preferably, by being circulated to members, to be corrected if found to be inaccurate and confirmed -

- (a) either by the signature of the person presiding at the time of their confirmation, or
- (b) in the case of the General Assembly by the attestation of the Clerk after the close of the Assembly.

(2) In correcting minutes before confirmation, no alteration shall be made in any resolution which was passed or rejected by a court or committee.

(3) No change shall be made in the minutes of an inferior court or committee after their confirmation without the direction of a superior court or supervising council; and such change shall be effected by the Clerk of the superior court or Convener of the supervising council, or as such court or council may direct.

(4) Official extracts from the minutes of proceedings, under the hand of the Clerk, shall not be given, except to a superior court or supervising council, without the leave of the court or committee concerned, or of their Moderator and Clerk or Chairman and Convener as the case may be. Such extracts shall be accepted as authoritative evidence.

Anent Par 254

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 254 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

254.(1) The custody of minute books shall be the responsibility of the Clerk, Convener or Secretary involved, while remaining the property of the Church body concerned which may require them of him at any time. It shall be his duty to ensure their preservation and prompt transfer to successors in office.

(2) Upon the dissolution of any Church court, commission, council or committee, the minute book shall become the responsibility of the superior court or supervising council, to be disposed of only at the direction of such court or council.

(3) No minute book or records of historic significance shall be disposed of without prior consultation with and advice from the Clerk of Assembly.

(4) All minute books of Presbyteries or Assembly commissions or councils no longer required for the business of the body concerned shall be lodged with the Clerk of Assembly for safe custody and preservation.

Anent title to CHAPTER XVI- SECTION III – PRESBYTERIES AND SYNODS

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in the title to Section III – Presbyteries and Synods the words “and Synods” be deleted.

Anent Par 261(1)(e)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 261(1)(e) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(e) The names of persons currently serving as direct nominations to various Assembly commissions and councils.

Anent title to CHAPTER XVI – SECTION IV - RECORDS AND REPORTS

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in the title to Chapter XVI – Section IV - Records and Reports the word “BOARDS” be deleted and the word “COUNCILS” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 266

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 266 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

266.(1) Minute books of each Assembly commission, council or committee not under a supervising council shall be submitted annually to the Assembly for examination.

(2) Committees under the supervision of a council shall submit their minute books to the Convener of the council for examination before each annual meeting of Assembly.

Anent Par 267

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 267 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

267.(1) The convener of each commission, council or committee shall submit to the Clerk of Assembly not later than March 15 each year a provisional report to the Assembly.

(2) Final amendments to reports, together with suggested resolutions arising from the reports shall be submitted to the Clerk of Assembly not later than April 30.

(3) A comprehensive printed volume of reports with appended resolutions shall be published and circulated to members of Assembly not later than one week before each annual Assembly.

(4) Supplementary reports and resolutions from commissions, councils or committees may be submitted only where matters could not have been dealt with at the time of the regular reports. These must be received before the opening of the Assembly and made available to members as an appendix to the daily minutes.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: Rev Dr DJ McKELVEY
Secretary: THE CLERK

1. The Judicial Commission met seven times since the last meeting of the General Assembly. Although this is a reduction in the number of meetings over the previous year, it still represents a heavy workload for members. The Commission agreed that the Convener should chair its normal business meetings, but that in line with recent practice, a legally trained member should chair meetings when a case is actually being heard. It was agreed that Mr Robin Tweed would take on this role and the Commission is thankful to him for his wise chairing of its meetings in these often complex situations.

2. During the year the Commission proceeded to hear one appeal and received three further appeals against decisions of Presbytery or Kirk Session. These are reported in the Confidential Booklet available to members of the Assembly.

3. Throughout the year the Clerk of Assembly continued to receive correspondence which, in the view of the correspondents, followed on from Findings delivered by the Commission. The Commission again stresses that in all normal situations its work ends when a Finding is delivered. The Judicial Commission does not have a continuing role of supervision or pastoral care. This responsibility rightly belongs to the Presbytery, who may refer specific points of difficulty to the Commission.

4. The Judicial Commission is concerned that when a Minister is loosed from a charge there is a tendency to ask that the family may continue to reside in the manse for a period. While any arrangement must be between the family and the Congregation who own the manse, with the approval of the Presbytery, the Commission advises that it be carefully considered. While not wishing to be unsympathetic, the reality is that the family's right of residence ends when the Minister is loosed from the charge. An on-going presence in the manse can be unsettling for the Minister, family and Congregation alike. The Commission recommends that if the family is to continue to reside in the manse beyond a reasonable period for removal a Caretaker's Agreement should be formalised.

5. During the year the Commission took time to consider its own processes and related matters. This included consideration of the use of informal consultations etc. once the Judicial Commission has begun hearing an appeal; consideration of broad guiding principles relating to special arrangements; and consideration of how the Commission could offer additional support to Presbyteries in their handling of judicial matters. On this last point, it was agreed that, during the incoming year, the Commission would seek to arrange a seminar relating to the conducting of Par 161 and Par 224 Commissions and also provide a simple set of 'guidance notes'.

6. Following the decisions of the 2014 General Assembly, and in line with the policy adopted by the Commission, a number of members are retiring this year to ensure an ordered transition in membership. The Commission thank the Rev Dr Brian Black, the Rev Brian Boyd, the Very Rev Dr David Clarke and

Mrs Pat Gray for their service so willingly given in the work of the Commission over many years. The General Assembly's Nomination Committee, in its report tabled at the Assembly, will be bringing forward names for appointment.

7. Overtures to the Assembly have been received and are considered to be in order.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Judicial Commission be received.

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS (Judicial Commission)

Anent Par 127(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 127(1) of the Code the words "the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly and" be deleted and the words "the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Convener of the Commission and" substituted in their place.

Anent Par 127(2)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 127(2)(a) of the Code the words "for five years." be deleted and the words "for five years and who may be reappointed for one further period of five years." substituted in their place.

Anent Par 137 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 137 of the Code the words "or Synod" be deleted.

DJ McKELVEY

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED (Judicial Commission)

Anent Par 161(1)(g) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 161(1)(g) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (g) conclude that a ruling elder, member of congregational committee or other leader in a congregation may have placed himself in a position where it is impossible for him satisfactorily to discharge his duties as a ruling elder, member of the congregational committee or leader; a Presbytery may temporarily suspend or, following further enquiry, remove such elder, member of congregational committee or leader from his office or role in the congregation; or

DJ McKELVEY

SPECIAL JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener, Rev Dr DJ McKELVEY
Secretary: THE CLERK

It was not necessary for the Special Commission to meet.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Special Judicial Commission be received.

COMMISSION ON APPLICATIONS

THE CLERK, Convener

It was not necessary for the Commission on Applications to meet.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Commission on Applications be received.

UNION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev WJ HENRY
Secretary: Mr TJ LIVINGSTONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report summarises the work of the Union Commission from March 2014-April 2015. Matters dealt with include: the terms of Leaves to Call granted to 22 charges, the reviews of the financial terms in various Leaves to Call, the Terms of Linkage and Amalgamation effected by the Commission, and reports on the work of the internal Committees of the Commission.

The Rev TD Gribben

2. During the year the Rev Trevor Gribben, having taken up new responsibilities as Clerk of Assembly, moved on from his position as Deputy Clerk and thereby Secretary of the Allocation Committee. The Commission places on record its deep appreciation of his commitment to its work, and the insight and vision he brought to the wider aspects of the mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As Clerk, he remains on the Allocation Committee and the Commission, where he will undoubtedly continue to exercise a profitable ministry of guidance.

The Very Rev Dr JW Lockington

3. Having completed nine years as Chairman of the Commission, the Very Rev Dr John Lockington retires at this Assembly. Dr Lockington brought a wealth of insight from a practical knowledge of the denomination and a wisdom gleaned from many years dealing with practical matters of Church life and witness. He chaired meetings of the Union Commission and Allocation Committee with fairness and authority; his warmth of personality was genuine and welcomed on the many deputations he was part of in every part of the island.

The Rev PG McCrea

4. The Rev Philip McCrea resigned as Convener of the Additional Pastoral Personnel Committee during the year (the Rev Colin Gamble having taken on this responsibility). The number of Congregations seeking such appointments means that there is a constant workload for this Committee and its Convener and it is right that tribute is paid to the dedication and exactness which Philip brought to this role.

Defaulting Congregations

5. The Commission has in recent years made the Assembly aware of the potential difficulties that lie in the future for the Church when individual Congregations are not able to meet their central assessments. The Financial Secretary's Department will ensure that when payments do come from individual Congregations in this situation that they will first be directed towards stipend. However, any unpaid assessment is still a debt. The Commission, in following the direction of the Assembly, will investigate and discuss with local representatives

to determine what must be done, taking into account the financial strain on the Congregation.

6. In the past year regrettably this has again meant that a Minister has had to be loosed from his charge ahead of a reconfiguration of ministry. It cannot be stated strongly enough the stress and pain that such unavoidable action causes to all parties but especially to the Minister and his family.

7. Again the Commission urges Presbyteries to be involved at an early stage where it becomes apparent that financial difficulties are becoming worryingly significant.

New Forms

8. During the year the Commission updated many of the forms that are in regular use either for application for Leave to Call, the Leave to Call document, and the Form of Call to a Minister. Where appropriate, similar forms have been created for Part-Time ministries. These are in immediate use. The Form of Call to a Minister and the version for a Part-Time Minister are reported to the Assembly as Appendix (1) as these have traditionally been printed at the end of the Code.

Congregational Readiness for Leave to Call

9. Presbyteries have the responsibility for deciding when it is right and appropriate for Congregations to seek Leave to Call. Generally Presbyteries, and particularly their Vacancy Commissions, have an awareness of any live issues in the Congregation which, if ignored, could make ministry difficult for the new Minister. Following the urging of the Conciliation Panel of the former General Board, the Commission has amended its forms (Congregational Return and Presbytery Comment) which specifically enquire as to whether or not it has been necessary to bring in outside conciliation to mend relationships during the vacancy. This will help the Commission in assessing the Congregation in question each time but it is stressed that the primary assessment of readiness for Leave to Call must be made by the Presbytery in a thoughtful manner.

Associate Ministers

10. The 2014 General Assembly challenged the Union Commission to reflect on the terms of the present Associate Ministry scheme with a view to embedding this role within the thinking for ministry options open to Congregations. This is a reflection of the changing nature of Church life and the demands that are put (consciously and unconsciously) upon “lead” Ministers in Congregations and recognises that, particularly within the largest of our Congregations, there needs to be variety and multiplicity of ministry to cover the many, and oftentimes, competing needs. But it equally is an understanding of the giftings of individuals and the desire to have teams where individuals in leadership complement one another.

11. The Commission trawled the collective experience and past history of those who had served as Associates, and of “lead” Ministers to garner views on what was considered beneficial and perhaps not so good. This was a helpful exercise: following some lengthy reflection, a varied scheme has emerged from what has been our experience to date for consideration at this Assembly.

12. What is envisaged is very different from the old 3-year Associate Minister term (albeit extendable for a second term). The new scheme is very similar to Reviewable Tenure which has been granted in many Congregations in recent times. Where this is significantly different from what went before is that it may be extendable indefinitely (each time getting Leave to Call renewed).

13. It was felt very strongly that these positions should not be open ended on full tenure at the time of seeking Leave to Call because the needs of Congregations may potentially be very different 20 or 30 years hence, and the type or giftings of ministry to complement the “lead” Minister (not to mention the ability to finance the position) may be radically different. Guidelines for adoption are attached as Appendix 2.

Auxiliary Ministry

14. It was the General Assembly of 2010 that agreed (as presented under the report of the Ministries Panel of the General Board) that an Auxiliary Ministry scheme be adopted and that the Union Commission be charged with implementing the concept. The proposed scheme was outlined in the GA Reports 2010, pp 94-96.

15. Normally an Auxiliary Minister would first be an Accredited Preacher, and then after formal application, endorsement and training be ready to take up such a post – the first successful candidates are anticipated in 2015.

16. The Union Commission, in preparing its guidelines ahead of the first batch of eligible candidates for the scheme, has attempted to be true to the spirit and aspirations which the original proposers intended. First and foremost was the desire for flexibility to enable the wider Church to benefit from the positives that will flow from this aspect of the using of the gifts of members of the Church in local ministry and mission. With that in mind the scheme as unfolded is a part-time Word-focused ministry – sometimes that will be given practical expression in a local Church alongside, and complementing, the present leadership. In other situations it might be a pioneering work in a context where there is little other Presbyterian mission.

17. True to the spirit of flexibility it is understood that the majority of these posts will be on an expenses only basis, or very little paid remuneration; but the option does remain that it may be significantly more depending on the circumstances agreed.

18. The guidelines are presented to the Assembly for adoption – Appendix 3. The guidelines detail what the Congregation(s) or Presbytery or Council need to clarify and detail ahead of asking the Linkage Commission to authorise an Auxiliary Ministry post. It is recognised that some posts already established have characteristics very similar to those of the Auxiliary Ministry scheme. The Commission will seek to enable those Congregations that wish to do so to transition from such posts to an Auxiliary Ministry post on a case by case basis.

Occupational Health Consultancy

19. The Commission agreed that in situations that require occupational health input or assessment that the services of *Healthlink360* be sought.

Use of Bequest, Farm or Manse Rental Income towards stipend or general use of the Committee

20. Following on from the Guidance received from the Assembly Solicitor, where it is no longer recognised that there is an automatic right of benefit to the Minister from income from the rental of a redundant manse or associated farm, there has been an increasing number of requests from Congregations seeking to use such income in alternative ways or to pay towards stipend and not additional to stipend. In some situations the income from these sources is not insignificant and could be higher than the stipend set by the Commission! The advice that has been given to the Commission, and which has been followed in recent times, is that the Congregation can ask that the Commission, at the time when Leave to Call is being sought, grant permission to use this income in a way that is different from what was historically the case. Such permission is dependent upon the deeds or terms of the original bequest first being checked to ascertain that it is not stipulated that the payment must be made additional to stipend. There is the possibility that the income could be used at the discretion of the Committee for general Church purposes. The onus for requesting a change in the use of such income rests with the Congregation when seeking Leave to Call. This will not affect present settlements.

Protracted Illness Guidelines

21. Prior to 2014, Ministers on Protracted Illness received 100% of their Stipend paid for 12 months and any benefits received were to be returned to the Financial Secretary. Under the new Protracted Illness Guidelines in force since the beginning of 2014 the amount received by Ministers is reduced to 75% of Stipend paid for months 7-9 and to 50% for months 10-12. There was an additional codicil that required any benefits received during this reduced period of payment to be paid back to the Congregation to pay expenses during the illness. It was understood that this put Ministers at a disadvantage to Church employees who do not have to return benefits in similar circumstances. Paragraph(C) of the Protracted Illness Guidelines adopted on 26th November 2013 was amended to read: "While on full payment of stipend any invalidity or other state benefit reclaimed by a Minister should be paid over to the Financial Secretary to be forwarded to the Congregation to be applied towards meeting expenses of the period of illness. (When a Minister serves in a linked charge normally only one Treasurer will be identified to whom payment is made)."

Landlord Registration

22. During the year Congregations in Northern Ireland were informed of the need to register with the Landlord Registration Scheme should they wish to let out any redundant manse (or a manse during a vacancy). It was noted on advice from the General Assembly Solicitor that 'the Landlord Registration Scheme does not apply to commercial lets. The legislation only applies to domestic properties under a Private Tenancy Agreement and also in which rent is charged.'

Family Grants payable to Part-time Ministers

23. The question arose about the jurisdiction family grants ought to be paid in should the family of a Part-Time minister live across the border from where the Minister works. It was decided that payments should be made according to the terms, conditions and payment currency applicable to the location of the Congregation(s).

Guidelines for Interviews

24. It has become apparent that issues have arisen in the context of interviews of candidates during vacancies, particularly in contexts where Hearing Committees have been appointed. The Commission has tried to present some helpful guidelines in an update to the Vacancy Convener's Handbook to detail what is appropriate for Kirk Sessions only to enquire about and what would be permissible for Hearing Committees to seek answers to. As ever the responsibility of the Kirk Session here is paramount and the guidelines, meant as a useful tool, are attached for approval as Appendix 4.

LINKAGES BROKEN

25. After deliberations with the Presbyteries concerned the following linkages were dissolved:

Sion and Urney on 30th September 2014. The Congregation of Sion was subsequently transferred to the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal;

2nd Castleberg and Alt on 24th March 2015. The Congregation of Alt was subsequently transferred to the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal.

CONGREGATIONS LINKED

2nd Castleberg and Urney

26. Terms of linkage:

- (a) That the Congregations of 2nd Castleberg and Urney be linked as from 24th March 2015;
- (b) Each Congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and Finances;
- (c) Each Congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the Superior Courts of the Church;
- (d) In the choice of a Minister the two Congregations shall act as one Congregation and the two Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session;
- (e) There shall be stated services each Sunday as follows: 2nd Castleberg at 10.30am and Urney at 12 noon or at such other times as the two Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine;
- (f) That the Stipends (2015) be: 2nd Castleberg £21,000 and Urney £5,000; and initial ministerial expenses: 2nd Castleberg £6,000 and Urney £1,500;
- (g) That Holiday Supplies, and other shared expenses not included in (f) be borne in the proportions 80% 2nd Castleberg and 20% Urney;

- (h) That Rent, Rates, Taxes and Maintenance of the Manse (or residence for the Minister) be borne in the proportions 80% 2nd Castlederg and 20% Urney;
- (i) that the Minister shall reside in 2nd Castlederg Manse.

Convoy, Carnone, Donoughmore and Alt

- 27. Terms of linkage:
 - (a) That the Congregations of Convoy, Carnone, Donoughmore and Alt be linked from 1st April 2015;
 - (b) Each Congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the Superior Courts of the Church;
 - (c) In the choice of a Minister the four Congregations shall act as one Congregation and the four Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session;
 - (d) There shall be stated services each Sunday as follows: Carnone: 9.45 a.m., Convoy 12:15, Donoughmore 11.00 a.m., Alt 10.30 a.m. or at such other times as the four Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine provided any permanent change to the times of stated services is approved by the Presbytery;
 - (e) That the Minister shall be responsible for no more than two of those stated services each Sunday unless agreed otherwise by four Kirk Sessions and the Presbytery;
 - (f) The supply fees to fund the conduct of the services not taken by the Minister to be a shared expense divided between the four Congregations using the percentages specified for the total expense allowance of the Minister;
 - (g) That the Stipends [2015] be (i) Carnone €8,400; (ii) Convoy €8,400; (iii) Donoughmore €11,400; (iv) Alt €2,100;
 - (h) That initial minimum expenses be (i) Carnone €3,640; (ii) Convoy €3,640; (iii) Donoughmore €4,810; (iv) Alt €900;
 - (i) The Minister shall reside in Convoy manse. That Rent, rates, Taxes and maintenance of the manse be borne in the proportions (i) Carnone 28%; (ii) Convoy 28%; (iii) Donoughmore 37%; (iv) Alt 7%;
 - (j) That Holiday Supplies, and other shared expenses not included in the total expenses allowance be borne in the proportions (i) Carnone 28%; (ii) Convoy 28%, (iii) Donoughmore 37%; (iv) Alt 7%.

CONGREGATIONS AMALGAMATED

- 28. The 2014 General Assembly amalgamated the Congregations of Dundalk and Carlingford, the Union Commission subsequently set the terms:
 - (a) That the Congregation of Carlingford be amalgamated with the Congregation of Dundalk from 30th June 2014 or other suitable date under the name 'Dundalk';
 - (b) That the two Kirk Sessions become one Kirk Session and the two Congregational Committees become one Committee until new Committee elections are held;
 - (c) That all existing or future assets, including property or lands not disposed of, become the property of the amalgamated Congregation, except that Home Mission rules shall apply to the former Carlingford property;

- (d) any expenses incurred in disposal of, or securing the property, providing insurance, and complying with any legal requirements, will be borne by the Board of Mission in Ireland.

29. The 2014 General Assembly also believed it had amalgamated the Congregations of Castlebellingham and Dundalk. However, subsequent investigations revealed that the General Assembly of 1940 had already done that! The practical implications are that the property, (including assets and potential liabilities) belong to the Congregation of Dundalk.

LEAVE TO CALL A MINISTER

30. This is only a summary; there may well be conditions attached to the Leave to Call which are not recorded here. These might include Part-time, Reviewable Tenure, Restricted List, additional income for Minister etc. When a figure is set the date denotes when Leave to Call was granted. This figure will increase automatically under the Stipend Review, Expenses are “initial ministerial expenses” and are to be kept under review and paid in accordance with the procedures agreed by the General Council’s Support Services Committee.

Congregation	Stipend Expenses	
Railway Street, Lisburn	£35,000 [2014]	£7,500
Hazelbank, Coleraine	£29,000 [2014]	£8,312
Bushmills	£30,000 [2014]	£8,312
Donabate	€15,000 [2014]	€5,000
	With a maximum contribution from C.M.F. of 70% A.M.M	
Ballysillan	£28,000 [2014]	£7,875
1st Ahoghill	£33,000 [2014]	£8,400
Lucan	€A.M.M. [2014]	€12,500
Union Road, Magherafelt	£17,400 [2014]	£4,987
& Lecumpher	£11,600 [2014]	£3,342
Hilltown	£10,000 [2014]	£4,156
& Clonduff	£15,000 [2014]	£4,156
Greystones	€23,000 [2014]	€7,500
Scarva Street, Banbridge	£35,000 [2014]	£7,500
1st Randalstown &	£14,500 [2014] or 4/7 A.M.M. (Whichever is greater)	£3,750
Duneane	£10,500 [2014] or 3/7 A.M.M. (Whichever is greater)	£3,750
Cladymore &	50% A.M.M. [2014]	£3,750
Tassagh	50% A.M.M. [2014]	£3,750
Clough &	£19,683 [2015]	£5,250
Seaforde	£6,570 [2015]	£2,250
Greenisland	£30,500 [2015]	£7,500
Arklow	€10,000 (year1) [2015]	€11,000
	€11,000 (year2) [2015]	
	€12,000 (year3) [2015]	
Ballywalter	£28,200 [2015]	£7,500
Larne, Craighill	£28,000 [2015]	£7,500

Castlecaulfield & Eglisli	£15,700 [2015]	£4,500
2nd Castledearg & Urney	£10,000 [2015]	£3,000
	£21,000 [2015]	£6,000
	£5,000 [2015]	£1,500
2nd Newtownards	50% A.M.M. [2015]	£3,750

(Note: BMM = Basic Ministerial Minimum; AMM = Appropriate Ministerial Minimum)

Leave to Call an Associate Minister

Cuningham Memorial Associate	£A.M.M.	Expenses: £4,500 & House or £2,000 Housing Allowance
1st Bangor	£A.M.M.	Expenses: £3,000 & £3,000 Housing Allowance

Permission to Extend Associate Minister Term

Mourne (3 years)

EXTENSION OF REVIEWABLE TENURE MINISTRIES

31. Reviewable Tenure Ministry in Fermoy was extended for 5 years from 27th January 2015 or until such time as a reconfiguration of Ministry in the South Munster area is undertaken.

STATED SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS

32. During the past year the Commission has renewed a number of previous nominations for a further period in co-operation with the appropriate Presbytery. New Stated Supply arrangements in Kells (Meath), Blackrock, Bray and Sion Mills were effected.

Stated Supply by a neighbouring minister

33. The Commission clarified its thinking in a practical matter where a neighbouring minister acts as Stated Supply for another Congregation. Holiday supplies and payment for such cover would be met in a manner that is mirrored on the conditions that Congregations in a formal linkage follow. Normally in a Stated Supply arrangement there is no payment when the appointed Minister is not preaching.

REVIEWS COMMITTEE

Mr James Livingstone reports:

34. In accordance with Par 236(2) of the Code and arising out of other circumstances the Reviews Committee reviewed the stipend of the following Congregations:

MAY, 2014

Congregation	Stipend
Clogher	No Change
& Glenhoy	Increase by £500
2nd Ballyeaston	No Change
Glendermott	Increase by £1,000
Clough, Ballymena	No Change
Ballyloughan	No Change
Hill Street, Lurgan	No Change
Loughgall	No Change#
& Tartaghan	No Change#
Gilnahirk	No Change
Strabane	No Change
1st Ballymena	No Change
Bellaghy	No Change
& Knockloughrim	No Change
Badoney	No Change
Corrick	No Change
& Glenelly	No Change
Ballykelly	No Change
2nd Randalstown	No Change
1st Newtownards	Increase by £500
Burnside	No Change
Mountpottinger	No Change
West Church, Bangor	No Change
Greenisland	No Change
Maynooth	Review in 2015
Raloo	No Change
& Magheramorne	No Change
Kilkeel	No Change
Belvoir	No Change
Arklow	No Change
2nd Newtownhamilton	Increase by £500
& Creggan (Freduff)	2012 Special Arrangement
2nd Dromara	Review in 2015
Carlow	No Change
& Athy	Increase by €1,000/year for 2 years
Cladmore	No Change
& Tassagh	No Change

(# While no change is recommended for this Linkage should they return to a position of Augmentation they should be referred back to Union Commission.)

JUNE, 2014

Congregation	Stipend
Convoy &	altered to €11,000
Carnone	altered to €11,000
Donoughmore	altered to €14,800
	Stipend Review after 3 more years.

NOVEMBER, 2014

Congregation

St. Columba's, Lisburn

Stipend

reduced to £17,000

To be reviewed annually for next 3 years.

EXPENSES AND FEES COMMITTEE

The Rev Robert Bell writes:

Travel Expenses

35. The Commission, through its Expenses and Fees Sub-Committee, gives guidance to Congregational Committees about Travel Expenses and its recommendations are based on information available from the motoring organisations in the UK and RoI.

36. For 2015, based on an average of 14,400 business miles per year, the recommended figures for 2015 took account of significant reductions in the cost of motoring in NI, compared to the RoI where costs had remained relatively unchanged.

Northern Ireland: £ 5,985

Republic of Ireland: € 10,000

Ministers recording a higher business mileage should be paid more, while a lower amount may be appropriate to those who do not record as many business miles.

37. As it has done for a number of years, the Commission uses 125% of travel recommendations in setting its recommended figures for total expenses, which are as follows in 2015:

Northern Ireland: £ 7,500

Republic of Ireland € 12,500

Review of Ministerial Expenses System

38. During the past year the Committee has continued with its review of the overall system for the payment of Ministerial Expenses, which was referred to in last year's reports to the General Assembly.

39. The fundamental aim of this review is to ensure that the system for the payment of Expenses ensures that Ministers are fully reimbursed for all the expenses they incur in the course of their work, whilst at the same time achieving a system that is fully transparent, accurate and accountable.

40. During the past year the Committee met on several occasions to discuss these issues, and has consulted extensively with Mr Clive Knox, Financial Secretary, and with Mr John Hunter, Support Services Committee.

41. At its February meeting the Commission received the following report re a 2-part system for Ministerial Expenses.

- (1) A 'Pure Reimbursement System' for ministerial travel expenses in which Congregational Treasurers would reimburse Ministers monthly, on the basis of accurate records of daily work-related travel, but which would not detail individual visits. Reimbursement would be at the rate recognised by HMRC, or the equivalent in RoI, and this would therefore remove travel expenses completely from the Ministers' taxable returns.
- (2) An Expense Allowance to cover the other work-related expenses which are significantly more difficult to measure and record, with the Linkage

Commission continuing to set this figure, as under the current system. It would continue to be the Ministers' responsibility to account for this element of ministerial expenses in their tax returns.

42. While the Committee recognises that there may still be some detailed work to be done before such a 2-part system could be introduced, it is persuaded that such a system would achieve the fundamentally important aims of transparency, accuracy and accountability, that the system of reimbursement would not be too complex to be introduced easily and operated effectively; and that Ministers would not be disadvantaged in terms of any and all work-related expenses. An appropriate resolution is appended.

Supply Fee

43. The level of the Supply Fee is determined by the Code, Par 238, and for 2015 this is £94 (€ 150), and £63 (€100) where only a single service is supplied in one Congregation.

44. Travelling expenses should be paid in accordance with the rate set for attendance at Assembly Councils, currently 14p (22 cents) per mile.

MANSES COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr John Stanage reports :

45. Through its Manses Committee, the Commission dealt with a wide variety of manse issues of which the following are the most significant.

46. First Cookstown asked permission to purchase a suitable property which would be used as a manse in lieu of the property currently being used as the manse next to the Church.

47. Union Road, Magherafelt sought permission to sell their existing manse with a 1.25 acre site, and which would have needed considerable investment over the next five years. This is in order to purchase a new manse.

48. Railway Street, Lisburn requested clarification regarding the appropriate level of furnishing which they should provide in the construction of a new manse which is being built alongside the old manse.

49. Richview, Belfast requested permission to rent their manse during the period of vacancy.

50. Crumlin sought permission to sell their existing manse and provide another manse property. If there is any surplus money after the manse has been sold it will be placed in a manse fund account to pay for any future repairs and maintenance of the manse.

51. Kilmore asked for permission to sell their existing manse and construct a new manse building. It is believed that the sale of the manse will more than cover the cost of a new build without creating a financial burden for the Congregation.

52. Magheragall requested permission to sell two vacant sites on land adjacent to the manse. The proceeds from the sale of these sites will go towards the Church Hall Development Fund.

53. Rathgar, Dublin requested permission to rent their vacant manse to a member of the Congregation for a limited period.

54. Adelaide Road, Dublin have requested permission to sell their existing manse and purchase a new manse.

55. Ballycrochan, Bangor have requested permission to sell their current manse.

56. Clarification was given to Duneane regarding maintenance or alteration expenses in a shared Congregation position.

57. First Antrim sought permission to sell sections of the existing manse property as building sites in order to pay for the construction of a new manse on the site. Any additional monies generated by the building sites will go towards the renovation of the Church building.

58. Congregations are reminded that, before letting a manse in a vacancy, the permissions of both Presbytery and the Linkage Commission are required, together with the drawing up of a proper legal tenancy agreement. It is also strongly recommended that the detailed professional survey of the vacant manse be carried out before any tenants move in so that the eventual Leave to Call is not delayed.

59. The Commission also reminds Presbyteries that when decisions are being taken with regard to the possible sale of a manse and the replacement of the same, or a major refurbishment of an existing manse when there is not a vacancy in the Congregation concerned, then it is strongly recommended that another Minister of Presbytery be appointed to chair all meetings relating to manse issues until the replacement or refurbished manse is ready for occupation.

ADDITIONAL PASTORAL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Rev Colin Gamble reports:

60. In the past year the Union Commission gave permission for 23 new APP posts and 12 extensions to existing posts.

61. Kirk Sessions are advised to contact the Convener of the APP Committee as early as possible whenever investigating the possibility of creating a post. Guidelines are available from the Convener in order to guide Kirk Sessions through the process and these guidelines should be consulted and followed. Before a post can be advertised, approval must be sought and received from Peninsula, Presbytery and the Linkage Commission.

62. Extensions to existing posts also require approval from Peninsula, Presbytery and the Linkage Commission. Once again, Kirk Sessions are advised to contact the Convener of the APP Committee as early as possible for guidance.

63. New Salary Scales for 2015 were agreed by the Union Commission at its meeting in November 2014. These are available from the Convener of the APP Committee. Kirk Sessions should normally follow the Salary Scales when creating a new post.

64. Ministers are reminded to seek approval in advance from Presbytery before undertaking 'Extra-Parochial Work' which has been defined as 'Remunerated work outside of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland undertaken by a parish Minister that amounts to more than six hours in any week.'

2015 SALARY SCALES

	Sterling salary pt	Euro salary pt	Level of responsibility of post	Qualification attained by employee or level of experience
Band A	£17,520 £18,147 £18,780 £19,411 £20,213 £20,839	€27,146 €28,118 €29,099 €30,076 €31,320 €32,288	Mostly direct work with children, young people or adults under close regular supervision; low management responsibility for people or projects.	Obtained or working towards OCN level 2 & 3 qualifications, PCI Youth/Children's Ministry Course or similar qualification in the relevant field. Where this level of qualification is not held, demonstrated experience in this field of activity may be deemed equivalent.
Band B	£21,851 £22,843 £23,866 £24,923 £25,645	€33,858 €35,394 €36,979 €38,616 €39,735	General responsibility for specific areas of programme and ministry oversight; graduating and less closely supervised responsibility for programmes, strategy, volunteers or leaders.	Appropriate recognition of attainment or working towards undergraduate or postgraduate theological study or professional qualifications (including Youth & Community, teaching qualification or other related professional qualifications such as counselling or social work). Where this level of qualification is not held, demonstrated experience in this field of activity may be deemed equivalent.

Please note:

1. This salary scale was initially based on the JNC Youth and Community work scale (2009) for the UK and has since been updated annually. The RoI salary scale will be the appropriate salary point multiplied by the RoI Ministerial Minimum (€37,007) and divided by the NI Ministerial Minimum (£23,884) i.e. Uplifted by PCI's agreed percentage for RoI cost of living differential.
2. The above rates are deemed to apply to a minimum of 37.5 hours per week. For employees working less than 37.5 hours per week a pro-rata rate is applicable.
3. The APP Convener's successor on the Linkage Commission should be contacted for the most up to date figures and for advice on their interpretation.

APPENDIX 1

Form of Call to a Minister

We, the members of in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland having heard a good report of you and being fully satisfied of your fitness to be our Minister in the Lord, do hereby call and invite you to undertake the work of the ministry among us.

We promise to respect you for your work's sake, to attend to your instruction in the Gospel, and to submit to the discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, according to the law of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we further promise as stipend in pursuance of our obligations under Paragraph 195(11) of the Code, the annual sum of £....., commencing from the date of installation and payable monthly, with increase in accordance with Paragraph 236 of the Code, together with the annual income of such endowments, held in connection with the Congregation, as are available for your benefit (if any) and the annual sum of £..... from investment income over which the Congregation or its Session or Committee or Trustees have absolute power of disposal; together with the use of the glebe (if any) and right of residence in the manse, in which you are required to reside during the period of your active ministry in this Congregation, free of rent, rates and taxes, after which period you must vacate the manse; and promising that if a manse be not available then to provide other suitable residence on the same conditions, free of rent, rates and taxes, from which you can conveniently discharge your congregational duties, or to make such other arrangements as may be required under Paragraph 274(14).

And we hereby undertake to contribute to the Central Ministry Fund according to the regulations for the time being of the General Assembly; and to meet as a congregational expense the cost for a holiday pulpit supply for six weeks annually during vacation and acknowledge your entitlement to avail of both in-service and sabbatical leave under the terms approved from time to time by the General Assembly.

This Call is made out in conformity with the terms fixed by the Commission on Union of Congregations, a copy of which is herewith attached.

Dated and signed at this day of in the year

We certify that we attended in the Congregation of this day of in the year.....

by appointment of the Presbytery of as its Commission and that we were present at the signing of the call.

..... Moderator
.....
.....

Form of Call to a Minister (Part-Time Ministry Scheme)

We, the members of
in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
having heard a good report of you
and being fully satisfied of your fitness to be our Minister in the Lord, do hereby
call and invite you to undertake the work of the ministry among us.

We promise to respect you for your work's sake, to attend to your instruction
in the Gospel, and to submit to the discipline of the Presbyterian Church in
Ireland, according to the law of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we further promise as
stipend in pursuance of our obligations under Paragraph 195(11) of the Code, the
annual sum of £....., commencing from the date of installation and
payable monthly, with increase in accordance with Paragraph 236 of the Code,
together with the annual income of such endowments, held in connection with
the Congregation, as are available for your benefit (if any) and the annual sum of
£..... from investment income over which the Congregation or its Session
or Committee or Trustees have absolute power of disposal; together with the use
of the glebe (if any) and (tick as appropriate):

- of residence in the manse, in which you are required to reside during
the period of your active ministry in this Congregation, free of rent,
rates and taxes, after which period you must vacate the manse; and
promising that if a manse be not available then to provide other suitable
residence on the same conditions, free of rent, rates and taxes, from
which you can conveniently discharge your congregational duties, or
to make such other arrangements as may be required under Paragraph
274(14).
- No right of residence in the manse _____

And we hereby undertake to contribute to the Central Ministry Fund
according to the regulations for the time being of the General Assembly; and
to meet as a congregational expense the cost for a holiday pulpit supply for six
weeks annually during vacation and acknowledge your entitlement to avail of
both in-service and sabbatical leave under the terms approved from time to time
by the General Assembly.

This Call is made out in conformity with the terms fixed by the Commission
on Union of Congregations, a copy of which is herewith attached.

Dated and signed at this day of ..
..... in the year

We certify that we attended in the congregation of
this day of
in the year.....

by appointment of the Presbytery of
..... as its Commission and that we were
present at the signing of the call.

..... Moderator
.....
.....

APPENDIX 2**Union Commission Guidelines on Associates****Granting Leave to Call**

In assessing whether Leave to call be granted the Linkage Commission will take into consideration the following:

- (i) The number of families connected to the Congregation;
- (ii) The profile of the Congregation;
- (iii) Duties attached to the position;
- (iv) Ability of the Congregation to meet the payments;
- (v) Other relevant factors;
- (vi) Cognisance will also be taken of the ministerial needs in the wider Church.

Review

It is noted that Leave to Call for Associate Minister positions will be on reviewable tenure. In this regard the nature of the position is radically different from what has existed before and potentially, depending on circumstances, may be long term appointments. Presbytery will oversee the tenure review in conjunction with the Congregation. At this review (which ought normally to be completed six months before the end of the term of the appointment) it will be determined whether the position ought to be continued or brought to an end. There will be no special arrangement provided through CMF other than in the unique situation referenced below:

Termination of the Associate Minister's position following the installation of a new Minister (i.e. where the Associate has offered their resignation and it has been accepted)

The Associate Minister must offer his/her resignation to the Clerk of Presbytery when a new Minister has been installed in the Congregation. The Clerk of Presbytery will then consult with the Minister and Kirk Session to ascertain whether it will be accepted.

After termination of the appointment the Minister shall be eligible for salary and pension contributions at the rate of the appropriate ministerial minimum as a charge upon CMF until the Minister receives another Call, or for a period not exceeding six months, whichever is the sooner. During such period suitable work may be offered to the Minister by the Linkage Commission. Should such Minister at any time refuse to perform the duties thus assigned, without giving reasons deemed satisfactory by the Commission, this financial arrangement shall cease.

Salary

The Congregation will normally be expected to cover the costs of salary, pension and ancillary costs associated with the position.

The Congregation's contribution to salary should be at least the appropriate ministerial minimum.

Housing Allowance

CMF will contribute pay 50% of the costs up to a maximum of £1,000.

APPENDIX 3**GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SCHEME FOR
AUXILIARY MINISTRY****A. Introduction:**

1. In June 2010 it was resolved, “That the General Assembly adopt the Scheme for an Auxiliary Ministry”, (2010 General Assembly Minutes, p 71, res 36). The scheme referred to was included as Appendix 2 of the report of the Ministries Panel of the General Board, (2010 General Assembly Reports, pp 94-96), and should be consulted to set the Guidelines in context.

2. An Auxiliary Minister is a part-time Minister of the Word and should not be confused with others who may exercise a ministry which can be described as part-time in nature, e.g. Stated Supply or under Par 81(3) of the Code, or the ‘Scheme for Part-Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament’ as also approved by the General Assembly in 2010.

3. It is intended that the scheme should be as flexible as possible.

B. General:

1. Some pastoral duties may be associated with a post, but it is primarily a Ministry of the Word. The person appointed to such a post will be called and commissioned, and is therefore not an employee.

2. The Union Commission – henceforth Linkage Commission – is authorised, after appropriate consultation, to create Auxiliary Ministry posts.

3. Auxiliary Ministry posts fall into one of two categories:

(i) An Auxiliary Minister who will work alongside, and under the supervision of, a full Minister of Word and Sacrament: a ‘Congregational Auxiliary Ministry’.

(ii) An Auxiliary Minister who will provide ministry in a pioneering situation, working under the auspices of a Presbytery or the Council for Mission in Ireland. A ‘Pioneering/Missional Auxiliary Ministry’. This will not include Congregational Auxiliary Ministries which happen to have a strong missional aspect.

4. Both forms of Auxiliary Ministry may be on an expenses only or part-time remunerated basis, but Congregational Auxiliary Ministries will primarily be expenses only. Part time will normally mean up to 20 hours per week. Auxiliary Ministry posts are only open to those not already Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

5. Normally an applicant for the Auxiliary Ministry Scheme would be required to be an Accredited Preacher within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

6. After successful completion of a one year course, followed by a six month probationary period, an individual will be eligible to apply for Auxiliary Ministry posts which have been created, being commissioned to their first such position. There will be additional modules of study for those moving into a Pioneering/Missional Auxiliary Ministry post.

7. An Auxiliary Minister may be involved in other remunerated employment. This will require the approval of the Linkage Commission

following normal procedures and take account not only of the hours worked, but of whether the nature of the work is appropriate for a Minister of the Word. Acceptance of appointment to a post involves acceptance of the authority of the Linkage Commission to determine these matters, including the right to decline to authorise particular types of employment both before and after commissioning.

8. Auxiliary Ministers will be commissioned by a Presbytery to whom he/she will also be accountable.

9. If they are not already members of the Court, Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries may invite Auxiliary Ministers to sit and deliberate, if appropriate.

C. Congregational Auxiliary Ministry

1. Congregational Auxiliary Ministry may be exercised in:

- (i) one Congregation;
- (ii) a linkage;
- (iii) a group of Congregations.

2. In C1(i) and (ii) above the Auxiliary Minister will be under the supervision of one Minister. In C1(ii) and (iii) above there will be two or more Kirk Sessions. The Linkage Commission shall have power to direct that they will act together in matters concerning an Auxiliary Minister as if they were one Kirk Session. In C1(iii) there will be more than one Minister. They will normally act together but the Linkage Commission will designate one as the lead Minister who will be responsible for supervision of the Auxiliary Minister.

3. In what follows the term 'Kirk Session' refers to one Kirk Session or to two or more Kirk Sessions acting together as appropriate; the term 'Minister' refers to one Minister or to two or more Ministers acting together as appropriate.

4. The initiative for a Congregational Auxiliary Ministry will normally come from a Kirk Session and proposals brought to the Linkage Commission through the local Presbytery. The Linkage Commission shall consult with the following concerned parties:

- the Minister (who may be a Convener of a Vacancy), without whose approval no scheme will go ahead;
- the Kirk Session;
- the Presbytery;
- any other appropriate bodies e.g. the Council for Mission in Ireland in the case of Home Mission Congregations, Urban Mission Congregations or 'Church planting' type situations.

5. After the conclusion of consultations, the Linkage Commission, in situations where it is clearly deemed appropriate, may create a Congregational Auxiliary Ministry post.

6. The Kirk Session will be responsible for payment of expenses and any remuneration and fulfilling any requirements of the statutory tax and revenue authorities. A pension may be offered where there is remuneration. As the person will be an 'office holder' rather than in an 'employed post', Employment Law will not apply to that extent, but good practice should still be followed. The Financial Secretary's Department will not process any remuneration through the payroll.

7. The Kirk Session must specify the following:
 - the hours to be worked – normally the frequency of preaching, leading Bible studies etc. and any pastoral duties. Account will need to be given to time for preparation;
 - whether the post will be established on an ‘expenses only’ or on a ‘part-time remunerated’ basis and what it proposes by way of expenses and, if appropriate, remuneration. Changes in remuneration will normally take place at review, but application can be made to the Linkage Commission at any time;
 - what particular arrangements will be put in place where there is more than one Congregation involved;
 - the period of review by Presbytery, which will normally be three years. (The Linkage Commission will not normally be involved in these reviews.)
 - any other necessary matters e.g. holidays, other supplies etc.

8. After Consultation with representatives of the Congregation and, if appropriate, the Presbytery, the Linkage Commission will decide whether to authorise the creation of a Congregational Auxiliary Ministry post applied for. It will also accept or adjust the terms a Kirk Session specifies. As each situation will have individual requirements, the Linkage Commission will not apply a scale for payments or impose a uniformity upon these posts other than what is in this document.

9. An existing post cannot transform to become an Auxiliary Ministry post as this would mean an individual moving from an employed post to being an ‘office holder’. An individual who is employed in a similar post (that is, with the prime duty of preaching) will have to resign their post before being commissioned. With immediate effect the Linkage Commission will not authorise any further such posts, other than under the Auxiliary Ministry Scheme.

10. Anyone declared eligible by the Council for Training in Ministry may make application directly to the Minister under whose supervision he/she will be working.

11. An Auxiliary Minister may be appointed within their own Congregation on the same basis as anyone else.

12. In seeking to fill the post the Congregation may advertise or appoint a particular individual they identify.

13. Calls to a Congregational Auxiliary Ministry post will be made by Kirk Session.

14. A Congregational Auxiliary Ministry post may be terminated by mutual agreement, or by a minimum of two months’ notice given by the Presbytery, any individual Minister or individual Kirk Session involved, or the Auxiliary Minister, subject to the approval of the Presbytery. In the case of an expenses only post, a minimum of one week’s notice will apply.

15. If a Congregation or group of Congregations for which an Auxiliary Ministry post has been created wishes to seek to have ministry delivered in another way e.g. by a Stated Supply, by a temporary assistant under Par 81(3) of the Code, or by the Scheme for Part-Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, application shall first be made to the Linkage Commission for withdrawal of the post before progressing any such arrangement.

D. Pioneering/Missional Auxiliary Ministry

1. The initiative for a Pioneering/Missional Auxiliary Ministry will normally come from the Presbytery or the Council for Mission in Ireland. In the latter case it will come with the knowledge, understanding and consent of Presbytery.

The Linkage Commission shall consult with the following concerned parties:

- the Presbytery;
- the Council for Mission in Ireland;
- any Congregation and/or Minister directly involved.

2. After the conclusion of consultations, the Linkage Commission, in situations where it is clearly deemed appropriate, may create a Pioneering/Missional Auxiliary Ministry post.

3. The Presbytery or Council will be responsible for payment of expenses and any remuneration, in the Council's case using the same processes as for other commissioned posts.

4. The Presbytery or Council must specify the following:

- the hours to be worked – normally the frequency of preaching, leading Bible studies etc. and any pastoral duties. Account will need to be given to time for preparation;
- whether the post will be established on an 'expenses only' or on a 'part-time remunerated' basis and what it proposes by way of expenses and, if appropriate, remuneration. Changes in remuneration will normally take place at review, but application can be made to the Linkage Commission at any time;
- the relative responsibilities, if any, of the Presbytery and/or Council in the arrangement;
- the period of review by Presbytery or Council as appropriate, which will normally be three years. The Linkage Commission will normally be involved in these reviews;
- any other necessary matters e.g. holidays, other supplies etc.

5. After Consultation with representatives of the Presbytery, Council, and any other directly involved parties, the Linkage Commission will decide whether to authorise the creation of a Missional Auxiliary Ministry post applied for. It will also accept or adjust the terms a Presbytery or Council specify. As each situation will have individual requirements, neither the Council nor the Linkage Commission will apply a scale for payments or impose a uniformity upon these posts other than what is in this document.

6. Anyone declared eligible by the Council for Training in Ministry may make application directly to the Council.

7. In seeking to fill the post the Council should normally recruit using the same processes as for other commissioned posts.

8. Calls to a Pioneering/Missional Auxiliary Ministry will be made by the Council and sustained by the Presbytery. As there is no provision in the Code for a Presbytery to issue a Call proposals may include provision for the Council to issue a Call on the request of a Presbytery.

9. A Pioneering/Missional Auxiliary Ministry post may be terminated by mutual agreement, or by a minimum of two months' notice given by the Council by its own decision or following the withdrawal of consent to the post by the Presbytery, as appropriate.

APPENDIX 4**General Assembly's Guidelines Re Interviews****1. General**

- (a) No meeting shall be held before a Minister is eligible for call.
- (b) The Minister's spouse shall not be present.
- (c) There shall be no bargaining, and no promises shall be sought or given.
- (d) The same basic questions for each candidate shall be agreed at a meeting convened by the Vacancy Convener or another ministerial member of the Vacancy Commission.
- (e) If possible, the questions should be notified to the candidates beforehand. Supplementary points may be discussed at the meeting.
- (f) No questions may be asked which invite comment on current settled policy of General Assembly.
- (g) No questions may be asked about the likely role of the Minister's spouse or family in the life of the Congregation or local community.

2. Interview by Kirk Session

- (a) While it is common practice for Kirk Sessions to interview possible candidates before drawing up a list, they are not obliged to do so.
- (b) If a Kirk Session wishes to interview, then it should take care to observe all the guidelines at **1. General** above, as well as those that follow under this section.
- (c) In interviewing candidates Kirk Sessions must bear in mind that, while the right to select candidates for a hearing belongs to them (Code Par 194(3)), it is the prerogative of the Congregation to choose the Minister (Code Par 195). The way the interviews are structured, and how the list is drawn up following the interviews, must be in such manner that the right to choose is not taken away from the Congregation.
- (d) The Convener of the Vacancy Commission, or another ministerial member of the Vacancy Commission, shall act as Chairman.
- (e) It may be appropriate to ask questions concerning matters that are specific to Kirk Session under Code Pars 35ff. These include:
 - Sacramental Discipline;
 - Times of service or number of services on a Sunday;
 - The merits or demerits of a particular type of organisation or group that the Kirk Session would be responsible for e.g. BB, GB, Bowling Club, Choir, Praise Group, House Groups;
 - Attitude towards services in connection with the Loyal Orders or the Masonic Order, including what may be carried/worn into Church;
 - The delivery of pastoral care;
 - Inter-church worship and relationships.

- (f) It may be appropriate to ask questions concerning other matters not specified above but which may be important locally. These include:
- Preaching patterns – e.g. topic, text, expository, lectionary;
 - Style of worship – e.g. use of liturgy, congregational participation;
 - Music – issues around use of organ and/or other instruments, contemporary songs, traditional hymns and psalms;
 - Marriage – personal criteria used by the candidate in deciding who to join in marriage.
- (g) Candidates should be given opportunity to indicate their position on matters important to them, which may not have been raised by Kirk Session.

3. Interview by Hearing Committee

- (a) Interviews by a Hearing Committee are not obligatory, nor are they necessary to fulfil the remit of a Hearing Committee, which is appointed in some circumstances to carry out more conveniently the role of the Congregation in hearing candidates.
- (b) If a Hearing Committee wishes to interview, then it should take care to observe all the guidelines at **1. General** above, as well as those that follow under this section.
- (c) The purpose of a Hearing Committee interview by must be understood. A Hearing Committee must not trespass in areas that are the responsibility of Kirk Session, including those undertaken in drawing up a list for hearing. A Hearing Committee may be appointed (i) to hear candidates and report back to the Congregation, or (ii) to recommend a sole nominee to be heard directly by the Congregation before a call is decided on (Code Par 194(4)).
- In both cases the Hearing Committee will either report that it is unable to bring in a recommendation, or it will bring forward a name. If a candidate is being recommended, a brief report from the interview, agreed by the candidate, and approved by the Vacancy Commission, may be read when the Congregation meet to decide on a Call. (Code Par 195(3)). This report will be factual, perhaps giving information about the candidate's home background, education and career before entering the ministry, whether married and if there is any family (although it is not necessary to give any of this information). While some further matters about which it may be appropriate to ask questions are noted at 'e' and 'f' below, the answers should only be used to help the Hearing Committee decide on a recommendation: neither they nor impressions from the service heard should be reported to the Congregation. The Code is clear that the Hearing Committee is to report the *result* of hearing candidates (Code Par 194(4)(b)).
- (d) The Convener of the Vacancy Commission, or another ministerial member of the Vacancy Commission, or failing them, the Chairman of the Hearing Committee shall act as Chairman.
- (e) The Chairman must ensure that the Hearing Committee does not discuss matters with candidates which are specific to Kirk Session. This means that it is inappropriate to ask questions concerning matters listed above under 2d.

- (f) While the Minister is responsible to Presbytery for the conduct of public worship, it may be appropriate to ask questions concerning matters connected with public worship. This includes preaching patterns, style of worship, music, and things relating to the service that has just been 'heard'.
- (g) While the delivery of pastoral care is the responsibility of Kirk Session, it may be appropriate to ask candidates about their own personal approach – for example how they prioritise, the use of prayer and Scripture in visiting, the conduct of funerals.

ASSESSMENTS ON FULLY CONSTITUTED CHURCH EXTENSION

CHARGES – 2015

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

<i>Church</i>	<i>Fully Constituted</i>	<i>Families (†)</i>	<i>Assess 2014 £</i>	<i>Spec. Sources £</i>	<i>Income* £</i>
Movilla	2001	210 (179)	268	75,635	142,386
New Mossley	2005	116 (75)	113	37,862	112,414
Ballysally	2007	150 (86)	129	48,826	176,054

† Families contributing at least £5.00 per annum

* As from 2012 Income includes all Organisational Income

ASSESSMENTS ON CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES – 2015

<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>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Taughmonagh	-	13,249	3,975	1,987	1,325	795	8,650

LICENTIATES – 2015

Licentiates are paid 75% of the Ministerial Minimum = £17,913 plus House Allowance pa (single - £702; married - £1,002) if applicable. House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and CMF

FIRST YEAR – From 1 January, 2015

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i> £	<i>Minister's Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregation's Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i>
Bloomfield	† JT Blue	30.05.14	37,200 (25%)	9,651	8,964
Greenwell Street	† GW Clinton	22.06.14	36,751 (30%)	11,376	7,239
Ballylinney	* RS Hamilton	06.06.14	29,500 (25%)	7,876	11,039
Glendermott	† MTW McMaw	08.06.14	35,032 (30%)	10,861	7,754
1st Ballymena	* David McMillan	01.06.14	37,000 (30%)	11,601	7,314
Ballygilbert	* JP McWatters	08.06.14	33,981 (30%)	10,695	8,220
Harmony Hill	† SJ Moore	22.06.14	37,499 (30%)	11,601	7,014
Whiteabbey	† JM Warburton	08.06.14	37,137 (30%)	11,492	7,123

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

No House Allowance - House provided by Congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES – 2015

Licentiates are paid 80% of the Ministerial Minimum = £19,107 plus House Allowance pa (single - £702; married - £1,002) if applicable. House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and CMF

SECOND YEAR – From 1 January, 2015

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i> £	<i>Minister's Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregation's Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i>
Ballyclare	* AR Adger	26.05.13	35,200 (32%)	11,765	8,344
Christ Church, Dundonald	† GJ Ball	09.06.13	29,012 (27%)	8,184	11,625
Raloo	† CMS Barron	16.06.13	19,633 (27%)	5,512	7,034
Magheramorne	† CMS Barron	16.06.13	11,366 (27%)	3,209	4,054
First Armagh	* PG Cleland	09.06.13	33,239 (s/a)	10,172	9,937
Eglinton	* DR Cromie	09.06.13	27,400 (s/a)	2,500	17,609
Ballysillan	* SD Currie	16.06.13	28,000 (32%)	9,461	10,648
Legacurry	* NW Duddy	26.05.13	35,072 (32%)	11,724	8,385
O C Randalstown	* RJ Edgar	16.06.13	32,034 (27%)	9,150	10,959
Kilbride	† MPR Fryer	16.06.13	35,000 (32%)	11,551	8,258
Abbot's Cross	* MA Johnston	26.05.13	30,452 (s/a)	8,001	12,108
First Antrim	† PWA McClelland	09.06.13	39,538 (27%)	11,026	8,783
First Bangor	* JS McCrea	02.06.13	38,600 (32%)	12,853	7,256
Fisherwick	* Gary McDowell	09.06.13	37,000 (32%)	12,341	7,768
Ballygowan	* DT McNeill	02.06.13	37,750 (32%)	12,581	7,528
High Kirk	* SW Orr	16.06.13	40,661 (32%)	13,513	6,596
Ballywalter	* KJ Ward	16.06.13	26,782 (s/a)	6,501	13,608
Immanuel	† RJ Watt	31.05.13	31,000 (27%)	8,721	11,088

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

No House Allowance - House provided by Congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES – 2015

Licentiates are paid 85% of the Ministerial Minimum = £20,301 plus House Allowance pa (single - £702; married - £1,002) if applicable. House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and CMF

THIRD YEAR – From 1 January, 2015

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i> £	<i>Minister's Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregation's Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i>
Dungannon	* JA Dunn (to 31.1.15)	17.06.12	36,622 (32%)	1,018	757
Fitzroy	† J Abernethy-Barkley	27.05.12	33,737 (27%)	9,460	11,543
Newmills	† Andrew Boreland	10.06.12	29,147 (27%)	8,221	12,782
Hamilton Road	* DP Burke	02.06.12	43,700 (32%)	14,485	6,818
Dundonald	* Stephen Cowan (to 31.1.15)	27.05.12	40,500 (32%)	1,122	653
Ballyhenry	* MW Dodds	17.06.12	28,784 (s/a)	0	21,303
Moira	* SM Hamilton	10.06.12	31,000 (32%)	10,421	10,882
Cooke Centenary	* CE Heron	17.06.12	29,000 (32%)	9,781	11,522
West Church, Ballymena	* Philip Kerr	10.06.12	40,900 (s/a)	10,589	10,714
1st Newtownards	* Edward Kirwan (to 31.1.15)	10.06.12	32,670 (32%)	913	862
1st Carrickfergus	* RE McCormick	10.06.12	40,948 (32%)	13,604	7,699
Richhill	* Ben Preston	10.06.12	37,117 (32%)	12,378	8,925
McQuiston Memorial	* Gareth Simpson	24.06.12	33,000 (32%)	11,061	10,242

* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

s/a Special Arrangement

No House Allowance - House provided by Congregation

ASSOCIATE MINISTERS – 2015

<i>Name</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Salary Paid</i> £	<i>Recovery</i> £	<i>House Allowance Paid</i> £	<i>Employer Pension NIC Costs</i> £
BJ Walker	Knock	27,030.00	27,030.00	n/a	9,342.00
DW Leach	Hamilton Road	23,884.00	23,884.00	3,000.00	8,150.00
RH Houston	High Kirk	23,884.00	23,884.00	2,000.00	8,150.00
AD Mullan	Mourne	26,010.00	26,010.00	n/a	8,956.00
LA Wilson (to 17.03.15)					
	First Comber	4,993.00	4,617.00	213.00	1,937.00
GA McCracken	Ballywillan	23,884.00	23,884.00	2,000.00	8,150.00
JD McCaughey (from 09.01.15)	Cuningham Memorial	26,149.00	26,149.00	n/a	9,027.00

Following the change in Basis of Assessment for Congregations, there are no longer assessments on associate salaries for CMF, RMF, WMF and PDF. Congregations are however now charged full Pension costs for their associate, although during the first four years of the implementation of the new Basis of Assessment, rebates are paid for all existing arrangements to ensure that the additional cost does not exceed 10% in the first year and this initial rebate is tapered for a further three years.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the guidelines on the Auxiliary Ministry Scheme be adopted.
2. That the guidelines for interviews conducted by Hearing Committees be adopted.
3. That the guidelines regarding seeking Leave to Call and the appointment of Associate Ministers be adopted.
4. That the proposals re Ministerial Expenses based on a 2-part system made up of (a) reimbursement at HMRC rates for all travel related expenses and (b) an expense allowance set by the Linkage Commission for all other expenses, be approved, and that the Linkage Commission be instructed to present full proposals for the introduction of this system to the 2016 General Assembly.
5. That CMF be authorised to pay inadequate expenses grants towards expenses incurred by Ministers, up to a limit of NI £5,985 or RoI €10,000, within the terms of resolution 3, p 70, General Assembly Minutes 1988.
6. That the updated Form of Call (regular and part-time) be noted.
7. That the updated guidance notes on Protracted Illness be noted.
8. That the Report of the Union Commission be received.

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 193(4) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that the wording of Par 193(4) be deleted and replaced with the following wording:

The following conditions shall apply to a Minister being called and inducted as an Associate Minister in a Congregation.

Normally the cost of full salary shall be met by the Congregation and the salary will not be augmented by CMF.

The appointment shall be reviewable on a term set by the Linkage Commission. An appointment as Associate Minister may, after twelve months service, be terminated by mutual agreement, or by two months notice given by the Presbytery or by the Minister of the Congregation, the Kirk Session, or the Associate Minister, subject to the approval of the Presbytery.

In the event of a vacancy in the pastorate of a Congregation in which the Associate Minister is serving, one month's notice offering resignation shall be given upon the installation of a new Minister though, upon the request of Minister and Session and with the consent of the Associate Minister, the appointment may be continued.

WILLIAM J HENRY

COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS

Convener: Rev Dr GRAHAM CONNOR

Secretary: Rev DH THOMPSON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council supports the life and witness of local Congregations throughout Ireland. An early goal is to seek to establish strong two-way communication between Congregations and Presbyteries and the Council, its Committees, Panels and Task Groups. The Council will focus on supporting and enabling Congregations to be **fruitful** in the Lord's work. The Council's alternative presentation at this year's Assembly will give each delegate an early opportunity to be involved in the process of beginning to shape the Council's agenda according to the expressed needs of the Church.

2. The Council has met on two occasions in 2015 and sought to establish the beginning of a listening process, both to God and the wider Church.

3. It is greatly indebted to its staff team who worked tirelessly in the huge changeover from their previous roles and offices, to become part of a new team in new surroundings. It thanks them for going beyond what could be reasonably expected in helping the Council begin with energy and vision. It continues to work hard at building one team of Conveners and staff.

4. The Council believes that if it is to be of service to local Congregations it needs to build better communication pathways between Congregations and the Council. It therefore hopes to concentrate next autumn and winter on a process of listening to the voices within Congregations and Presbyteries. It needs to hear what the real centre of our Church, i.e. our Congregations, thinks about our life and witness. Only then can it help and encourage the life of the Church.

5. The Council believes that under the Spirit of God, it has been led to focus its energies on encouraging Congregations to be **fruitful**. John 14 vv 4-5 *'Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.'*

6. The Council sees fruitfulness defined in 1 Corinthians 3 vv 5-9. Fruitfulness depends on the 'soils' of our local congregational situations, the 'gardeners' God has appointed to serve in the local Congregation and community, and the 'weather', the spiritual blowing of the wind in God's sovereign plan for his glory.

7. Fruitfulness is more than faithfulness in a changing world, less than success in the eyes of a superficial world, always the growth of a Kingdom that is not of this world.

'Paul spoke of the pastoral nurture of Congregations as a form of gardening. He told the Corinthian Christians they were 'God's field' in which some Ministers planted, some watered and some reaped. The gardening metaphor shows that both success and faithfulness by themselves are insufficient criteria for evaluating ministry. Gardeners must be faithful in their work, but they must also be skilful, or the garden will fail. Yet in the end the degree of the success of the garden (or the ministry) is determined by factors beyond the control of the gardener. The level of fruitfulness varies due to 'soil conditions' (that is, some groups of people have a greater hardness of heart than others) and 'weather conditions' (that is, the work of God's Sovereign Spirit) as well... When fruitfulness is our criterion for evaluation, we are held accountable but not crushed by the expectation that a certain number of lives will be changed dramatically under our ministry.'

[Center Church, Tim Keller (Zondervan)]

8. Fruitfulness is to be evident in the life of the believer, the family, the Church and community. However, at different times and in different places it will yield a harvest in a variety of ways.

'Jesus never, ever, speaks about success or failure in the life of the Church. He talks about fruitfulness or a lack of fruit. That fruitfulness will be evident if the branch is connected to the vine. However, it may be evidenced in different ways in different communities at different times according to the community and its context in wider society. It may be seen in growth in character and the quality of discipleship. It may be seen in an increase in numbers. It may be seen in the transformation of society. It may be in any combination of the above.

Jesus seems to imply that, over time, growth and fruitfulness in all these ways will be normal but that no kind of growth is meant to be continual or steady. The picture of the vine is much more gentle and sustainable than the language of growth drawn from factories and big business. The fruitfulness we are to see in the branches of the vine will be seasonal. It is likely that, in God's economy, seasons of bearing fruit in the life of any local Church will alternate with seasons of being pruned and cut back. A season of expansion may need one of consolidation. Jesus even says that it is precisely when we are fruitful that we will experience this sense of then being pruned so that this particular branch may be even more fruitful. A season of growth in numbers in a local Congregation may need in God's husbandry, to be followed by a season of consolidation as those new Christians learn to be more like Jesus and like the community they have joined, and become in turn a blessing to the society around them.

So, like our Lord, we should be both generous and gentle when we look for fruit. It may be there in different ways, and it may not be there all the time. Seeing fruit will sometimes be a process of discernment.'

[Jesus People: What the Church should do next,
Steven Croft (Church House Publishing)]

9. The Council sees its role as helping Congregations see growth in biblical terms i.e. in context, in depth, in numbers, seasonally, along with examining the potential of growth and anticipating what its next phase might look like.

10. The Council exists as the servant of the Congregations of the Church, not their master. It exists to help resource Congregations for fruitfulness.

11. In Isaiah 5 vv 1-2 we are given a picture of God as Covenant vine grower:

I will sing for the one I love

a song about his vineyard:

My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside.

He dug it up and cleared it of stones

and planted it with the choicest vines.

He built a watchtower in it and cut out a wine press as well.

Then he looked for a crop of good grapes,

but it yielded only bad fruit.

12. Reflecting on these verses, the Council is aware that Congregations are at different stages in the expression of their life and witness so that a ‘one size fits all strategy’ is bound to be unhelpful. Nevertheless, a number of clear areas emerge from the imagery in these verses, including the following which are not sequential, but often concurrent:

- Approach to **ministry** – Pictured as a song we sing for the one we love about His vineyard. In each Congregational context the words are the same but the tune differs according to situation. It is the tune which ‘carries’ the words. Often our problem is that we know the words of the song, but not the tune. We are a denomination strong in our understanding of the Biblical content of ministry and mission, but contexts differ and need to be taken seriously.
- Addressing **motivation** - Pictured as digging beneath the surface, turning the soil, clearing obstacles. These tasks are often necessary prerequisites for fruitful ministry and mission.
- Applying the right **methods** – Pictured as planting the carefully chosen vines that carry ministry and mission.
- Arriving at the appropriate **model** – Pictured as gaining a necessary understanding of the infrastructure that needs to be built to sustain congregational life (‘watchtowers’) and witness (‘wine presses’).
- Anticipating the **movement** of God’s Spirit – Pictured as looking, praying and expecting a good crop.
- Appreciating God’s **mandate** – Understood as God’s longer term, redemptive purposes. These are often more than we can see at any given moment. Israel is a disappointment in these verses, but it can be viewed in redemptive history as part of the Old Testament anticipation of the ‘True Vine’ to come in the person of Christ.

13. These principles of congregational life and witness are what the Council desires to further test and explore with the Church as a framework for moving forward in our understanding of how fruitful ministry and mission occurs.

14. The work of the Council is vast, and will require a large number of Committees, Panels and Task Groups. The basic structure is in place and further necessary formation of Panels and Task Groups will be rolled out over the next few months to enable the Council to become fully functioning. The appendix to the report illustrates some of the work passed on to the Council from previous Boards and Committees. It has sought to be careful in seeking to understand and absorb this work so that nothing important is lost in transition. Over the next period of time, it will assess the effectiveness of these endeavours in the light of its call to serve Congregations.

15. The Committees are already grappling with the task of looking at the work they have inherited and the possibility of future development. In each Committee, the following questions have been asked:

- What are the emerging challenges and/or opportunities for each Committee?
- What might the next step be for each Committee?
- What might a medium term outcome look like?
- Are there additional particular short term pieces of work?

16. The beginning of that journey is in outline as follows:

GLOBAL MISSION INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

- **Opportunity** – To highlight ‘Fruitful Congregational Global Mission Involvement’ through the 2016/17 Fit for Purpose Theme: A People of Global Concern.

DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE

- **Opportunity** – To listen to, and reflect on, Discipleshaping Church Conference.

YOUTH, CHILDREN’S AND FAMILY STRATEGY AND COORDINATION COMMITTEE

- **Challenge** – To define a flexible, but intentional, framework to help Congregations gain an overview of 0-25 ministry and mission in the context of a ‘Church family’ umbrella.

LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

- **Challenge** – To identify the big issues in the following areas of leadership development:
 - (a) Congregational leadership in ‘Presbyterian form’ – facilitative leadership in community
 - (b) Young adults
 - (c) Congregational leaders
 - (d) Elders
 - (e) Ministers
- **Particular short-term piece of work** – review the VIP scheme and SPUD

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

- **Challenge** – To explore an emerging theme of how Congregations can build on existing contacts and relationships to present an appropriate challenge to faith.

PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

- **Opportunity** – To reflect on the in production Fit for Purpose 2015/16 resource ‘A Caring Fellowship’ as the current, popular

level, denominational commentary on our understanding of pastoral care. To hold this in tension/balance with the complementary perspective of pastoral equipping and see what wider vision of pastoral work emerges.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

- **Challenge** – To define a holistic remit for resourcing Congregations for public worship.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S STRATEGY AND COORDINATION COMMITTEE

- **Opportunity** – This Committee currently comprises the membership of the previous Central Committee of *Presbyterian Women*. A Task Group is developing plans for a new structure fully integrating *Presbyterian Women* as an essential part of an overall strategy for the development of women's ministry in the local Congregation. This will be in place not later than the General Assembly of June 2016

17. Meanwhile *Presbyterian Women* continues to play a vital role within the life of the denomination. The theme for 2015-16, 'Here is love', was launched at the Annual Meeting in May. As always, local groups will be supported in developing the theme through the content of a Resource Pack.

18. Finance raised plays a vital role in continuing to support the mission of the Church, providing substantial funding for Deaconesses and overseas missionaries as well as the work of South Belfast Friendship House. This year's Home Mission Project will contribute to the development of the facilities in Mullingar Presbyterian Church and Aaron House Residential Care Home. The Overseas Project will support the work of James and Heather Cochrane as they continue the work of Church Planting in Porto, Portugal.

19. As *Presbyterian Women* integrates more fully into the work of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, it encourages local Congregations to continue to see and develop the work of their PW groups as a vital part of their overall ministry and mission.

20. *'Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.'* John 14 vv 4-5 . The most significant thing the Council can do is to encourage the Church to utterly depend on the Lord. To that end, this summer it is producing a resource which can be used by Congregations to stimulate prayer among members for God's anointing of the life and witness of their Church. This material can be used at any appropriate time within the life of the Congregation and will be available primarily in digital form. Further details will be available at the General Assembly.

21. Please continue to pray for the new Council and send it any information which you believe will help it better understand the lives of the Congregations of our Church.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS APPENDIX

Inherited work from previous structures as initially reassigned to Council for Congregational Life and Witness thematic Committees

PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

Pastoral Equipping – core work reflecting the agenda arising directly from Congregations

- Continued promotion of the three models of pastoral care
- Continued promotion of the existing resources on pastoral care
- A link to the disciple-making agenda around pastoral equipping as an aspect of pastoral ministry

Specialist Services – reporting to the Committee annually

- Ministry of Healing
- Remarriage Advisory Group
- PCI Counselling
- PCI Family Holiday

Pastoral Issues – generally generated from elsewhere in the structures e.g. Council for Social Witness

- Disability and inclusion
- Next steps in ‘Breaking the Silence’ as a broad heading for dealing with mental health issues and the Church
- Bereavement and care of the elderly

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Mission Development

- Aspects of the work of the previous Board of Mission in Ireland delivered by the Mission Development Officer

Focus on mission in Presbyterian and Irish context

- Rural mission
- Urban mission
- Mission as a minority community in a still divided society
- Evangelism in contemporary culture

Work under age specific categories

- Children – Little Resources
- Youth - MAD
- Young adult – the Mix
- Summer Teams

Congregational social witness as an aspect of outreach

LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Elders

- Elders Training Panel to be set up to build on existing work

Ministers

- Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills Course
- Elements of Ministerial In Service Training

Work under age/ministry specific categories

- Youth and Children's Ministry Courses
- Regional training for youth, children and family ministry
- Mission Outreach Training (MOT) for Holiday Bible Club leaders
- SPUD (General Assembly, Regional Youth Assemblies and Congregational Grow Your Own SPUDs)
- Volunteer Intern Programme (VIP) a training development programme for young adults in congregational setting
- PCI Summer Team's Leaders Training
- Academies (Worship, Sports, Tech) specialist training aimed at being applied in local congregational life and witness

Training for Ministry (in conjunction with Union Theological College)

- Early task to map existing input of Council for Congregational Life and Witness into Ministerial training and begin to examine its effectiveness.

DISCIPLESHIP COMMITTEE

Training and Resources

- Material that needs ongoing promotion e.g. Prepared to Serve

Discipleshaping Church

- Follow up to Discipleshaping Church Conference 23rd April 2015

Planned Giving

- Material that needs ongoing promotion
- Animation (completion summer 2015)
- Panel has been reformed under the new arrangements with view to concluding its work in June 2016

Good Relations

- Previous agenda to be picked up
- Panel to be reformed under the new arrangements

Children's Ministry

- Kids Big Day Out and Little Resources

Youth Ministry

- Close to Home – Family discipleship

Young Adults Ministry

- The Word

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Support for Congregations in praise

- Mentoring scheme for musicians
- Musical arrangements service

Events

- Worship Conferencing, roadshows, Big Sing

Worship Academy

(specialist training aimed at being applied in local congregational life and witness)

GLOBAL MISSION INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Support for Congregations sending teams overseas

- Prepared to Go Training Day

Ignite Overseas Summer Team

Overseas Projects

- Overseas dimension of the Youth and Children's Project

Advice to Congregations about overseas partnership

Administration of the Concorde Fund

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations and Presbyteries to prioritise and facilitate a process of engagement with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness during 2015/16.

2. That the General Assembly note the interim arrangements for integrating PW into the structures of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and authorise the General Council to approve final arrangements not later than June 2016.

3. That the Report of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness be received.

COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY

Convener: Rev JNI McNEELY
Secretary: THE DEPUTY CLERK

Executive Summary of the Council's Report

1. The Council for Training in Ministry operates through three committees and six panels, five of which were specified under the Structures Review Report of 2014.

2. The **Ministerial Studies and Development Committee** looks after all aspects of selection, training and ongoing development of full-time Ministers and operates with an Assignments Panel.

3. The **Union Theological College Management Committee** is responsible for all management of UTC and operates with a Curriculum Panel and a Property, Finance and Administration Panel.

4. The **Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee** primarily considers requests from Ministers and Licentiates of other Churches in regard to service within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

5. The **Deaconess Selection and Training Panel** oversees the selection and initial training of Deaconesses including supervising of the probationary period.

6. The **Accredited Preacher and Auxiliary Minister Panel** handles all aspects of the selection, training and on-going development of Auxiliary Ministers and Accredited Preachers.

7. The **Pastoral Care of Manse Families Panel** is responsible for the development of pastoral care for Ministers and their families and the provision of support for manse families.

8. The **Conciliation Panel** provides a service of conciliation and a team of trained people to assist in situations where conciliation is required.

9. The sixth panel is one established by the Council: the **Ministry Formation Panel** which has a remit equivalent to that of the previous Standing Panel on Ministry Formation as explained in paragraph 15 of the report.

10. A **Qualifications Panel** considers the academic merit of degrees awarded by a university or college not normally recognised under the law of the Church and reports directly to the General Assembly.

Convener's Introduction

11. The Council has been primarily continuing the work of the former Board of Christian Training in regard to training of students for the ordained ministry and the training of Church members under the Accredited Preachers Scheme and the new Auxiliary Ministry arrangements.

12. The Council recognises the significance of Supervising Ministers in the training of Assistant Ministers and it is intended that the training of supervisors will be developed and in the future there may be more scope for a greater concentration in 'on the job' training of Student Assistants.

13. Training in ministry is much more than preparing people for ordained ministry and this is recognised by the training of Deaconesses, Accredited Preachers and Auxiliary Ministers. Ministry in the 21st century is changing and the form of ministry in the future may be more diverse. Students trained for the ministry of the PCI may not all end up in traditional charges and specialised training for certain forms of ministry may be necessary. Ministers may require specific training for inner city ministries or for Church planting, for team ministries or for specialised ministries in rural Ireland.

14. The Council recognises the important role that Presbyteries have in the selection of people for training in ministry. Ministers and Presbyteries should be mindful of the types of ministry that are available to members who are inquiring about serving in the Church in a specialised capacity. There are options available and when interviews are being conducted it may be that a potential candidate for training might not always have the gift profile for ordained ministry, but may be suited for one of the other ministries that a person can be trained for under the Council.

15. The Ministry Formation Panel receives reports on the progress of students for the ordained ministry and will when necessary add specific requirements to a candidate's pathway, such as additional courses or an extra year. It may be necessary in exceptional cases to suspend a student's studies or recommend to the General Assembly that a Ministry Candidate's pathway be terminated. It is important to note that students are on pathways of training and that it should not be assumed that acceptance as a student for the ordained ministry is a guarantee that all elements of ministry formation will be achieved.

STUDENTS' BURSARY FUND

The Rev Mark Russell, Students' Bursary Fund Agent, writes:

16. The Students' Bursary Fund exists to make financial provision for students for the ordained ministry and their families, during their time of study.

17. In the academic year Sept 2014 – June 2015 there are 49 students in receipt of grants. The cost to the Fund of grants, fees and all other expenses for this period is £634,787.84. This is being met through offerings at services of licensing, ordination and installation of ministers and elders, personal and congregational donations, and by congregational assessment. Thanks are due to all members of the Church who generously support the Students' Bursary Fund.

18. All those who have responsibility for planning services of licensing, ordination and installation are asked to ensure that full use is made of the SBF literature available from reception in Assembly Buildings, especially the Gift Aid envelope. Past experience has shown that where literature is handed out at an earlier service, those attending the special service are more likely to use a Gift Aid envelope.

MINISTERIAL STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

19. The Committee seeks to fulfil its broad responsibility which comprises overseeing: the selection process and college years of students for ordained ministry; Licentiate training; in-service training for ordained Ministers (including sabbaticals); pre-retirement courses for Ministers. It met on three occasions since the transition from the Board structure to the new Council structure. The Panels and Task Groups set up under the Committee have been meeting and are making progress in their areas of responsibility.

20. The new Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development (DMSD), the Rev Dr David Allen, took up post on 1st March 2015. The Director of Ministerial Studies (DMS), the Rev Ronnie Hetherington, continued to act as Secretary to the Committee until 31st March 2015 and the Committee wishes to record its appreciation to Mr Hetherington for agreeing to serve during this time of transition and overlap when the new DMSD was settling in. Indeed, the Committee wishes to record its deep appreciation to him for the measure of expertise and experience he brought to the role of DMS through his pastoral sensitivity, wise counsel and administrative ability over the last ten years, and wishes him God's blessing in his retirement. The Committee also assures Dr Allen of its prayers as he now acts as Secretary to the Committee and seeks to advise prospective candidates and fulfil his duties in relation to students in training according to the Regulations of the General Assembly.

21. In the academic year 2014-15 there were 52 students under the care of Presbyteries, as listed in the appended Schedule (see Appendix 1). This is in addition to 2 students training at Union Theological College for Deaconess service.

Accredited Preacher Course Requirement for Ministry Applicants

22. As agreed at the 2013 General Assembly, from 2016 it will be a requirement that all who make application to the Council for Training in Ministry for training for the ordained Ministry will normally have completed the Accredited Preachers Course (General Assembly Reports 2013, p 214).

Revised Application and Assessment Process

23. The Ministerial Training Review Task Group (MTRTG) continues to monitor this process with particular reference to the Applicants Information and Consultation Day and two Interview Days.

Vocational Consultant

24. *Healthlink360* has been engaged by the Council for Training in Ministry as the new vocational consultant, initially for one year but with the hope and expectation that this arrangement will continue into the future.

Interviews

25. The interviews of 9 candidates were held in Union Theological College under the revised Application and Assessment process on Monday 30th

and Tuesday 31st March 2015. The Interviewing Panel comprised: Ministers – the Revs. Amanda Best, Robin Brown, Andrew Faulkner, Nigel McCullough, Ian McNie, Colin Morrison, Ivan Patterson, Alan Thompson; Elders – Mr Joe Campbell, Dr Lena Morrow. Also present were the Rev Noble McNeely (Convener CTM), the Rev Jim Stothers (Secretary CTM), the Rev Dr Bill Parker (Convener MSDC), the Rev Dr David Allen (DMSD) and the Rev Ronnie Hetherington (DMS) and representatives of Healthlink360. Under the revised process 2 Panels interviewed the 9 candidates. The Panels had previously had opportunity to meet and get to know those they had the responsibility to interview at the Applicants Information and Consultation Day in December 2014.

26. Having completed the interviewing process, 6 candidates are being nominated to the General Assembly by the Council for Training in Ministry. As a result of the 2014 Interview Procedure, one applicant was invited to meet his Sub-Panel again in 2015. Having conducted a further interview on Thursday 3rd March, the Panel concluded that he should be nominated to the General Assembly this year.

Restructuring of the Training for Ministry Course

27. As outlined in the closing report of the Board of Christian Training, the Committee has noted the results of the discussion from the Board Conference of October 2014 concerning the Restructuring of the Training for Ministry Course and will progress this matter.

MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT

Post-Ordination Training

28. The 5 year programme for Post-Ordination training, overseen by the DMSD, continues to roll out.

Pre-Retirement Residential

29. This annual residential seeks to equip ordained Ministers and their spouses as they anticipate the transition from full-time ministry to retirement. It is open to ordained Ministers and their spouses from the year in which the Minister reaches the age of 63. A residential was held in November 2014 and the Committee wishes to express its appreciation to the facilitators, the Very Rev Dr John and Mrs Rosemary Dunlop, the Rev Bill and Mrs Margaret Sanderson, and the Very Rev Dr David and Mrs Hazel Clarke. Another residential is planned for 2015. Dr John and Mrs Rosemary Dunlop are stepping down as residential facilitators and the Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to them for their commitment to this key ministry offered to those anticipating retirement.

WJM PARKER, Convener

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

30. The total student enrolment for the 2014-15 academic year is 212, of whom 48 are ministry students and 2 are Deaconess students.

Curriculum Panel

31. Proposed changes to the academic calendar at QUB in 2016-17 and the implications for courses and methods of assessment at Union continue to be a focus of discussion. There has been a positive response from the Faculty to the proposed changes which include an earlier start to both semesters, the elimination of exams at the end of the first semester, and the inclusion of a period of 'employability enhancement' for all students at QUB. The possibility of second semester teaching being completed by the end of March opens opportunities for the May/June period, such as placements or the offering of ministry courses as intensive weeks of study.

32. Curriculum changes are also a focus of discussion, with some changes having been agreed in the assessment and delivery of a number of modules within the Institute of Theology, while discussions continue with the other constituent college on other proposed changes.

33. The College is undergoing its periodic review by QUB, including the Memorandum of Agreement. It is hoped a number of issues can be discussed and resolved that will lead to better co-operation between the University and the College. Among the issues identified is the question of work visas for international students and negotiations with the UK Border Agency.

34. Following a productive QAA training and review meeting attended by the Principal, a QAA Action Team has been created and is working on the preparation and monitoring of a Quality Action Plan. The Action Plan was presented and a number of the actions discussed. A proposal was approved to survey members of Kirk Sessions in Congregations where student assistants are serving with a view to gaining some feedback on the effectiveness of the training course for ordained ministry.

35. The results of the evaluations of the third *Church in the Public Square Conference* on the theme 'Living and Dying Well' were circulated and these were largely positive. Credit is due to all concerned in the organisation and delivery of the Conference. Such events are not only valuable in their own right but facilitate the College in making a vital contribution to issues of concern in the wider community.

36. During the first semester of the 2014-15 academic year Prof SN Williams was on sabbatical leave.

Finance, Property and Administration

37. Stonework, Phase 1. While the quality of the restoration work has been good, progress has been frustratingly slow. The original completion date of 21st November 2014 stretched to 30th April, although the discovery of dry rot in a portion of the Library roof didn't help. The Quantity Surveyor estimated that the contract may end up some 2.5% over budget. The increase includes expenditure for the unexpected dry rot repairs, plus earlier costs associated with the sourcing

of suitable stone. However, the dry rot work is 45% grant assisted as are the additional stonework items, so the additional grant should cancel out most of the additional cost.

38. Stonework, Phase 2A. A Tender of £336,900 has been accepted. Including VAT and fees the overall estimate is £454,815. Although the tender was submitted to NIEA seeking grant aid, it is unlikely that any grants will be available for phase 2A. The Committee is deeply grateful to the Trustees who have agreed in principle to make a grant from their Discretionary Fund, should no NIEA grant be awarded, to match what the NIEA grant might have been.

39. Work on reinstating the Basement Book Store following water ingress started in mid-February and the books were scheduled to be returned by Easter. The Committee believes that all the costs associated with the entire water seepage incident will be borne by our Insurers.

40. Deficiencies in IT provision continue to cause frustration for both staff and students. The Committee acknowledges that PCI's IT Department works under constant pressure, and the Committee is grateful for all that it does for the College. However, the Committee continues to be seriously concerned that the IT Department is seriously under-resourced, an issue that affects not just UTC but the whole Church. It was agreed to write both to the IT Panel and to the Priorities Committee highlighting the continuing concern of the College re IT service provision and supporting the allocation of additional appropriate resources for the IT Department.

41. QAA is changing the scope, content and methodology of how it carries out assessments. In particular it is introducing Higher Education Review (Plus). As part of this new approach QAA now require that a Financial Sustainability, Management and Governance (FSMG) check be carried out. Steps are being taken to ensure that the College will be compliant. However, to return to IT issues, at the time of writing the College falls short in significant areas of IT, and this was noted by the QAA team at their last monitoring visit as an area to be addressed. The College is committed through its Memorandum of Agreement with QUB, and by standards set by the QAA, to providing a satisfactory level of IT support to students.

42. **Personnel:** administrative staff change has continued into 2015. Mr Ken Brown's appointment as Bursar/Registrar in autumn 2014 following the resignation of Mr Tony Holmes in summer 2014, has helped considerably to ease the burden on other staff, and at the time of writing, the process of filling other vacancies continues.

HA DUNLOP, Convener

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES COMMITTEE

43. The Committee has met once since the restructuring took effect in 2015.

44. One candidate asked to defer their interview to a later time.

45. The Rev Jared Stephens, a Minister of PC(USA) applied in the normal way and was interviewed. The Committee accepted Mr Stephens in the following

terms, “that he successfully completes a 2 year assistantship and relevant studies as agreed by the DMSD and Principal of Union College.” His assignment to an assistantship will be subject to the granting of the appropriate Visa.

46. The Rev Laszlo Orban, Minister of the Hungarian Reformed Church, applied in the normal way and was interviewed. The Committee agreed not to receive him at the current time and that he could apply again in no less than 2 years.

47. The Committee discussed the fee paid to Healthlink360 for the profiles that are compiled for each applicant. It was agreed that normally the candidate will be responsible for this fee in future.

48. The Committee discussed a 2014 General Assembly resolution from the Overseas Board, “That the General Assembly request the Committee on Reception of Ministers and Licentiates to prayerfully review current guidelines with the aim of facilitating and encouraging gifted Ministers and Missionaries with global Church perspectives to serve with PCI on the island of Ireland.” As a result of this a review of application procedures will take place in the coming months.

ANDREW FAULKNER, Convener

DEACONESS SELECTION AND TRAINING PANEL

49. The Panel is mindful of the partnership that exists in the selection, training, assignment and financing of Deaconesses, and is seeking to move forward in co-operation with the Council for Mission in Ireland, the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and PW. Informal meetings have taken place among office-bearers of all four agencies in an attempt to enhance the mutual understanding of responsibilities, and develop further the shared ownership that already exists.

50. There are currently three trainee Deaconesses, two are completing their first year of studies at Union Theological College, while the other has been on maternity leave and is yet to commence training.

TD ALLEN, Convener

ACCREDITED PREACHER AND AUXILIARY MINISTRY PANEL

51. The Panel is building on the work done under the Board of Christian Training’s Committee for Training and Resources in regard to the Accredited Preacher Scheme and the Auxiliary Ministry Scheme. It also oversees the content of the Handling the Word Course.

52. To date twenty one people have successfully completed the most recent Accredited Preacher Course and will be accredited at a service on 14th June 2015. In addition, those who successfully complete the current Auxiliary Ministry Course will be recognised at that service and will be available to apply for Auxiliary Ministry posts as they are created.

53. The next Accredited Preacher Course will commence in Union Theological College in January 2016 with applications needing to be in by 4th September 2015. Plans are also being made to hold Accredited Preacher Courses in the North West and Dublin in 2016. The next Auxiliary Ministry Course is also planned for 2016 with applications needing to be in by August 2015.

54. Some minor changes to the content and structure of the Handling the Word Course have been approved and this remains available for Presbyteries to run in consultation with the Rev Dr David Allen (DMSD).

NIGEL McCULLOUGH, Convener

PASTORAL CARE OF MANSE FAMILIES PANEL

55. At the time of writing it is intended to hold two area meetings in late April and early May to bring the Presbytery Chaplains/Pastors together. One will be held in Banbridge and the other in Randalstown. Each meeting is to have a facilitator who will enable people to share the perceived issues and needs within their Presbytery. It is hoped that these people can be brought together twice a year, to learn from and support each other in this important work for God.

56. It is planned to increase the profile of the Panel for the wider Church including:

- an article for the Herald promoting its work and the service it offers;
- a more prominent place on the Church website making it easier to access;
- building relationships with students and Licentiates.

GAJ FARQUHAR, Convener

CONCILIATION PANEL

57. In the autumn of 2014 the Panel recruited and trained 12 new conciliators. The total number of active conciliators is 22 from 12 Presbyteries who receive ongoing training and supervision.

58. The Panel has a steady stream of cases mainly referred by Presbyteries.

JOE CAMPBELL, Convener

APPENDIX 1

SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS

ARDS	Stephen Lowry	Union
	Craig Lynn	Union
	Alan Marsh	Union
	Richard Tregaskis	Union
ARMAGH	Edwin Frazer	Union
	Craig Jackson	Union
BALLYMENA	Jonathan Boyd	Union
	Matthew Boyd	Union
	Ross Kernohan	Union
	Norman Kennedy	Union
NORTH BELFAST	Hanneke Marshall	Union
	Jonathan Newell	Union
SOUTH BELFAST	Andre Alves-Areias	Union
	John Martin	Union
	Brent van der Linde	Union
	Seth Wright	Union

EAST BELFAST	Alan Dickey	Union
	Andrew Downey	Union
	David Gray	Union
	David Kelly	Union
	Steve Kennedy	Union
	Alistair McCracken	Union
	Alan McQuade	Union
CARRICKFERGUS	Ian Cahoon	Union
	Stuart Hawthorne	Union
	Robert Orr	Union
COLERAINE & LIMAVADY	Alan Burke	Union
	Robert McClure	Union
DERRY & DONEGAL	John Torrens	Union
	Jonny McKane	Union
DOWN	Michael McCormick	Union
DROMORE	Robin Aicken	Union
	James Maguire	Union
	Philip Poots	Union
DUBLIN & MUNSTER	John Brogan	Union
	Richard Cronin	Union
	David Curran	Union
	Marty Gray	Union
	John O'Donnell	Union
	Joanne Smith	Union
	Graham Mullan	Union
IVEAGH	Keith Parke	Union
	Michael Rutledge	WTS
	Jonathan Porter	Union
MONAGHAN	Stephen Kennedy	Union
NEWRY	David Clarke	Union
TYRONE	Philip Leonard	Union

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Council for Training in Ministry, be accepted as students for the Ordained Ministry, and placed under the care of their Presbyteries:

Name	Congregation	Presbytery
Sam Bostock	Kirkpatrick Memorial	East Belfast
Philip Houston	Rathcoole	North Belfast
Richard Morrison	Toberdoney	Route
Campbell Mulvenny	Mourne	Newry
James Porter	Connor	Ballymena
Christopher Wilson	1st Ballymena	Ballymena
Robert McFaul	Ebrington	Derry & Donegal

2. That those reported by Presbyteries as Licentiates and Ministers without charge be retained as such on the Church's current records.

3. That the candidature for the Ordained Ministry of Mr Norman Kennedy be terminated with immediate effect.

4. That following the changes to the Management Structures for Union Theological College as part of the Structures Review agreed in 2014 (Minutes 2014, pp 55f, res 8 and9), the General Assembly note the following as agreed in 2009 (Minutes 2009, p 85, res 12): 'That the General Assembly instruct the Clerk of the General Assembly to draft Overtures to give permanent effect to the agreed changes in the Management Structures for Union Theological College and to take steps to have any necessary amendments enacted to the 1978 Act of Parliament.'

5. That the Rev Dr David Allen, Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development, be appointed to the Faculty of Union Theological College.

6. That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be set to raise £50,000.

7. That the assessment for the Students' Bursary Fund be set to raise £375,000.

8. That the Report of the Council for Training in Ministry be received.

COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Rev STEPHEN SIMPSON

Secretary: Rev DJ BRUCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council for Mission in Ireland- a fresh calling

1. Inspired by Christ's Great Commission, the General Assembly has given the new Council for Mission in Ireland an exciting and challenging remit. Receiving the call of the Lord Jesus Christ to involvement in the mission of God in Ireland and beyond our shores is what we pray will direct, motivate and fuel the service of the new Council.

Council for Mission in Ireland- a new work

2. The Council has been charged by the General Assembly with a new work which is framed by these 6 responsibilities.

- To develop PCI's strategic priorities in all-age mission in Ireland, and plan initiatives at General Assembly level where appropriate.
- To consider new Church development and Church planting.
- To oversee all aspects of the Home and Irish Mission, including the Irish Mission Fund.
- To oversee the deployment and ongoing support of Deaconesses.
- To support a chaplaincy service in the Forces, Hospitals, Hospices, and Prisons.
- To support mission and ministry in Universities and Colleges through chaplaincy services.

Council for Mission in Ireland- continuing work

3. The Council and its representatives will report on the work of the Belfast Panel and the Alternating Ministry Scheme Review, both of which have been referenced in the work of the former Board of Mission in Ireland in previous years. Chaplaincy (in all its forms) is reported here, having previously been under the purview of the Board of Social Witness.

Council for Mission in Ireland- a time of transition

4. Transition is the word which best summarises the flexibility, learning and adaptation that has been necessary during the implementation of the new General Assembly structures. The Council pays tribute and expresses sincere gratitude for the willingness, hard work, wisdom and generosity of spirit of each person involved during this time of transition.

Council for Mission in Ireland- a growing family

5. The Council Family is made up of Home and Urban Mission Ministers, Deaconesses, Irish Mission workers, other Church-based staff supported by CMI grants, Chaplains in Hospital, Prisons, the Forces, Universities and Colleges. It is grateful to God and gives thanks as a Church for every way in which these men and women serve the Lord in Ireland and beyond. A directory of their names and spheres of work is included in Appendix 1 of the Report.

6. The Council is also grateful to the staff of the Mission Department, which serves the needs of the Council with dedication and a passion for God's glory and the building of Christ's Kingdom. The Council records its sincere thanks – making note of the many additional duties which arose as the new General Assembly structures were implemented. Appreciation is expressed to the Rev Uel Marrs (CGM Secretary); the Rev David Bruce (CMI Secretary); Nehru Dass (Finance Manager); Lorraine Beatty (Support Officer, Property); Helen Johnston (Mission Support Officer, Member Care); Mandy Higgins (PA to CMI Secretary); Michelle McDowell (PA to CGM Secretary and Office Supervisor); Beverley Moffett (Senior Admin Asst.); Marianne Trueman (Senior Admin Asst. pt); Karen Hutchinson (Senior Admin Asst.); Laura Whitcroft (Admin Asst. pt) and Evelyn Craig (Admin Asst. pt).

HEALTHCARE, PRISONS AND FORCES CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

Prisons Chaplaincy

7. Following protracted discussions during the last 12 months, a revised Service Level Agreement with the Northern Ireland Prison Service was entered into from 1st April 2015. The grant to fund chaplaincy services in Northern Ireland prisons has been reduced significantly as a consequence of budgetary cuts imposed by the Northern Ireland Executive. The Committee has commissioned an internal review of Presbyterian Chaplaincy provision across the three prison estates, in light of the constraints introduced by this reduced budget.

Healthcare Chaplaincy

8. Most PCI Healthcare Chaplains are part-time and honorary. PCI ordained chaplains in the Royal group of hospitals and the Belfast City sites of the Trust are full-time, each with a Deaconess Assistant part-time.

9. PCI chaplains and their assistants are valued by staff and patients alike through offering a supportive and compassionate ministry of spiritual care. Ministers and Congregations are encouraged to remember this ministry in worship Services and to take opportunity to express their appreciation. Traditionally each Chaplain has looked after his/her own denominational members while in care. However, on some sites and departments, this model is changing to a generic approach. This change may have an impact on the flow of information to colleagues in Congregations. Trusts are now very conscious of

data protection legislation and patient confidentiality. Visiting Clergy lists are being withdrawn, and Chaplains can supply only very limited information to colleagues – mostly just the name and ward. A generic model of chaplaincy is now in operation in Antrim Area Hospital, and in some departments of the Royal. These changes have been introduced without reference to the central authorities of the participating Churches. The Committee is keeping these developments under review.

Royal Victoria Hospital Chaplaincy

10. The Rev Henry Wilson retired on 31st January 2015 from his chaplaincy position in the Royal Victoria Hospital. On behalf of the Council, the Committee thanks him for his ministry and wishes him good health to enjoy retirement. Deaconess Heather McCracken has been allocated six sessions in the RVH in the interim. A formal announcement of the appointment of a full time ordained Presbyterian Chaplain at the Royal Group of Hospitals will be made in due course.

DONALD PATTON, Convener

FORCES CHAPLAINCY PANEL

11. The Rev Dr Victor Dobbin has retired as Convener of the former Forces Committee. He brought a wealth of knowledge, skill and enthusiasm to the role as a former Chaplain General to the British Army.

Recruitment and retirement

12. On 26th September 2014, the Rev Graeme McConville was formally inducted as a full-time Army Chaplain.

13. On 26th August 2014, the Rev Stephan Van Os came to the end of his period of service as an Army Chaplain.

14. On Thursday 12th February 2015, the Rev Heather Rendell, with others, organised a promotional evening in Union College, giving an insight into the life and work of an Army Chaplain to stimulate interest in the calling.

Future work

15. The Council has an active interest in the several branches of the Forces – the regular Army, the Reserve Army, the Army Cadet Force (not officially part of the Army), the Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy, the Air Training Corps, and the Sea Cadets – though the PCI is not represented in all the branches and would like to address the gaps in the future.

16. The Council is conscious of the need for pastoral support not only for Chaplains and their families but also for all those from PCI who are serving in the Forces and to their families. The Council will be examining ways to strengthen this. The Committee and Panel are also conscious of the need to link with Forces personnel in the Irish Republic.

PATTON TAYLOR, Convener

THE HOME MISSION, IRISH MISSION AND DEACONESS COMMITTEE

Calls, installations and inductions

17. The Council issued a Home Mission Call to Mr Gary McDowell as Home Mission Minister in Greystones.

18. The Council received reports of the inductions of the Rev Andy Carroll as Home Mission Minister of Donabate on 24th October 2014 and the Rev Andrew Watson as Home Mission Minister of Dunfanaghy and Carrigart (part time), on 9th January 2015.

19. Mrs Sharon Heron was inducted as Deaconess in Windsor and the International Meeting Point, Belfast on 1st March 2015.

Grants

20. The Committee is responsible for the evaluation of Mission Support grant applications on behalf of the Council.

Deaconesses

21. The Committee approved the plans for the holding of a day conference on 16th April 2015, for Ministers supervising Deaconesses.

22. The Committee received a report from the PW General Secretary (Acting) on the progress of two student Deaconesses in training at Union College.

Home Mission Reviews

23. The need for development of an appropriate review scheme for Home Mission Ministers was noted from previous work done by the BMI. This work will be carried forward by a Task Group appointed by the Committee, reporting in March 2016.

BRIAN COLVIN, Convener

THE UNIVERSITIES' AND COLLEGES' CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

24. The Universities' and Colleges' Chaplaincy Committee takes the lead role in matters related to third level education in both jurisdictions, including the deployment and support of Chaplains.

25. This new Committee has already met on four occasions to deal with the draft report of a review of Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy in the greater Belfast Area – a legacy from the previous Committee. However, at its first meeting, some time was spent examining the remit, the work of the existing Chaplains and how they link with, for example, local Churches, the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) and the University Chaplains' network.

Review of Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy in the Greater Belfast Area

26. The Review of the work in greater Belfast will, when completed, be reported to the Council. In the interim the following general observations are made.

27. Apart from the general value there can be in reviewing provision, a number of specific developments have given rise to this particular review of chaplaincy in greater Belfast, namely:

- the planned re-location in 2018 of most of the provision at the Ulster University, Jordanstown Campus (UUJ) to York Street;
- Belfast Metropolitan College's move to Titanic Quarter in 2011 and its decision not to have Chaplains appointed by the local Churches;
- the significant financial losses sustained by Grace Café.

28. There are currently around 60,000 students in greater Belfast, around one-third of whom are part-time. These students are the civic, social, business and political leaders of tomorrow and it is from this group that the Church will look for many of its future leaders. There are full-time Presbyterian Chaplains in QUB and the UU campuses in Jordanstown and Belfast and an assistant to the (QUB) Chaplain. An important question is whether the Church is investing sufficiently in mission to the next generation.

29. There is no generic chaplaincy model and significant differences exist in the responsibilities of, for example, the Chaplain at QUB and the Chaplain at UUJ. Nonetheless, both universities are very positive in their support for all the full-time Chaplains and not least because of the increasing pastoral needs presented by students.

30. One of the key questions which the work of the Review Group raises is the extent to which the role of the Chaplains should be integrated with the local Church, bearing in mind that while many local students return home at the weekend, university communities include both staff and students, and that the numbers of international students are set to increase.

31. The UU envisages about 6,000 students being on their campus in York Street on any one day, from 2018. There is no residential accommodation being built by the university but it is likely that some private developers will move in. The Presbyterian Church has no Church or property in the immediate area. The report discusses what might be the Church's response. This same question is one that has also been discussed with the other three main Churches.

32. Key recommendations emerging from the Report will be further discussed with Presbyteries, Ministers of local Congregations and the Chaplains themselves.

33. Several other issues occupy the Committee's attention but four are prioritised:

- the extent to which the review of the chaplaincy provision in greater Belfast should inform chaplaincy elsewhere and what it means to 'do Church' in a university community;
- the ways through which the members of the Committee might best keep in touch with the Chaplains on the ground, getting to know their work and provide pastoral support, constructive evaluation and strategic direction;

- the adequacy of the quota of staff currently allocated to chaplaincy work: up until now there have been limited links with the Further Education Sector in Northern Ireland and the Colleges of Technology in the South;
- in what ways can and should PCI chaplains work with Chaplains of other denominations and with IFES?

MAUREEN BENNETT, Convener

STRATEGY FOR MISSION COORDINATION PANEL

The Belfast Task Group

34. The work of the former Belfast Panel was transferred to this Panel as part of the structures Review, and has become a Task Group. The Rev David Thompson continues in his role as facilitator, with the Rev Robert Bell as Convener.

35. The Task Group's work in the past months has been focused on adding depth and detail to its report to the 2014 General Assembly. This has involved three important areas.

- (i) Engaging with the three Belfast Presbyteries – January 2015 saw the Task Group present a broad outline of last year's report to the three Belfast Presbyteries. These gatherings provided an opportunity to cast a vision for re-imagining future Presbyterian presence for mission in the city; address the issue of how to assess sustainability; and test the concept of the formation of a joint Consultative Group for Belfast made up of representatives of the Linkage Commission, Council for Mission in Ireland and local Presbyteries. The Task Group thanks the three Presbyteries for facilitating this engagement. In each case they were well attended and helpful in aiding the Task Group's further reflection and nuancing its thinking.
- (ii) Developing draft proposals for engaging with Congregations to ascertain sustainability in mission. A working group explored and developed proposals in the important area of ascertaining sustainability for mission. Discerning where there should be future strategic investment for mission is an increasing challenge as resources continue to decline. The aim of the exercise is to find a way to accompany Congregations at key points in their life in telling their story of mission with a view to isolating particular strengths and weaknesses in their ability to sustain local ministry. The Task Group received the paper which has been reproduced below. Further detail needs to be added to these proposals, which also require modification so that they can be applied in the task of assessing new proposals for urban mission. This will form part of the Task Group's work in 2015/16.
- (iii) Belfast Research Project – An important piece of research was commissioned with the Ulster University to collect significant statistical data about each Belfast Congregation's locality for mission. When complete, it will allow Congregations access to a snapshot of their setting for mission, including the most relevant demographic

trends in their area. This information will be provided in accessible form and will also serve to aid Presbyteries and other relevant bodies in devising future missional strategy and in taking key decisions. A further aspect of the research will map developments in Belfast at a citywide level enabling a realistic, rather than speculative, view of how the urban area is developing and guiding a missional response.

36. All of this work provides the denomination with an understanding of the context for mission in the city of Belfast at a level of detail to which we have never had access before. It provides crucial background at a time when the Church, society and the city itself are experiencing constant and rapid change. Nevertheless, this information on its own will not enable us to move forward for the Kingdom and its work.

37. The Task Group recognises the constant need to cry to God in prayer for discernment, vision, imagination, self-sacrifice, leadership and the work of the Spirit required to reach the city for Christ. However, even that is not all that is required. Throughout its life and work, the Belfast Task Group has intentionally sought to bring together the relevant bodies of Presbytery, the Council for Mission in Ireland and the Linkage Commission in addressing the issue of the future shape of mission to the city. The building of a unified vision and approach by these bodies is an absolutely crucial component in harnessing the energies of the denomination to rise to this task.

38. History shows that as a denomination we have sought to address the issue of mission in Belfast many times in the past. In every case, some progress was made, but the outcomes fell well short of a coherent strategy with which to move forward. Meanwhile, our presence in the city has continued to decline and our ability to respond to changes in its life has diminished. It is difficult to envisage that the story and the trend will be any different in the future if we miss the opportunity the present Task Group's work provides us with to move forward in a concerted and coherent way. To that end, it urges the Assembly to continue to pray for the ongoing work of the Belfast Task Group as it moves into what is anticipated will be its final year's work in preparing a detailed recommendations for approval to the 2016 Assembly.

BELFAST TASK GROUP

Report of the Working Group on Process

PROCESS AND SOFT OBJECTIVITY

1. **Introduction.** The following sources of information were examined by the Working Group:

- 1.1 Church of Scotland – New Charge Development Review Processes;
- 1.2 a letter with supporting documents from the Rev Angus R Mathieson, Partnership Development Secretary of the Ministries Council of the Church of Scotland;
- 1.3 interview with Dr Maureen Bennett, drawing insights from her professional experience with the School's Inspectorate in Northern Ireland;

- 1.4 the Church of England Diocese of London, Mission and Ministry Strategy, with a case study in the Deanery of Brent;
- 1.5 an interview with Bishop Harold Miller of the Diocese of Down and Connor;
- 1.6 an interview with Mrs Ruth Walker (Consultant to the voluntary sector);
- 1.7 a review of 'Using Measurement Well' by Paul Valler (Grove Books);
- 1.8 a review of 'Because However Therefore – Strategies for innovating Church' by Andrew Baughen.

2. **What the Assembly said.** The report of the Belfast Panel to the General Assembly 2014 noted the need to develop a model of assessment for a Consultative Group on Belfast to use. This assessment process would provide the base upon which decision-making about a proposal for a new Church Plant or project, or the future mission and ministry of an existing Congregation would rest. The process would include an analysis of both hard and soft data. The Assembly report includes phrases such as:

- 2.1 Assessment and review would be conducted from alongside and within, rather than from above and without;
- 2.2 A combination of ... numerical and financial realities, but with a careful ear to the story of what is actually happening on the ground;
- 2.3 Analysis based around the 8 P's.
 - Place
 - Presence
 - People
 - Pounds
 - Programme
 - Preparedness for transitioning
 - Patterns emerging
 - Pathways into the future

3. **When does the process happen?** The possible points or triggers for this process of assessment involving the Consultative Group might include:

- 3.1 a vacancy;
- 3.2 a tenure review;
- 3.3 a consultation;
- 3.4 at the request of a Congregation and/or Presbytery because of:
 - conversations around local initiatives in mission development, including the assessment of larger grant applications;
 - resourcing new mission opportunities, including Church Plants.

4. **What is the process like?**

- 4.1 **A collaborative process.**
 - The Consultative Group needs not only to learn new skills of inter-agency collaboration, but also how to converse with and accompany the Congregations and Presbyteries with which it is working. Only by accompanying the leaders and members of a Congregation in the articulation of their story, can a conclusion be arrived on the merits and demerits of their journey. Only by

listening and testing the vision of a Presbytery for a new piece of work can a sensible decision be arrived at regarding the release of central resources of finance and personnel.

- The Working Group notes that when the conclusions that the Consultative Group may arrive at are unpopular or unpalatable, either to Presbytery or Congregation, they will only be acceptable if the process itself is seen to be even-handed and transparent. The conduct of the process itself will in significant measure inform the positive reception of its outcomes, even if these outcomes are challenging.

4.2 **An objective process.**

- Statistics have value, but do not tell the whole story.
- The Working Group notes the repeated references in PCI's own literature to the difficulties of Presbyteries offering a critical analysis of Congregations within its bounds due to the challenge of proximity. Similarly, when assessing a proposal for a new project or plant, critical objectivity will almost always prove to be a blessing rather a threat to an emerging vision.
- The Consultative Group must not only maintain an appropriate distance in its work, but it must demonstrate by the pathway to its conclusions that this process is logical and consistent. For Congregations this may require the introduction of some form of classification as descriptive of their story. The Working Group recognises the difficulties with this, but notes the various attempts to achieve it – especially within the diocese of London and the Church of Scotland (see Appendix 1). For new work including proposals for planting, the analysis of the statistical and narrative base upon which the proposal rests must be rigorous.
- The Working Group affirms the value of the 8 Ps (see 2.3 above) as its preferred template for conversations between the Consultative Group and Congregations and Presbyteries with which it works.

4.3 **An intentional process.**

- In the case of Congregations it is not enough to measure outputs of their life and work – such as donation income, numbers of children in Sunday School, numbers of new communicants, numbers attending worship, numbers contributing etc. These statistics provide only a snapshot in time and a particular measure of one aspect of one activity, but they may fail to capture the ebb and flow of congregational life and witness. For example, it may be said that 12 people attended a Discipleship Explored course, but what is more difficult to measure is the maturing of the life of discipleship in the participants. There may well be children's ministry taking place in the life of a Congregation which is not referred to as Sunday School. Or there may be families attending the Congregation and participating in its activities which have

not sought, nor are seeking to become members of the Church or even to be identified as Presbyterians, and are consequently largely invisible in the statistical analysis.

- In the case of new projects or plants a vision which has been presented for a new piece of work needs to be tested against actual demonstrable need, demographic realities including population projections and a corporate sense of ownership of the idea within and beyond Presbytery bounds. Both CMF and the Councils of the denomination will in all likelihood be asked to carry a major part of the financial load in the initial phases, and they will need to be convinced of the merits of a project before committing.
- An intentional focus on outcomes will force the Consultative Group beyond the more easily analysed numerical data, which may have been our custom up to now.

4.4 **A process which expresses Good News.**

- The Working Group was conscious of the need to ensure that this process is essentially positive, rather than negative. By this the Working Group does not mean that the outcomes always need to be affirming, but that comments and findings are presented in such a way that even though the decision may be to change or close a piece of work, this in itself will be understood by all participants as the right thing to do, and therefore as an expression of good news.
- The purpose of the entire exercise ought not to be to punish or criticise or diminish, but to enable the mission of the Church in all its expressions. Missional achievement ought therefore to be measured against accurate expectations and potential, and the process needs to be hungry for indicators of the blessing of God, rather than simply reliant upon the abilities of good statisticians or story-telling. The legacy in mission of a local Church may continue, long after its doors have been closed, in new projects enabled by the release of resources and vision.
- Project proposals, including a vision for planting a new Church will not always be successful on first submission. While this may appear to be a negative outcome, the wisdom of a wider group will almost always assist those who cast the vision to refine and re-shape it, such that by the time of its re-submission the good news of a God-given vision can be celebrated by the entire Church.

4.5 **A process which emphasises Investment.**

- Using the language of investment in the local Church will be important if the process is to be embraced. The Working Group noted the comments from the School Inspectorate, that even when a negative outcome is communicated, the expectation is that senior management in the school will have acquired learning which possibly could not have been achieved in any other way and that this in turn will open the doors to investment in their progress going forward.

Alternating Ministries Review

39. The Panel Convener, along with Dr John Lockington and Dr Keith McCrory represent PCI on this Review Group, with colleagues from the Methodist Church in Ireland, under the independent chairmanship of Mervyn McCullagh. Two full meetings of the Review Group took place, with further visits to Dublin, Limerick and Galway to meet with representatives of the Congregations in their own locations.

Management of CMI-supported projects

40. A number of “stand-alone” projects which attract central financial support require clarification of their accountability and management arrangements in light of the structures review. These include South Belfast Friendship House, Nightlight and the International Meeting Point. Each one relates in different ways to Congregations, Presbyteries and other agencies of the Church. When consultation on these matters is completed, the Council will be asked for its comment, and where necessary, its approval.

Linkage Commission

41. The Council, through the Panel, will be asked to provide Home Mission Vacancy Assessment reports, Additional Personnel reports and Tenure Review reports by the Linkage Commission.

BEN WALKER, Convener

FINANCE PANEL**Remit**

42. The remit of the Panel is the general oversight of CMI finances, including the review of quarterly management accounts, the preparation of annual accounts for presentation to the Council and the General Assembly, consideration of the finances of major capital projects, and the preparation of budgets for annual submission to the United Appeal.

Capital Projects

43. In order to create the capacity for capital grants decisions must be made about the disposal of property surplus to requirements. Every endeavour is made to ensure that this is done in a timely and cost-effective manner to match the period of expenditure requirement. The building of new Churches and the provision of suitable manse accommodation in Home Mission situations requires significant capital capacity, and the Council recognises that additional means to raise capital capacity may be required, other than income from legacies and the disposal of redundant assets.

DENIS GUILER, Convener

PROPERTY PANEL

44. Representative Task Groups have visited and inspected two Church properties and held a meeting in Assembly Buildings with congregational representatives since the start of the year.

Mullingar New Church Building

45. Construction work was completed well within programme. The Congregation took possession and began worshipping in the building in December 2014 while the official opening by the Rt Rev Dr Michael Barry, Moderator of the General Assembly, took place on Saturday 7th March 2015.

Shankill Road Mission Premises

46. Further holding repairs have been carried out to keep the building weatherproof. A Notification of possible B2 listing has been received from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

47. Regular contact has been maintained with a potential purchaser and their completion of an economic appraisal has been encouraged.

Nun's Island Dwelling, Former Manse in Galway City

48. A formal letter of offer to purchase 23 Nun's Island has been received from Galway County Council. Solicitors are finalising details and drawing up necessary documentation.

Carrickmacross Presbyterian Church Building

49. A Lease Agreement has now been signed off with Youth Work Ireland to enable the building to be used as a 'Youth Café'.

Maynooth

50. A visit has been made to Maynooth to inspect a possible location for a future Church building. A meeting with Kildare County Council is being arranged to discuss details.

CYRIL CAVAN, Convener

APPENDIX 1

Ministers, Chaplains and other field staff serving with the Council for Mission in Ireland, 2015/16.

Congregations in (brackets) are not in the Home Mission

HOME MISSION MINISTERS	
Rev RS Agnew	(1st Monaghan) and Smithborough
Rev SG Anketell	1st Bailieborough, Corranery, (Trinity Bailieborough)
Rev RSG Beacom	Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler
Rev Janice M Browne	(Kerrykeel, Milford) and Rathmullan
Rev D Burke	(Frankford, 1st Castleblayney), Corvalley and Ervey
Rev A Carroll	Donabate

HOME MISSION MINISTERS	
Rev CFD Clements	Irvinestown, Pettigo and Tempo
Rev D Conkey	Enniscorthy and Wexford
Rev Molly Deatherage	Ballina, Killala, Ballymote
Rev AJ Dunlop	Howth and Malahide
Rev DTR Edwards	Drum, Cootehill and Kilmount
Rev JG Faris	Cork and Aghada
Rev H Freeburn	Galway (Alternating Scheme)
Rev S Glendinning	Moville, Greenbank, Carndonagh and Malin
Rev WJ Hayes	Tullamore and Mountmellick
Rev KA Jones	(Waterside) and Fahan
Rev C Kennedy	Bray (Stated Supply)
Rev SJ Lockington	Corboy and Mullingar
Rev Vicki Lynch (MCI)	Christ Church, Limerick (Alternating Scheme)
Rev Dr DK McCrory	Maynooth
Rev IT McKee	(Aughnacloy) and Ballymagrane
Rev G Jean Mackarel	Drumkeeran, Killeshandra, Cavan and Bellasis
Rev Colin McKibben	(Convoy, Carnone, Donoughmore and) Alt
Rev Katherine P Meyer	Sandymount (Alternating Scheme)
Rev GA Mitchell	Sligo and Boyle
Rev Alan Moore	(Cavanaleck) and Aughtentine
Rev W Montgomery	Fermoy and Cahir
Rev M Proctor	Naas (part-time)
Rev SW Rea	Carlow and Athy
Rev DW Reid	(Ardstraw) and Douglas
Rev D Reyes Martin	Kilkenny
Rev SJ Richmond	Donegal and Stranorlar
Rev S Stewart	Clones, Stonebridge, Ballyhobridge and Newbliss
Rev RB Thompson	(Badoney, Corrick) and Glenelly
Rev Dr DJ Woodside	Drogheda
Rev Andrew Watson	Carrigart and Dunfanaghy (part-time)
Vacant	Arklow
Vacant	Inch (Stated Supply)
Vacant	Kells (Under Review)
Vacant	Greystones

URBAN MISSION MINISTERS	
Rev M Gibson	Westbourne
Rev R Love	Taughmonagh
Rev I McDonald	New Mossley
Rev D Rankin	Strand, Belfast
Rev L Webster	Craigavon

CHURCH PLANTERS	
Rev DF Leal	Cliftonville Road

IRISH MISSION WORKERS	
David Boyd	Adelaide Road, Dublin
Tom Dowling	Kilkenny
Harry Moreland	Cork
Keith Preston	International Meeting Point, Belfast
William Workman	Athy
Philip Whelton	Arklow

DEACONESSES	
Sonya Anderson	Shore Street, Donaghadee
Eileen Black	1st Magherafelt
Jenny Clegg	Ballycrochan, Bangor
Amanda Cooper	New Row, Coleraine
Muriel Cromie	BCH Chaplaincy Team and Deaconess Support
Doreen Draffin	Whitehouse and Hospice Chaplaincy Team
Eleanor Drysdale	Wellington, Ballymena
Joanne Dunlop	Hillhall and Antrim and Craigavon Hospitals Chaplaincy
Sharon Heron	Windsor and International Meeting Point
Roberta Irvine	Greystone Road, Antrim
Christine Kyle	Ulster Hospital Chaplaincy Team
Phyllis Linton	West Church, Ballymena
Heather McCracken	Alexandra and RVH Chaplaincy Team (locum)
Sadie McCullough	Whiteabbey
Lynda McFaul	1st Carrickfergus

DEACONESSES	
Amy Magee	Muckamore
Tracey Nicholl	St James, Ballymoney
Julie Peake	Portrush
Michelle Purdy	Ballyclare
Hazel Reid	1st Broughshane
Margaret Robertson	Elmwood, Lisburn
Jenny Robinson	South Belfast Friendship House
Kathleen Spence	Deaconess without charge
Rosemary Spiers	1st Antrim
Evelyn Whyte	1st Lisburn

HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINS	
Rev Norman Harrison	Royal Group of Hospitals (full time)
Rev Brian Hughes	Belfast City Hospital (full time)
Rev Marlene Taylor	Beaconsfield House Cancer Care (full time)

PRISON CHAPLAINS	
Rev Rodney Cameron	Chaplain, HMP Maghaberry and Lead Chaplain
Rev Graham Stockdale	Assistant to the Chaplain (part time) HMP Maghaberry
Mr Norman McCorkell	Assistant to the Chaplain (part time) HMP Magilligan

FORCES CHAPLAINS	
Rev Mark Donald	Army Reserve (part time)
Rev Mark Henderson	Army
Rev Colin Jones	Army
Rev Ivan Linton	Army
Rev Graeme McConville	Army
Rev Norman McDowell	Army
Rev Heather Rendell	Army
Rev Dr Paul Swinn	Army
Rev Dr Philip Wilson	Royal Air Force
Rev Joseph Andrews	NI Wing Chaplain, Air Training Corps (part time)
Rev Kenneth Crowe	Army Cadet Force (part time)

FORCES CHAPLAINS	
Rev Prof Patton Taylor	Air Training Corps and Officiating Chaplain (part time)
Rev Derek Weir	Officiating Chaplain (part time)

CHAPLAINS IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES	
Rev Karen Mbayo	Queen's University, Belfast (full time)
Rev Cheryl Meban	Ulster University, Jordanstown and Belfast Campuses (full time)
Rev John Coulter	Ulster University, Coleraine Campus (part time)
Rev Nigel Craig	Ulster University, Magee Campus (part time)
Rev Julian Hamilton (MCI)	Trinity College, Dublin (part time)
Mrs Gillian Kingston (MCI)	University College, Dublin (part time)
Rev Dr Brian Brown	Letterkenny Institute of Technology (part time)
Rev John Faris	University College, Cork (part time)
Rev Helen Freeburn	University College, Galway (honorary)
Rev Dr Keith McCrory	National University of Ireland, Maynooth (honorary)

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Belfast Task Group continues its work, bringing a final report to the 2016 General Assembly.
2. That the Alternating Ministries Review report to the Mission Partnership Forum on the progress of its work and that a final report be brought to the 2016 General Assembly.
3. That the work of PCI Chaplains in Healthcare, Prisons, the Forces, Universities and Colleges be commended to the Church for prayer, both privately and at services of worship.
4. That the Report of the Council for Mission in Ireland be received.

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev Dr TJ McCORMICK
Secretary: Mr LINDSAY CONWAY, OBE

1. In so many ways the Church is returning to its rightful place, in being a key player in the provision of services. Welfare Reform and the daily pressure in Health and Social Care Services have brought society to a crossroads. We can no longer be a welfare and service dependent society. As Statutory Services continue to reduce, more and more pressure will be on the Voluntary and Faith Sectors to plug the gaps and develop services. The work of the Council for Social Witness will have to continue to prove that the Church can respond and be innovative in its practice, as appropriate funding levels permit.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Overarching Aim of the Council for Social Witness can be stated as follows:

“The Council shall deliver an effective social witness service on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and to the wider community by the provision of Residential, Nursing, Supported Housing, Respite and Day Care and Community Based Programmes.”

- In partnership with appropriate organisations
- By the promotion of volunteering
- By responding to the needs of the Social Care and Faith Sectors
- By supporting those with additional needs
- By continuing to challenge and lobby Government in conjunction with the Council for Church in Society.

3. In the first three months of the new structure the Council for Social Witness (CSW) has met twice and all the Committees have met at least once. These initial meetings have provided opportunity for induction training, considering the former Board’s strategic plan and developing the Council’s own new Strategic Plan (see Appendix 1) and agreeing Terms of Reference for each Committee (see Appendix 2).

4. Plans are also in place for a number of Committees to visit Homes/ Projects associated with their Committee as a means of being more fully aware of the work and issues and for Committee/members not to be seen as remote. This has resulted in a clear ownership of the plan and will facilitate its implementation and resourcing.

5. The Strategic Plan is the route map for the work of the Council over the next few years. The Council cannot anticipate the future of the Social Care Sector. The Social Care Sector along with the Health Service, is at an all-time crisis, resulting in the Council for Social Witness, as a Service Provider, having to both supplement services and plug some of the gaps.

6. The Council’s Strategic Plan has three vital applications:

- (a) to enable the Council to stay focused on the work and responsibilities remitted to it by the General Assembly;

- (b) to give a structured account of the work of the Council to the General Assembly;
- (c) to relate to statutory agencies, regulatory authorities, service users and others, the particular focus and ethos of our Church's work in this particular area.

7. The Council's report is therefore presented as a commentary on its Strategic Plan.

MAIN COUNCIL REPORT

8. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, through its Council for Social Witness, continues to provide a wide range of services, as follows:

Residential Care – For Older People

- Adelaide House, Belfast – 44 Beds
- Ard Cluan House, Londonderry – 13 Beds
- Corkey House, Belfast – 35 Beds
- River House, Newcastle – 29 Beds
- Sunnyside House, Bangor – 45 Beds
- York House, Portrush – 32 Beds

Residential Care - for those with Learning Disability

- Aaron House, Dundonald – 16 beds

Residential Respite Care – for those with a learning disability; physical disability, sensory impairment and older people

- Lawnfield House, Newcastle – 20 beds
- Aaron House, Dundonald – 2 beds

Nursing Care – for Older People

- Harold McCauley House, Omagh – 32 Beds

Day Care – for learning disability

- Aaron House – 9 service users

Supported Living

- Willow Brook, Coleraine – learning disability – 9
- Topley Terrace, Coleraine – physical disability – 3

Supported Housing – Older People

- St Andrew's Bungalows, Mallusk
- Tritonville Close, Dublin

Family Centres – Young Families, Older People, School Children and Homeless

- Friendship House, South Belfast

Work With People With Addictions

- Carlisle House – 12
- Gray’s Court – 7

Work With Offenders

- Thompson House – 19
- Fresh Start Initiative at Hydebank YOC

Ministry To The Deaf

- The Kinghan Church
- New work in Ballykelly

Taking Care

- Advice, Support and Training, in collaboration with Council for Congregational Life and Witness (CCLW), and the appropriate regulatory bodies

Staff Training

- In partnership with appropriate organisations to meet the requirements of regulatory bodies and provide high quality care and enhance residents/service user’s life
- Volunteering – supported by raising awareness and providing induction training through the Getting on Board scheme and Fresh Start Initiative

Disability

- Raising awareness of disability, health and wellbeing in collaboration with CCLW.

9. The Council has overseen this work, on behalf of the Church, in 17 locations:

- providing 373 bed spaces
- employing 450 staff
- utilising 200 volunteers
- with an operational budget of £9.5 million.

10. This work is a witness in both word and action with a concern for the whole person. In the Homes/Units a range of opportunities and resources are provided for ministry and spiritual nourishment, including daily devotional times, weekly worship, Bible study, and distribution of devotional books and literature. Volunteers make a significant contribution in this particular area of work, and there will be continuing recruitment of others, believing the ‘Getting on Board’ programme is beneficial to all involved.

11. Staff are a key resource whose professional skill, diligent commitment and human tenderness are foundational to the care that is offered. To fulfil the Church’s responsibilities to all service users and staff CSW staff have ongoing interaction with a diverse range of regulatory and statutory bodies and the wider voluntary sector. Regular training and professional development is available to all staff, and the Key Staff Forum for senior staff provides updates on new

requirements and initiatives for them. The introduction of a Staff Award Scheme for long-service and training initiatives has been well received and will be developed in the future.

12. Thanks are also recorded to all of the CSW Department Staff who in a period of transition have gone the extra mile to ensure there has been no disruption in our care of and ministry to residents and service users. The day to day functioning of the Council is heavily dependent on, Julie Sykes (Office Manager); Gail Gamble; Wilma Steele; Jennie Telford; Amanda Kyle (on maternity leave) and Cathy Mullin (maternity cover) in the Taking Care office.

13. The professional standing and immeasurable commitment of Lindsay Conway, Linda Wray, May Gordon and Deborah Webster guides, develops and enhances all of this work. As May moves towards retirement in late summer, thanks and good wishes are extended to her and to husband Wilson.

14. It is appropriate to express thanks for the encouragement and participation of the local support committees, "Friends of" groups, and volunteers who have enabled this witness of the Church to continue and develop throughout this year. Under Strategic Objective 6 the Council plans to develop the role of Local Support Committee and 'Friends of' groups and to encourage feedback to their Congregations on local CSW areas of work. We believe this will engender further engagement and deepen the sense of partnership throughout the Church. With the continuation of the Recognition Scheme for Social Witness initiatives in Congregations and within our own Homes/Projects, an increasing number of Congregations, groups and individuals are engaging in both familiar and innovative projects.

15. To maintain the highest possible standards in a closely monitored and regulated sector at a time when 'Austerity' and 'Welfare Reform' are common parlance CSW continues to develop relationships with other statutory and voluntary sector organisations and our partner housing associations – in particular Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA); Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC); Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJI); Probation Board Northern Ireland (PBNI); Supporting People Initiative (NI Housing Executive); and Health and Social Care Trusts. Both the multiplicity and diversity in this list is indicative of the accountability of CSW in addition to responsibilities vis-à-vis the General Assembly.

16. In order to be wise stewards of its facilities the Council will be conducting a comprehensive building survey so that necessary refurbishment or replacement can be undertaken in an orderly and phased programme. Currently lifts in two OPS Homes are being replaced and the installation of solar panels is under active consideration.

17. The record of PCI's work is recognised and respected by many in the Social Care and Faith Sectors. One example was the request in 2014 of the Disabled Christian Fellowship (Ireland) asking the Council to take over Lawnfield House, Newcastle to provide residential and respite care in a 20 bed facility. This was an answer to prayer, as we were able to respond to the crisis in the Residential Care and Respite sectors.

18. Too often those who have the opportunity to speak about the Social Witness work of our Church hear the comment, 'I didn't know we did all that'. While we appreciate invitations to speak at services, and other meetings,

there needs to be a constant flow of information to our members and the wider community. Strategic Objective 6 gives the framework of a revitalised communications policy which will include news-sheets and updates, website, and prayer bulletins. The Council believes that the investment of staff time and finance in such a programme will expand the awareness of this work, encourage prayer support, and stimulate engagement and support.

19. In continuing and developing work the Council aims:

- to promote the spiritual well-being of our residents, tenants and service users;
- to adhere to and, where possible, exceed regulatory standards and achieve best practice;
- to respond to the needs of the Social Care and Faith Sectors;
- to strengthen partnership with appropriate organisations;
- to promote volunteering – the “Getting on Board” volunteering programme and the achievement of “Investing in Volunteers” standard;
- to carry out a comprehensive building survey of all our Units;
- to challenge and lobby Government in conjunction with the Council for Church in Society;
- to raise awareness of Adult Safeguarding/Human Trafficking/Domestic and Sexual Violence;
- to engage with service-users for feedback.

20. The Council continues to work with our partners in the Presbyterian Orphan and Children’s Society in areas of mutual concern, especially in provision of resources related to Taking Care. A statement from the Society is provided after the Council’s report and resolutions for information of members of Assembly. The Council notes that 2016 will see the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the Society and expresses its good wishes as preparations are made to mark the event.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DISABILITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

21. The Committee is already dealing with the major issue of Respite Care and how it will be supported and funded in the future, recognising that respite is a key factor in all future care packages. There is also recognition that Day Care provision as provided by Aaron House will also need expanded. The acquisition of Lawnfield House from the Disability Christian Fellowship in September 2014, has greatly added to the scope of the work of the Council, in the whole area of respite, holiday and short-term care. Willowbrook and Topley Court have full occupancy and deliver a high standard of support to the tenants. Denegarh House at Mallusk as a possible venue for a Social Enterprise Scheme for young adults with a learning disability is to be urgently explored. The expansion of “Christmas Cracker” is also a priority for 2015.

PETER DICKINSON, Convener

OLDER PEOPLE SERVICES COMMITTEE

22. The first task of the Committee was to consider an Options Paper, on how to communicate with the numerous homes. The Committee agreed on an Annual Review bringing Council, Committee, Local Support Committee Chairs, Home Managers and Senior Staff to an annual meeting. The Committee also agreed that the Council engage with the Guysmere Panel, to explore the use of the site for the possible replacement of Ard Cluan and York House. "Transforming Your Care" will remain on the agenda for some time to come, challenging the Committee to respond to the changing needs of the sector. The Council is effectively subsidising every bed space within Older People Services, with more cuts on the way. The Council recognises the role of Regulatory Bodies, but is concerned that recommendations can result in considerable expenditure, that is often unbudgeted.

JOHN SEAWRIGHT, Convener

TAKING CARE COMMITTEE

23. The Committee agreed that their main function will be to provide advice and training for the protection of children and adults within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Thirty-three incidents were reported to the Taking Care Team in 2014, the majority requiring an advice only response. Access (NI) went online on 1st April 2015, resulting on a more efficient service for the whole Church. The GARDA Vetting Service requires new legislation to enable them to provide a similar online service, and a "Managing Offenders Policy" has been drafted and will be further considered by Council. The Accredited Trainers are now delivering training and have been asked to adhere to a "Trainers Agreement", guaranteeing the delivery of at least four training sessions annually per trainer. A successful training pilot was delivered on the subject of "Vulnerable Adults" in October. This package will form the foundation of a substantial piece of work to be carried out on the implementation of the Adult Safeguarding Bill. Training in this area will be provided in conjunction with Congregational Life and Witness.

PAMELA MARSHALL, Convener

SPECIALIST SERVICES COMMITTEE

24. The Committee acknowledges the wide extent of its work in offering a range of services to those with addictions and who come into conflict with the law. Few Committee members are familiar with the work of the units, so induction will be a priority for Committee members. Substantial increases in funding have been secured for all of these units but the removal of Special Needs Management Allowance in Carlisle House will create a future funding issue. In the long term Government cuts will also impact on the development of services and the overall stability of the sector. The recent drug related deaths of two young residents has highlighted a serious problem of the vulnerability of prisoners on their release from custody.

COLIN MEGAW, Convener

APPENDIX 1

STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Objective 1

“DISABILITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – will deliver a high standard of Day, Residential, Supported Housing and Respite Care in all of our Units; oversee the Ministry of the Kinghan Church and wider Ministry to the Deaf; contribute to the Disability, Health and Wellbeing work of the wider Church in partnership with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.”

- By developing Denegarath House site at Mallusk as a Skills Learning Centre/Social Enterprise Initiative for those with a learning disability.
- By expanding the ‘Christmas Cracker’ initiative throughout PCI Congregations for those with a learning disability.
- By supporting the ongoing development of our ministry at the Kinghan Church and within the deaf community.
- By promoting deaf awareness throughout the Church.
- By exploring opportunities to establish outreach to the deaf community.
- By promoting Lawnfield House as an all-year Respite Service.
- By exploring opportunities for development and day care at the Aaron House site for those with a profound learning disability.
- By encouraging the integration of people with Additional Needs in organisations and congregational life.
- By raising awareness of Disability issues throughout Presbyterian Church in Ireland Congregations including carers’ issues.

Strategic Objective 2

“OLDER PEOPLE SERVICES COMMITTEE – will deliver a high standard of day, residential, nursing and respite care to all our users and campaign and raise awareness on behalf of older people issues and services; support the development of the Pastoral Support of those requiring support in their own homes.”

- To continue to consider the relocation of Ard Cluan House and York House.
- To continue to engage with Government in relation to ‘Transforming Your Care’ where it pertains to older people.
- To explore opportunities to provide Home Care Services.
- To train all staff and volunteers in dementia care.
- To develop awareness of dementia in the wider Church.
- To attain an overall occupancy rate of 95%.
- To increase the number of volunteers in the Homes to 250.
- To provide respite/day care/holiday accommodation for an additional 50 residents.
- To establish Activities Co-ordinators in each of the Residential Homes.

Strategic Objective 3

“TAKING CARE COMMITTEE (The Safeguarding Programme of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland) – creating a safe environment for all our members, users, volunteers and staff.”

- To provide training for those working with or in contact with children and adults at risk.
- To prepare for Access (NI) applications going online.
- To review current policies and devise relevant responses to Safeguarding issues.
- To organise conferences and seminars in conjunction with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.
- To raise awareness of Child Protection issues.
- To develop a training programme for Kirk Sessions.
- To appoint a network of Taking Care Ambassadors.
- To develop a Taking Care Sunday strategy.
- To further develop a working relationship with our Public Protection partners.
- To develop a Safeguarding strategy for adults at risk of harm, who are connected with our Congregations.
- To provide training for those in Congregations who work/visit in a pastoral capacity.
- To continue to build relationships with other faiths and voluntary groups.
- To raise awareness of Human Trafficking and Domestic/Sexual Violence.

Strategic Objective 4

“SPECIALIST SERVICES COMMITTEE – will deliver a high standard of service to those with Addictions, Offending Behaviours and who require Supported Housing.”

- Establish a closer collaboration between Thompson House, Carlisle House and Gray’s Court.
- Develop a Crime Reduction and Life Skills Programme for Thompson House.
- Develop the Fresh Start Programme in partnership with the Northern Ireland Prison Service.
- Develop a link with Prison Chaplains and contribute to the development of Community Chaplains.
- Establish stronger links with Juvenile Justice Centre.
- Promote the work of ‘Flourish! Churches’ Initiative on Suicide’.
- Raise awareness of Domestic/Sexual Violence throughout the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
- Explore with Oaklee/Trinity the refurbishment of Carlisle House.
- The work of the Council is underpinned by sound business principles and practice, some of this work is delivered in collaboration with other Departments, principally Finance and Personnel, and IT.

Strategic Objective 5

“BUSINESS AND FINANCE PANEL – will monitor the Financial Management, Personnel Functions, Information Technology and Property Management of the Council supported by the Finance and Staffing Commission.”

Key Tasks:**(a) Finance**

- To develop policies/procedures and deliver training to staff in all Homes/Units re handling of finances.
- To continue to enforce strict financial controls.
- To establish more appropriate funding streams with stakeholders.
- To explore possible savings through group purchasing.
- To ensure funds from capital projects are appropriately controlled.
- To agree a protocol for the use of money given as a gift or bequest.
- To insure that all new work/developments are project-managed.
- To explore other sources of funding and resources for our work.

(b) Personnel

- To ensure that our recruitment and appointment procedures are fit for purpose.
- To monitor all Council staff against the appropriate Professional Codes.
- To explore and implement an appropriate Supervision/Appraisal Scheme.
- To further reduce our use of agency staff.
- To train Managers in Disciplinary/Grievance Investigation procedures.

(c) IT

- To explore the possibility of a Service Level Agreement for all IT services.
- To explore appropriate IT systems to assist in the overall care of Users.
- To upgrade broadband lines and cabling, where necessary, in our Homes/Units and to provide Wi-Fi in all rooms allowing residents to have access to the internet and facilitating the use of skype.
- To deliver training to enable widespread use of IT in all Council facilities.

(d) Property Management

- To maintain all property and equipment to an acceptable standard.
- To further develop and review annually cyclical maintenance in each of our properties.
- To work with our Housing Association partners to ensure Joint Management Agreements are adhered to and we get value for money.
- To look at the delivery of Portable Appliance Testing
- To have self-closers fitted to doors.

Strategic Objective 6**“The Council shall effectively communicate to its members, the wider Church and community the work, services and achievements of the Council.”**

- By the use of a vibrant fresh web-site and social media.
- By the production of regular news sheets/bulletins.
- By the organising of regular training events, seminars and conferences.
- By the establishment of a Staff Award Scheme for long-service and training initiatives.
- By a Recognition Scheme for Social Witness initiatives in Congregations and within Homes/Projects.
- By the generation of regular Press Statements and articles in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland publications.
- By the production of Monthly Prayer Alerts and contributions to ‘Prayer for Today’ on Presbyterian Church in Ireland web-site.
- To develop the role of Local Support Committee ‘Friends of’ groups to feedback to their Congregations on local Council for Social Witness areas of work.

APPENDIX 2**TERMS OF REFERENCE****DISABILITY SERVICES COMMITTEE****Membership:**

As agreed by the Finance and Staffing Commission.

Meetings:

The Committee will meet as often as is required, but at least twice a year with at least one annual site visit.

Aim:

“Disability Services Committee – will deliver a high standard of Day, Residential, Supported Housing and Respite Care in all of our Units; and will contribute to the Disability, Health and Well-being work of the wider Church in partnership with the Council for Congregational Life & Witness.

The Committee shall:

- oversee the work of all Units and Initiatives in relation to Disability;
- advise the Council for Social Witness on all matters relating to Disability;
- implement the decisions of the General Assembly in partnership with the Council on Congregational Life and Witness relating to Disability and related issues;

- produce training materials for, and promote the care of those with a disability in Congregations and Presbyteries in conjunction with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness;
- receive reports from Unit Managers;
- connect with the appropriate Central Church and Statutory Bodies.
- To be reviewed annually.

OLDER PEOPLE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Membership:

As agreed by the Finance and Staffing Commission.

Meetings:

The Committee will meet as often as is required, but at least two times a year, together with a site visit in May.

Aim:

To oversee the work of older people services including residential care, nursing care, day care, respite care, supported housing and care in the community.

The Committee shall:

- oversee the work of all Units and Initiatives in relation to Older People Services;
- advise the Council for Social Witness on all matters relating to Older People;
- implement the decision of the General Assembly in Partnership with other Councils in relation to raising the Churches awareness on issues related to Older People;
- produce materials and promote their use in conjunction with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness;
- receive reports from Unit Managers;
- connect with the appropriate Central Church and Statutory bodies.

TAKING CARE COMMITTEE

Membership

As agreed by the Finance and Staffing Commission.

Meetings:

The Committee will meet as often as is required, but at least four times a year.

Aim:

Oversee the policy development and administration of Taking Care.

To co-ordinate all Taking Care Training and conferences, through the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.

The Committee shall:

- oversee the work of the Taking Care Programme;
- advise the Council for Social Witness on all matters relating to Safeguarding;
- implement the decision of the General Assembly relating to Taking Care;
- produce all training materials and promote the Taking Care Training programme and Child a Vulnerable Adults awareness programmes for Congregations and Presbyteries in conjunction with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness;
- receive reports from the Programme Co-ordinator;
- connect with the appropriate Statutory and Central Church Bodies.

SPECIALIST SERVICES COMMITTEE**Membership:**

As agreed by the Finance and Staffing Commission.

Meetings:

The Committee will meet as often as is required, but at least two times a year.

Aim:

“Specialist Services Committee – will deliver a high standard of service to those with Addictions, Offending Behaviours and who require Supported Housing.”

The Committee shall:

- oversee the work of all Units in our work with offenders and those with addictions;
- advise the Council for Social Witness on all matters relating to offending and addictions;
- explore opportunities for the development of Specialist Services;
- receive reports from Unit Managers;
- connect with the appropriate Central Church; Statutory and voluntary bodies.
- review annually

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Council for Social Witness be received.

FOR INFORMATION

The following funds are not under the control of the General Assembly and the Reports are included for information only.

OLD AGE FUND, WOMEN'S FUND AND INDIGENT LADIES' FUND

The Rev W P H Erskine reports:

1. The Directors report that, during the last financial year which ended 31 December 2014, 94 beneficiaries (41 in the Old Age Fund, 36 in the Women's Fund and 17 in the Indigent Ladies' Fund) received grants.

2. The changes in beneficiaries during the year is as follows:

Beneficiaries Receiving Quarterly Grant	Old Age Fund	Presbyterian Women's Fund	Indigent Ladies Fund	TOTAL
At 1 January 2014	35	33	17	85
New Grants Provided	4	1	–	5
Deaths	–	(1)	–	(1)
Grants no longer required	(1)	(3)	–	(4)
As at 31 December 2014	38	30	17	85
Beneficiaries receiving one-off donations	2	2	–	4
Deaths and Grants no longer required (as above)	1	4	–	5
No of Beneficiaries receiving assistance during the year	41	36	17	94

3. The total distribution of the Funds in Grants, Donations and Gifts was £151,871 (£67,210 from the Old Age Fund, £55,135 from the Women's Fund and £29,526 from the Indigent Ladies' Fund).

4. An annual grant of £1,400, paid quarterly, was sent to beneficiaries during the year (2013: £1,360).

5. A 'Special Gift' of £350 (2013: £340) 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 the 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.

FOR INFORMATION

The following is not under the control of the General Assembly. The report is for information only.

PRESBYTERIAN ORPHAN AND CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

Dr Paul Gray (Executive Secretary) reports:

1. Since its formation in 1866, the Presbyterian Orphan and Children's Society has supported Presbyterian children within Ireland, thereby enhancing their life opportunities, and provided support for the families of these children, through their Ministers, in order to alleviate poverty and financial hardship. This support is currently delivered through the provision of grants and assisting Presbyterian projects and programmes geared to children and their families as their needs are identified by Presbyterian Ministers.

2. Poverty has a very negative impact on the lives of children and children's health and education outcomes appear to be closely linked to family income levels. The Society cannot impact every family in need or take every child out of poverty. It can, however, enhance the income, outlook and therefore the prospects, for many Presbyterian children and their families.

3. The Society provides two major types of grants, regular grants and exceptional grants. This is its main work and the vast majority of the Society's resources are allocated to these grants. Regular grants consist of a grant payment each quarter for children of families put forward by Ministers for help by the Society. Depending on the Society's financial resources, a summer grant and Christmas grant will also be paid to families for their children. Exceptional grants are also available to families in exceptional need. Circumstances of need may vary considerably and grants are used for such items as education expenses, funeral expenses, basic clothing/furnishings, debt management and general household expenditure. In 2014, 740 children received almost £600,000 through these grants.

4. The Society also supports projects from time to time, which must be connected to a Presbyterian Congregation and must also benefit children and families. The Society has been involved with Child Contact Centres which provide a neutral venue where children of separated families can enjoy contact with a parent and sometimes other family members in a comfortable and safe environment where there is no viable alternative. In addition, a small number of bursaries are available to parent and toddler groups, crèches, lone parent support groups, holiday schemes, or groups wishing to initiate parenting courses or similar projects. The aim of this Scheme is to enhance and improve childcare facilities within Presbyterian Congregations.

5. Each year the Society sponsors some families who receive regular grants, to go to the Presbyterian Family Holiday.

6. The Society's only sources of income are Congregation and individual subscriptions, investment income and legacies. The Society deeply appreciates the support received from Ministers, Congregations and their representatives for their tireless work over the years. It would encourage Congregations to prayerfully and financially support its work and for Ministers to contact Dr Paul Gray, Executive Secretary (telephone +44 (0)28 9032 3737) if they feel he can be of assistance.

COUNCIL FOR CHURCH IN SOCIETY

Convener: Very Rev Dr TN HAMILTON
Secretary: THE CLERK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. From the outset, the work of the Council for Church in Society has been constant and, at times, very demanding because of the breadth and seriousness of the issues that need to be addressed. The remit given by the General Assembly last year is summarised as follows:

- (a) identify current issues which the Church needs to address; helping to develop the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's thinking in these areas and communicating the General Assembly's views in the public square;
- (b) develop relationships with the Westminster and Dublin Governments and Parliaments and the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly, making representations to them on behalf of the Church and responding to consultations from them;
- (c) develop relationships with civic society;
- (d) provide nominations to education and other state bodies where the Church is a stakeholder;
- (e) work with the press and media office to ensure the Church's view is heard in the public square.

2. The full Council has met twice since 1st January, with a further meeting scheduled for the end of May, just prior to this year's General Assembly. The only General Assembly Committee under the Council is the State Education Committee. However, in response to identified public policy priorities, a Republic of Ireland Panel and five Task Groups have also been formed.

REPORT

3. In January 2015 Mr Gavin Norris was appointed to the newly created post of Public Affairs Officer for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. In this role Gavin will assist the Church with its work in the public square by helping to develop the PCI's thinking on issues of public policy and providing much needed support to the new Council for Church in Society. The Council welcomes Gavin to this strategic post and acknowledges the significant contribution he has already made to its work.

4. An early priority for the Council was to establish its modus operandi. This included:

- (a) how the work of the Council is set and completed;
- (b) how the Council deals with urgent business;
- (c) how the Council makes use of expertise within the Church; and
- (d) how the Council works with other Churches and organisations.

5. A Modus Operandi Task Group met to consider these matters and made recommendations to the Council, which were amended and agreed at its second meeting in March. The text of the agreed paper is attached as Appendix A.

6. At an early stage Council Members collectively identified the public policy issues of highest priority to the Church and subsequently the following Task Groups and Conveners were agreed:

- Abortion (the Rt Rev Dr Michael Barry);
- Poverty and Social Deprivation (Mr Lindsay Conway);
- Freedom of Conscience (the Rev John Kirkpatrick);
- Community Relations and Reconciliation (Mr Edgar Jardine); and
- Dealing with the Past (the Rev Dr Lesley Carroll).

7. At the time of writing (April 2015) the Abortion and Freedom of Conscience Task Groups have already met and are reported on below. Inaugural meetings of the other Task Groups are scheduled for late April/early May.

8. Since its formation the Council has responded to two public consultations: the Department of Justice's Consultation on the Criminal Law on Abortion in Northern Ireland; and Mr Paul Givan MLA's Private Member's Consultation on the Northern Ireland Freedom of Conscience Amendment Bill. These responses are attached as Appendices B and C respectively. At the time of writing the Council is also formulating a response to the Consultation on a proposed Irish Language Bill by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.

9. There remains great pressure for legislative change to permit same sex marriage in Ireland, north and south. In advance of the constitutional referendum on same sex marriage in the Republic of Ireland on 22nd May 2015, the Council Convener and Public Affairs Officer met with members of the Derry and Donegal, and Dublin and Munster Presbyteries respectively, to assist them in handling the issue locally and to discuss the Council's response.

10. At the time of writing a meeting with representatives of the three Republic of Ireland Presbyteries to finalise a response by the Council is imminent.

11. In accordance with the position adopted by the 2014 General Assembly, the Council is conscious of the need to respond to the referendum debate in a way that is faithful to the witness of the Bible and characterised by gentleness and respect. This will be reported on further at the General Assembly.

12. Aware of its responsibility to build relationships with those in government, the Council has agreed to request separate meetings with the five parties of the Northern Ireland Executive following the May 2015 UK General Election.

13. Engagement in public life at Presbytery and congregational level is also extremely important. Therefore, the Council is currently reflecting on how it should engage with Presbyteries and Congregations, and how it can assist them to engage with others in their local areas.

14. The Council has continued the partnership established between the former Church and Society Committee and Union Theological College. In particular, the Council is working with UTC in planning two further conferences under the theme of The Church in the Public Square. These are scheduled for October 2015 and January 2016, and will respectively address the economy, and remembering and reconciliation.

15. Since its formation the Council has worked closely with the Church's Press and Web Officer to communicate the Church's views in the public square. Significant media coverage has already been given to the Church's

contributions on different issues. It is a key objective of the Council to build positive relationships with those working in the media and it values the ongoing opportunities to do so.

16. A central challenge for the Council is not only to respond with grace and Godly wisdom to the issues that arise in wider society, but also to take the initiative in helping to shape public debate by highlighting those important issues that are unnoticed or overlooked.

17. A further challenge is to help the leaders and members of our Congregations to think Biblically about these complex and often contentious issues, to enable them to be ambassadors for Christ in all the circumstances of local Church and community life.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND PANEL

18. The remit of the Republic of Ireland Panel is to identify and consider the Council's position on priority public policy issues in the Republic of Ireland.

19. The Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow has agreed to assume the position of Convener of the Republic of Ireland Panel in September 2015.

20. The Council has agreed that education issues in the RoI will be better addressed through the RoI Panel, rather than the State Education Committee, given the level of knowledge and expertise within the Panel regarding issues unique to the RoI.

ABORTION TASK GROUP

21. As outlined above, the Council responded to the Department of Justice's recent public consultation on amending the law on abortion in Northern Ireland. The Abortion Task Group is giving further detailed consideration to the complex and highly sensitive issues raised by the consultation. A primary objective is to enable the Council to speak into this emotive area of public policy with Godly wisdom, competence, compassion and grace.

22. Mindful of the stated position of the General Assembly, and with the assistance of two members of the Doctrine Committee, the first task of the Group is to reflect on the theological and Biblical issues involved. This will lay the foundation for further consideration from medical, legal and policy perspectives.

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE TASK GROUP

23. At its inaugural meeting the Freedom of Conscience Task Group discussed and agreed the Council's response to Mr Paul Givan MLA's Private Member's Consultation on the Northern Ireland Freedom of Conscience Amendment Bill.

24. It is clear from recent public debate that there is much disagreement within society about the extent to which freedom of conscience should be permitted in the public square. Assisted by two members of the Doctrine Committee, the Task Group will continue to examine the various aspects of this issue to enable the Council to speak to it with intelligence and grace. The Council Convener will make further comment at the General Assembly in light of the anticipated court judgement in the Ashers Bakery case.

STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

25. Under the Council for Church in Society, the State Education Committee was established to address state education matters. Mr Andrew Brown has been appointed as Convener of the Committee.

26. Although the Presbyterian Church in Ireland works collaboratively with the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland on Northern Ireland education issues through the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC), the State Education Committee will contribute to this body by providing representatives and, as necessary, bringing its own policy recommendations for deliberation. Appendix D contains a summary of the TRC's work during the past session.

27. The Committee has appointed five representatives to the TRC:

- Mr Andrew Brown;
- The Rev Trevor Gribben;
- The Rev Dr Colin McClure;
- Mr Uel McCrea; and
- Mr Gavin Norris (as an observer).

28. The Committee also seeks to develop the Council's thinking on education issues that are not addressed through the TRC, such as those relating to further and higher education.

29. As noted above, the Committee recommended to the Council that education issues in the Republic of Ireland be dealt with by the RoI Panel, with overlapping issues being brought to the attention of the Committee. This recommendation was subsequently adopted by the Council at its March meeting.

ANDREW BROWN, Convener

APPENDIX A

Modus Operandi Task Group Paper

There is a need for the Council to agree its ongoing modus operandi. This will include how the work plan of the Council is set and carried forward; how the Council deals with urgent business; and how the Council works with other Churches and organisations.

Setting and Completing Work

At its first meeting on 22nd January 2015, Members of the Council were asked to identify and prioritise important issues of public policy. The results are as follows:

Highest priority issues (in order)

Education	
Welfare Reform/Social Deprivation	Religious Freedom, Equality and Human Rights Issues
Community Relations & Reconciliation	Dealing with the Past
Economy	

Less priority issues (no order)

Justice System and Public Order	Same-Sex Marriage
Medical Ethics	Environment
Health and Well-Being	Local Politics (Community Planning)

In addition to the State Education Committee and the Republic of Ireland Panel, it is important to establish mechanisms for addressing the other priorities identified by Council Members:

Option 1

'Task and finish' groups are established in response to identified priorities and when specific issues arise. These groups are given a brief and/or terms of reference, and provide progress reports to the Council as requested. If possible, completion dates are aligned to facilitate comprehensive re-evaluation of priorities by the Council. Membership is assigned based on stated interests, experience and the need to maintain adequate numbers across groups. Below is an example of how this may work based on topical issues and the priorities identified by Council Members:

Task Group	Membership
Poverty & Social Deprivation	Lindsay Conway, Alan Wilson, Anne Jamison, Trevor McCormick,
Freedom of conscience in a pluralist society	John Kirkpatrick, John Black, Alan Buick, Stephen Gowdy, Helen McDowell, Moderator (+2 Doctrine Committee Members)
Community Relations and Reconciliation	Edgar Jardine, Nick Cooper, Andy Brown, Brian Kennaway, Stephen Johnston, Wallace Moore, Alan Rowan
Dealing with the past	Lesley Carroll, Stanley Stewart, Michael Davidson, Ethel White, Geoff McBride, Tony Davidson.
DoJ Consultation on Abortion	Moderator, Helen McDowell, Lindsay Conway, Helen Macaulay (+2 Doctrine Committee Members)

*Convener, Secretary and Public Affairs Officer are ex officio members of all groups

Option 2

Permanent panels are established based on closely related policy areas. These panels are responsible for identifying priority issues within their assigned areas. Membership, reporting and approval of completed work are dealt with in the same way as in Option 1. Separate 'task groups' are established to address more urgent issues that arise. Below is an example of how this might be structured based on Members' stated priorities:

Panel	Responsibilities
Economy and Welfare	Budget; Poverty and Social Deprivation;
Shared Future	Cultural and Identity issues; Community Relations and Reconciliation; Dealing with the Past; Race relations.
Social and Ethical Issues	Family and Relationships; Medical ethics.
Political Engagement	Freedom of Conscience; Engagement at local level, Community Planning etc.

Analysis

The need for flexibility to adapt to changing priorities is an important consideration, particularly in the early stages of the Council's existence. Option 1 would enable us to more effectively allocate our resources in situations where, for example, two or three priorities fall within the same policy area.

Some members highlighted the danger of trying to do too much and losing our focus. Whilst Option 2 would help to keep lower priority issues 'in the mix', it could make planning and target setting more difficult as the Council begins its work.

Option 1 would also provide better opportunities for members with diverse interests and experience to work on issues in different policy areas, and to establish what area they are most passionate about. This would also be of benefit to the Council's work as a whole.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Council adopts the model detailed in Option 1; recognises that the establishment of the types of panel envisaged in Option 2 may be of benefit to the Council in the future, as its work is developed; and encourages task groups to continually monitor their remit, membership and/or terms of reference (which can be amended as necessary).

Dealing with urgent business

Urgent business being that which needs to be addressed before the next meeting of the Council, often at very short notice. **It is recommended that the Council Convener, Council Secretary, Public Affairs Officer and two additional Council members (the Rev Dr Lesley Carroll and Mr Edgar Jardine CB) be given power to deal with such business and report back to the Council at the next meeting.**

The additional Council members will provide expertise and guidance to the Convener, Secretary and Public Affairs Officer. The group as a whole will be authorised to appoint other small task groups to deal with urgent business as appropriate.

It will often be the case that urgent business cannot be addressed by organising a meeting. Therefore, all those involved in addressing urgent business must be readily available via phone and email.

Expertise

We are pleased to have a wealth of expertise and experience, not only in our Council, but in our Congregations across Ireland. Over time we should be able to

identify those individuals who are willing and able to develop PCI's views in the public square, through an informal relationship with the Council.

It is recommended that the Council build a database of experts to draw on for advice on specific issues of public policy by:

- (a) **examining the information submitted by Presbyteries on individual 'pool' nominees for Councils; and**
- (b) **asking Presbytery Representatives to begin to identify others in their own local Congregations who would be able and willing to contribute.**

Working with other Churches and organisations

The Council for Church in Society is authorised by the General Assembly to speak on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on matters of public policy. Whilst maintaining its own voice in the public square, the Council will build partnerships on different levels with other Churches and organisations as appropriate.

There are several other Churches and Christian organisations that share many of the core Biblical values of PCI and seek to make a similar contribution in society. Some have a different scope and will diverge from our position on certain issues. Cooperation is nonetheless important to better inform our own thinking, assist others and present as united an approach as possible in the public square.

There will also be a variety of non-Christian organisations with whom it will be useful to meet and build relationships, to help us develop our positions on issues of public policy.

Example methods of engagement:

- bi-lateral meetings (formal and informal) with others to gauge and develop thinking on priority issues;
- issue-based engagement with other Christian bodies, such as the Evangelical Alliance, CARE and the Christian Institute as appropriate. The Public Affairs Officer will maintain ongoing engagement on issues of mutual interest and concern;
- working with other Churches, such as the Methodist Church, Church of Ireland and the Roman Catholic Church, as appropriate;
- building informal networks of communication;
- building relationships with specialist Christian organisations, such as the Christian Medical Fellowship and the Jubilee Centre; and
- liaising with non-Christian organisations as appropriate.

On most occasions, the Council will be represented by the Public Affairs Officer, Convener and/or Secretary, who will report to the Council on their engagements as appropriate.

It is recommended that the Council, in discharging its functions, works with other Churches and organisations, and that Council Members assist with building networks of communication and engagement.

APPENDIX B**Response of the Council for Church in Society of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Department of Justice Consultation on amending the law on abortion**

The Council for Church in Society is authorised by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to speak on behalf for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on its behalf on matters of public policy. This response reflects our current position on abortion (as laid down by the General Assembly), and our current thinking on the issues raised in the consultation. It should be noted that any change in the Church's position on abortion can only come through resolution of the General Assembly, and that there are no plans to seek a change in the current position. In offering this response, we are also very conscious of the crucial role of the DHSSPS in providing the necessary guidelines for the medical profession in these matters, and are greatly concerned that these have not yet been agreed.

In addition, we do not see how the issues raised in the consultation can, in practice, be separated from the wider abortion debate, even though the Department of Justice wishes to do so. The recent intervention by the NI Human Rights Commission is evidence that little heed is being paid to those wishes.

We are conscious however of the need to engage sensitively and fully with the issues raised in the consultation, not least because of the great pain involved in such circumstances, and are grateful for the opportunity to do so as set out below, along the lines of the numbered questions offered in the consultation paper. In doing so, however, we recognise that whilst much of the language used is accepted medical terminology, nonetheless the paper does not take cognisance of common usage – e.g. ‘unborn child’ – and therefore gives a clear impression that differing views of the status of the unborn are of little significance in the consultation.

Lethal foetal abnormality*2. Should the law allow for abortion in cases of lethal foetal abnormality?*

In our view, the criminal law should not be changed to allow for abortion in cases of lethal foetal abnormality, because we regard the right to life itself as of higher importance than any rights of personal choice.

*3. If so, how is this best achieved? Not Applicable**4. How would you define ‘lethal’?**5. Do you agree that the best way is to allow clinical judgment to decide when a foetus is not compatible with life?*

On questions 4 and 5 we share the views and rationale expressed in the Christian Medical Fellowship's response to the consultation – i.e. that definition of ‘lethal’ is difficult, and that clinical judgement on this condition by (as yet) unspecified medical practitioners would be an inadequate legal basis if the law were to be changed.

Given that there are very few cases of lethal foetal abnormality in Northern Ireland each year, it is our current view that, if the law were to change, **all** such cases should be referred by the medical practitioners, to the courts or a fully independent tribunal, for advance permission to be given. Our understanding is that such referrals could be decided very quickly. This would give added protection to the medical practitioners involved, as well as giving added public assurance that the law was being strictly followed. It would also provide protection to the DoJ by offering transparent reassurance that any public fear of the abortion law being further extended by the Department was groundless.

Sexual Crime

6. *Should the law also provide for abortion to be a choice in the event of rape?*
7. *Should the law allow abortion only for women who have been the victim of rape?*
8. *Should the law allow for abortion for victims of other sexual crime, such as sexual activity with a person under the age of 16, abuse of a position of trust, unlawful sexual activity with a vulnerable adult?*
9. *Should the law provide for abortion in cases of familial sexual activity with a person under 18, and sex between adult relatives?*
10. *Should it be necessary to have made a complaint to the police before accessing a termination?*
11. *Does this need to be time limited?*
12. *Should a police report be required and what would this say?*
13. *How would all this be achieved to allow for an early termination and is this an issue?*
14. *Or should the exemption apply with no requirements, other than a declaration to her medical practitioner by the woman, that the pregnancy is the result of a sexual crime committed against her?*
15. *In the case of incest, who is going to determine when an incestuous relationship has occurred and how is this proved?*
16. *In other words, how could we ensure that the law would work as intended, has no unintended consequences and that there would be legal certainty in these cases?*

The stated position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is that we are not in favour of any further extension of the law in Northern Ireland relating to abortion. We do believe that the current law strikes a careful and fine balance between the need to protect the life of the unborn and the need for proper care of the mother in these very difficult and distressing circumstances. We would regard it as very unwise for any new legislation to be introduced without full public assurance

from DHSSPS and the relevant health authorities that the best possible perinatal and postnatal care would be made available to the mother, whatever her decision. Not to have such provision in place would be to effectively steer the mother in the direction of choosing an abortion.

Furthermore, in considering all the above questions, there is little assurance in the consultation document that, if a change in the law were to be considered, the legislation could be framed in such a way that the desired limitations could be effectively sustained and protected.

Conscientious objection

17. Should there be a right to conscientious objection for those who participate in treatment for abortion in respect of (i) lethal foetal abnormality and (ii) sexual crime?

18. Should that right be confined to involvement in the actual procedure which results in termination (e.g. giving the abortion medication, carrying out or assisting in the surgical procedure)?

19. Should the right cover participation in all treatment related to the abortion, including both pre and post procedure nursing care?

20. Should it also cover all associated, but not direct duties, such as supervising and supporting other staff, and delegating tasks to staff involved in the provision of care to patients undergoing medical termination at any stage of the process?

The right of private conscience is one of explicit and high significance within the ethos of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The right of conscientious objection is also enshrined at present in the working protocols of the medical profession. Should the law be changed to permit abortion in any of the circumstances outlined in the consultation document, we would be very greatly concerned if the right of conscientious objection for anyone involved was to be limited or dis-allowed. For the sake of clarity, we would want such a right to include all the personnel mentioned in Q20.

APPENDIX C

Response of the Council for Church in Society of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Private Member's Consultation on the Northern Ireland Freedom of Conscience Amendment Bill

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has over 240,000 members belonging to 545 Congregations across 19 Presbyteries throughout Ireland, north and south.

The Council for Church in Society is authorised by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to speak on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on matters of public policy. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Private Member's Consultation on the Northern Ireland Freedom of Conscience Amendment Bill. This response reflects our current thinking on the issues raised in the consultation document.

1. General Comments

1.1 We are fully supportive of having legislation that upholds the core Christian principle that all people are created with equal value and worth, and therefore no one should be treated as a second-class citizen.

1.2 We uphold the importance of freedom of conscience, which is, at its core, about distinguishing between what is morally right and morally wrong, and one's ability to act in accordance with those judgements.

1.3 We recognise that many people believe that the current law does not appropriately value the role of conscience and the freedom to manifest one's beliefs in the public square.

1.4 We acknowledge that achieving an informed and gracious discussion about these matters is very difficult, given the divisive nature of much public debate about strongly-held values and beliefs. Nevertheless, we believe it is essential.

1.5 We are disappointed by the lack of significant public debate about the role of conscience in a diverse and pluralist society. We believe that the Equality Commission should help to facilitate this discussion.

1.6 We support in principle the objective of finding a better approach to the balancing of rights in relation to the provision of goods, facilities and services.

1.7 There are other aspects of freedom of conscience in society that need to be addressed but are not contained within the draft Bill, for example, the rights of employees to manifest their religious beliefs in the workplace. It is essential that such cases form part of a wider societal discussion about freedom of conscience.

1.8 The concept of reasonable accommodation should be developed in law, with the aim of achieving a better way of enabling people to manifest their beliefs in the public square whilst offering protection from discrimination. Lady Hale, Deputy President of the UK Supreme Court, has suggested that we may not yet have found reasonable accommodation in law.¹ We also note that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has recently recognised that 'expression of faith is sometimes unduly limited by national legislation and policies' and has called on member States to 'promote reasonable accommodation...to enable Christians to fully participate in public life'.² Examples from case law in other jurisdictions, such as Canada, could help to formulate a template for legislative change.³

2. Faith-based Voluntary Adoption and Fostering Agencies

2.1 We support in principle the objective of the proposed amendment to allow faith-based voluntary adoption and fostering agencies to operate in accordance with core religious beliefs and values.

2.2 The best interests of children must have primacy in these matters over the wishes of those who would like to adopt or foster.

2.3 Providing services within the context of a faith position is of central importance to faith-based adoption and fostering agencies. The role of religious beliefs and values cannot reasonably be separated from the purpose and function of such an organisation.

1 <https://www.supremecourt.uk/docs/speech-140613.pdf>

2 <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=21549&lang=en>

3 For example, *Ontario Human Rights Commission v. Brockie* [2002] O.J. No. 2375 (Ont. Sup. Ct.).

2.4 Before such adoption agencies were forced to close or cut ties with Churches, the criteria used to identify suitable adoptive parents were used in good faith, in the belief that they were necessary to deliver services within the framework of core religious beliefs.

2.5 We note that by limiting the exception to the ground of sexual orientation only, other factors which may conflict with core beliefs and values are excluded, such as marital status. We believe that other factors must be considered in discussions about freedom of conscience.

2.6 Many who are involved in the voluntary sector are dedicated to working for the common good because of their faith and conscience. Conditions should not be created within which people's rights to manifest their beliefs are ignored or sacrificed, or in which the ability to follow their conscience is put at risk if they seek to work in the public domain.

2.7 This issue highlights the need for the state to reasonably accommodate a much wider group of interests within society. The conditions created by equality legislation should not make conscience an obstacle to working for the public good.

2.8 Reasonable accommodation in law for faith-based adoption and fostering agencies would facilitate greater diversity and choice of providers, allowing the many adoptive and foster parents who would value the support of an agency with a particular ethos to access services within the framework of their religious beliefs. We believe that equity and justice would be better served by such an approach.

3. Business Exception

3.1 We support in principle the objective of the proposed amendment to provide better protection for people to exercise the right to freedom of conscience in the public square.

3.2 We believe that a state does not act with respect for personal freedoms and diversity, or properly value liberty, justice and dignity, if it requires citizens, whether they are acting in a commercial capacity or not, to produce material which directly conflicts with their core beliefs and values.

3.3 We recognise the concerns that have been raised about the scope of the amendment's current wording. We have some concerns of our own about possible unintended consequences of the draft legislation.

3.4 We note that by focusing exclusively on the Sexual Orientation Regulations, the draft Bill would not address issues in other areas that may come into direct conflict with core religious beliefs, such as certain campaigns and causes. We would welcome clarification on why the draft legislation was formulated with limited scope in this respect.

3.5 We also note that the proposed amendment only applies to those *whose sole or main purpose* is commercial. We would welcome clarification on the intention behind this restriction.

3.6 A respectful, thoughtful and comprehensive discussion is required within society about how we might develop reasonable accommodation, to find a better approach to balancing competing rights.

APPENDIX D**Summary of work in Education in Northern Ireland carried forward through the Transferors' Representative Council (TRC)****Education Bill 2014**

1. In September 2014 the NI Executive agreed to withdraw its commitment to establish an Education and Skills Authority (ESA) and instead agreed to replace the five existing Education and Library Boards (ELBs) with a single body based upon the model of an ELB. The Executive also agreed to establish a new body to support controlled schools. A draft Education Bill was brought to the Assembly with agreed accelerated passage and the final reading took place on 17th November 2014 with a view to being enacted as soon as possible following Royal Assent. The Board of the new Education Authority will consist of a chair appointed by the Minister and 20 members, comprising eight political members, and 12 non-political members. These 12 will comprise nominees representing: the Transferors, Catholic Trustees, Integrated schools, Voluntary Grammar schools, and Controlled Grammar schools.

The Secretaries of the Boards of Education of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland issued the following short statement supporting the new development:

'The Transferor Churches welcome the agreement today by the Executive that legislation will be drafted to establish a single body to replace the five Education and Library Boards. It is good that a way forward has been found to place the future of educational administration on a secure footing and to remove the current uncertainty.'

The Transferors also warmly welcome the Executive's agreement that the proposed Bill will include an additional provision to fund a new body to support Controlled schools. At their annual meetings of General Synod, General Assembly and Conference earlier this year, the three Transferor Churches expressed deep concern at the continued disadvantaged position of Controlled schools and called on the Minister to create a body to support and advocate for the Controlled sector. The Churches are pleased that he and his Executive colleagues have responded and acknowledge the support of those parties whose work over the years has enabled such a positive development. The establishment of this new body will correct a deficit in the education system which has existed for decades and will enable Controlled schools to feel they now have an advocate body to work alongside them to bring about continued improvement in educational outcomes for children and young people.'

Controlled Sector Support Body

2. Following the successful passage of the Education Bill through the Assembly in November 2014, the Minister agreed to restore funding to the Controlled Schools Sectoral Support Body Working Group. In addressing the Assembly on 14th October the Minister outlined the functions of the Support Body.

- Provide a representational and advocacy role for Controlled Schools, including advice and support in responding to consultation exercises in respect of education policies, initiatives and schemes, and in regard to relationships with the Department, the Education Authority and other Departments;
- work with Schools within the sector to develop and maintain the collective ethos of the sector including, where appropriate, a role in identifying, encouraging and nominating governors and in ensuring ethos is part of employment considerations;
- work with the Education Authority to raise educational standards;
- participate in the planning of the schools estate, assessing current and ongoing provision within the sector, participating in area-based planning co-ordinated by DE and the Education Authority (including membership of the Department's Area Planning Steering Group) and engaging where appropriate in strategic planning processes, including community planning; and
- build co-operation and engage with other sectors in matters of mutual interest, including promotion of tolerance and understanding.

The TRC assessment is that that the renewed political agreement to establish a support body for controlled schools is excellent news and will ensure this sector has similar support and representation as other sectors. Transferors are represented on the Working Group which has been meeting regularly to produce a business case to ensure the Controlled Schools' Support Body is established on a firm strategic and financial foundation. The aim of the Group is to ensure that the Body is operational at the earliest opportunity to provide effective support for the Controlled Sector and advice to the emerging Education Authority. The TRC urges the Department to expedite the various administrative processes to approve the business case and allow the support body to come into existence as soon as possible.

Shared Education

3. There have been some significant developments in Shared Education in the past year. In October 2014 the NI Assembly Education Committee for Education began an Inquiry into Shared / Integrated Education, and sought contributions from stakeholders. The TRC made a written submission and was asked to bring oral evidence to the Committee on 18th February 2015. The TRC emphasised the commitment of the three transferor Churches to the development of shared education through a range of approaches appropriate to the context of local schools. In December 2014 the Minister announced funding of £25m over four years being made available to support shared education in schools, focussing on those already engaging in collaborative projects. In February 2015, six projects involving more than 20 schools were permitted to proceed to the feasibility and economic appraisal stage. In January 2015 the Minister launched a consultation on a proposed policy and an accompanying Shared Education Bill. The Bill proposes a definition and core principles of shared education, along with actions and interventions the Department will take to support its development. TRC

has made a response to the consultation cautiously welcoming the development although expressing concerns that the wording of the draft definition could have a narrowing effect on the range of shared education proposals coming forward.

Jointly Managed Church Schools: During the past year transferors, representatives of the Catholic Trustees and DE have held a number of meetings regarding the framing of draft guidelines applicable to proposals for such schools. Discussions have been productive and are ongoing; the Department proposes to publish, later in 2015, a circular of guidance for those schools considering this new form of sharing.

DE Draft Budget 2015-2016 consultation

4. TRC submitted a strongly worded response to proposed cuts to the Education Budget including the following comments:

‘Whilst acknowledging that in times of economic difficulties the Government must take measures to reduce spending by departments to balance the budget, it is deeply disappointing that the education of children could not have been given special exemption from the cut-backs. It is of grave concern that the budget for education is being required to endure the harsh reductions as proposed. Reductions of 8.4% in the Resource Budget and 19.7% in the Capital Budget will in our view seriously damage the future capability of the education system to deliver the high quality education children deserve’.

‘Transferors who serve on Controlled school boards of governors are reporting that implementation of the cut in the Aggregated Schools Budget of £78.7m at school level will necessitate many schools losing teaching staff and/or support staff. The necessary outworking will be increased class sizes and less dedicated time for supporting those children who need it most’.

‘We have a deep concern that implementing such severe budget cuts will bring an impossible burden to already stressed teachers and the present curriculum of active learning could become impossible to implement’. Following the consultation on the draft budget, the Finance Minister announced in his revised budget that Education would receive an extra £63m. While this should bring some relief to the education system it is unclear at this stage what impact this will make at school level given that budget cuts will still be required.

Religious Education (RE)

5. The TRC continues to be concerned at the current low level of professional support available to teachers of Religious Education. Due to the cuts in ELB budgets, the Curriculum and Advisory Support Service (CASS) to most subject teachers has been diminished to virtually zero. Due to retirements there is currently only one RE advisor across the five ELB areas and his work has been mostly reallocated to school improvement. The TRC has raised this issue at various levels: with MLAs, the ELBs and the Department itself. One possible way to address the current deficit is through a TRC proposal to include RE support for schools in the work of the Controlled Sector Support Body under the heading of developing school ethos. A key component of the religious aspect of the ethos of a Controlled school is its unique un-denominational approach to RE and collective worship.

Review of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in NI

6. A panel of international education experts, appointed by the Minister of the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), has reviewed the system of initial teacher education in NI and made recommendations to the Minister.

The Review Group has examined the best international practice for ITE and how the present structure of teacher training in NI might be developed. The Group has proposed four options for consideration: (A) enhanced collaboration between the existing institutions; (B) a two-centre model, with one institution based in the North-West and the other in Belfast; (C) a Northern Ireland Teacher Education Federation, in which existing institutions continue but with some ceding of responsibilities to a supra-institutional federal body; and, finally, (D) a single Northern Ireland Institute of Education in which the distinctive missions of the current teacher education institutions would be retained.

The DEL Minister has published the report, circulated it to stakeholders and has stated that he would be seeking views. This Board has had an initial discussion of the various options and reflected on the merits of each. The TRC was invited to a meeting with the Minister in February 2015, and in line with its earlier oral submission to the Review Group gave support to the closer integration of the current ITE providers with their university settings to enable better synergies between educational research, teacher education and professional development. They stressed that this should be achieved in a way which fully respects and protects the ethos of each ITE institution. The TRC suggested that it would be desirable in the context of developing shared education, if colleges were to build upon existing collaboration and develop an increasingly shared approach to aspects of teacher education. Therefore in the view of the TRC, option (A) offered the most pragmatic way forward at this stage.

Realistically, progress in re-modelling ITE in NI will require political agreement and at present there is a polarisation of opinions. In January 2015 the DEL Minister in response to a cut in his department's 2015/16 budget allocation, proposed to remove a 'premia' which is a supplementary funding stream worth £2m for St Mary's and Stranmillis. The knock-on effect of this cut could threaten the sustainability of both colleges in their current form. Following a public campaign of opposition to the cut back, on the 12th March the NI Executive reversed the Minister's decision and restored the 'premia' to both colleges. This is a measure of the lack of political consensus on remodelling Teacher Education provision in NI.

Consultations responded to:

7. Department of Education:
 - Draft Budget 2015-2016
 - Review of Home to School Transport policy
 - Sharing Works: a Policy for Shared Education
- NI Assembly Education Committee for Education:
 - Enquiry into Shared / Integrated Education

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the General Assembly affirm their commitment to civil and informed political discourse; acknowledge that fractious and poor quality public debate damages community relations and weakens confidence in political systems; and urge all those who speak in the public square to do so with conviction, knowledge and civility.
2. That the General Assembly encourage the Council for Church in Society to develop partnerships for the common good with other Churches and organisations, whilst maintaining its distinctive voice in the public square.
3. That the General Assembly encourage gracious and informed societal and political discussion across Ireland, north and south, about how to develop the concept of reasonable accommodation in law for matters of conscience.
4. That the Report of the Council for Church in Society be received.

COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION

Convener: Rev SE HUGHES

Secretary: Rev WS MARRS

1. The Council for Global Mission met on 14th January and 18th March 2015 and this is its first report to the General Assembly based on the work of its Committees and Panels from 1st January 2015.

2. It is the prayer of the Council for Global Mission, in grappling with the new challenges which changes in structure have brought, that PCI will be alert to the vision God will give for the way ahead. The Council are acutely aware that even as “a people of service and outreach” PCI alone cannot do everything that is out there in global mission. PCI cannot send enough people, cannot cover a vast range of countries, cannot enter into every possible partnership, cannot receive all the people who might wish to come to the shores of Ireland, cannot cover all the global concerns which the wider world has identified. However, alongside the rest of the Christian world, alongside the various Churches, agencies and organisations specialising in specific areas, making use of the resources, expertise and experience that have been gathered over many years, and open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit PCI can look forward to developing a vision and a direction which will hopefully clarify what God is calling PCI to do in the next five years.

3. The Council looks forward to an “Envisioning Time Out” later in June when the whole Council will, under God’s guidance, concentrate on “Developing the Vision”.

4. Council Panels: The Council for Global Mission has agreed to set up three Council Panels: the Business and Finance Panel which has met on one occasion; the Grants Panel and the Personnel Panel which have yet to meet.

5. The Council is delighted that the concept of mobilising the local Congregation for global mission has been fully recognised by the General Assembly and is now being taken up by the Global Mission Involvement Committee of the Council for Congregational life and Witness – the Council for Global Mission looks forward to working closely with this new Committee and Council in the days ahead.

6. At this 2015 Assembly we have particularly appreciated the inclusion of a session entitled “Listening to the Global Church”. It is something which the early Church learned to do at a very early stage (Acts 15 – The Council at Jerusalem) and the experience dramatically challenged their own assumptions of how ministry and mission should be done.

7. Mission Department Staffing: Massive changes have taken place in the forming of the new Mission Department, serving both the Councils for Mission in Ireland and for Global Mission. These have impacted the Department’s staff in various ways and they have risen to the challenge superbly well. They deserve PCI’s highest admiration along with strong ongoing prayer support, as do those who recently concluded their service. Nigel Eves retired from the post of Mission Development Officer (Overseas) on 4th July 2014 after 17 years of service, and the Rev Cheryl Megan served as Convener of the Board of Mission Overseas over the past three and a half years.

8. At the time of writing the post of Mission Support Officer (Partnerships) had not been filled, but it was hoped that this will have happened by the summer of 2015, so easing the pressure of work within the Department.

9. The work of the Council is progressing under four Assembly Committees:

Outreach Ministries Committee (OMC) Para 15 to 20

Main Issues: Healthcare Mission; New Initiatives in Europe

Following the findings of the Board of Mission Overseas Partnership and Personnel Review in 2014, the Outreach Ministries Committee has increasingly encouraged PCI to focus on mission in Europe and noted the ease with which Church members can travel to encourage and support PCI's mission personnel and partner Churches on Ireland's doorstep. At the same time the Council's mission partnerships in other areas are not being neglected. The facility for receiving Monthly News Bulletins via internet or email from missionary personnel has been a superb benefit to the whole Church and has many praying in a much more informed way.

Leadership Development Committee (LDC) Para 21 to 28

Main Issues: Leaders in Training, Panels

The Leadership Development Committee is now actively looking to develop leaders through both receiving potential "leaders in training" from other areas of the world and at the same time encouraging PCI's own Church "leaders in training" to gain missional theological insights and experience overseas.

World Development Committee (WDC) Para 29 to 33

Main Issues: World Development Appeal; Moderator-supported special appeals

Because the Council's focus is on integral mission, caring for the whole person and the whole of creation, so the World Development Committee, working in partnership with Tearfund and Christian Aid, actively supports local communities in the work of sustainable development, in areas such as education, capacity building, healthcare, gender equality, HIV prevention and care, clean water, agriculture and community advocacy.

Global Concerns Committee (GCC) Para 34 to 50

Main Issues: Remit, Panels, Principles

The Council acknowledges the importance of the Global Concerns Committee recognising its direct relevance to the Council's work and witness. Identified below are some of the key global concerns in the world today, together with some questions which the Council has reflected on:

- **International development** – emergency relief, food insecurity, fair trade, debt, consumerism, waste, food dumping, multinational corporations, tax justice;
- **Health** – Ebola, HIV AIDS, Malaria;
- **Education** – women, children, literacy;
- **Population** – overpopulation, human settlement, worldwide migration;
- **Environment** – natural disaster, climate change, global warming,

biodiversity, GM food, atomic energy, geopolitics, oceans, depletion of natural resources – oil, gas, water;

- **Peace and Conflict Resolution** – safe-guarding peace, unjust wars, nuclear weapons, disarmament and arms control, international terrorism and genocide, religious conflict, the Middle East crisis;
- **Communication** – misinformation, propaganda, media;
- **Human Rights Abuses** – racism, gender, disability, family, sexual orientation, domestic violence, bullying, child labour, human trafficking, the elderly;
- **Political** – governance, democracy, decolonisation, international law, unemployment, crime;
- **Faith** – understanding other faiths, religious freedom, discrimination and persecution.

10. The above list sets out many of the world's concerns, but who sets the agenda? To what extent are they God's concerns and what is God saying about each? To what extent are these the concerns of PCI's partner Churches, and should they be? To what extent are these the concerns of PCI's Congregations, and should they be? On what basis does PCI prioritise the concerns with which to engage? Are there other bodies internal or external to PCI who would be better placed to deal with these concerns? A process for taking these forward has been identified by the Global Concerns Committee in the four panels which they have put in place.

11. **Mission Personnel:** A Memorial Minute was recorded and sympathies expressed in respect of Margaret Young, Missionary to Malawi, 1995 to 2009 who passed away on 1st November 2014. Stephen and Laura Coulter were commissioned for missionary service in Nepal in Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian Church on 4th January 2015.

12. **Partner Church Visits and Visitors:**

- The Rev David Steele represented PCI at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa from 13th-18th April and thereafter visited with PCI mission personnel in Kenya, returning home on 24th April 2015.
- A delegation of Church leaders from the Christian Church in Sumba, Indonesia visited PCI from 13th-24th April 2015.
- Helen Johnston visited Nepal from 1st-15th May to represent PCI at the General Assembly of the United Mission to Nepal and also to meet with PCI mission personnel.

13. **Finance and Property:** The Council for Global Mission commenced its work on 1st January 2015 inheriting a deficit of £38,692 which is less than the budgeted deficit of £164,158. The Council will work towards a strategic plan for 2016 – 2020 for submission to the United Appeal Committee in October 2015.

14. Proceeds of £64,571 have been received on the sale of a property at 154 Skegoneill Avenue. The proceeds of sale from this property will contribute to ongoing repair and maintenance of remaining mission properties at 44 Marlborough Park North and 20 Gilnahirk Crescent where mission personnel are accommodated whilst on home assignment. At the time of writing the sale of a property at 39 Mount Prospect Park has been agreed for £167,000.

OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMITTEE (OMC)

15. The Outreach Ministries Committee will seek to operate as a bridge between the wider PCI, and mission personnel and partners serving in the wider world under the oversight of the Council for Global Mission, so as to facilitate global outreach in its various forms. Five areas of work were highlighted:

- *Developing strategy* – discerning what the Committee does and where it does it;
- *Sharing with overseas partners* – building missional relationships;
- *Supporting mission personnel* – consulting, reviewing and evaluating the work in liaison with the Council for Global Mission’s Personnel Panel;
- *Informing the Church at home* – Publicity through the PCI website, magazine articles, prayer resources. There is a need to think practically how to get information out to Presbyteries through the various Presbytery representatives, PW representatives, and Mission Mobilisers who are actively engaged with the wider Church;
- *Resourcing the work* – grants, projects, and teams in liaison with the Council for Global Mission’s Grants Panel and World Development Committee, and the Council for Congregational Life and Witness’s Global Mission Involvement Committee.

16. **Healthcare Mission Team:** Jackie Davey (Orangefield Presbyterian Church) reported back on the ‘Go, See, Do’ Healthcare Mission Team that went to Malawi in the spring of 2014. She indicated that the team’s visit provided a great opportunity not only to contribute, but to learn from Africa in terms of the role of the Church in healthcare and the importance of treating the whole person. In addition to the lessons learnt, the challenge for those on the team was to consider what longer-term input they could have, whether in the form of teaching, through sending out specialist medical equipment in containers, or simply raising the profile of global mission.

17. The Committee reflected on the fact that there can be great value in sending such mission teams in promoting mission among individuals, Congregations and in the Church as a whole. It is important for there to be ongoing discussion with the Global Mission Involvement Committee of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness as to how best to facilitate such visits in the future.

18. **Torre del Mar Congregation, Spain:** The Rev Uel Marrs reported on his recent visit to Torre del Mar in Spain. During the visit, Uel met with PCI missionary, Steve Anderson, members of the Torre del Mar Community Church and representatives of the Spanish Evangelical Church, to offer support, discuss the Congregation’s planned move to alternative premises and new outreach initiatives. It was agreed that in this context the Committee could be supportive through pastoral visits and in encouraging congregational teams and visits.

19. The Committee was urged to support prayerfully all the mission personnel involved in Outreach Ministries, in particular new mission personnel and those involved in new mission opportunities. Furthermore, it was encouraged to take time to use and promote the excellent monthly News Bulletins prepared

by mission personnel which are available by email from the Mission Department, or as downloads from the Mission Overseas Website.

20. It was agreed that members of the Malawi Container Group should be encouraged in their work and greater promotion given to the sending out of boxes of invaluable medical and educational supplies. It was reported how Dr Neil Kennedy had highlighted a recent timely arrival of medical boxes to bolster the dwindling local hospital supplies in Malawi. The Committee wants to encourage Congregations to continue supplying this much needed help.

DAVID STEELE, Convener

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LDC)

21. The newly constituted Leadership Development Committee met for the first time on 19th February, 2015.

22. At this first meeting time was given to considering an overview of the Committee's remit and role and the work to be taken forward. Background information was also provided on the current Leaders in Training studying in the UK. In the discussion which followed the Committee agreed that greater attention needs to be paid not only to holding an exit interview with each Leader in Training, but to providing them with the kind of evaluation form that contains more pointed questions allowing for more detailed feedback, both positive and negative. This would be especially important for those studying for PhDs. The Committee also wishes to consider more closely the issues surrounding placing those coming to the UK or Ireland to train in appropriate Congregations so that they, their home Church and PCI may all benefit spiritually from their being here.

23. Having considered the leadership development remit, and with an openness to the guiding of God's Spirit, the Committee recommended and the Council for Global Mission agreed the establishment of two Panels to serve the work of the Leadership Development Committee:

24. **A Leaders in Training Panel:** This will deal with all matters relating to those whom the Committee provides with scholarship funding, whether for study in the UK, Ireland or further afield, including: liaising with the university/college, pastoral care, reception and orientation, and providing guidelines to Congregations for sponsoring and supporting Leaders in Training.

25. **A Global Envisioning Panel:** This Panel will seek to envision students for the ministry and Ministers, primarily through contributing to a series of lectures on mission designed for ministry students at Union Theological College and to a Licentiates Training Day. It will also seek to be supportive of those in PCI's leadership taking sabbaticals in an overseas context, and facilitating members of Union Theological College Faculty, PCI Ministers and other Presbyterians to engage in concentrated periods of lecturing in partner Church training institutions.

26. The Committee notes that these two panels will complement each other, one dealing with Leaders in Training in the overseas context, the other with Leaders in Training from within PCI who, in turn, will be in a position to renew the vision of PCI's Congregations for God's Global Kingdom.

27. The Committee was pleased to receive a report relating to the visit of the Rev John Faris and Miss Linda Jackson on behalf of the Leadership Development Committee to the inauguration of the newly refurbished Library and “Ted Jackson” Computer Suite at the Gujarat United School of Theology in Ahmedabad, November 2014.

28. The Committee has begun the work of considering applications from those from PCI’s partner Churches who wish to study in the UK or Ireland in 2015/2016, and of planning a reception in the autumn for Leaders in Training.

MARIE KANE, Convener

WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (WDC)

29. The World Development Committee met for the first time under the Council for Global Mission in February 2015.

30. As most members of the World Development Committee were newly appointed, the first focus of the meeting was an overview of the work of the Committee, including: its biblical and theological grounding, the annual World Development Appeal, and the Committee’s working relationship with Christian Aid, Tearfund, and various partner Churches.

31. The second task of the meeting was to initiate work on the 2015 World Development Appeal. It was agreed that the lead project to be highlighted will be the Disaster Management Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (DMCCAM) Project of the United Mission in Nepal. The project addresses the continuing effects of climate change and related issues of climate justice.

32. The second project to be profiled is in Ethiopia, and seeks to encourage the farming of peanuts and the development of access to markets, as one aspect of constructive response to climate change. This project is run by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). The work of sourcing materials for both projects is underway.

33. The Committee is delighted to report that the total funds received for the Special Appeal for South Sudan amounted to just over £330,000 as of 5 February 2015. In addition, on the same date, the Committee authorised payment of £450,000 (£225,000 each) to Tearfund and Christian Aid in respect of the 2014 Appeal.

KATHERINE MEYER, Convener

GLOBAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE (GCC)

34. The very title of the Global Concerns Committee conveys the far-reaching and overarching nature of the task assigned to it and raises questions about how PCI can meaningfully engage with the many challenging global issues that make their way into the homes and lives of Church members, not least via the media and the internet.

35. The starting point must be acknowledging whose world it is and PCI’s place in it. Eugene Peterson translates verse 1 of Psalm 24 as “God claims Earth

and everything in it, God claims World and all who live in it.” (The Message). A proper perspective of who God is, how He works and how His people are called to partner in His mission are essential starting points in exploring PCI’s role as a denomination in issues of Global Concern.

36. As PCI reflects on who God is and what He has done, Church members realise they should not bury their heads in the sand or wash their hands of these issues. There is a real danger that PCI can become immune, feel overwhelmed or inadequate, or that as a Church does not have the wherewithal to investigate and respond to these global issues and therefore do nothing. As God’s people who pray for His kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven, doing nothing is not an option.

37. The Global Concerns Committee realises that it cannot hope adequately to address the myriad of global issues which clamour for attention. Therefore the Committee has noted a number of key pointers, proposed new structures and seeks to develop principles by which PCI as a denomination can meaningfully engage with Global issues.

38. Pointers: What PCI seeks to do does not take place in a vacuum. There is an important tradition of engagement with issues within PCI on which to build. Most recently Environmental and Race Relations Panels formed part of the old Global Concerns Committee under the old General Board.

39. There are significant questions about how the Global Concerns Committee defines its remit and prioritises its involvement. How does the Committee decide which Global impact issues to engage with? What are the issues PCI Church members need to know about and grapple with? How does the Committee ensure that these do not simply reflect vested interests but are relevant to all God’s people?

40. The Committee’s primary role must be to support the discipleship development of the members of PCI Congregations, enabling and equipping them to engage with the global impact issues which they encounter in the course of their lives.

41. The Committee’s place in the new structures provides potential for developing interface relationships between the global and local Church. Experiences and lessons learnt by PCI’s partners can positively impact how PCI shapes her response to global issues.

42. The Committee recognises its limitations, and therefore proposes exploring strategic partnerships with organisations and bodies who may be better placed and resourced to address specialised Global issues.

43. **Panels (Structures):** The Committee recognises the need to establish structures to take forward various aspects of its remit. The setting up of task groups or panels was considered but the Committee opted for the latter, proposing the establishment of four Panels as follows:

44. **Intercultural Panel** focusing on *relationship with other people*; including but not confined to people of other ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This panel would take forward some of the work undertaken by the old Race Relations Panel. It may take on the issue of how PCI highlights and responds to persecuted minorities.

45. **International Panel** focusing on *relationship with other countries*; including the proposed Near East Panel and dealing with international issues.

This would fulfil the remit of the International Relations Panel suggested under the structures review.

46. **World Faiths Panel** focusing on *relationship with other faiths*; understanding other world faiths, globally and locally. Relating to other faiths should always be in the context of confidence in what PCI believes and in a spirit of respect for other people.

47. **Stewardship of Creation Panel** focusing on *relationship with the earth*; including but not necessarily confined to the work of the old Environment Panel.

48. The remits of these four Panels will need to be defined. Further they will need to be populated from the Council, Committee and the pool of nominees from Presbyteries.

49. **Principles:** One of the challenges facing the Committee is how to respond promptly to global issues as they arise. As Presbyterians, seeking to be democratic in Church structures, there is a tendency to be slow and cumbersome in deliberations and response. This is a particular challenge for advocacy. The Committee believes that equipping local Congregations and believers with basic Biblical principles is one way in which people can be enabled to grapple at a local community and individual level.

50. The Committee therefore proposes developing overarching and Biblically based principles as an immediate priority. It is envisaged that these will facilitate discussion and engagement at congregational level with global issues and help equip local believers to critically apply their faith to matters which they encounter in the course of their daily lives.

RICHARD KERR, Convener

APPENDIX A

Global Mission Personnel: the names, spheres and categories of service of the Council's Mission Personnel are listed below and are to be taken together with this report.

INTEGRATE PROGRAMME – service of two or more years

BRAZIL

Naomi Keefe	2004	Outreach programme, The Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB), Recife
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GREAT BRITAIN

Christopher & Nivedita Benjamin	1989	Ministry among Asians in Wembley, London
Edwin & Anne Kibathi	2009	Ministry among East Africans in East London

ITALY

Alan & Tracey Johnston	2014	Associate Pastor, Sola Grazia Church, Coram Deo Ministries Church Plant, Mantova
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KENYA

Stephen & Angelina Cowan	1985 1989	Outreach & Development Work, Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Tuum
Naomi Leremore	1991	Development of Sunday School materials, PCEA, Nairobi
Gary & Mary Reid	2000	Outreach & Development Work, PCEA, Olkinyiei

MALAWI

Diane Cusick	1995	Pre-school teacher training, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), Livingstonia Synod, Mzuzu
Neil &	2008	Head of Paediatrics Department –Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital; Dean and Senior Lecturer, College of Medicine of the University of Malawi
Sara Kennedy Volker & JinHyeog Glissmann	2010	Teaching, Blantyre Executive Director, Theological Education by Extension in Malawi (TEEM), Zomba
Lyn & John Dowds	2011	Doctor, David Gordon Memorial Hospital, CCAP, Livingstonia Synod, Livingstonia
David & Pamela McCullagh	2013	Ministry Co-ordinator Resources Co-ordinator
Matthew Williams	2011	Scripture Union of Malawi, Lilongwe Lecturer, Livingstonia Theological College, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Ekwendeni

NEPAL

Stephen & Laura Coulter	2015	Mental Health Peace Building United Mission to Nepal (UMN), Kathmandu
Peter & Valerie Lockwood	2012	Programme Advisor and Expatriate Recruitment Co-ordinator United Mission to Nepal (UMN), Kathmandu

PAKISTAN

Ron & Hilary McCartney	2007	Teaching, Forman Christian College, Lahore
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PORTUGAL

James & Heather Cochrane	2008	Church Planting, Igreja Christiã Presbyteriana de Portugal, Porto
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ROMANIA

Csaba & Ilona Veres	2001 1993	Co-ordinator, SERVANT Mission & Mera Children's Project, Diakonia Cluj
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SPAIN

Steve Anderson	2014	Student outreach with Grupos Biblicos Unidos
Derek & Jane French	2000	Student outreach with Grupos Biblicos Unidos (GBU), Bilbao

INSPIRE PROGRAMME – service of less than one year**Malawi**

John Justin	2015	Teaching, Children's and Youth Work, CCAP, Livingstonia Synod, Embangweni and Bandawe
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RESOLUTIONS

1. That the General Assembly convey warm greetings and appreciation to PCI's global partners and mission personnel currently serving overseas.
2. That the General Assembly give thanks for continuing and generous support of PCI Congregations and members for both the 2014 World Development Appeal and the Moderator-supported Appeal for South Sudan, and encourage prayerful support for the 2015 Appeal focusing on Nepal and Ethiopia.
3. That the Report of the Council for Global Mission be received.

SPUD YOUTH ASSEMBLY

Convener: Miss HELEN MACAULAY

Secretary: Mr OWEN WILSON

Grow Your Own SPUDs

1. The SPUD Working Group has continued to focus on enabling congregations to deliver the Grow Your Own SPUDs resource. SPUD passionately affirms that the local Church should be the epicentre of discipling young people to love and serve Jesus. If young people are not invested in their local Church family, then the work we do at a denominational level has no grounding.

2. In March a training night was held in Waringstown for representatives from Churches in the surrounding area. Youth Leaders and Elders from three congregations were in attendance and a beneficial conversation was facilitated.

MAD Weekend

3. SPUD was invited to run a seminar on Saturday morning at the MAD weekend. The focus was on encouraging young people's involvement in their local Church. This interactive session sought to challenge and empower participants to recognise their potential and responsibility to learn to serve. It was shaped by the precepts seen in the Parable of the Talents, Jesus' teaching in Matthew chapter 25, and Paul's teaching on the Church as a body in 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

4. The Working Group made the most of the opportunity to speak to young people and hear their opinions on how they are being equipped to face daily pressures. The key question posed was, "What issues do you feel your Church is not addressing effectively?" The responses were considered and correlations arising noted, including: are not receiving adequate support regarding areas of Christian discipleship, mental health, peer pressure, sexuality, and academic pressure.

SPUD on Tour

5. SPUD on Tour was a series of four regional events that took place in Dublin, Belfast, Ballygawley and Ballymoney from January to March. Their purpose was to provide a channel through which SPUD could engage with young people from across the denomination.

6. The content of the programme was influenced by the feedback received at MAD. The sessions focussed on young peoples' opinions regarding gender roles, pornography, dating, relationships and homosexuality. The event was structured around discussion groups and concluded with a biblical perspective on the issues addressed.

7. The feedback from these events was brought to the SPUD Overnight and used by the delegates to formulate a framework for further discussion.

SPUD Overnight

8. The SPUD overnight was held in April at the Faith Mission Centre, Portadown. Owing to the brevity of this year's Assembly reports due the

transition resulting from the restructuring process, the Working Group felt that it would be most profitable to ask the delegates to provide their opinions on areas under the remits of the Councils for Congregational Life and Witness, and Church in Society.

9. Time was also spent addressing the concerns raised from the SPUD on Tour events and considering actions which SPUD and Churches can take to better equip our young people.

SPUD Special Report

10. The Working Group is in the process of compiling a final report regarding how young people in PCI feel their Churches can best help them to engage with issues which are encompassed by the term, 'human sexuality'. This will be forwarded to the Clerk for consideration by and engagement with the appropriate grouping within PCI.

The Future of SPUD

11. SPUD will continue to develop the conversation begun by *Breaking the Silence* so as to address the issue of the Church's response to mental health.

12. SPUD would like to raise a point of concern regarding the timing of the General Assembly. In light of the recent restructuring process which our denomination has undertaken aimed at increasing participation in the decision making processes of the Assembly, it would be remiss of us not to highlight that the Assembly is not accessible to delegates who hold down regular working hours or are in full-time education.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the SPUD Youth Assembly be received.

TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Chairman: Very Rev Dr SAMUEL HUTCHINSON
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 Assembly Buildings, Belfast, on 24 March 2015.

2. Moved by the Very Rev David Clarke, seconded by Mr Douglas Crowe and agreed that the Dr Samuel Hutchinson, the Rev WJ Orr and Mr NH McLean be re-appointed for a further term of 5 years. The Very Rev Dr Samuel Hutchinson and the Rev WJ Orr both indicated they are willing to be re-appointed but that it is unlikely that they will serve a full term.

3. Moved by the Very Rev Dr David Clarke, seconded by Mr Douglas Crowe, that the Rev WJ Orr be appointed Chairman until the 2016 General Assembly.

4. The Statement of audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2014 of the following were laid before the Trustees, and were adopted by them:

- The General Investment Fund
- The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

(Incorporating 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 and Various other Trust Funds).

5. Moved by Mrs Marjorie Guiler, seconded by the Very Rev Dr David Clarke and unanimously agreed that the Report and the Statements of Accounts be adopted, and lodged with the Clerk of Assembly to be laid before the Assembly in June. The Report and the Statement of Accounts were signed and lodged in accordance with the foregoing resolution.

6. The Trustees also received and examined the Accounts for 2014 of the Getty Trust and The War Memorial Hostel and accepted these for inclusion in the volume of Accounts to be submitted to the General Assembly. The accounts of Union Theological College will be reviewed for this purpose at the Trustees meeting in April.

7. The Trustees nominated Mr WH Scott and Sir Bruce Robinson as members to attend the General Assembly according to the provision of the Code Par 97 (h) (iv).

Trust Funds

8. A summary Account of the various Trust Funds is included in the Book of Accounts 2014. The following Trust Funds are distributed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Trustees.

As in 2014, the Trustees have agreed to recommend to the General Assembly that, where the terms of Trust permit, these should be distributed via the United Appeal rather than directly to various agencies.

Mrs A M Davidson Trust: The total income for 2014 available for distribution is £6,627.40. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£6,627.40</u>
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Sir Wm V McCleery Estate: The total income for 2014 available for distribution is £34,601.84. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Central Ministry Fund	80%
Retired Ministers' Fund	10%
Widows of Ministers' Fund	10%

Estate of Miss Irene Scott: The total income for 2014 available for distribution is £7,169.24. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£7,169.24</u>
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Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown: The total income for 2014 available for distribution is £4,600.96. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£4,600.96</u>
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Estate of Mr Victor Morrow: The total income for 2014 available for distribution is £1,499.68. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£1,499.68</u>
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THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INVESTMENT FUND

(commonly known as The General Investment Fund)

9. The General Investment Fund was originally established under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964. It is a Common Investment Fund in which any charity connected with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland can invest.

10. In accordance with the Scheme Rules, dividends are declared on shareholdings in the fund at 15th April and 15th October and the shares are also valued on these dates. Recent dividend levels and share values are set out below.

11. Investments in the fund or shareholdings tend to arise from trust funds, bequests or donations which often have particular terms or restrictions attached regarding the application of the capital and income.

12. Further details about the General Investment Fund, the investment performance and investment holdings, is available in a booklet available from the Financial Secretary's Department.

13. The Trustees have prepared the accounts of the General Investment Fund for the year ended 31st December 2014 in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Financial Statement of Authorised Funds (October 2010). These are included in the Book of Accounts presented to the General Assembly. These accounts provide detailed information regarding the Fund and in particular its performance, investment allocation, level of income and distributions during the year.

14. Declaration of Dividend	15.4.14	15.10.14
Number of shares qualifying	5,430,776	5,439,403
Income from investment for distribution and Tax recoverable less administrative Charge and Investment Advisers' Fees	£624,264	£828,254
Dividend per share	11.00p	15.00p

15. During 2014, £12,344 was transferred to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve, in accordance with the Scheme Rules, and the balance on the Reserve at 31 December, 2014 is £524,154.

16. The combined annual Dividend of 26.00p per share for 2014 is to be compared with 26.00p for 2013, 26.00p for 2012, 25.00p for 2011, 26.00p for 2010; 28.00p for 2009; 33.00p for 2008; 31.00p for 2007; 30.00p for 2006; 27.00p for 2005.

17. Valuation	15.4.14	15.10.14
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	44,690,356	44,028,253
Cash on Deposit	829,040	813,102
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	538,689	524,154
	<u>£46,058,085</u>	<u>£45,365,509</u>
No of Shares Issued	5,443,116	5,441,462
Share Value	£8.4617	£8.3370

In addition to the official valuations at 15th April and 15th October the Trustees also carry out a valuation of the shares as at 31st December. This is an "internal" valuation used by Boards and Agencies and the Trustees to value investments held by various funds in the General Investment Fund for year-end accounting purposes. At 31st December the valuation was £8.8936 per share (2013, £8.4940).

18. The Trustees meet with Investment Managers, Newton Investment Management Limited, three times a year to review investment performance. During 2014, there was a return of 8.6% compared to a benchmark return of 6.8%. Newton Investment Management Limited was appointed Investment Adviser to the Trustees Funds in June 2006 and from then to 31st December 2014, the General Investment Fund returned 6.55% per annum compared to the benchmark of 6.31%.

19. During 2014 The Trustees appointed BNY Mellon to act as custodian for the Fund as Newton Investment Management has advised the Trustees that they were no longer able to act in this capacity.

Trustees Discretionary Fund

20. On occasions the Trustees are notified of bequests where the terms may state they are for the “benefit of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland” or the “Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland”. The present policy of the Trustees is to invest these in the Trustees Discretionary Fund in the General Investment Fund, unless a specific project requiring funding is identified, and then to distribute the income annually. In allocating capital or income, and while recognising no restrictions have been expressed by the donor, the Trustees will have regard to expressions of wish or known interests of the donor. During 2014, the Trustees did not receive any bequests which they have included in their Discretionary Fund. At 31st December 2014 the Fund held 57,812 shares in the General Investment Fund which valued the holding at £514,210. In response to a resolution of the 2013 General Assembly the Trustees provided a grant of £450,000 to Union Theological College during 2014 to assist with the cost of major repairs to the building. This was funded by realising 46,779 shares in the General Investment Fund (proceeds £390,000) and from £60,000 of undistributed income. The Trustees have received a further request for assistance from the College following the withdrawal of anticipated government grant funding. In principle the Trustees have agreed to a further grant to enable the next phase of works to be completed but have also advised the College that their discretionary funds are limited.

Crescent Church Loan Fund

21. The Crescent Loan Fund was established following the sale of the Crescent Church premises in 1975 and provides low interest loans to congregations having short term financial problems.

Interest is currently charged on loans at half the total of bank base rate plus 2% (currently 1.25%) on the average balance outstanding over the term of the loan.

The maximum loan normally provided by the Fund is £25,000 and this has to be repaid normally within 3 years, although loans over 5 years can be provided in certain circumstances. Further information about loans from the Fund is available from the Financial Secretary’s Department.

During 2014 no loan request were received. Loans outstanding at 31st December 2014 were £72,625 and at that time, the fund had £288,765 available to meet loan requests.

Getty Bequest

22. The allocation of grants out of the income of the Trust Estate of John Getty for the year ending 31st December, 2014 was as follows:

Overseas – Foreign	£2,330
Overseas – Jewish	£1,270
Home Mission	£3,070
Belfast City Mission	£2,330
TOTAL	£9,000

Bequests

23. The Trustees were advised of a significant bequest during the year to the United Appeal. This included a residuary interest in the estate of the deceased consisting of various shareholdings and the family home. The residuary beneficiaries have agreed to allow the deceased's widow to remain in the family home during her lifetime. A payment on account has been received but the final distribution will only be made when the deceased widow is no longer in residence at which stage it is anticipated the Executors will sell the property.

The Trustees wish to record their deep gratitude to all those who have decided to support the Church through bequests.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the recommendation regarding the Mrs AM Davidson Trust be adopted.

2. That the recommendation regarding the Sir Wm V McCleery Trust be adopted.

3. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Irene Scott Trust be adopted.

4. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Ida Mary McGeown Trust be adopted.

5. That the recommendation regarding the Victor Morrow Trust be adopted.

6. 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 Revs Dr David Clarke, Dr Samuel Hutchinson; Revs Dr DJ Watts, TD Gribben; Sir Bruce Robinson, Norman Bennett, Douglas Crowe, Leslie McKeague.

7. That the Report of the Trustees be received.

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