



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

of

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

1998

ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

Luncheon adjournment at 1.00 p.m. each day.

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

References to the Minutes of Assembly are given in full.

NOTES

MONDAY, JUNE 1

Within Church House

7.00 p.m.—

Divine Service
Constitution of Assembly
Memorial Roll
Election of Moderator

TUESDAY, JUNE 2

Within May Street Church

9.30 a.m.—

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
(Intermission 15 minutes)

Within Church House

11.00 a.m.—

1. BUSINESS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (73-81).
Arrangements Committee
2. Memorial of the Rev. N. J. Linkens (79).
3. Memorial of the Presbytery of Donegal (80).
4. Mission Assembly (1997) Committee: Report and Resolutions (265-268).
5. Reports of Synods and Presbyteries (63-72).
- (11.30) 6. Reception of Corresponding Members and Delegates.
Church of Scotland: Right Rev. Prof. Alan Main, Rev. Gillian MacLean, Rev. Donald Fraser.

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

NOTES

United Reformed Church: Rev. David Jenkins, Mrs. Rosemary Johnston.

Presbyterian Church of Wales: Rev. Harri Owain Jones.

Church of Ireland: Right Rev. H. C. Millar, Mr. D. G. Cruise.

The Methodist Church in Ireland: Rev. Kenneth Best, Rev. W. B. Fletcher, Mrs. Kathleen Hassard, Mrs. Nan Frame.

Irish Council of Churches: Dr. David Stevens.

Other Delegates and Visitors: Presbyterian Church of East Africa: Right Rev. Dr. Jeseo Kamau. Église Réformée de France: Rev. Raphael Picon. Presbyterian Church of Sudan: Rev. John Gatluok Chol. Reformed Church in Romania: Right Rev. Dr. Kalman Csiha. Church of North India: Dr. V. S. Lall.

(12.15) 7. **UNION COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (45-62).**

Personnel/Planning, City Area Committees

8. **Tyrone Memorial Committee: Report and Resolutions (269-270).**

Lapsed Business.

2.00 p.m.—

9. **NOMINATION BOARD: Report and Resolutions (94-97).**

10. **BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS: Report and Resolutions (82-93).**

Communications Administration, Media, Public Worship, Church Architecture, Historical Society Committees.

(3.30) 11. **BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND CHRISTIAN TRAINING: Report and Resolutions (173-183).**

Evangelism, Irish Mission, Christian Training, Divine Healing, Christian Marriage Committees.

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

NOTES

(4.00) Intermission (15 minutes).

12. HOME BOARD: Report and Resolutions (146-158).

Assignment, Home Mission, Church Extension Committees.

13. Overtures anent Pars 280(1), 304(1) and (3), 305(2), 306(2), 307(1) and (5) of the Code (158).

14. Overture anent Par 305(1) of the Code (158).

Lapsed Business.

(6.30) Close of Business.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3

9.30 a.m.—

15. GENERAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (5-37).

Church and Government, Moderator's Advisory, Forces', Chaplains', Doctrine, Peace and Peacemaking, College and Training Review Committees.

(10.45) Intermission (15 minutes).

GENERAL BOARD (Continued)

Lapsed Business.

12.15 p.m.—

Worship.

2.00 p.m.—

16. PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION: Report and Resolution (159-162).

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

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17. OVERSEAS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (126-145).

(3.30) Intermission (15 minutes).

18. INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (98-125).

Irish Church Relations, World Church Relations, World Development, Race Relations Committees.

(4.30) 19. BOARD OF EDUCATION: Report and Resolutions (193-205).

Church Education, State Education, University Education Committees.

20. Overture anent Par. 284(2)(e) of the Code (205).

21. BOARD OF STUDIES FOR THE MINISTRY: Report and Resolutions (206-213).

Studies, College Management, Magee Fund Scheme, Students' Bursary Fund Committees.

Lapsed Business.

(6.30) Close of Business.

Meeting of the General Synod of Ulster.

7.45 p.m.— Evening Rally.

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

NOTES

THURSDAY, JUNE 4

9.30 a.m.—

22. TRUSTEES: Report and Resolutions (248-251).
23. Appointment of Trustee (251).
24. COMMISSION ON TRUSTS: Report and Resolutions (215).
25. UNITED APPEAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (231-236).

(10.45) Intermission (15 minutes).

(11.00) 26. Strategy for Mission Committee: Report and Resolutions (252-263).

27. Notice of Motion (264).

Lapsed Business.

12.15 p.m.—

Worship

2.00 p.m.—

In Private

28. Committee on Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees: Report and Resolutions (214).

29. JUDICIAL COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (41-43).

30. Appeal of Joseph A. G. McDonald (43).

31. Reference by Presbytery of Foyle (43).

32. Overture on the Books anent Par. 137 of the Code (43).

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

NOTES

33. Overtures anent Pars. 95(d), 163, 165(5) of the Code (44).
34. Recognised Ministries Committee: Report and Resolutions (37-40).

Intermission (15 minutes).

In Public

- (4.00) 35. BOARD OF MINISTRY AND PENSIONS: Report and Resolutions (237-242).
Central Ministry Fund, Committee on Retirements and Pensions, Retired Ministers' House Fund.
36. Overtures on the Books anent Pars. 313(1), 315(3), 316(1)(a) of the Code (242-243).
37. Overture anent Par. 315(4) of the Code (243).
38. Memorial of Dublin and Munster Presbytery (243).

Lapsed Business.

- (6.00) Adjournment.

Meeting of Secession Synod at Adjournment.

7.00 p.m.—

Lapsed Business if any.

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

9.30 a.m.—

39. BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS: Report and Resolutions (163-172).
Alcohol and Drug Education, War Memorial Hostel, Kinghan Mission, Social Witness Centres, Presbyterian Residential Trust, Social Issues and Resources Committees.

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

NOTES

40. SHANKILL ROAD MISSION COMMISSION:
Report and Resolutions (245-247).

(10.45) Intermission (15 minutes).

(11.00) 41. YOUTH BOARD: Report and Resolutions (184-192).

Youth Events, Youth Training and Resources, Youth Home Mission, Youth Overseas, Youth Centres, Committees.

Lapsed Business.

(12.15) Worship.

2.00 p.m.—

42. BOARD OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION:
Report and Resolutions (216-230).

Finance and Staffing, Incidental Fund, Getty Bequest, Assembly Buildings, Statistics Committees.

Late Business, if any.

Lapsed Business.

BUSINESS BOARD, Final Report.

CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY.

7.45 p.m.— YOUTH NIGHT

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

NOTES

BUSINESS BOARD

A Guide to Assembly Procedure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Presenting a group of reports and resolutions	10 minutes
Seconding a group of reports and resolutions	7 minutes
All other speeches	5 minutes

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

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

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

13. 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.

14. **Additional resolutions**, concerning some matters not covered by an existing resolution, may be submitted by any member or associate as notice of motion for license. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, these should be received by the Clerk at least one week before the Assembly. Resolutions rescinding or reversing a previous decision of

the Assembly require notice of motion to be first given and accepted at the preceding annual meeting. Those invited to sit and deliberate may “present” resolutions or amendments in the usual way, but these must be formally proposed and seconded by a member of Assembly before being debated.

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

16. An **“Overture”** is a proposal for a change in the “Code”, or law of the Church’s Constitution and Government. Changes in rules, of which notice has been given in the printed Reports, may be adopted forthwith if approved by a two-thirds majority, or without such notice if approved nem. con. If approved by a lesser majority, it is “placed on the books”, to be decided at the following Assembly. This applies also to rules governing the Central Ministry Fund and other Ministry Funds. In the Basic Code, where immediate operation is desirable, the change may be adopted temporarily during the intervening year as an “interim act”. If an overture contemplates a constitutional change it must also be sent down to Presbyteries to be voted on during the intervening year.

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

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND ACCOUNTS 1997 — PREFACE

A preface to the Accounts is submitted herewith.

This takes the form of a memorandum Central Income and Expenditure Account and a graphical illustration in relation to this Income and Expenditure.

This Income and Expenditure does not form part of the Audited Accounts of the Church.

1996 Column is period to 31 December 1996.

1997 Column is year to 31 December 1997.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME

	Grand Total		Contributions from Congregations		Congregational Assessments		United Appeal	
	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996
	General Board	34	15	7	7	—	—	27
Business Board	9	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Communications Board	496	271	—	—	—	—	110	94
Inter-Church Relations	393	369	363	352	—	—	—	—
Overseas Board	1,645	1,364	12	14	—	—	715	660
Home Board	712	694	36	14	4	4	445	420
Social Witness Board	3,973	3,798	12	13	—	—	110	138
Evangelism & Christian Training	495	462	9	14	—	—	245	215
Youth Board	476	572	39	1	—	—	199	212
Education Board	168	147	1	1	—	—	155	135
Board of Studies	854	747	7	6	—	—	428	303
Finance & Administration	1,133	1,107	—	—	889	918	—	—
United Appeal	343	58	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ministry & Pensions	3,870	3,808	—	—	3,132	3,167	—	—
Presbyterian Women's Association	766	723	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sundry Other	64	63	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grand Total	15,431	14,206	486	422	4,025	4,089	2,434	2,185

EXPENDITURE

	Grand Total		Employee and Ministry Costs		Printing Stationery, etc		Administration	
	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996
	General Board	25	25	17	16	—	—	2
Business Board	9	8	—	—	8	4	1	—
Communications Board	470	380	118	120	283	227	38	28
Inter-Church Relations	395	357	—	—	9	16	1	1
Overseas Board	1,329	1,401	96	86	27	35	64	60
Home Board	486	389	59	58	8	2	64	64
Social Witness Board	4,192	4,601	2,472	2,381	390	370	201	151
Evangelism & Christian Training	654	504	332	327	89	79	30	27
Youth Board	510	657	122	141	53	24	30	29
Education Board	187	200	116	104	7	28	28	27
Board of Studies	787	772	342	311	139	127	5	5
Finance & Administration	1,185	1,080	410	371	178	172	126	111
United Appeal	22	13	—	—	22	13	—	—
Ministry & Pensions	3,403	3,756	3,169	3,512	13	12	146	146
Presbyterian Women's Association	884	773	631	509	44	51	39	27
Sundry Other	42	77	—	—	—	1	1	—
Grand Total	14,580	14,993	7,884	7,936	1,270	1,161	776	678

— MEMORANDUM CENTRAL INCOME

1997 Per Board £000's

Trust, Investment Income and Bank Interest		Rental Income (net)		Donations and Bequests		Loan Repayments		Sales: Periodicals & Property		Grants and Fees	
1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	7	6
(10)	(4)	—	—	—	—	—	—	396	180	—	1
11	11	—	—	19	6	—	—	—	—	—	—
139	127	—	—	779	563	—	—	—	—	—	—
81	69	11	15	38	73	17	16	80	83	—	—
26	56	2,970	2,752	189	148	50	56	94	80	522	555
26	23	—	—	115	114	—	—	100	96	—	—
9	5	67	100	118	236	—	—	—	—	44	18
5	7	—	—	1	1	—	—	6	3	—	—
218	223	10	6	83	93	—	—	—	—	108	116
(143)	(178)	345	344	15	10	—	—	27	13	—	—
343	56	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
704	610	—	—	34	31	—	—	—	—	—	—
105	95	—	—	611	584	8	8	42	36	—	—
13	16	—	—	—	—	51	47	—	—	—	—
<u>1,527</u>	<u>1,116</u>	<u>3,403</u>	<u>3,217</u>	<u>2,004</u>	<u>1,863</u>	<u>126</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>745</u>	<u>491</u>	<u>681</u>	<u>696</u>

Travel Expenses etc		Building Costs		Upkeep of Property		Loans Issued		Home and Over- seas Projects and Grants		Missionaries Field Costs	
1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	7	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
30	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	385	340	—	—
15	18	—	—	18	20	—	—	545	634	564	548
9	5	154	46	17	19	12	16	163	179	—	—
37	27	253	848	691	589	146	231	2	4	—	—
34	30	132	—	2	4	—	—	5	7	30	30
4	17	101	273	55	63	—	—	145	110	—	—
7	7	—	5	16	17	—	—	13	12	—	—
8	6	15	17	48	52	—	—	230	254	—	—
64	60	—	—	254	267	—	—	153	99	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
72	83	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	—	—
4	13	—	—	7	4	6	32	144	122	9	15
—	—	—	—	—	—	40	75	1	1	—	—
<u>284</u>	<u>270</u>	<u>655</u>	<u>1,189</u>	<u>1,108</u>	<u>1,039</u>	<u>204</u>	<u>354</u>	<u>1,796</u>	<u>1,773</u>	<u>603</u>	<u>593</u>

REPORTS: JUNE, 1998

BELFAST

GENERAL BOARD

Convener: THE ACTING CLERK

1. The General Board met three times during the year. In accordance with resolutions of last Assembly it appointed ten persons to work with the Public Worship Committee in exploring new ways to present hymns for our Church, including consideration of a list of hymns; noted the membership of the Ad Hoc Committee set up in response to the Tyrone Memorial on paying ministers; approved a job description for the post of Director of Social Service and Secretary to the Board of Social Witness and appointed specialists to the Nomination Board for both the Director of Social Service post and the nomination of a new Principal of Union College.

PANEL ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS

2. The 1997 Assembly thanked and discharged the Committee but agreed to the establishment of a Core Panel under the General Board which, in terms of the report to the Assembly, would act as a “think-tank on issues which are not already being handled elsewhere” or on particular issues about which the Assembly wanted “to find its own mind”.

3. The General Board, consequently, appointed the Core Panel as follows: The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, Revs C J C McMullen (Convener), Dr R A Russell and T I Harte with power to co-opt.

4. The Panel will take up a study if and when instructed to do so by the General Assembly or on the authority of the Assembly through the General Board.

NOMINATION BOARD

5. The Acting Clerk reported to the Board, at its meeting on 26 February, 1998, that the Nomination Board had met on 19 February and interviewed two applicants for the post of Director of Social Service and Secretary to the Board of Social Witness.

6. After a ballot had been taken, it was agreed, in accordance with the Code Par 276 (3), that Mr Norman J Chambers be the nominee of the Board but that the name of Mrs Lorraine Girvan, who had received one-third of the votes cast, be also forwarded to the General Board in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly (Minutes 1997 p 74).

7. Having received this report, the General Board proceeded to elect a Director of Social Service and Secretary to the Board of Social Witness.

Voting:	Mr Norman J Chambers	70 votes
	Mrs Lorraine Girvan	12 votes

8. Moved by the Rev R F S Poots, seconded by Rev J M Cathcart, and agreed:

That Mr N J Chambers be appointed as the General Assembly's Director of Social Service and Secretary to the Board of Social Witness.

9. Mr N J Chambers entered the meeting and was congratulated by the Moderator on his appointment. Mr Chambers suitably replied. The Moderator commended him to God in prayer.

COLLEGE AND TRAINING REVIEW COMMITTEE

10. In response to a resolution presented by the Panel on the Overview of Funding, the General Assembly in 1997 instructed the General Board, in consultation with the Board of Studies, to arrange for a major review of the training of students, the role of Union College, Magee House and the Director of Ministerial Students and report thereon to the General Assembly. Other Assembly resolutions involved the Committee on Christian Training and the Strategy for Mission Committee in this consultation process.

11. The General Board, at the October, 1997 meeting, set up a College and Training Review Committee as follows:

The Moderator and Acting Clerk of Assembly (Convener), Revs M L Johnston, C J C McMullen, Very Rev Dr A W G Brown, Revs R G Johnston, R B Savage, J S Carson, G Moore, W C Lynas, D S Graham, J McVeigh, M Stanfield, D Allen, D T Moore, Prof J C McCullough, Prof J P Taylor; Messrs O J G White, Hal Stewart and Miss A Tolland.

12. The Committee decided that:

- its remit did not extend to the curriculum of Union College;
- training for the ministry should continue as an important ingredient of the work of our Church;
- courses of study and training should be made available, on a wider basis, to ministers, elders, church workers and others;
- decisions taken, as part of the review, should not be primarily finance-driven.

13. It was also decided to recommend to the General Board that steps should not be taken to advertise for a new Professor of Practical Theology pending a report to the 1998 General Assembly, on the understanding that the Board of Studies would be able to make provision for adequate teaching in Practical Theology in the interim. The General Board agreed to this recommendation.

14. The Committee believed that it was important to set its work firmly within a spiritual context and formulated the following vision for theological education:

To provide first class courses in Biblical, Theological and practical subjects for Students for the Ministry; Ministers seeking in-service training; other full-time church workers; for church members and for students from other denominations and/or countries, which will lead to:

- (i) a deep knowledge of God;
- (ii) a holy lifestyle;

- (iii) equipping for service in the advancement of Christ's Kingdom here on earth;
- (iv) provision of a forum where lasting friendships can be formed so that students can subsequently call on each other for support and encouragement in the task ahead.

15. It was also accepted that this provision should be centred in one establishment.

16. It was against this general background that the Committee approached the review and its work has progressed to the point where structures are discernible which would:

- co-ordinate training provision within one cohesive structure;
- reduce the overall cost of training provision;
- generate additional recurrent income and make a certain amount of money available for capital expenditure.

Within the proposed new structures:

- the training of students for the ministry would continue as an important ingredient of the work of our Church;
- training would be provided for elders, church workers and others including students from overseas;
- in-service training for licentiates would continue and in-service courses for ministers, including the possibility of additional degrees being on offer, would assume a new dimension.

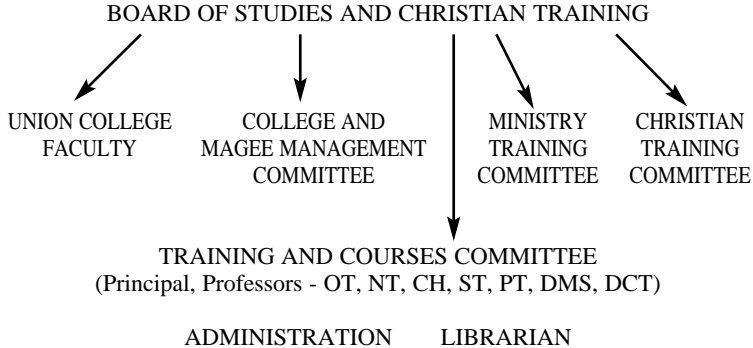
Financial Considerations

17. While decisions relating to theological and other training should not be primarily finance-driven, the cost of training cannot be ignored. The following factors require careful consideration.

- (a) The cost of maintaining the Union College building requires an unacceptably high input from the United Appeal. Consequently, means of generating additional income and reducing expenditure require to be found. It is unlikely that the Church would accept the imposition of an additional levy on congregations for the College upkeep.
- (b) The fabric of the College is old and costly to maintain while the facilities fall short of modern requirements for the teaching of students.
- (c) The Gibson Chambers require costly refurbishment.
- (d) The cost of maintaining both Union College and the Christian Training Centre, as separate entities, is hard to justify.
- (e) The College is under-used with little evening activity.

Proposed Structure

18. The proposed structure involves the incorporation of the Magee function and both theological and lay Christian Training in a new Board of Theological and Christian Training along with other elements as set out in the diagram below.



The Faculty

19. The Faculty would retain its present form and, while relating to the College and Magee Management Committee, would maintain its separate integrity under the Board as the provider of high-level academic courses and research.

College and Magee Management Committee

20. This Committee would inherit the legal responsibilities of the present Magee Fund Committee and the College Management Committee and would, in particular, be responsible for the financial management of the College, property and equipment and staff appointment, with the exception of Assembly appointments.

Ministry Training and Christian Training Committees

21. These Committees would assume the responsibilities of the present Committee on Studies and the Christian Training Committee.

Training and Courses Committee

22. Although designated a 'committee', this body would not be envisaged as coming under the formal structure of church committees. It would, however, fulfil an important role as co-ordinating all departments within the College including the Director of Christian Training and the Director of Ministerial Students and would be generally responsible for the implementation of courses, under the Chairmanship of the Principal of the College.

Director of Ministerial Students

23. Within the proposed structure the Director of Ministerial Students would continue to have an important role as at present but, while remaining a member of the Board, would cease to be its secretary and would be related to the overall structure as a Head of Department. The post would also entail the hearing of students preaching and the conducting of preaching seminars. There would also be additional work arising from the expansion of in-service training for licentiates and ministers.

Director of Christian Training

24. This important post would also come within the training provision of the Board of Studies and would operate within the structure of Union College. The proposals for compulsory in-service training for ministers put forward by the Strategy for Mission Committee and the identification of high-grade training courses by other providers would be a responsibility of the Director of Christian Training.

Professor of Practical Theology

25. The Committee will recommend to the Board an appointment to this Chair at the 1999 Assembly. The duties would incorporate the responsibilities of the current Chair but the Professor might assume additional responsibilities relating to an increase in the supervision of higher degrees, in common with the other professors, which is under consideration. The role would also be enlarged by involvement with in-service courses and courses for non-ministerial students who the College would be expected to attract in significant numbers.

Accountability

26. All staff, including professors and others within the training structure, library, secretarial and ancillary staff would report to the Principal who, in turn, would report to the Board of Studies and Christian Training.

Property

27. The Committee is exploring the options for the Union College building as follows:

- refurbish the College, if possible, by replacement of the Gibson Chambers and, as necessary, the two wings and rear of the building, excluding the chapel;
- invite the War Memorial Hostel Committee to co-operate in the provision of a new residential block in the grounds of the College;
- consider how best to eliminate the deficit on the catering budget as well as how to make catering more cost effective.

Conclusion

28. It will not be possible within the time-scale to explore the legal implications of these proposals, though the Committee believes they should be minimal, nor has it been possible to provide detailed schemes for the various structural elements. The proposals are designed as a skeletal framework to which 'flesh' will be added if the Assembly gives approval in principle. Professional advice will now be needed to enable the review to be competently carried out. In consultation with the Convener of the Incidental Fund, a resolution is appended requesting a modest grant to cover these costs

PRIORITIES

29. The Panel's report to the 1997 Assembly focused on the need to allow congregations to retain sufficient financial resources to provide for the employment of additional pastoral personnel to engage in local mission. The

Assembly instructed the Panel to bring proposals as to how this might be achieved to the next Assembly.

30. However, the Personnel and Planning Committee is considering a revision of Par 235 of the Code following the debate on additional pastoral personnel at the Assembly and the Panel decided to fulfil its remit by asking the Personnel and Planning Committee to consider bringing practical proposals for the retention of adequate congregational finances to the Assembly. The Personnel and Planning Committee will report accordingly.

31. The Panel is part of the process initiated by the Assembly in 1997 by which the General Board is authorised to “exercise a co-ordinating role” for the Church’s work. The Panel, therefore, sees its role as advising the General Board which, in turn, advises the General Assembly concerning priorities for the year or longer.

32. If such a practice is to be successful, the central agencies of the Church must respect and act upon the priorities set by the Assembly. Last year, for example, the agreed priority was to find means of allowing more financial resources to remain in the hands of congregations. Central agencies must, therefore, restrict proposals which require increased funding since, for the time being at least, there is likely to be a limited amount of money available for new developments.

33. There is an accompanying responsibility on Presbyteries and congregations to ensure that when larger amounts of money are retained locally they are utilised for an increase in personnel to assist in the mission of the congregation, which was the initial thrust of the appeal for more locally-available money. There also needs to be a fresh look at property, both centrally owned and owned by congregations, to ensure that resources, both human and financial, are more effectively used.

34. The Panel is of the strong opinion that, in order to do its work effectively, it must be understood to have a monitoring role. This could be carried out in co-operation with the Overview of Funding Panel’s visitation of agencies and by reading the minutes of all Boards and Committees. The reporting by ad hoc committees of Assembly to the General Board has proved its usefulness and should be made a permanent requirement.

35. The Panel sees an urgent need for a more radical review of the Board and Committee structure, while seeking to maintain the principle of democratic representation. The overall average attendance at Boards and Committees in October, 1997 was 49% with a number of Boards and Committees struggling to reach the quorum. The cost of mailing the 900 Board and Committee members each year is some £22,000.

36. The Panel, consequently, recommends that the Panel on Boards and Committees should be asked to undertake this review.

OVERVIEW OF FUNDING

Realisation of Investments:

37. The Panel has clarified the recommendation referred back by last year’s Assembly (Reports p6 Res10(b)) that future proposals for the realisation

of investments should be referred to the Panel on the Overview of Funding for approval of the contemplated expenditure.

38. The use of the word approval was not intended to imply the right of the Panel to veto expenditure but to ensure that boards or agencies appreciated the loss of income which would result from the realisation of investments and that they should not anticipate that lost income would be made up from the United Appeal.

39. It was agreed that, in future, proposals for the realisation of investments should be referred to the Panel for consultation and that areas of concern or disagreement should be referred to the General Board or the Assembly for decision.

Visitation of Assembly Agencies (Minutes 1997 p42 Res5)

40. The United Appeal Board has been requested to report growth in demands for funding coming from agencies as well as any matters of specific concern so that these can be addressed during visitations of agencies.

New Posts and Appointments

41. Two personnel matters were dealt with.

In light of earlier Assembly decisions the Panel decided that new appointments, about which the Panel was not consulted, cannot be given financial support without appropriate General Board or Assembly authorisation.

INTER-CHURCH COMMITTEE ON NORTHERN IRELAND

Very Rev Dr A W G Brown reports:

1. The Inter-Church Committee on Northern Ireland met in Belfast on 31 October, 1997.

2. It had been hoped that The Honourable George Mitchell might have been with us to update us on the progress of the Inter-Party Talks. In the event, this proved impossible and in its place we had a round table discussion on the situation as it then was, with useful insights contributed by various members from their different perspectives.

3. The various pieces of work undertaken by the Committee were discussed. In particular it was reported that there was to be a Summer Institute again in 1998 and that already plans were afoot to ensure a wider range of participants.

4. Another 'Rev-Tour' was in process of being planned, based in and around Kansas city.

5. The Business Education Initiative has gone from strength to strength and must rank as one of the finest examples of inter-church co-operation in the world. Its stated aim is to train young people to revitalise the economy. The cost of the programme is between US \$23,000-25,000 per student per annum and we are grateful to the Training and Employment Agency and to a number of Church colleges who have enabled some 500 Northern Ireland students to benefit from this experience. It is good to know that ten American students have come to Queen's University and a similar number to the University of Ulster free of

tuition costs. The programme has also drawn together the various Church colleges which have participated.

PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Rev J T Magowan reports:

“O Lord of heaven and earth and sea ...”

“Christ is the Lord of all creation

Christ is the Lord of all of life ...”

1. Christ is the Lord of the environment yet as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches’ Report “Justice for all” put it “the world is not moving towards a sustainable future, but is falling into an ever-deeper ecological crisis. The web of life is threatened as never before. The greed of many is choking the life of the planet. We are faced with concrete threats of drastic deforestation, the pollution of water, the contamination of air and the destruction of soil. These threaten the livelihood of whole groups of people.”

2. The Environmental Panel encourages the Church to demonstrate in practical ways concern for God’s creation. Increasingly, environmental concern is being seen as part of our evangelical witness and apathy is on the decrease in light of the impact of these issues on the lives of people through, for example, health, food, travel and the countryside.

3. The Panel has met with representatives of other main Churches and plans to develop this common interest by moving to the Inter-Church Relations Board.

4. Most Presbyteries have appointed an environmental agent but, to our regret, not all have done so. We pay tribute to the late Mr Trevor McGowan for his service as agent of the Carrickfergus Presbytery.

5. The Panel attempts to keep well informed about pressing issues and has developed contacts with Government departments.

6. The Panel wishes to commend the ‘Green Page’ to all readers of the ‘Herald’ and suggests that congregations should arrange educational visits to such places as Ballydevitt Conservation Farm, Aghadowey.

7. Two Panel members will be promoting the Millenium Tree Planting Campaign aimed at planting one and a half million trees in Northern Ireland by mid-2000. It is hoped that congregations in the Republic can also be involved.

8. An Environmental Audit which was presented to the Assembly in 1994 has been revised and the Panel wishes to renew the recommendation of 1994 that it should be used at Presbytery Visitations of congregations. It is printed as Appendix A.

APPENDIX A

ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT

In order to demonstrate in practical ways the Church’s concern for God’s creation, the Environmental Panel urges all congregations to increase their environmental awareness and witness in a variety of ways. At the General

Assembly of 1994, the recommendation of the General Board to introduce an environmental audit as part of Visitations of Presbytery was approved. Experience has shown that this Audit is little used and, in an effort to make it more user-friendly, the Panel has redrafted it in a tick-list format. The Panel further suggests that congregational committees may find it helpful to use this form of audit at an annual review of property management. The Panel expects that at least some of the factors to which attention is drawn in the Audit could lead to financial savings as well as environmental benefits.

ENERGY CONSERVATION:

- Are all parts of the church property insulated to prevent unnecessary heat loss?
- Are all parts of the manse similarly treated?
- Have low-energy light bulbs been fitted in all appropriate locations?
- Have time-clocks been fitted to church heating systems to ensure that they are only activated when there are definite requirements for their use?
- Have you ensured that the heating throughout the property is regulated by thermostats in order to maintain an equable temperature?
- Have cut-off valves been fitted to cisterns in toilets to ensure that water is provided only when buildings are in use?

WASTE DISPOSAL

- Are waste materials segregated for disposal into paper, glass, aluminium, fabric, metals etc for easy sorting at civic amenity sites, leading to their subsequent recycling?
- Have the financial or other advantages of using commercial waste disposal firms been investigated?
- Are local re-cycling schemes being supported and encouraged?

USE OF ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

- In building and repair of church property, do you try to find ecologically sound materials - eg timber which comes from renewable resources, paint which is non-polluting etc?
- Even though it may appear more costly, is Church paperwork (letters, news-sheets, orders of service etc) printed on recycled paper?
- Are cleaning and washing-up materials environment-friendly, used only at the minimum quantities necessary and properly disposed of?
- Is the use of aerosols prohibited, even those which do not damage the ozone layer as they still contribute to the 'greenhouse effect'?
- Is unnecessary packaging avoided?
- Is there a policy for the re-use of envelopes, packaging etc?
- Has the use of disposable plastic or paper cups been stopped?

CONCILIATION PANEL

Rev R F S Poots reports:

1. The Conciliation Panel had a quiet start to the year with few calls on the services of the conciliators. However, as time went on requests for assistance increased and, in certain geographical areas, conciliators were almost overburdened. Some of the 'cases' are on-going but in others there was a reasonable degree of success in preventing disputes from escalating.

2. The service can provide:

- trained conciliators to assist when difficulties and disputes arise;
- trained personnel to speak at Elders' or Church Workers' Conferences or to share in the training of Elders and Church Leaders so that they learn some of the skills which could assist them to act as 'agents of peace';
- study materials on what the Bible has to teach about relationships and peacemaking free of charge and these would benefit people in living and working together as well as helping them to cope when disputes reach the acute stage.

3. The Church is indebted to those who give very considerable amounts of their time to this work and especially to the Co-Ordinator, Mr Ivan Wallace CB.

VISITATIONS OF PRESBYTERY

Rev J I Davey reports:

1. The sub-committee has met 20 times since November, 1995. Much of the early work was geared towards updating the present questionnaires, but eventually it was agreed, with the strong support of the General Board, that something much more radical should be attempted.

2. It was decided to try to create a scheme in which congregations would be encouraged to analyse their current life and mission and to prepare for the future. To this end members of the Presbytery would be made available on a consultative basis as an expression of the wider Church's care. The whole process would hopefully be a positive experience for all concerned.

3. There has been a great deal of discussion about what the process should be called. To get away from the apparent perception that 'visitations' are an unwelcome intrusion into the life of an individual congregation by Presbytery, it was felt that the word 'visitation' should no longer be used. The concept of an 'appraisal' was considered, but this seemed to raise even more concerns in some people's minds. The sub-committee would now be of the opinion that we should in future refer to a 'consultation'. This, we believe, emphasises that the process is an expression of the Presbytery's care; that it should be a positive experience for all involved and should be for the benefit of Presbytery, congregation, Kirk Session and minister.

4. The process as currently envisaged would proceed as follows:

- (i) The congregation would be notified by the Presbytery that the consultation is to take place and its leaders asked to provide answers

to questions relating to the following areas of congregational life - worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and mission. It would be up to the individual congregation to decide how each question should be addressed, but it is not envisaged that each will require the same attention in every situation.

- (ii) The members of the consultation team would meet to familiarise themselves with the replies, to extract from elsewhere whatever statistical and financial information they may consider necessary and to plan how they want to approach the consultation.
- (iii) The Convener would liaise with the minister and office-bearers to arrange whatever meetings are considered necessary including a congregational meeting at which members will be asked to make a presentation of its current life and goals for the future. This to take whatever form is decided at the local level.
- (iv) The members of the consultation team would attend services, visit organisations and Session and Committee meetings, as appropriate, during the process.
- (v) Preliminary comments would be presented to minister, Kirk Session and Committee.
- (vi) After a period (yet to be decided) a report, with recommendations, would be presented to the congregation and Presbytery.
- (vii) A review of progress would be activated one year after the report has been presented to the congregation.

5. These details of the proposed new scheme are presented to the Assembly to assess reaction to it. A resolution is attached to enable Presbyteries to comment on the proposed scheme before any further work is carried out.

2000 AD

Rev R F S Poots reports:

1. The General Board has set up a small sub-committee to consider what should be planned by the Church as a whole or what recommendations may be made to Presbyteries and individual congregations for celebrating the Millennium.

PANEL ON BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Rev R F S Poots reports:

1. The Panel did not meet during the year but hopes to renew its work after the Assembly.

STATEMENTS

During the year the Board issued major statements as follows:-

GENERAL BOARD RESOLUTIONS 29 October 1997

1. That the General Board welcome the IRA ceasefire, the commitment of the parties to the Mitchell Principles and the willingness of most parties to be involved in the current three stranded talks at Stormont. The Board reiterates the call of the 1997 General Assembly for 'the British and Irish Governments and all elected political parties to enter into urgent and serious talks with one another with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable political accommodation'.

2. The General Board continues to be mindful of the suffering of the bereaved and the injured and strongly commends the thousands of people who have exercised courage, tolerance and restraint during the troubles.

3. The Board believes that the current pursuit of peace involves more than passivity and containment and would urge everyone to continue in prayer and in strenuous peacemaking activity at every possible level.

4. Mindful of the General Assembly's Peace Vocation which calls upon Presbyterians to be 'prepared to meet and talk together with those from whom we are politically divided' and recognising the importance of the present situation with its dangers as well as opportunities, the General Board encourages the Church and Government Committee to continue its processes of dialogue and to include elected representatives of any political party.

GENERAL BOARD RESOLUTIONS 26 February 1998

1. The General Board, believing that the unlawful taking of another human life is totally unacceptable, is dismayed that some paramilitary groups could not bring themselves to stop killing people and bombing towns in order to give the political process an opportunity to succeed.

2. The Board condemns the outrageous spate of murders and the bomb attacks on Moira and Portadown and extends its sympathy to those who have been bereaved or injured, or who have suffered damage to their property.

3. The General Board urges the government to take all possible steps to speed up compensation payments to those whose property and businesses have been damaged by terrorist bombs. It is intolerable that they should have to wait for years, without good reason, to receive compensation to which they are entitled.

4. The General Board congratulates the Garda Síochána on its recent significant explosives find in Co. Cavan which clearly has prevented damage to property and possible loss of life.

5. The historic opportunity which exists for a political accommodation between nationalists and unionists ought not to be missed. Violence from any faction must not be allowed to destroy this opportunity.

6. The General Board urges that local agreement about parades be reached, but where such agreement about a particular parade cannot be reached, the General Board urges those who parade and those who protest to abide by the lawfully taken 'determinations' of the Parades Commission.

7. The General Board commends every effort being made to move the relationships in our society from confrontation to consensus and to give due recognition to our underlying interdependence.

8. The General Board, recognising the difficulties in arriving at an agreed solution to our present political difficulties, calls all Church members to special prayer for a happy resolution of our problems. We call upon each member to pray about these issues daily. For the next three months we request every congregation to provide opportunities for united prayer on a Saturday evening or other appropriate occasion.

9. The General Board agrees that a letter be written to the Israeli Prime Minister, through the Israeli Ambassadors in London and Dublin, expressing our Church's concern about -

- (i) the proposed amendment to the Enticement to Change religion law 1977 through a Bill sponsored by two Knesset members Zvilli and Gafni in February, 1997; and
- (ii) the addition being proposed to that Bill by Knesset member Pinchasi proscribing any change of religion

which could result in a form of religious totalitarianism through which freedom to chose one's faith would be restricted and only the official majority could disseminate information and practice their faith without fear of restriction, reprisal or possible imprisonment.

GENERAL BOARD RESOLUTIONS 1 April 1998

1. The General Board extends its sympathy to the families and friends of those who have recently been murdered. The Board condemns these savage killings and considers them as attacking the whole community as well as the individuals concerned..

2. The General Board reminds political parties that, having signed the Mitchell Principles, they are morally bound to actively support the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons.

3. The General Board strongly affirms the independence of the Church, and no government or political party should assume that it can count on the political support of the Presbyterian Church.

4. The General Board continues to encourage representatives of political parties to reach a mutually acceptable political accommodation and will support and pray for them in that endeavour.

5. In the event of a mutually acceptable political accommodation being reached, the General Board encourages people:

- (a) to consider the issues prayerfully before God who loves all the people of these islands;
- (b) to consider if such an accommodation will facilitate the creation of an environment which will serve to advance the cause of the gospel and the interests of the kingdom of God in these islands;
- (c) to read any such agreement carefully;
- (d) to listen to and participate in informed discussion about its contents amongst themselves and others;
- (e) to ask whether or not it represents a reasonable accommodation between nationalists and unionists, taking into account the hopes and fears of people from different parts of this island;
- (f) to ask themselves if the agreement represents a better future for themselves and their children;

- (g) to beware of a sinful tendency to see things from only one point of view;
- (h) to resist supporting or being influenced by any threats of violence or civil disorder;
- (i) to exercise their responsibilities by voting in any ensuing referenda held in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland.

6. It is important to examine the matters before us carefully so that fears and anxieties are not exploited or permitted to exclude hope of a better future and the rational evaluation of proposals which may be agreed by the political parties.

7. The people of God have faced change at every stage of their history and we should therefore be people whose eyes are turned to the future and whose lives are marked by faith, hope and love in God whose purposes for the people of this island are good.

CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

1. By the time the Assembly meets the Church and Government Committee will have met on at least nine occasions during the year.

THE NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION

2. Following the resolutions of last year's General Assembly the Committee encouraged all parties to sign up to the Mitchell Principles, commit themselves to a violence-free negotiation process and enter into urgent and serious talks with a view to reaching a "mutually acceptable political accommodation". Without getting involved in the details of the negotiations, the Committee has sought to be supportive of the talks process recognising the difficulties involved, the complexity of the issues and the importance of the outcome.

3. At its meeting in September the Committee resolved that "the political negotiations must not be driven in any direction nor impeded from reaching an acceptable political accommodation by threats of violence or civil disorder".

4. Should these talks succeed and an agreement be reached which commands the support of a widespread consensus in all parts of our community, it could usher in a new time of co-operation which may lead on from a political accommodation to widespread reconciliation. The historic opportunity which exists for a political accommodation between nationalists and unionists ought not to be missed.

5. One cannot read the Bible without being aware that the people of God always live in constantly changing times in which there are regular endings and beginnings. These changes can be marked by hope or anxiety depending upon what is happening. These unlooked for personal or communal changes are often occasioned by events beyond our control. In such times the Church is called to look to the faithfulness of God while being attentive to His will and purpose which embrace more than the interests of any one section of a community. Any

community which is dominated solely by self-interest cannot claim with any credibility to be paying attention to God.

6. The Committee, without officially endorsing, offered broad support for the work of New Agenda which seeks to stimulate discussion in civil society about the approach to the issues being addressed in the talks process.

7. The Committee supports the call that we move away from adversarial, conflictual and confrontational attitudes, which are so widespread, to attitudes which recognise that we are already in many ways an interdependent community. It is an invitation for us to prioritise co-operation and the search for consensus.

8. The Committee has the responsibility for drafting resolutions about these issues for the General Board and the General Assembly and issued its own statements on 3 September and on 16 January (see Appendix A).

9. As this part of the Report is being written early in March, it is impossible to say what the outcome of the negotiations will be. It will be necessary to submit another report to the General Assembly in the Daily Minutes by which time the situation may be clearer. At the time of writing, it is thought that there may be an agreement in April followed by a referendum in Northern Ireland and a referendum in the Republic of Ireland in May.

10. The Committee continued the practice of engaging in dialogue with representatives of the Irish and British Governments and political parties, sometimes involving the whole Committee; at other times working through sub-committees; on occasions through informal meetings involving some members of the Committee and other members of the Church.

11. As a service to people in leadership roles in Presbyteries and Boards, the Committee arranged a comprehensive briefing day on 20 March. The Committee is grateful to those academics, civil servants, journalists and security experts, as well as members of our Church, who were willing to give us of their time in leading the briefing day.

12. The year has been marked by a lower level of violence yet, where it has existed, it has been devastating to the people involved. In addition to the murders of people from both parts of our community, serious damage was done by bombs in Markethill, Moira and Portadown. Both republican and loyalist paramilitary groups have been involved, often in activity designed to instil the maximum amount of anxiety, inflame passions or subvert the political negotiations. It was sometimes not entirely clear which paramilitary group or splinter group was involved in particular incidents.

13. Widespread concern was occasioned by the existence of an escape tunnel in the Maze Prison, two murders within the prison, and paramilitary emblems on the walls. All of this indicates that very unusual conditions exist within this prison, which matters are the subject of an enquiry.

14. The issue of parades and protests has been frequently in the news. Most parades proceeded without difficulty. At times it has proved possible for mediators to facilitate agreement in some contentious areas; at other times the RUC has had to take and implement difficult decisions which have alienated one side or the other. These decisions had to be taken under the then current legislation which put a premium on maintaining public order. Those people who

successfully defused volatile situations last summer deserve the thanks of the whole community.

15. The House of Commons has now passed the new Public Processions etc, (Northern Ireland) Bill and the Parades Commission has been appointed. The Committee submitted its observations on the draft Bill to the Government and on the Parades Commission's three draft discussion documents, A Code of Conduct, Procedural Rules and Guidelines to the Commission. Summaries of these submissions are to be found at Appendices B and C. The Parades Commission's documents have since been revised in the light of the submissions made to it.

16. Much time was spent in careful preparation of these submissions which normally go through a number of drafts before they are finalised. The same applies to the submission to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee of the House of Commons on the 'Composition, Recruitment and Training of the RUC'. A summary of this submission is at Appendix D.

17. The new legislation on parades gives the Commission the responsibility for encouraging mediation on contentious parades and, in cases where such mediation does not result in local agreement, the Commission must make a 'determination' as to what should happen. We should be grateful to those people who have agreed to serve this society by agreeing to be members of the Commission. They have one of the most difficult tasks facing any group of people and they deserve our support.

18. Even if people disagree with the determinations, they should keep the law. The whole of this community cannot be held to ransom by people who are intent on having their own way regardless of the well-being of other people and the wider community. Northern Ireland cannot afford widespread civil disorder.

19. The issue about parades and protests has to do with conflict between two groups of people holding to two sets of rights, neither one of which is absolute. Almost all rights are heavily qualified. Rights need to be balanced by obligations, and individuals, organisations and residents' groups need to locate themselves within wider communities where the maintenance and promotion of good relationships are important.

20. The danger in this area of our shared life, as in a number of others, lies in the relentless pursuit of personal autonomy and group rights, without those being balanced by the needs of the wider community. Discourse which is dominated by 'rights' talk to the subordination of all else can result in a society marked by continuous conflict, resolved not by mutual accommodation but by power struggles and often by endless litigation. Some means must be found to overcome these conflicts and the work of the Parades Commission is such a mechanism.

21. The beef crisis has continued to impose enormous hardship on all sections of the farming industry in Northern Ireland, even though there has been a low incidence of BSE. There would appear to have been political, as well as scientific, reasons for decisions taken. It is not fair to ban exports and permit imports into Britain from countries which have less stringent safeguards. It is hoped that the ban may be lifted by the end of April, 1998.

22. This crisis has affected the beef industry in the whole of the United Kingdom where farm incomes (including Northern Ireland) are estimated to

have fallen by 37% in 1997. An additional factor is the increasing strength of sterling.

23. There is understandable anger and anxiety among members of the farming community, especially among farming families with smaller farms, less fertile land and those with bigger dependence on borrowed capital. The crisis may well continue, especially if interest rates rise. This not only affects individual farmers, but also the confidence and viability of rural communities. Future revisions of the Common Agricultural Policy will foster continuing uncertainty.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

24. The excellent economic performance of the Republic continues. This is coming from continuing foreign investment (mainly US) choosing Ireland as a favourable climate for establishing companies.

25. The flow of EU funds is set and should continue at the current level for another two years. The result is improved road and rail links throughout the country. This is and will be more evident on the Belfast-Dublin links.

26. The number of new jobs being created is increasing - attracting returning emigrants and also reducing the level of unemployment - down from 15% to 9% in four years.

27. In consequence of an improving economy new issues are arising. One of these is the number of refugees (or economic migrants) who are arriving in Ireland. Our concern is that such persons are given fair treatment and fair assessment.

28. The success of the Gardai against the drug criminals has been immense since the murder of journalist Veronica Guerin in 1996. While illegal drugs are still a serious issue the pressure being brought by the authorities and local resident groups has paid off.

29. It appears that as a consequence of the success of the campaign against illegal drugs, the level of other types of crime has been lowered particularly in Dublin. However, murders have been carried out in greater numbers than before arising from a variety of social, drug-related and other issues.

30. Growing pluralism is leading to a greater emphasis on secular everything. There is a growing lack of interest in church attendance particularly among the Roman Catholic community where the fall-off is dramatic.

31. The very genuine concern shown by successive Irish Governments in a Northern Ireland settlement is something of which most people are aware. There is a belief that terms can be agreed which will lead to benefits over the entire 32 counties. It is expected, but not emphasised, that there will be scope for northern political influence on the affairs of the Republic.

DOMESTIC, OVERSEAS AND EUROPEAN ISSUES

32. The Committee, in co-operation with the Moderator and the Acting Clerk of Assembly, arranged for a memorial service to be held on Friday, 5 September, following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

33. The Committee reminded ministers and Presbyteries of the special offering to mark the 25th Anniversary of the RUC Benevolent Fund.

34. From September, 1998 the European Ecumenical Commission on Church and Society will become a Commission of the Conference of European Churches.

35. The Committee is consulting with the equivalent committee of the Church of Ireland with regard to a possible co-operative approach by the Churches in Ireland to European Union issues.

36. The Committee conveyed the concerns of the Ballymena Presbytery to the Government on the 'beef crisis'.

37. The Minister of Health and Social Services, Mr Tony Worthington, replied to concerns being expressed by the Board of Social Witness about the possible reduction of the homosexual age of consent to 16 and the extension of the Abortion Act 1967 to Northern Ireland. He wrote that the Government had no plans to do either of the above. He described these as highly controversial and sensitive issues and wrote that the Secretary of State will wish to take a considered view before deciding on any future action.

38. A letter was sent to the High Commissioner for Kenya in London concerning the attack by police upon the Moderator of the Nairobi Presbytery when he and other worshippers were in the Anglican Cathedral. A letter was also sent to the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa concerning the same incident.

39. Concerns of the Presbytery of Iveagh and the Alcohol and Drug Education Committee were conveyed to the Home Office on a draft Bill concerning the frequency of 'on-line' lottery draws.

40. Representations were made to the Israeli Government regarding a Private Member's Bill before the Knesset which, if passed, could result in freedom to choose one's faith being restricted. A reply has been received stating that the Israeli Government will ensure that the proposed amendment will not pass.

41. A letter was sent to the Secretary of State for International Development requesting that Malawi be included in the World Bank's Highly Indebted Poor Countries Debt Remission Scheme.

JOHN DUNLOP, GEORGE McCULLAGH, Conveners

APPENDIX A

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE 3 September, 1997

1. The Committee reiterates the Assembly resolution that the British and Irish Governments and all elected parties enter into urgent and serious talks with one another with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable political accommodation.

2. The political negotiations must not be driven in any direction nor impeded from reaching an acceptable political accommodation by threats of violence or civil disorder.

**STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
16 January, 1998**

1. The Church and Government Committee welcomes the initiative taken by the British and Irish Governments in issuing “Propositions on Heads of Agreement”. The Committee hopes that it will provide an effective basis for constructive negotiations with the aim of arriving at a mutually acceptable political accommodation.

2. The Committee believes that both Governments should pursue bi-partisan policies which have at their heart equal concerns for all parts of the Northern Ireland community and should therefore avoid partisan policies which provide opportunities for people to play one government off against the other.

3. While some prisoners have been helpfully constructive in their support for ceasefires and for political negotiation, it ought not to be the case that prisoners should hold the power of veto over the direction and progress of political negotiations.

4. The Committee condemns the recent murders of Billy Wright, Seamus Dillon, Eddie Trainor and Terry Enright and extends its sympathy to their families.

5. The Committee is appalled that it has proved possible for one paramilitary group to murder a prisoner from another paramilitary group within the confines of the Maze Prison.

6. The Committee believes that it is important for those in charge of the media, in all its forms, to place their skills and resources at the disposal of facilitating understanding and hopes that they will avoid pursuing policies and devising programmes which increase tension and push people unnecessarily into corners while they are engaged in delicate negotiations.

STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

24th April 1998

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

**Response of the Church and Government Committee following the
publication of “The Agreement”**

PREAMBLE

1. Jesus Christ loves all the people of this island regardless of their political preferences or backgrounds.

2. The church is a community of people who have been set free by Jesus Christ to love God and to love their neighbours.

3. To love our neighbours is to seek what is just and good for them, and as Jesus taught, our neighbours include our enemies (Matthew 5: 43-48; Luke 10: 25-37). This kind of love means we will be concerned with their needs as well as with our own and will lead to difficult choices and personal sacrifice.

4. Love for God and His kingdom is our primary loyalty. Since His kingdom is not restricted to any national boundaries or cultural identities, our political allegiances may never make the first claim upon our hearts. (Rev. 5.10).

5. These are the basic convictions that inform the response of the Church and Government Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the publication of "The Agreement".

SUPPORT FOR THE POLITICAL PROCESS

6. Because the space we occupy on God's earth is shared space (Psalm 24: 1), it was neither possible nor desirable to reach an agreement on the terms of only one community. "Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you?" (Matthew 5: 46).

7. Although churches and community groups have sought to build trust and foster understanding, it is the responsibility of elected politicians to negotiate a political accommodation between unionists and nationalists so that they and all other kinds of citizens can live at peace with one another.

8. In the light of these realities the General Assembly in June 1997 encouraged politicians to enter the talks process.

The General Assembly call upon the British and Irish Governments and all elected parties to enter into urgent and serious talks with one another with a view to reaching a mutually acceptable political accommodation.

9. Difficult decisions had to be taken; choices had to be made and we commend those who were involved in that difficult process. The Agreement they negotiated does not represent defeat or assimilation but is rather a political accommodation which could be a way out of the darkness of the last 30 years into a better future.

10. All of us, in both parts of Ireland, now have to make a choice in the referenda on 22nd May.

11. As we do so, it is important to remember that Christians are to be the masters of political strategy and not the servants of ideologies like Unionism and Nationalism. Either of them may be supported peacefully by Christian people and neither of them is an essential expression of the Christian faith.

12. Since Jesus alone is Lord (Philippians 2: 10-11) and the church exists by the grace of God, we have the freedom and responsibility to face up to the cultural, political and religious deficiencies of our part of the community rather than simply engaging in one-sided criticism of the deficiencies of others. (Matt. 7: 1-5).

THE NATURE OF THE NEGOTIATED ACCOMMODATIONS

13. The Agreement locates the decision about the constitutional future of Northern Ireland within Northern Ireland, rather than with the Government of the United Kingdom, thereby taking account of the wishes of a majority in Northern Ireland, who currently wish it to remain part of the United Kingdom.

14. Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution are to be amended to recognise the necessity of the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland before there can be any constitutional change. This significantly modifies the Nationalist ideal of the right to self-determination of the people of

Ireland as a single whole. The Presbyterian Church has long asked for these Articles to be addressed.

15. The proposed North/South Ministerial Council will meet some of the concerns of the Nationalist community in Northern Ireland, who feel a deeper affinity with the Republic than with Britain. It will have an impact in the South as well as the North because this is a reciprocal agreement.

16. A new devolved Assembly in Northern Ireland offers all the people of Northern Ireland greater control over their future, as it will return power to elected representatives of the people of Northern Ireland and will require the agreement and support of both parts of the community. Whilst the danger of this arrangement is that communal division may be institutionalised, this risk may be necessary in the short term, but the review in four years' time can take into account any growth in co-operation and consensus in the meantime.

17. The proposed Civic Forum will provide an opportunity for voices to be heard from outside the ranks of elected politicians.

THE RELEASE OF CONVICTED PARAMILITARY PRISONERS

18. This is a most difficult issue. The General Assembly resolved last June that:

As an encouragement to the peace process, the General Assembly recommend that consideration be given to the possibility of increased remission of prison sentences imposed upon those who have been involved in paramilitary crime short of murder in the event of; (a) credible ceasefires which will include an end to punishment beatings and targeting, and (b) evidence that any such prisoners would not be further involved in paramilitary activity.

19. The Assembly considered whether this should also include those who were guilty of murder but decided that it should not by 215 votes to 196.

20. The early release of convicted paramilitary prisoners seems so unjust. However, all prisoners receive some remission of their sentences and life sentences never mean "life" as they are subject to consideration by the Life Sentence Review Board.

21. It is obvious that no judicial sentence is strictly proportionate to the crime committed. We speak of those who are released in normal circumstances as having "paid their debt" to society. In reality this can never be done. They have served their time in prison but they have not thereby undone the consequences of their actions.

22. It is the case, however, that some prisoners within the prisons and some ex-prisoners have taken a significant lead in moving people away from violence.

23. The release of prisoners can only be contemplated as part of a search for a greater good. Any early release of prisoners is an act of generosity and not of right. In getting early releases, these prisoners are getting what they do not deserve. But all of us live as people who get from God better than we deserve. We do well to remember that God has "not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103: 10).

24. International experience, as well as past experience in Ireland in this century, would indicate that addressing the release of prisoners has been a part of seeking to make peace. Indeed after previous IRA campaigns former British,

Irish and Unionist governments were relatively liberal in their prison release policies.

25. In the search for peace, we all, but especially those people from both communities who have lost their loved ones, are being asked to accept this additional burden for the sake of a new future. For many people this hurts deeply and we feel the pain of the unfairness of it. This may be the most difficult part of the cost of peacemaking.

DECOMMISSIONING

26. Those who signed the Mitchell Principles are under a moral obligation actively to pursue the decommissioning of weapons. Paramilitary groups, whose members would be released from prison as a part of the Agreement, owe it to the rest of the community to act on this quickly and thereby build confidence that we are facing a new future. Particular responsibility may devolve on the Government of the Republic of Ireland to see that this happens since it is thought that most weapons are stored within its territory.

VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES

27. It is impossible to quantify the suffering which violence has visited on so many innocent people. We cannot forget the thousands who lost their loved ones; the many who will carry their injuries to their graves and all the others who have seen the destruction of their homes, farms and businesses through acts of terrorism, none of which was justified.

28. A political accommodation can never recover the loss which they have experienced and may even make them feel their grief and trauma more deeply. Careful and generous attention must be paid in word and action to the needs of victims and their families, many of whom have truly received a life sentence.

COMMISSION ON POLICING

29. The Presbyterian Church has frequently paid tribute to the people who have served the community in the security forces. They and their families have borne a disproportionate share of suffering.

30. The composition, culture and style of policing should be reflective and supportive of the diverse traditions and people of Northern Ireland and be a part of a society at peace with itself. But the Committee would be concerned if the proposed Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland resulted in the dismantling of the RUC.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE IN A FLAWED BUT CHANGING WORLD

31. The citizens of both parts of this island find themselves in a situation which has not existed before in the lifetime of any one of us. The ceasefires announced by the paramilitary groups are largely intact and the two Governments and the elected representatives of the majority of people in Northern Ireland have reached an agreement about our future relationships.

32. The historical processes which have brought us to this situation have been flawed and unjustifiably violent but they have also been marked by faith, courage and patient endurance.

33. Anxiety and hope are both marks of these times. To read the bible is to be nurtured in the accounts of how the people of God have, with faith, faced changes at every stage in their history. We should therefore be people whose eyes are turned to the future, and whose lives are marked by hope, faith and love.

34. Failure to settle disputes when there is the opportunity is not always wise. Christ, our Lord, said:

Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. (Matthew 5:25).

35. The Apostle Paul wrote:

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12: 18).

LET US PRAY

36. The issues are complex and the decision to be made significant, so let us consider these issues prayerfully before God, who lives all the people of these islands.

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC PROCESSIONS ETC, (NORTHERN IRELAND) BILL

1. Having made a submission to the Independent Review of Parades and Marches and also having commented upon that Review's recommendations, the Church and Government Committee sent a number of comments on the 'Public Processions etc, (Northern Ireland) Bill' to the Government.

(Summary of submission made to the Northern Ireland Office).

2. The Committee welcomed the urgency with which the Secretary of State laid the necessary legislation before Parliament.

The Committee is of the opinion that the Parades Commission ought not to be involved in both mediation and determination. (This dual function has since been removed from the Bill.) The Committee welcomed the extension of the requirement of notice of processions to 28 days and while welcoming the emphasis on any disruption to the life of a community which a procession may cause and any impact which the procession may have in relationships within the community, a change in the demographic composition of an area should not be the only factor to be taken into account. The Committee believes that neither the rights of those who are involved in parades nor the rights of protesters are absolute, therefore it is necessary to balance these rights in a way which is reasonably proportional.

3. The Committee expressed concern that the Commission is being asked to take account of any possible disorder which would result from a particular parade. The Committee believes that this was a major drawback in the

previous legislation and believes that it is not helpful to have this in the current legislation as it may encourage people to threaten disorder, either in support of a parade or in opposition to it, in order to influence the terms of any “determination”.

4. The Committee believes that the frequency of parades in any one area is a factor which ought to be taken into account, and welcomed the incentives being laid upon both those processing and those protesting to adhere to any determinations made by the Commission. While there is a right to peaceful protest there is no right to behave in such a way that a parade, which is proceeding after a determination by the Commission, should be prevented from taking place by the activities of protesters. Similarly, if conditions are imposed upon any parade by the Commission, those involved in that parade ought to abide by the determination. It is important that the rule of law obtains both for those who are parading and those who are protesting.

5. The Committee welcomes the registration of bands and the control of alcohol. The Committee believes that the provisions within the Bill will help to facilitate the resolution of a very contentious issue in a limited number of areas in our common life. In any democratic society citizens need to exercise a degree of toleration of some activities which they preferred did not happen, unless they intrude in an unreasonable, offensive and disruptive way into their lives, while other people should restrict the exercise of their rights in the interest of the good of the wider community. It is our belief that the majority of the people will find this Bill reasonable and would be supportive of the desirability of both local accommodation and of demonstrable, reasonable determinations by the Commission should they become necessary.

APPENDIX C

THE PARADES COMMISSION'S DRAFT DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS; A CODE OF CONDUCT, PROCEDURAL RULES AND GUIDELINES

(Summary of the submission to the Parades Commission).

1. We agree that parade organisers should, “Take whatever steps are reasonable to meet residents’ concerns” but we would also add that residents should, “Take whatever steps are reasonable to meet the concerns of the parade organisers”.

2. Many band parades have nothing to do with the Loyal Orders and have acquired a culture and identity unto themselves.

3. Where it is possible we would welcome notice being given of all the parades planned for a year, since most are known, and we hope that organisers will go beyond the minimum requirements of the letter of the law and that their willingness to do so should be noted.

4. The Committee noted and welcomed the fact that in the proposed legislation it will be an offence not to comply with conditions imposed on a parade, but also an offence to prevent a lawfully determined parade taking place. The Committee believes the rule of law is important and it must be enforced.

5. It is important that the Commission gathers necessary information before making a determination. We also believe it important for the Commission to have the freedom to decide whether or not to implement the inquiry process so that no encouragement is given to the lodging of vexatious objections.

6. As we did in our comments to the Government over the Parades Bill itself, we also conveyed our concerns about the Commission having to take possible public disorder or damage to property into account in their determinations. We believe that by introducing public order considerations, the legislation opens the way once again for protesters to threaten disorder and for this to be capped by even more threats of disorder by other people. We believe that public order considerations should be avoided in reaching determinations which ought to be made on the merits of the case. Those who fail to comply with the determination, whether paraders or protesters, should be dealt with under the law. The work of facilitators or mediators will be important. Each side should address and seek to accommodate the other side's legitimate concerns.

APPENDIX D

“THE COMPOSITION RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF THE RUC”

(Summary of submission to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee of the House of Commons).

1. The Church and Government Committee responded to a request from the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee in the House of Commons for a submission regarding “the composition, recruitment and training of the RUC”. The submission was supplementary to the June, 1995 Report, which we also forwarded to the Committee, which report had been welcomed by the General Assembly and commended “as a statement of the Church's position”.

2. The Committee pointed out that until such issues as those being addressed in the current talks process are resolved, there will be difficulty in maintaining “a force which fully reflects the various identifiable social groups within the population of Northern Ireland”. In the meantime the police still have to operate in a divided and abnormal society threatened by well organised and comprehensively armed paramilitary bodies.

3. The vision the Committee has of Northern Ireland is of a community at peace with itself, with people from different traditions working together in a political structure and culture which embraces and honours the obvious diversity of the citizens of Northern Ireland. We believe that the composition, culture and style of policing should reflect and be supportive of that vision and should receive and earn the support of both sides of our community.

4. The Committee also paid tribute to the service given by the RUC, pointing out the human and emotional cost which has been borne by officers and their families. We pointed out the danger and stress which officers and their families have had to face over the last nearly 30 years of violence.

5. The under-representation of Roman Catholics within the police is a major cause of concern, and we regret that leaders in the nationalist community have given so little encouragement to people from that community to join the

RUC. The Committee notes with pleasure that the under-representation of Roman Catholics has begun to improve. The Committee believes that police officers in Northern Ireland must serve unionists and nationalists and all other groupings and be comprised of men and women from all traditions, and strenuous efforts should be made to recruit people from these backgrounds.

6. If the level of violence continues to decrease and numbers in the RUC have to be reduced, it will not be easy to achieve the kinds of balances which are desirable. Men and women should be recruited on merit and should be trained in sensitive awareness of and respect for, the complex strands of religious, cultural, social and political attitudes which characterise the people of Northern Ireland, which will mean investment in training and retraining at all levels of the police service.

7. Symbols are very sensitive matters to both parts of our community and, while we were not pressing for any change in the name, we would support the addition of the subtitle "Northern Ireland Police Service". The Committee pointed out that the present badge which incorporates the crown, the harp and the shamrock, comprehensively covers various traditions within the Northern Ireland community. The Committee supported the substitution of the present oath by that used in Scotland, "I do solemnly and truly declare and affirm that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Constable". The Committee believes that the practice which obtains in Scotland where the flag of the local Constabulary is consistently flown, but the Union Flag is rarely flown, is a practice which could be followed by the RUC.

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

1. Two matters were referred to the Doctrine Committee by the General Assembly of 1997.

2. First, that the Doctrine Committee undertake an examination of the Biblical and theological foundations of ministry.

3. The second was requested by a memorial of the Presbytery of Armagh that the Doctrine Committee examine afresh the Biblical material on divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons.

4. The first matter required a report for the General Assembly of 1999, but the second a report in 1998.

5. A draft report on the examination of the Biblical material on divorce and remarriage is almost complete, but the final report will not be ready for printing before the General Assembly of 1998.

6. Preliminary work on the Biblical and theological foundations of Ministry is in hand and it is hoped that both will be ready for the General Assembly in 1999.

T S REID, Convener

FORCES' COMMITTEE

1. The principal aim of the Forces' Committee is to provide a point of contact for all our members serving with the Armed Forces, and especially to keep the work of our chaplains to the forefront of our Church's thinking. They need our support as they seek to bear witness for Christ in places where Christian faith meets the sharp edge of the secularising trends in our 20th century culture.

2. At present our Church has four full-time commissioned chaplains serving with the Regular Forces. Contrary to recent trends, the demand for Army Chaplains is in fact increasing. In a recent letter to the Committee, the Deputy Chaplain General indicated that at least four new chaplains were urgently required by June of this year to fill positions that were becoming available. The Royal Air Force also has a possible vacancy for a Presbyterian minister coming up within the next twelve months.

3. A number of our ministers serve as chaplains to the Territorial Army and the Army Cadet Force or as Officiating Chaplains to the various Garrisons around Northern Ireland. They provide a valuable part-time service and frequently minister to men and women who have little or no contact with the Christian Church. We record our appreciation for the work which they carry out willingly in spite of often busy demands in their own congregations.

4. The Rev Terry Maze has moved from Portsmouth to Northwood HQ and is now serving as Staff Chaplain to Commander-in-Chief Fleet. His present ministry gives him a chaplaincy input into the issues that affect the operations of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines such as equal opportunities, harassment, family and welfare issues etc. He writes that "it is good and appropriate to have a Christian voice in this process."

5. The Rev Dr Victor Dobbin, MBE, QHC continues to serve as Chaplain General to the Army. He continues to fulfil the demanding administrative and pastoral duties of this high office at a time of constant change in the Army.

The Rev Norman McDowell continues to serve in Edinburgh with the 1st Battalion The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. He is doing his bit for recruitment into the Royal Army Chaplains' Department because, in recent days, two young assistant ministers from our Church have gone to Edinburgh to get an idea of the potential for ministry in the Army.

6. The Rev David Edgar continues to serve as CSFC (Church of Scotland & Free Churches) Chaplain at RAF Halton. Halton is one of the two RAF training stations. It receives adult recruits but also provides trade training for suppliers, caterers, police and secretarial branches. His time is divided into three major areas, teaching, welfare support and building a church community. He writes, "I get dozens of opportunities to commend my faith and my Church to those I work with...It can be very encouraging at times, as well as routine and mundane. Chaplaincy can be described as an incarnational witness to the things of God within a military environment that can be very harsh and very secular."

7. The Forces' Committee seeks to encourage all our chaplains in their work and it also commends those evangelical organisations which often supplement their ministry. The work of the Sandes Homes, the Officers'

Christian Union, the Soldiers' & Airmen's Scripture Readers Association, the Naval Military & Air Force Bible Society all deserve our prayerful and practical support.

8. The work of the Benevolent Fund of the Ulster Defence Regiment/Royal Irish Regiment continues to be required. Our support for their work will continue regardless of any changes that may come about due to the peace process. Our congregations have in the past supported this fund with great generosity and the Committee hopes that this support will continue.

S W VAN OS, Convener

CHAPLAINS' COMMITTEE

1. The Chaplains' Committee has met on four occasions since last Assembly and continues to co-ordinate, develop and support the work of our hospital and prison chaplains.

2. Within the Health Service a number of our chaplains have retired, some after many years of devoted hospital chaplaincy work. We sincerely thank all of them for jobs well done and warmly welcome those who have been appointed to fill the vacancies.

3. Guidelines on the procedure to be followed by Presbyteries when recommending candidates for chaplaincy vacancies was introduced during the year and distributed. This, the Committee trusts, will introduce a consistency of approach throughout Presbyteries and be in keeping with current employment practices.

4 We acknowledge the devoted and resolute ministry of part-time hospital chaplains and those deaconesses who work alongside them. Despite the difficulties and frustrations of working within an evolving administrative system they continue to provide an essential service to members of our Church and often to others in need of a listening ear.

5. Although the delivery of health care has changed dramatically during the last few years the chaplaincy service in hospitals, especially the larger establishments, remains unaltered.

6. The establishment of Trusts and the consequent policy and administrative changes arising from this re-organisation has required a re-examination of the role of our chaplains and deaconesses. The Committee continues to consider the implications of full-time appointments in larger units.

7. Our full and part-time chaplains working in the prison system continue to provide a vital service to those living and working in HMP Maghaberry, Maze and Hydebank Young Offenders' Centre. The last year has been one of the most difficult in memory, with a number of very serious incidents including loss of life. The Committee greatly appreciates the efforts of both chaplains in a difficult and, at times, dangerous environment. We warmly commend and support our chaplains as they seek to understand the complexity of prison life and with a confidential, personal and caring approach, treat prisoners as individuals deserving of dignity and respect.

8. The Chaplains' Committee is grateful to those involved at prisons, hospitals, DHSS and NIO, who willingly expedite the work of our chaplains.

9. The constant prayers of the Church are vital as our men and women seek, through faith, to counsel staff, patients, prisoners and families in a role which can be rewarding but, at times, discouraging.

JOHN SCOTT, Convener

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met once during the year and received reports from groups which had been appointed at the request of Presbyteries, under Par 172(1) of the Code, to advise in certain circumstances of difficulty.

2. The Committee considered the arrangements for Moderators' Presbytery tours and agreed that they should remain largely unchanged but that they should enable the Moderator to meet as many people as possible.

3. Consideration was given to the issuing of Special Licences for Marriages. It was agreed that the onus should rest on local ministers to seek to satisfy themselves that all is in order, including any moral or spiritual implications of the marriage, before application is made for a Special Licence.

4. Ministers were also strongly advised to refer cases of difficulty concerning a marriage to the General Assembly's Committee on Marriage and the Family, in accordance with Par 85(4) of the Code.

R F S POOTS, Acting Convener

PEACE AND PEACEMAKING COMMITTEE

1. The Peace and Peacemaking Committee recognises that we are living through a critical period of Irish history which may well shape the future of this community for generations to come. It makes it all the more imperative to be clear-sighted in our vision as a people of God, allowing our faith to strengthen and challenge us as we face inevitable change. The Peace Vocation, adopted in 1994, is the basic document which underpins the work of the Peace and Peacemaking Committee. To put its principles into practice is a serious challenge to all in the Church, so that we may "publicly acknowledge our vocation to peace, which is both the gift and mission placed on us by God".

2. In order to help our members to think through some of the more difficult issues we face, the Committee has continued to run conferences which have proved valuable to many. Two further conferences on "Sectarianism in Ireland and the Presbyterian Church" were held in Dungannon and Magherafelt. The policy of arranging venues away from greater Belfast has been helpful to some, although the Committee still looks for ways to engage more fully with people in the border areas. The conferences were ably facilitated by Drs. Joe Liechty and Cecilia Clegg from the 'Moving Beyond Sectarianism Project'.

At the time of writing a further conference has been planned on “Facing Change”. It will attempt to explore the Biblical understanding of a faith community living through change in outward and sometimes political circumstances. It is also hoped to look pastorally at how faith will strengthen the believer through uncertain times when fear can easily take control. It is hoped that in such a conference members from different backgrounds will be able to meet and talk together, so strengthening one another in faith.

3. The Committee has been encouraged by the enthusiasm of some within the network of agents appointed by congregations and Presbyteries. It is hoped, in the next year, to develop more effective ways of keeping in touch to share ideas and experience. Since the last Assembly a series of meetings has been held with Presbytery agents, although it was disappointing that only about half the Presbyteries were represented. Active Presbytery agents are vital if work at the local level is to be encouraged and developed. At the same time there are Presbyteries, especially in the Belfast area, which are very active in encouraging local initiatives. The Committee is appreciative of their work and would ask all Presbyteries to ensure that the imperative of peacemaking is high on their agendas.

4. The Committee has responded to requests for comment from outside organisations, notably the Northern Ireland Victims’ Commission and the “Believers’ Enquiry” set up by the Glencree Centre for Reconciliation. It has also welcomed initiatives such as the “Hand of Friendship” promoted by Restoration Ministries to mark the 200th Anniversary of 1798, the discussion packs produced by New Agenda, and the study materials and workshops provided by the Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland.

5. On the world scene, the Committee has noted, with relief, the treaty on landmines signed in Oslo last September and fervently hopes that all states will sign. The sustained efforts of many people in harnessing public opinion on this issue is to be commended, while the enduring suffering and danger for many must also be remembered.

6. A group appointed by the Committee continues to look at issues relating to the arms trade, including the difficult problem of investments. A useful initial meeting has been held with the Trustees, who will continue to be kept informed of the Committee’s work.

7. The threat of renewed war against Iraq was a real possibility earlier this year. The Committee would remind members of the report, “Some Lessons from the Gulf War”, received by the General Assembly in 1993.

8. Tension and uncertainty is a reality, not only in this community, but in many situations of conflict throughout the world. It is all the more important that we continually point to the source of our certain hope in Jesus Christ and learn to rely on Him. When the Peace Vocation was issued, so too were Prayer Cards, “Stepping Forward for Peace”, which are still available. The Committee has been encouraged to produce further prayer material relevant to the present situation and it is hoped that this will be available shortly after Easter.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received

College Training and Review Committee

2. That the Committee be encouraged to proceed along the lines of the proposed new structures, as set out in the report, and to bring detailed recommendations to the 1999 General Assembly.

3. That the Committee be encouraged to further explore possibilities for the refurbishment of the Union College building and the provision of student accommodation; that a grant of £5,000, from the Incidental Fund, be made available to cover the cost of professional advice and report to the 1999 General Assembly.

4. That the General Board be empowered to approve a job description for a new Professor of Practical Theology, drawn up by the Board of Studies in consultation with the General Board's College and Training Review Committee; invite the Nomination Board to proceed to present a nomination or nominations to the 1999 Assembly; take any other decisions, as necessary.

Priorities

5. That Boards and agencies of the Church respect the priorities set by the Assembly and be guided by them in all development planning.

6. That congregations and Presbyteries increasingly utilise funds in local mission.

7. That the General Board, through the Panel on Priorities and the Panel on the Overview of Funding, exercise a monitoring role over central spending and development.

8. That the General Assembly direct the General Board, through the Panel on Boards and Committees, to examine the current structure of boards and committees, keeping in mind the principle of democratic representation, and report to the 1999 General Assembly.

9. That the Ad Hoc Committees of Assembly report to the General Board on a permanent basis.

Overview of Funding

10. That, in future, proposals for the realisation of investments by Assembly agencies be referred to the Panel on the Overview of Funding for consultation and that areas of concern or disagreement be referred to the General Board or the Assembly for decision.

11. That new appointments, about which the Panel was not consulted, be not given financial support without appropriate General Board or Assembly authorisation.

Panel on the Environment

12. That the General Assembly commend the Environmental Audit to Presbyteries for use in Visitations of congregations.

Conciliation Panel

13. That the General Assembly reaffirm the valuable work of the Conciliation Service and encourage Presbyteries and others to make use of its expertise.

Visitations

14. That the Report from the sub-committee on Presbytery Visitations be sent down to Presbyteries for comment, and report to the Convener, the Rev J I Davey, by 30 November, 1998.

Church and Government Committee

15. That the General Assembly extend its sympathy to all those who have suffered through violence, especially the families of those who have been murdered. The Assembly affirm that there is no moral or political justification for these acts.

16. The General Assembly affirm that since people are made in the image of God they have rights which are to be recognised and protected. They call upon people to respect these rights but, in addition, to balance any pursuit of these rights against our obligations to the well-being of others.

17. The General Assembly remind political parties that, having signed the Mitchell Principles, they are morally bound to actively support the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons.

18. Allowing for the fact that people hold divergent political allegiances, the Assembly nevertheless believe it necessary that we move away from confrontation to attitudes which recognise that we are an interdependent community.

19. The General Assembly urge that local agreement about parades be reached, but where such agreement about a particular parade cannot be reached, the Assembly remind everyone of their calling to obey lawfully constituted authority, to show a gentle attitude towards everyone (Titus 3) and urge those who parade and those who protest to abide by lawfully taken "determinations" of the Parades Commission.

20. The General Assembly welcome the increased prosperity being enjoyed by people in the Republic of Ireland, but call upon the economically successful and the professionally contented to remember those who are marginalised, poor and deprived.

21. That a grant of £4,220 be paid to the Church and Government Committee from the Incidental Fund.

Forces Committee

22. That the greetings of the General Assembly be sent to our chaplains serving with the Regular Forces.

23. That the General Assembly recommend the customary observance of Battle of Britain Sunday and Remembrance Sunday in our congregations and that the appropriate offerings taken up on those days be given to the Royal Air Force 'Wings Appeal' and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

24. That the General Assembly recommend that congregations continue to support the work of the UDR/Royal Irish Regiment Benevolent Fund by taking up an offering on the last Sunday in April or some other appropriate Sunday.

Chaplains Committee

25. That the General Assembly record their continuing appreciation of the faithful service being given to the Church and the community by our Prison and Hospital Chaplains and Hospital Deaconesses and the willing co-operation received from staff associated with both services.

Moderator's Advisory Committee

26. That the General Assembly affirm that the onus lies with local ministers to seek to ensure that all is in order, including any moral or spiritual issues, when planning a marriage by Special Licence.

27. That the General Assembly strongly advise ministers to refer cases of difficulty to the Assembly's Committee on Marriage and the Family before issuing the certificate of marriage, in accordance with Par 85 of the Code.

Peace and Peacemaking Committee

28. That the General Assembly welcome the appointment of Peacemaking Agents by all Presbyteries and ask that regular reports be given by them and that congregations be also encouraged to appoint agents.

29. That a budget of £2,000 be available to the Peace and Peacemaking Committee from the Incidental Fund.

General

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

RECOGNISED MINISTRIES' COMMITTEE

1. In March the Committee reviewed the position of Ministers and Licentiates without Charge.

The Committee's recommendations are as follows:-

<i>Presbytery</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Ards	Rev C D Mawhinney	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Armagh	Rev W A Shaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge for one year.
North Belfast	Rev W M Smyth	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev C R J Brown	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).

	Rev N J Linkens	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev L E Carroll	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev C I McKnight	To be retained as Minister without Charge for a further year.
	Mr. N. Patrick	To be retained as Licentiate.
Belfast South	Rev P A J McBride	To be retained as Minister without Charge for one final year.
	Rev S J Hanna	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev B R Hughes	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Belfast East	Rev R A Crooks	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Dr Eliz Jamison	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev H E Lewis	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev Dr Samuel Scott	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Rex Pedlow	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev. D R Baker	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Carrickfergus	Rev D R Byers	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Coleraine	Rev Wm Morrison	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev J D Mark	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Mr Thomas Mulholland	To be retained as Licentiate
Derry/Strabane	Mr Ernest A Smyth	To be retained as Licentiate.
Down	Rev R N Stewart	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev W N Duncan	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Dromore	Rev R J Mattison	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev John Honeyford	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Dublin & Munster	Rev F W Vincent	To be retained as Minister without Charge.

Foyle	Rev K Campbell	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Iveagh	Rev E G McAuley	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Newry	Rev David McKee	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).

2. Any names added to the list more recently will be due for review next year.

3. Returns are not required for licentiates who are serving normal assistantships, merely for any who are “without charge”. Currently there are only three persons in that category.

Mediation Network

4. The Board of Social Witness submitted a request for leave to call a minister to a Recognised Ministry as Development Officer, responsible for the Churches’ Project, with the Mediation Network for Northern Ireland.

5. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that Mediation Network be approved for purposes of the Recognised Ministries Scheme under Par 200 (5)(a) of the Code.

6. The Mediation Network for Northern Ireland was established in 1992 and, while a numerically small organisation, it has developed a significant role of intervention in disputes and peace-building activities.

7. In its ‘Vision Statement’ Mediation Network states that it promotes the use of Third Party intervention in disputes, and supports creative responses to conflict in the community.

8. All of the activities of the Mediation Network relate to the context of our conflictual society in Northern Ireland. We seek to make a contribution to Community Relations by encouraging individuals and agencies to transform age-old approaches to conflict. We believe that our society must develop new ways of living with difference.

9. The Mediation Network has identified a number of sectors in the life of our society where the N Ireland conflict expresses itself and where mediative activity can be of help.

- **The Community** - assisting community workers and other activists to deal with conflict in their own localities. When appropriate, the Mediation Network works directly at communal conflict.

- **Politics** - using mediation to enhance political interaction.

- **The Justice System** - providing a mediative perspective on policing, offending and the prison system.

- **The Churches** - training clergy and church activists as resource people to address conflict in local communities.

- **The Public Sector** - assisting public bodies and institutions to improve their strategies for serving a divided society.

- **Community Support** - providing a range of training and support to individuals and organisations in the voluntary and community sector.

- **Local Mediation** - improving the capacity of community workers for conflict intervention in their localities.

- **Policing** - engaging in dialogue with the RUC and the community regarding the evolution of policing.

- **Parades** - developing methods of third party intervention in the parades dispute, training facilitators and providing assistance to the Parades Commission.

- **Churches** - working with clergy and lay leaders on issues of conflict within and between church communities, addressing religion as a historic theme of our conflict, and supporting the churches in engaging constructively with the wider Northern Ireland conflict.

10. It believes that after more than a quarter of a century of violent conflict, the people of our society have a deep understanding that fighting about conflict, or indeed, avoiding important issues of strain and division, have not served us well. The Mediation Network aims to build on a growing awareness among our people that alternatives to violence must be developed.

11. It believes that mediation is a useful way to manage enmity, assist communication, improve understanding and support creative thinking in situations of conflict. Mediation is also a method of building long-term peace by assisting in the growth of mutual respect and right relationships in our society.

R F S POOTS, Acting Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly adopt the recommendations of the Recognised Ministries' Committee on Ministers and Licentiates without Charge.
3. That the General Assembly approve The Mediation Network for Northern Ireland for purposes of the Recognised Ministries' Scheme.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: THE ACTING CLERK

Appeals of Second Dromara Kirk Session

1. Last year the General Assembly referred to the Judicial Commission two Appeals from the Kirk Session of Second Dromara against decisions of a Commission of the Presbytery of Dromore. These related to matters of procedure.

2. The Commission met on 18 August, 1997, representatives of the Kirk Session and of the Presbytery were present and evidence was heard from the parties.

3. The Commission met on 5 September, 1997, in the presence of representatives of both parties, and a finding was delivered wherein both Appeals were dismissed on the grounds that the Presbytery Commission's decision, that there had been material procedural irregularities concerning the business of the Kirk Session, was correct.

Magheragall

4. On 5 September, 1997 representatives of the Dromore Presbytery reported on-going concerns about matters at Magheragall. Presbytery had failed to detect evidence of humility and, in particular, the focus of concern was the setting up of an alternative fund into which Church members had been encouraged to direct their givings. Presbytery had also encountered lack of openness and co-operation and had been presented with no conclusive evidence that all moneys in the alternative fund had been transferred to the account of Magheragall.

5. The Judicial Commission instructed Presbytery to set up an independent investigation into any and all areas of concern.

6. On 17 December, 1997 the Acting Clerk reported a letter to the Clerk of Presbytery from the Kirk Session which offered co-operation in clearing up the matter of the alternative fund and the Judicial Commission agreed that Presbytery should attempt to resolve matters, provided Magheragall acted in a fully open manner and acknowledged wrong, the process to be completed by 28 February, 1998.

7. The Acting Clerk further reported, on 6 March, 1998, that Presbytery still considered that issues relating to Magheragall required further investigation. The Commission authorised Presbytery to investigate as necessary and to report to the Commission as and when appropriate.

Appeal of R Boucher and Others

8. On 7 November, 1997 the Judicial Commission heard an Appeal from a decision of a Commission of the Presbytery of Newry which had rejected a petition which stated that the situation in Dundalk had deteriorated to such an extent that Par 224 (1) of the Code was relevant.

9. Having heard the evidence presented by the petitioners and respondents, the Judicial Commission upheld the Appeal to the extent that the evidence presented to the Commission has satisfied the Commission that there are matters which call for inquiry and investigation within the meaning of Par 224 (1) (2) (3) and (4) of the Code.

10. The Judicial Commission agreed that further investigation ought to be conducted by the Commission taking into account that to refer the matter back to Presbytery would be likely to result in any decision of Presbytery producing further appeals, on the same issues, to a superior Court.

11. The Judicial Commission, at their meeting on 17 December, 1997, concluded that it would require additional powers from the General Assembly in order to conduct further inquiries and investigations into issues arising from the Appeal.

12. The Judicial Commission decided to request the General Assembly to invest them with the powers of a Court of the Church under Par 20 of the Code and all other paragraphs of the Code as necessary to empower the Commission to inquire into and investigate matters arising from the Appeal of R Boucher and Others within the meaning of Par 224 (1) (2) (3) and (4) of the Code, with power to issue. An appropriate resolution is appended.

Special Financial Arrangement

13. The Commission received representatives of the Union Commission and, having heard their report, approved the decision of the Union Commission in making a 6 months special arrangement, under Par 226 (b) of the Code, in respect of a minister who had resigned his charge.

The Code

14. In accordance with the decision of last Assembly, the Code has been reprinted.

Code Par 165 (5)

15. The Judicial Commission considered ways and means whereby suitable cases could be dealt with more expeditiously and decided to recommend the removal of the Synod as an Appellate Court while retaining the authority of the Presbytery and of the General Assembly to hear and determine appeals. Appropriate Overtures are appended.

16. The effect of this legislation would be that every appeal against a decision of a Presbytery or a Synod would go directly to the Judicial Commission to hear and to decide without appellants being required to wait for long periods to have their cases considered.

17. However, the important right of any person to have a case referred to the General Assembly would remain under these proposals.

18. If the Assembly approve the Overtures they will require to be placed On the Books for one year and sent down to Presbyteries for consideration under the Barrier Act.

19. Mr R W Alcorn, who has tendered his resignation from the Judicial Commission for personal reasons, served on the Commission for fifteen years

and was chairman for eight and a half. During this period he established a reputation as a wise counsellor with an in-depth knowledge of the Code whose balanced judgement, firm but gentle hand and unperturbable manner guided the Commission through years during which its work-load escalated. His acknowledged ability to present a logical case and respond to questioning with precision won the respect of the General Assembly as well as that of his fellow members of the Commission. The thanks of the Church is due to Mr Alcorn for the contribution he has made to its well-being, not least for the hours he has given.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly invest the Judicial Commission with the powers of a Court of the Church under Par 20 of the Code and all other paragraphs of the Code as necessary to empower the Commission to inquire into and investigate matters arising from the Appeal of R Boucher and Others within the meaning of Par 224 (1) (2) (3) and (4) of the Code, with power to issue.
3. That the General Assembly approve, in principle, the recommendation set out in Pars 15-17 of the Report concerning a proposed amendment to Par 165 (5) of the Code.
4. That the Judicial Commission be appointed in accordance with Par 127 of the Code as follows:

APPEAL

Joseph A G McDonald (Appellant) - v - Presbytery of Foyle (re a decision not to nominate him as a student for the Ministry).

REFERENCE

The Presbytery of Foyle refers a Charge laid by Mrs Margaret McCloy against Mr Stanley Gault alleging slander, under Par 21 (1) of the Code

OVERTURE ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 137 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 137 of the Code after the words "section III of Chapter VII" there be inserted the additional words "'solicitor or barrister' and 'qualified as a lawyer' mean 'any person who has obtained a professional qualification as a solicitor or barrister, whether currently practising or not'".

R W ALCORN

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 95 (d) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 95 (d) of the Code be deleted and that Par 95 (e) and Par 95 (f) be renumbered as Par 95 (d) and Par 95 (e).

R W ALCORN

Anent Par 163 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 163 of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place.

Par 163

(1) The Appellate courts are the Presbytery and the General Assembly. The Judicial Commission is also authorised to hear and determine appeals as provided for in Par 165 (5) and when so doing shall exercise any and all the powers of the General Assembly as the supreme judicial authority of the Church to hear and determine appeals.

(2) The right of appeal belongs to -

- (a) any member of an inferior court who disapproves of a decision and desires to have it reviewed;
- (b) any party in a case before a court who feels aggrieved by a decision in the case and desires to have the decision reviewed.

(3) In addition to rules contained in this section, appeals in cases of discipline are subject to any special provisions regarding procedure contained in the rules in Chapter XIX.

R W ALCORN

Anent Par 165 (5) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 165 (5) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place.

Every appeal against a decision of a Presbytery or a Synod shall go directly to the Judicial Commission which is empowered to proceed forthwith to hear and determine the appeal. However, should one of the parties, within 14 days of the date of the Notice of Appeal being lodged, request, in writing, that the appeal be referred to the General Assembly the Judicial Commission shall, without adjudicating thereon, immediately transmit the appeal to the General Assembly with a report and recommendation in accordance with the foregoing subparagraph (3).

R W ALCORN

UNION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev W J ORR
Secretary: Rev T J STOTHERS

INTRODUCTION

1. The period covered by this Report is from March 1997 to February 1998. The Union Commission continues to conduct its work primarily through eight stated meetings each year. When more detailed negotiation is required, ad hoc subcommittees of the Commission meet with local Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and Congregational Committees. It is necessary to work very closely with Presbyteries, and it is much appreciated when vacancy commissions and Presbytery strategy committees have examined matters thoroughly at local level prior to an approach to the Union Commission. In the main, the representatives of vacant congregations come prepared to discuss arrangements in a realistic and positive way.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

2. Since June 1997 the Very Rev Dr A R Rodgers has been Chairman of the Commission, while Revs T J McCormick and I McClean have been in charge of Fractions and Rev J Gordon in charge of Manses. If the resolution concerning the discharging of the City Area Committee is passed the Rev J N I McNeely will retire as Convener. Thanks are due to him for his work in this capacity over the past two years.

LEAVE TO CALL

Ministers

3. Leave to call a minister was given to the following congregations in accordance with the General Assembly's Form of Call and the following terms:

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses	Fraction
Kells, Co Meath	IR£1,000	IR£285	33½%
Corboy	IR£850	IR£170	33½%
Mullingar	IR£380	IR£170	33½%
Hilltown	£6,250	£2,250	37.5%
Clonduff	£7,000	£2,500	37.5%
First Dromore	£18,500	£5,400	to be considered after 1998
Drumlough	£10,000	£2,600	37.5%
Anahilt	£8,000	£2,600	37.5%
Carlisle Road	£14,750	£5,000	35%
Crossroads	IR£2,500	IR£700	37.5%
Ballygrainey	£16,250	£5,000	to be considered after 2 full years of ministry
Macrory Memorial	£5,570	£1,250	26% with review after 2000
Newington	£7,030	£1,500	26% with review after 2000

Sinclair Seamen's	£10,800	£2,250	26% with review after 2000
Carnone	IR£4,250	IR£1,900	37.5%
half cost of temporary accommodation for the minister			
Convoy	IR£8,000	IR£3,500	37.5%
half cost of temporary accommodation for the minister			
Stranorlar	IR£4,000	IR£1,300	37.5%
20% of Manse Fund income to the minister as additional expenses			
Donoughmore	IR£6,000	IR£3,300	37.5%
Letterkenny	IR£12,500	IR£4,900	37.5%
Trenta	IR£3,600	IR£1,100	37.5%
1st & 2nd Markethill	£20,500	£5,400	35%
First Ballymoney	£21,500	£5,500	to be set after 3 full years of ministry
Dromore	£3,150	£2,150	37.5% restricted list
Drumquin	£6,000	£2,650	37.5% restricted list
Abbey, Dublin	IR£7,250	IR£4,000	to be considered after 3 full years of ministry

Leave issued on the understanding that the role and responsibilities of the minister may be altered as the Presbytery and Union Commission see the most effective pattern of ministry develop in the City of Dublin

Second Keady	£6,400	£2,500	37.5%
Drumhillery	£5,000	£1,800	37.5%
First Coleraine	£23,000	£5,500	30%
Joymount	£24,000	£5,250	28%
Ballina	IR£2,000	IR£2,000	33½%
Ballymote	IR£606	IR£337.50	33½%
Killala	IR£270	IR£80	33½%
First Castleberg	£12,000	£4,400	37.5%
Killeter	£5,500	£1,000	37.5%

Income from the outlying farm in Killeter is to go directly to the minister, less 20% which may be retained for ongoing improvement of the land. Income from the 'manse farm' (which was purchased by the congregation originally) is to go to specified sources. Income from Killeter Manse to the minister is in addition to the Stipend and Expenses figures above.

Sixmilecross	£9,750	£4,750	37.5% restricted list
Cunningham Memorial,			
Cullybackey	£27,500	£5,500	27.5%

Stipend Review (under the 'twelve months vacant' rule)

As from 1 April, 1997:

Garvaghy	£7,200	£2,375
Anaghlonne	£6,400	£2,375

As from 19 June, 1997:

Donaghedy	£10,300	£4,525
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As from 19 November, 1997:

Ballyhenry	£20,600	£4,950
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Leave to Call withdrawn

Leave to Call was withdrawn from Garvaghy and Anaghlonge on 21 October, 1997.

Associate Ministers

4. Leave to call an associate minister was given to the following congregations in accordance with the General Assembly's Form of Call and the following terms:

Congregation	Salary	Expenses	Housing Allowance
West Church, Bangor	£15,000	£4,200	£1,500
First Ballymena Hamilton Road	£16,800	£3,000	£1,500
second associate	£14,760	£3,485	£1,500
with congregational assessments at 20% of the normal rate calculated on the ministerial minimum while 2 associate ministers are in post			
First Larne	£15,210	£3,000	House or £1,500

Associate Salary Review

As from 17 June, 1997:

Ballywillan	£16,000	£2,500	£2,000
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CONGREGATIONS UNITED

5. The following congregations were united under the terms set out below:

Cloughey and Portavogie

- (a) That the congregations of Cloughey and Portavogie be united as from 1 July, 1997.
- (b) Each congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and, where appropriate, 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) The stated services shall be: Portavogie 10.30am and, on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, 6.30pm; Cloughey 11.45am and, on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month, 6.30pm or at other such times as the two Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine.
- (f) That the stipends and initial ministerial expenses shall be as agreed with the Union Commission. Holiday supplies, telephone rental and business calls, rent, rates, taxes and maintenance and repair of the manse to be borne in the proportions 50% Cloughey, 50% Portavogie.
- (g) That the minister shall reside in the jointly-owned manse.

Macrory Memorial, Newington and Sinclair Seamen's

- (a) That the congregations of Macrory Memorial, Newington and Sinclair Seamen's be united from 1 September, 1997.
- (b) Each congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and finances.
- (c) Each congregation shall continue to have the right to appoint representatives to the superior courts of the Church.
- (d) In the choice of ministers the three congregations shall act as one congregation and the three Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.
- (e) The stated services shall be (i) Macrory Memorial at 12 noon; (ii) Newington at 10.45am and 7.00pm; (iii) Sinclair Seamen's at 11.30am and 7.00pm or at other such times as the three Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine.
- (f) That the ministerial remuneration be as follows:

	Macrory Memorial	Newington	Sinclair Seamen's	TOTAL
	Stipend*Exps	Stipend*Exps	Stipend*Exps	Stipend* Exps
Minister	£5,570 £1,250	£7,030 £1,500	£10,800 £2,250	£23,400 £5,000
Associate	£2,228 £ 750	£2,812 £ 900	£ 4,320 £1,350	£ 9,360 £3,000
TOTAL	£7,798 £2,000	£9,842 £2,400	£15,120 £3,600	

* 'Stipend' for the Associate is properly 'Salary'

The Fraction in each case will be 26% with review when the figures for the year 2000 are available.

- (g) The minister shall reside in a manse and the associate minister in a house provided by the three congregations.
- (h) The routine maintenance of the houses in (g) above, the ministers' telephone rentals and business calls and other shared expenses will be borne in the proportion 25% Macrory Memorial, 30% Newington and 45% Sinclair Seamen's.
- (i) Holiday supplies each year shall be aggregated and the cost borne in the same proportions as in (h) above.

RESTRICTED LIST STATUS

6. The charge of Donagheady, with Strathfoyle Stated Supply, was removed from Restricted List Status from 20 May, 1997.

The charge of Dromore & Drumquin was given Restricted List Status from 21 October, 1997.

The charge of Sixmilecross was given Restricted List Status from 17 February, 1998.

FRACTIONS

7. The Commission has reviewed the following congregations and adjustments have been made as follows:

1997

Newtownstewart: £8,500 Stipend with £3,300 Expenses; no fraction and review in 2 years.

Gortin: £3,250 Stipend with £1,500 Expenses; no fraction and review in 2 years.

Raloo: £14,760 Stipend; no fraction and review in 2 years.

Great Victoria Street: £15,250 Stipend with £4,750 Expenses.

McQuiston Memorial: £21,735 Stipend.

First Lisburn: Fraction increased to 30% from 1 January, 1997.

Wellington Street, Ballymena: Fraction reduced to 20% from 1 January, 1997 provided Stipend paid be not less than £28,190 and subject to Presbytery approval.

Hamilton Road, Bangor: Fraction reduced to 15% from 1 January, 1997 provided Stipend paid be not less than £30,836.

Finaghy, Lowe Memorial: £26,556 Stipend with £5,778 Expenses.

High Street, Antrim: £21,115 Stipend.

Ballywillan: Fraction suspended provided Stipend paid be not less than £23,500 with review after 1998.

Kilkeel: Fraction reduced to 30% with a minimum Stipend of £23,750 with review after 2001.

Pomeroy: Fraction reduced to 35% with a minimum Stipend of £10,500 with review after 2001.

Sandholes: Fraction reduced to 35% with a minimum Stipend of £8,500 with review after 2001.

STATED SUPPLIES

8. The following nominations as Stated Supply have been made:

Rev R J Mattison to the Presbytery of Armagh for continuation in Tassagh.

Rev Dr S Mawhinney to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster for appointment in Fermoy.

Rev B R Hughes to the Presbytery of South Belfast for appointment in Nelson Memorial.

Rev J Honeyford to the Presbytery of Iveagh for appointment in Garvaghy (and to take services only in Anaghlonge).

Rev N J Linkens to the Presbytery of Ards for continuation in Cloughey & Portavogie.

Rev L E Carroll to the Presbytery of North Belfast for appointment in Fortwilliam Park.

9. The arrangement whereby the Minister of Donagheady is Stated Supply in Strathfoyle was continued.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

10. Special arrangements were made for three congregations to be enabled to employ Licensed Assistants; for an Assistant to a Convener following a union of congregations; for a Licensed Assistant to enable him to meet requirements for ordination and for a minister who resigned.

11. Special Financial Arrangements for Licensed Assistants will normally be terminated six months following eligibility for call.

MANSES

12. The following business has been completed:

Drumlegagh was given permission to access an amount from their Manse Fund to replace the study in Mountjoy manse. The Fund is to be built up again to its present level.

Loanends was given permission to convert part of their glebe into an extended church car park and graveyard. The income for the Minister is to be protected.

Dunlop Memorial was given permission to sell the manse and purchase a replacement house for the use of the Associate Minister.

Rev Dr R W J MacDermott, who is in an Alternating Ministry, was given permission to reside in his own house on the grounds that a manse is not available.

Ardglass was given direction on the use of interest on the capital sum from the sale of the manse. The matter, however, continues under consideration.

Anahilt was given advice on their financial contribution to the repair of Drumlough manse.

Ballyhenry was given permission to lease the manse.

Rev F J Kelly was given permission to live in his own house on the grounds of health and that the manse needs extensive repair.

Edenderry was given permission to use a proportion of the Manse Fund capital to help Seskinore build a new manse. The Fund is to be built up again to recover its value.

Seskinore was given permission to sell the manse farm.

Gilford was given permission to use an amount from the manse account to help pay for building work on church property. The sum is to be returned to the manse account within five years and the income for the Minister is to be protected.

Ballygrainey was given permission to sell the manse and glebe in order to replace it.

Cloughey and Portavogie were given advice concerning the administration of their jointly-owned manse.

Macrory Memorial, Newington and Sinclair Seamen's were given advice on the administration of their jointly-owned manse.

Magilligan was given permission to sell the manse.

Rev N Hunter was given permission to live in his own house on the grounds that he is eligible to retire.

Convoy was given permission to sell their manse farm in order to build a new manse.

CHURCH EXTENSION MINISTERS

13. It was decided that ministers of former Church Extension Charges shall receive no less remuneration than the appropriate ministerial minimum plus the amount allowed under Par 316(2)(e) of the Code.

City Area

14. A later Report will recommend that the City Area Committee should be thanked for its services, as a Committee of Assembly, and discharged. The Rev J N I McNeely has been its Convener for a comparatively short period but,

during that time he brought personal commitment, clarity of thought, decisive ability in decision-making along with sensitivity in the handling of sensitive situations. The Assembly owes him their appreciation.

ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO STUDENT ASSISTANTS

15. It was decided that Student Assistants be eligible for the married allowance of £500 payable by the Students' Bursary Fund when the spouse earns less than £1,000 annually.

**ASSESSMENTS ON FULLY CONSTITUTED CHURCH EXTENSION
CHARGES — 1998**

Under Par. 234 3(a) of the Code

	<i>Fully Constituted</i>	<i>Families (†)</i>	<i>Assess 1998 £</i>	<i>Spec. Sources £</i>	<i>Income £</i>
Elmwood	1982	490 (302)	453	68,147	117,297
Ballee	1986	229 (175)	262	40,421	61,839
Tullycarnet	1990	233 (159)	238	26,394	45,937
Downshire	1993	220 (187)	280	35,192	53,106
Lisnabreen	1993	287 (215)	322	38,106	160,373
Scrabo	1994	217 (152)	228	28,913	47,225
Burnside	1995	180 (143)	214	37,463	66,993

† Families contributing at least £5.00 per annum

ASSESSMENTS ON CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES — 1998

<i>Church</i>	<i>Spec.</i>						
	<i>Building £</i>	<i>Srs. £</i>	<i>Stip. £</i>	<i>C.M.F. £</i>	<i>Ch. Ext £</i>	<i>H.M. £</i>	<i>Total £</i>
New Mossley*	18,082	14,824	3,706	1,779	1,186	741	7,412
Ballysally*	6,763	19,958	4,989	2,395	1,597	998	9,979
Strathfoyle	—	2,820	846	423	282	169	1,720
Taughmonagh	3,337	16,395	4,918	2,459	1,639	984	10,000
Movilla	9,490	26,370	7,911	3,955	2,637	1,582	16,085

* Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES — 1998

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £11,407 from 1st January, 1998 plus House Allowance p.a. (single — £702; married — £1,002). If applicable House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

FIRST YEAR — From 1st January, 1998

Congregation	Assistant	Date of Licentiate	Ministers Stipend	Congregations Contribution	C.M.F.
Ist Ahoghill	M. Dunn†	13.6.97	22,195	5,900	6,209
Cregagh	C. M. Glover†	22.6.97	21,978	6,944	5,165
Abbot's Cross	J. G. Jones*	13.6.97	20,730	6,720	5,689
Carryduff	P. W. Patterson*	28.5.97	25,407	7,973	4,136
McQuiston Memorial	Miss A. E. Tolland†	29.6.97	21,738	s/a	10,758
Greenwell Street	G. Aitcheson*	25.6.97	25,230	8,070	4,339
Rathcoole	W. R. B. Martin*	15.6.97	18,519	s/a	12,409
Whiteabbey	P. D. Thompson*	11.6.97	23,612	7,585	4,824
High Street, Antrim	R. W. Gaston*	12.6.97	21,114	s/a	11,109
Abbey, Monkstown	A. A. McCullough*	13.6.97	19,372	6,313	6,096
Glinahirk	M. C. A. Gray*	27.7.97	22,720	6,181	6,228
Ist Coleraine	J. P. Moxen*	15.6.97	23,000	7,401	5,008
Ist Lurgan	K. R. Gibson*	15.6.97	21,526	s/a	9,408

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance

‡ No House Allowance — House provided by congregation s/a special arrangement

LICENTIATES — 1998

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £11,407 from 1st January, 1998 plus House Allowance p.a. (single — £702; married — £1,002). If applicable House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

SECOND YEAR — From 1st January, 1998

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licentiate</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i>	<i>Congregations Contribution</i>	<i>C.M.F.</i>
Ist Lame	J. K. A. McIntyre‡	21.6.96	25,310	7,593	3,814
McQuiston Memorial	D. Rankin*	16.6.96	21,738	7,022	5,387
Ist Cookstown	R. K. Graham†	21.6.96	25,326	7,949	4,160
Malone	R. D. Cameron*	23.6.96	26,220	8,361	4,048
Fisherwick	A. J. Boal*	16.6.96	25,851	8,256	4,153
Dungannon	J. R. Burnett‡	23.6.96	26,000	7,800	3,607
Railway Street	A. J. Thompson*	12.6.96	22,936	7,382	5,027
Trinity, Bangor	M. Henderson†	16.6.96	23,315	7,345	4,764
Ballygowan	A. A. Cole*	16.6.96	25,040	8,013	4,396
Stormont	D. J. Montgomery‡	23.6.96	27,693	8,308	3,099
Ist Antrim	R. D. Gregg*	16.6.96	24,417	7,826	4,583
Belmont	J. A. Curry*	9.6.96	23,680	7,605	4,804
Ballyholme	A. J. A. Rosborough†	7.6.96	23,494	7,399	4,710

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance

‡ No House Allowance — House provided by congregation s/a special arrangement

LICENTIATES — 1998

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £11,407 from 1st January, 1998 plus House Allowance p.a. (single — £702; married — £1,002). If applicable House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

THIRD YEAR — From 1st January, 1998

Congregation	Assistant	Date of Licentiate	Ministers		Congregations Contribution	C.M.F.
			Stipend			
Carmonney	J. C. Teeney*	14.6.95	30,576		9,674	2,735
1st Portadown	N. J. McCullough*	18.6.95	27,407		8,723	3,686
Harmony Hill, Lambeg	C. J. Aitcheson*	26.6.95	24,306		7,793	4,616
Regent Street, N'ards	A. W. Carson*	23.6.95	25,214		8,065	4,344
Abbot's Cross	G. W. M. Glasgow*	16.6.95	20,730		6,720	5,689
Rosemary	S. A. McCracken*	4.6.95	23,009		7,404	5,005
Mourne, Kilkeel	R. I. Abraham‡	11.6.95	38,303		11,407	—
Newcastle	W. A. McCully*	18.6.95	24,572		7,873	4,536

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance

‡ No House Allowance — House provided by congregation s/a special arrangement

ORDAINED ASSISTANTS — 1998

FOURTH YEAR — From 1st January, 1998

<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Date of Ord.</i>	<i>% Min.</i>	<i>Salary</i> £	<i>House Allow.</i> £	<i>Total</i> £	<i>Cong.</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
E. P. Gamble	West Kirk	2.2.94	100	15,210	1,002	16,212	7,920	8,292
Marlene Taylor	Cooke Centenary	11.1.85	100	15,210	1,002	16,212	9,151	7,061
W. J. P. Bailie	Greenwell Street	5.2.95	100	15,210	1,002	16,212	11,224	4,988
T. J. Lavery	West Church, Bangor	29.1.95	100	15,210	1,002	16,212	15,711	501
J. A. Gordon	Kells, Eskylane	2.4.95	100*	15,210	702	16,212	12,361	3,551

*From 2nd April 1998

PERSONNEL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Extraparochial Work

1. Six ministers have received permission for extraparochial work up to six hours per week.

2. Presbytery Clerks are asked to submit an annual report to the Personnel and Planning Committee re ministers in their Presbytery involved in extraparochial work.

Locomotory Expenses

3. The 1998 recommendations for locomotory allowances were set in the usual way, based on an average ministerial mileage of 13,000 miles in a car of 1400cc.

	N.Ireland (£)	Rep. of Ireland (IR£)
Standing Charges		
Insurance	330	380
Road Tax	145	175
Depreciation	1,955	2,211
Loss of Interest	429	485
Running Costs		
Petrol	1,276	1,177
Repairs and Servicing	525	552
Total Costs	4,660	4,980

It was felt best to continue phasing in the increases caused by the change to a calculation base of 13,000 miles and the Committee therefore recommended the following minimum locomotory allowances for 1998:

N Ireland	£4,440 (1997: £4,200)
ROI	IR£4,680 (1997: IR£4,452)

Inadequate Expenses Grant Scheme

4. Applications for grants towards inadequate expenses were approved for 29 ministers, the total amount of grant support being approximately £43,500, a slight decrease on the previous year.

The Committee is very grateful to all ministers, congregational treasurers and Presbytery Clerks/Finance Conveners who pay careful attention to the completion and necessary authorisations on the application form.

5. The recommended limits for 1997 claims under this scheme are as follows:

N Ireland: £4,650; Republic of Ireland: IR£5,200

City Area Grants:

6. Although this grant has now been discontinued, there are still some ministers who are entitled to claim under it. In 1997 grants totalling just over £6,000 were paid to five ministers.

Vacancies:

7. A Handbook for Presbytery Commissions in Vacant Congregations is now available from the General Secretary's Office which we hope will prove to be a 'user-friendly' guide to vacancy procedures, gathering together all the relevant legislation and guidelines and presenting them in a chronological and practical progression and in a form which allows the booklet to be used as the Minute Book of the Vacancy Commission. It is our suggestion that the booklet should be placed in the hands of the Convener of the Vacancy Commission immediately upon appointment.

8. In the course of the work done in preparing the Vacancy Guidelines booklet, the Committee recognised the vitally important responsibilities placed upon the Vacancy Commission, which ought to be actively involved in all vacancy procedures and decisions through its full membership rather than simply through the Convener.

Particular consideration was given to the process of drawing up a list of candidates for a vacancy (Par 194).

Two equally important 'rights' were identified and it was felt that these should be emphasised in the 1998 report to the General Assembly:

- (a) the right of the Kirk Session to select the candidates for hearing and;
- (b) the right of the congregation to hear the candidates (Pars 194(3) and (4) of the Code).

It is the responsibility of the Vacancy Commission to give guidance in these matters and to approve the List.

9. The Form of Application for invitation to occupy a vacant pulpit has not been reviewed or revised for a very long time. The Committee felt that this work ought to be undertaken and a suggested new form is therefore presented in this report. The most significant changes are that it includes space for some basic information about the applicant as well as a requirement for the application to be formally signed. The revision is printed as an appendix.

Review of Par 235(3)

10. The Committee considered that a revision of Par 235(3) of the Code raised bigger issues which are also being addressed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Paying Ministers and it would, therefore, be unwise to report independently of it. The Committee has identified possible ways forward and will report, in consultation with the Ad Hoc Committee, next year.

Licentiatees

11. The Committee was asked to consider the issues raised in the 1997 Memorial of the Carrickfergus Presbytery re whether licentiatees ought to remain under the care of the licensing Presbytery or be transferred to the Presbytery in which they are serving.

The Committee recommends that they ought to be transferred, but proposes to consult Presbyteries as well as some licentiatees and ministers.

Reviewable Tenure Ministry

12. The Commission has taken a very preliminary look at the idea of a 'reviewable tenure ministry.' A time of rapid social and demographic change means that it may be prudent, in a limited number of situations, to retain an element of flexibility in how provision is made for ministry. In such a ministry an agreed review would be built into a call from the outset and, after a certain time span or in the light of changed circumstances, tenure might be terminated, altered or extended. The Church of Scotland has been operating a similar scheme for 14 years and experience which they have shared has been useful and encouraging. One of our appended resolutions asks the Commission to examine further such a ministry and bring a recommendation to the General Assembly in 1999.

Vacancy Conventership Expenses

13. In response to a request from a Presbytery, the Committee gave consideration to the possibility of establishing some measure of uniformity in the allowances paid to Vacancy Conventers. A number of schemes were considered and, as a result, the following system is recommended to the Assembly.

Size of Congregation

Weekly Payment

Up to 200 families

Full Supply Fee (Code Par 238(4) + £5

Up to 300 families

Full Supply Fee (Code Par 238 (4) +£10

Over 300 families

Full Supply Fee (Code Par 238 (4) + £15

It is recommended that the amount over and above the Supply Fee is only payable where the vacant congregation does not have the help of an assistant etc.

R J A BELL, Convener

CITY AREA COMMITTEE

1. During the past year the City Area Committee discussed the effectiveness and the necessity of its existence as a Committee of the General Assembly.

2. The City Area Committee was sanctioned by the General Assembly in 1970 to consult with the Presbyteries of Belfast and to allocate the City Area Grants.

3. In 1996 the responsibility for the grants was transferred to the Personnel and Planning Committee. Members of the Committee have been involved in delegations at various times consulting with Belfast Presbyteries on respective strategies for the future. In recent years much of the discussion regarding strategies has involved wider representation from Union Commission.

4. It was thought by the City Area Committee that its agenda at present did not necessitate a regular meeting of the Committee. It was concluded that the remit of the City Area Committee could be dealt with by the Union Commission and if and when necessary a sub-committee of the Commission be appointed to cover business.

5. It is therefore recommended that the City Area Committee be thanked for its services and discharged.

J N I McNEELY, Convener

APPENDIX

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Form of Application

For invitation to occupy vacant pulpit

To

The Convener of the Vacancy Commission of

.....

From

Full Name

Address

.....

Telephone

I submit this application for an invitation to occupy the vacant pulpit in the above-named congregation(s)

Signed

Date

N.B. This is the only Form of Application authorised by the General Assembly.

The following details may be supplied for the information of the Kirk Session(s)

Personal and Family Background

Date & Place of Birth

Home Congregation

Post Primary Education (place and dates)

.....

.....

Tertiary Level Qualifications (include awarding body and dates)

.....

.....

.....

Marital Status

Family Details (if applicable).....

.....

Training for Ministry

Details of any full-time employment prior to the commencement of ministry

.....
.....
.....

Place and dates of theological training

.....
.....

Date of Licensing

.....

Assistantships (include summer and student assistantships with dates)

.....
.....
.....

Date and place of Ordination

.....

Experience of Ministry

Spheres of Ministry with dates of installation

.....
.....
.....

Presbytery responsibilities

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.....
.....
.....

Responsibilities undertaken on General Assembly Commissions, Boards or Committees

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Development of Ministry

In-service training undertaken in past 5 years

.....
.....
.....

Current Study

(institution, course, date of commencement, anticipated completion and qualification)

.....
.....

Assessment of Ministry

Emphases and priorities in ministry

.....
.....
.....

Community Interests, Hobbies etc.

Level of involvement in non-church organisations

.....
.....

Interests, hobbies, sports

.....
.....

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the report be received
2. That the Central Ministry Fund be authorised to pay grants towards expenses incurred by ministers in congregations, up to a limit of £4,650 in N Ireland, and IR£5,200 for ministers residing in the Republic of Ireland, within the terms of Res 3, p70, General Assembly Minutes 1988, as reviewed in the 1995 Report, p58f.
3. That the revised Form of Application for invitation to occupy a vacant pulpit be approved as the only Form of Application authorised by the General Assembly.
4. That the recommendation re transferring Licentiates to the care of the Presbyteries in which they are serving be referred to Presbyteries for comment - all such comments to be sent to the Convener of Personnel and Planning by 31 December, 1998.
5. That the Union Commission be encouraged to bring a scheme for 'reviewable tenure ministry' to the General Assembly in 1999.
6. That the suggested scheme for the payment of Vacancy Conveners be approved and recommended to all Presbyteries.
7. That the City Area Committee be thanked for its services and discharged and that the Rev J N I McNeely be thanked for his services as its Convener.
8. That the Union Commission, with its associated working committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 128 of the Code as follows:

REPORTS OF SYNODS AND PRESBYTERIES

SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN

The **SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN** report that Rev. Principal Thomas Samuel Reid is their Moderator, and that their next stated meeting is appointed to be held at Armagh Road, Portadown on Tuesday 9th March, 1999 at 11.30 a.m. and that they recommend that the Parish Bounds of Cloughey and Portavogie, (with the subsequent changes in the Parish bounds of the neighbouring congregations) be: Portavogie Parish Boundaries — from the Pumping Station (opposite Green Island) (655586) by a straight line to the Bog Road at (647593) thence by a straight line to a point (645600) thence by a straight line to the junction of Warnock's Road and Main Road (655607) thence along Main Road to the junction with Lemon's Road (654610) thence by Lemon's Road to Sea at Robin's Rock (659612), thence by the Sea to the Pumping Station (655586)

Subsequent changes to Glastry Parish Boundaries.

Cloughey Parish Boundaries

By the Sea from Kearney (650518) to the Pumpng Station (opposite Green Island) (655586) thence by a straight line to the Bog Road at (647593), thence along the Bog Road to its junction with Rubane Road (636593) thence along Rubane Road through Six Road Ends to where the Blackstaff River crosses the Rubane Road (628603) thence along the Blackstaff River to Saltwater Bridge (603591) and Strangford Lough to a point opposite the junction of the Rowreagh, Deerpark and Loughdoo Roads (590567) thence along the Loughdoo Road to Nun's Bridge (623553) thence along the Ballygalget Road to its junction with Ardminnen Road (628532) thence along Ardminnen Road to its junction with Newcastle Road (641537) thence along Newcastle Road to its junction with Kearney Road (643515) and thence along Kearney Road to Kearney (650518).

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. Douglas Bradley, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. H. C. Spence, M.A., Senior Minister of Kircubbin died on 6th March, 1997; the Rev. D. J. Templeton B.A., M.Div., M.Th., Minister without Charge died on 24th March, 1997; the Rev. N. M. Heaney M.A., Senior Minister of Glastry died on 29th January, 1998; that the Rev. J. F. K. Watson, B.A., Minister of Ballygrainey retired on 31st May, 1997; that the Rev. R. A. Liddle, B.Ed., B.Th., having presented credentials from the Carrickfergus Presbytery, was ordained and inducted as Associate Minister at Bangor West on 3rd September, 1997; the Rev. J. N. I. McNeely, B.Ed., B.D., having presented credentials from the Route

Died

Retired

Ordained
Installed

Presbytery, was installed as Minister of First Holywood on 11th September, 1997; the Rev. J. G. Millar, B.Sc., B.D., Ph.D., having presented credentials from the Dromore Presbytery, was ordained and inducted as Associate Minister at Hamilton Road, Bangor on 19th November, 1997; that they licensed as probationers for the Christian Ministry Mr. W. R. B. Martin on 15th June, 1997; Mr. M. C. A. Gray on 27th July, 1997; that they have under their care the Rev. C. D. Mawhinney as a Minister without Charge; Messrs. A. A. Cole, C. J. Aitcheson, M. C. A. Gray, W. R. B. Martin as Licentiates; Messrs. C. J. Gamble, M. M. Stewart, J. Wylie, C. A. Grant, K. S. Jeffrey, S. Henning, C. Ebbinghaus as Students for the Ministry; that they have visited the congregations of Ballygilbert, First Newtownards, High Street, Holywood, Bangor West; that Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately.

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. B. A. McDonald, B.Ed., Dip.Th., is their Moderator; that the Rev. J. C. Faulkner, M.A., senior minister of Moy and stated supply of Benburb, died on the 30th March, 1997; that the Rev. S. I. Dennis, B.D., demitted his charges of Second Keady and Drumhillery on 14th September, 1997 upon his acceptance of a call to Aberdeen: Greyfriars John Knox and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Aberdeen; that the Rev. W. A. Shaw, B.D., resigned on 31st January, 1998 from the congregations of Craigavon and Vinecash and was received as a Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery; that they licenced Mr. J. G. Jones, B.A., as a probationer for the Christian Ministry on 13th June, 1997; that they have under their care as Licentiates, Mr. R. I. Abraham, B.A., B.D., and Mr. J. G. Jones, B.A., B.D., that during the year they visited the congregations of Richhill, Craigavon, and Minterburn; that Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately.

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. M. Stanfield B.D. is their Moderator.

That the Rev. W. M. Brown, B.A., B.Th., having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards, was ordained and inducted as Associate Minister in Second Comber congregation on the 26th September, 1997.

That they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs. W. N. Duncan, B.D., M.Th., and R. N. Stewart, B.A., B.D. (retired).

That they have under their care as a student for the Ministry Mr. Mervyn Gibson.

That during the year they visited the congregations of Spa/Magherahamlet and First Saintfield.

That the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

The **DROMORE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. D. J. Temple, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. J. S. Martin, B.A., Minister of Drumlough and Anahilt, retired from the active ministry on 31st March, 1997; that the Rev. W. L. Elliott, B.Sc., B.D., Minister without Charge, resigned from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on 3rd March, 1997; that the Rev. A. W. Boyd, B.A., B.D., Minister of Banbridge Road, Dromore, having received a call from the congregation of Ballyhenry, demitted his charge on 23rd February, 1998 and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that on 20th June, 1997 Mr. A. T. F. Johnston, B.Ed., a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh having received a call to become Minister of Gilford and Tullylish; that on 4th November, 1997 Dr. G. Millar, B.Sc., B.D., a Licentiate under the care of the Presbytery, was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Ards having received a call to become Associate Minister in Hamilton Road, Bangor; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs. R. J. Mattison, B.D. and J. Honeyford, B.A., B.D.; that they have under their care as students for the ministry Mr. Samuel Castles and Mr. Michael McClenaghan; that during the year they visited the congregations of First Dromara and Banbridge Road; and that Financial Statements are being published separately by each congregation.

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. J. G. Trueman, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. H. P. Cromie, B.A., retired Missionary to India, died on the 9th August 1997; that the Rev. L. J. Addis, B.Sc., B.D., resigned as the Minister of Hilltown and Clonduff on 3rd April, 1997, having received a call from the congregation of Buckna; that the Rev. A. T. F. Johnston, B.Ed., B.D., presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was ordained and installed as the Minister of Tullylish and Gilford on 4th September, 1997; that the Rev. M. J. R. Neilly, B.A., B.D., presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was ordained and installed as the Minister of First Rathfriland on 19th September 1997; that the Rev. R. M. Murray, B.A., B.D., presented credentials from the Presbytery of Belfast, South and was ordained and installed as the Minister of Hilltown and Clonduff on 7th November, 1997; that they have under their care as Minister without Charge (retired) the Rev. E. G. McAuley, B.A., B.D., M.Sc., as a Licentiate, Mr. W. A. McCully, B.S.Sc., B.D., and as students Mr. E. S. McDowell, B.Sc., B.D., Mr. R. D. McDowell, B.Sc., B.D., Mr. T. D. Hagan, B.A. and Mr. J. A. Peacock, B.A.; that during the year they visited the congregations of Ballyronney and Katesbridge; and that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. W. J. Carlisle, B.A., B.D., Dip.Ed., is their Moderator; that the Rev. R. I. A. Allely, B.A. B.D., Minister of 1st and 2nd Markethill, demitted his charge on

26th June, 1997, having received a call to Dungannon, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone: that they have under their care as Students for the Christian Ministry Mr. Robert J. Stevenson, Mr. William J. A. Moody, Mr. Kenneth W. J. Hanna, Mr. Kenneth Henderson and Mr. David S. Henry; that during the year they visited the congregation of Annalong; and that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE

The **SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE** report that Rev. S. J. Millar, M.A., is their Moderator and that the next stated meeting is to be held in First Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church on Tuesday 9th March, 1999 at 10.00 a.m.

The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. Dr. D. G. McMeekin, M.A., M.Sc., Dip.S.Admin., Ph.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. T. E. Lindsay, B.A., Senior Minister of Cloughwater, died on 31st October, 1997; that the Rev. W. J. Hook, M.A., B.D., retired from the duties of the Active Ministry in Cuningham Memorial, Cullybackey, on 31st December, 1997; that the Rev. L. J. Addis, B.Sc., B.D., having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh, was installed as minister of Buckna on 4th April, 1997; that the Rev. J. D. McGaughey, B.A., having presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast, was installed as minister of Brookside, Ahoghill, on 16th May, 1997; that Mr. A. M. Bates, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick, was ordained to the office of the Christian Ministry and inducted as Associate Minister in First Ballymena on 23rd November, 1997; that they have under their care as a Licentiate: Mr. R. D. Gregg; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry: Mr. L. Eagleson, Mr. S. Finlay, Mr. C. McDowell and Mr. S. Richmond; that the congregations of Grange, Ballee and Kells and Esylane were visited; and that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that Rev. J. H. Wilson, B.A., M.A.R. is their Moderator; Rev. R. W. C. Clements retired on 21st September, 1997; Rev. J. R. Lambe, B.A., B.Th.DB.Studs. was ordained and inducted as Associate Minister of Ballyclare on 26th September, 1997 on his presenting credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast; they licensed Mr. Phillip W. Patterson, B.Mus. on 28th May, 1997; they presented credentials to Mr. R. A. Liddle, B.A., B.D. to the Presbytery of Ards on his receiving a call from West Church, Bangor to be their Associate Minister; they have under their care as a Minister without Charge, Rev. D. R. Byers, as Licentiates, Messrs. James C. Simms, Stephen A. McCracken and Philip W. Patterson, and as Students for the Ministry, Messrs. Colin

Burcombe, Ian Carton and Stephen J. Lockington; they visited the congregations of Joymount and Greensisland; and that Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately.

The **COLERAINE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. Mark Goudy, B.Sc, B.D. is their Moderator: that the Rev. B. H. S. Liddell, M.A., Senior Minister of First Coleraine, died on 17th September, 1997; that the Rev. W. G. M. Martin, B.A., Senior Minister of Second Dunboe, died on 8th January, 1998; that the Rev. D. S. McIlwrath, B.A., B.D. resigned from the charge of First Coleraine on 9th September, 1997 having received a call as Associate Minister in Carnmoney Church, and was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev. A. J. McL. Smith, B.A., M.Div., Assistant Minister in Ballywillan having demitted his Charge on 2nd October, 1997, was inducted as Associate Minister in Ballywillan on 3rd October, 1997; that on 9th October, 1997 the Rev. B. A. H. Wilson, M.A., B.D., Minister without Charge under the care of the Presbytery, was installed to Missionary Service with the Overseas Board; that on 15th June, 1997 Mr. J. P. Moxen was licensed as a probationer for the ministerial office; that the Presbytery have under their care as Minister without Charge (retired) the Rev. W. J. Morrison, B.A.; that the Presbytery have under their care as Licentiates Messrs. J. P. Moxen, J. K. A. McIntyre and T. Mulholland; that the Presbytery have under their care as Students for the Ministry, Messrs. G. Allen and P. Wilson; that the Presbytery have visited the congregations of Main Street, Garvagh and Second Dunboe; and that the Financial Statements of congregations are being printed separately.

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** report that Rev. J. T. Magowan, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that Rev. J. N. McNeely, B.Ed., B.D., resigned his Charge of First Ballymoney on 10th September, 1997; that Rev. D. H. Thompson, B.A., B.D. was installed at First Kilraughts on 18th April, 1997; that Rev. E. J. Hyndman, M.A. was installed at Roseyards on 20th June, 1997; that Mr. G. Aitcheson was licensed on 25th June, 1997, and continues as a Licentiate under their care; that they have also under their care as a Licentiate Mr. M. Henderson; and as a Student for the Ministry Mr. D. Steele; that during the year they visited the congregations of Dunloy, Armoy, and Trinity, Ballymoney; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

The **TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. D. Bannerman, B.D., M.Th., Dip.S.Admin., M.Sc., is their Moderator; that on 17th April, 1997, having received credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone, they ordained Mr. Peter Ernest Dickinson, B.A., B.D., to the Christian Ministry and installed him as Minister of Muckamore; that on 9th September, 1997, Mr. S. Simpson, B.Sc., a Licentiate under Presbytery care, received a call from the Home Board to serve in the congregations of Tullamore and Mountmellick and was furnished with

credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that on 9th September, 1997, Dr. S. Mawhinney, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.C.H., M.R.C.G.P. a Licentiate under Presbytery care, received a call from the Home Board to serve in the Congregations of Fermoy and Cahir and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that on 4th November, 1997, Mr. A. M. Bates, B.A., B.D., a Licentiate under Presbytery care, received a call to serve as Associate Minister of First Ballymena and was furnished with Credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that on 22nd June, 1997, they licensed Mr. C. M. Glover, B.A. (Q.U.B.), B.A. (Oxon.) as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry; that on 29th June, 1997, they licensed Miss A. E. Tolland, B.Sc., P.G.C.E., as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry; that they have under their care as Licentiates, Mr. C. M. Glover, B.A. (Q.U.B.), B.A. (Oxon.) and Miss A. E. Tolland, B.Sc., P.G.C.E., B.D., M.Th.; that they have under their care as Students for the Christian Ministry, Miss L. J. Robinson, B.A., and Mr. D. A. Simpson, B.Th.; that during the year they visited the congregations of First Ballyeaston and Dundrod; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

Licensed

Visited

SYNOD OF BELFAST

The **SYNOD OF BELFAST** report that the Rev. Samuel J. Campbell, B.A., Dip.Ed., M.Dir., is their Moderator and that the next stated meeting of Synod will be held at Townsend Street Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, 9th March, 1999 at 10.00 a.m.

The **NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. John Kenneth Doherty, B.Sc., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. Margaret Louise Johnston, M.A., Dip.Th., Minister of Fortwilliam Park, retired on 19th July, 1997; that the Rev. Peter Fitzgerald Jemphrey, B.Ed., B.D., Ordained Assistant Minister in the congregation of Ballysillan, demitted his charge on 24th April, 1997 on receipt of a call to the Associate Ministry in Dunlop Memorial and Glengormley; that the Rev. Joseph McGaughey, B.A., Ordained Assistant Minister in the congregation of Immanuel, demitted his charge on 15th May, 1997 on receipt of a call from the congregation of Brookside, Ahoghill and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that the Rev. Alexander William Boyd, B.A., B.D., was installed in Ballyhenry on 24th February, 1998 credentials having been received from the Presbytery of Dromore; that the Rev. Peter Fitzgerald Jemphrey, B.Ed., B.D., was inducted as Associate Minister in the congregations of Dunlop Memorial and Glengormley on 25th April, 1997; that the Rev. Samuel David McIlwrath, B.A., B.D. was inducted as Associate Minister in the congregation of Carrmoney on 10th September, 1997, credentials having been received from the Presbytery of Coleraine; that Mr. Roy Gaston was licensed as a Probationer for the Ministry in Abbots Cross on 12th June 1997; that Mr. Angus McCullough was

Retired

Resigned

Installed

Licensed

licensed as a Probationer for the Ministry in Carnmoney on 13th June, 1997; that Mr. Johnston Rea Lambe, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was issued with credentials on receipt of a call to the Associate Ministry from the congregation of Ballyclare; that Mr. Mark James Robert Neilly, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was issued with credentials on receipt of a call from the congregation of First Rathfriland; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs. C. R. J. Brown, B.A. (retired), L. E. Carroll, B.A., B.D., N. J. Linkens, B.D., C. I. McKnight, B.A., and W. M. Smyth, B.A., B.D., M.P.; that they have under their care as Licentiates Messrs. A. W. Carson, R. Gaston, G. W. M. Glasgow, A. McCullough, N. Patrick and J. C. Teeney; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry Messrs. J. M. Casement, W. H. H. Crawley, M. Jones and D. Murphy; that they have visited the congregations of Fortwilliam Park, Woodvale and Whiteabbey; and that the congregational Financial Reports are being printed separately.

Resigned

Visited

The **BELFAST SOUTH PRESBYTERY** report that Rev. D. J. McKelvey, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator: Rev. E. A. Russell, B.A., B.D., M.Th., D.D. Professor Emeritus died on 20th March, 1997: Rev. A. W. Williamson, B.A., B.D., Senior Minister of Nelson Memorial died on 22nd February, 1998: that Mr. Philip Thompson, B.A., B.D., was licensed as a Probationer for the Ministry in West Kirk on 11th June, 1997: that credentials were issued to Mr. Richard Murray, B.A., B.D., a Licentiate, having received a call from the congregations of Clonduff and Hilltown in the Presbytery of Iveagh: that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge: Rev. S. J. Hanna, B.A., Rev. B. R. Hughes, B.A., B.D., stated supply in Nelson Memorial and Rev. P. A. J. McBride: that they have under their care as students for the Ministry Miss Cheryl Reid, Mr. Ian Harbinson, Mr. Peter McDowell: that they visited the Congregations of May Street and Richview during the year and Financial Statements are being printed separately: that Rev. I. S. McDowell retired from Christian Aid on 16th January, 1998 and Rev. Dr. J. W. Morrow retired from the Irish School of Ecumenics on 31st August, 1997.

Died

Licensed

Resigned

Visited

The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. Joan Scott, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. Dr. John M. Barkley, M.A., B.D., Ph.D., Professor-Emeritus of Church History at Union College, died on 20th December, 1997; that the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Jamison, B.A., M.Ed., M.Th., Ph.D., Minister without Charge, retired on 5th June, 1997; that the Rev. D. R. Baker, B.A., M.Div., resigned from his work in the Corrymeela Community as a Recognised Ministry under the Board of Social Witness on 6th May, 1997, and was retained as a Minister without Charge under the care of the Presbytery; that the Rev. D. H. Thompson, B.A., B.D., Assistant Minister in Bloomfield, demitted his charge on 17th April, 1997 on receipt of a call from 1st Kilraughts, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of

Died

Retired

Resigned

Route; that the Rev. E. J. Hyndman, M.A., Assistant Minister in Knock, demitted his charge on 19th June, 1997 on receipt of a Call from Roseyards and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Route; that the Rev. T. M. McWhirter, M.A., M.Sc., B.D., Assistant Minister in Dundonald, demitted his charge on 12th June, 1997 on receipt of a call from the parish of Old Luce and New Luce, Church of Scotland, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Wigtown and Stranraer; that the Rev. B. R. Hughes, B.A., B.D., Minister without Charge, was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Belfast South on 4th November, 1997; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs. R. A. Crooks, M.A., E. Jamison, B.A., M.Ed., M.Th., Ph.D., H. E. Lewis, B.D., Dip.Ed., L. R. Pedlow, M.A., S. Scott, B.D., Ph.D., Th.D.; D. R. Baker, B.A., M.Div.; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry, Messrs. Michael N. Davidson, Graeme J. Kennedy, and Andrew N. Kerr; that the congregations of Orangefield, Ravenhill and St. Andrew's were visited during the year; and that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

Visited

SYNOD OF DERRY AND OMAGH

The **SYNOD OF DERRY AND OMAGH** report that the Rev. J. Maynard Cathcart, M.A., is their Moderator; that the next stated meeting is appointed to be held in Waterside Presbyterian Church on Wednesday 10th March 1999 at 2.30 p.m.

The **DERRY AND STRABANE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. R. L. Brown, B.Sc., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. F. M. Hay, B.A., Senior Minister of Leckpatrick died on the 21st June, 1997; that the Rev. R. S. K. Neill, M.A., Minister of 1st Castleberg and Killeter, retired on the 30th June, 1997; that the Rev. J. K. McCormick, B.D., having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Donegal, was installed as Minister of 2nd Derry (Strand and Buncrana) and Burt on the 17th June, 1997; that Mr. M. Dunn, B.Sc., was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on the 13th June, 1997; that they have under their care as Licentiates Mr. E. A. Smith, B.A., Mr. R. K. Graham, B.A., and Mr. M. Dunn, B.Sc., that the candidature of Mr. D. S. Gilmore, B.Sc., C.Q.S.W., M.S.Sc., as a student for the Ministry was terminated; that the congregations of Badoney, Corrick and Glenelly; and Kilfennan were visited during the year; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

Died

Retired

Installed

Licensed

Visited

The **FOYLE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. N. Hunter, M.A., B.D., Dip.Th., is their Moderator; that the Rev. Thomas J. Stinson, M.A., Senior Minister of First Limavady, died on the 28th January, 1998; that Mr. S. Stewart, B.Sc., D.A.S.E., Dip.Th., a Licentiate of the Presbytery, was ordained and installed as Minister of

Died

Ordained

Donagheady Congregation on 12th December, 1997; that they have under their care, as a Minister without Charge, the Rev. K. Campbell, B.D.; that they have under their care, as a Licentiate, Mr. A. J. A. Rosborough, M.A., B.D.; that during the year the congregations of Balteagh and Myroe were visited; that the Financial Statements of the congregations are being printed separately.

Installed

Visited

The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. D. P. Kirkwood, B.A., is their Moderator; that the Very Rev. Dr. J. A. Matthews, B.A., B.D., minister of Sixmilecross, retired on 30th September, 1997; that they have under their care as a student for the Ministry Mr. David William Reid; that they visited the congregations of Irvinestown and Lisbellaw during the year; and that the Financial Statements of the congregations are being printed together in booklet form.

Retired

Visited

The **TYRONE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. W. T. Bingham, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. Robert I. A. Allely, B.A., B.D., was installed as Minister of the congregation of Dungannon on 27th June, 1997, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Newry; that Mr. Peter Ernest Dickinson, a Licentiate under the care of the Presbytery, was issued with credentials on receipt of a call from the congregation of Muckamore in the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry, Mr. Adrian T. S. McAlister, B.Sc., M.Sc., and Mr. Colin W. A. Martin, B.Sc., that during the year they visited the congregations of Albany, Brigh and Stewartstown; Castledawson and Curran; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

Installed

Resigned

Visited

SYNOD OF DUBLIN

The **SYNOD OF DUBLIN** report that the Rev. James Carson is their Moderator and that the next stated meeting is appointed to be held at Sandymount, Dublin, at 7.00 p.m. on 8th March, 1999.

The **DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. P. A. McBride, B.Ed., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. E. L. M. Henning, S.R.N., Dip.H.V., B.D., retired from the duties of the active ministry in Donoughmore and Stranorlar on 30th June, 1997, and Rev. K. J. C. McConnell, M.A., Dip.Ed., retired from active ministry in Dunfanaghy and Carrigart on 31st December, 1997; that on the 16th June, 1997, Rev. J. K. McCormick, B.D., resigned his charge as Minister of Trinity, Letterkenny and Trenta, having accepted a call to Second Derry and Burt congregations, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane; that the congregations of Dunfanaghy and Rathmullan were visited during the

Retired

Resigned

Visited

year; that the Financial Statements of the congregations are being published in a Year Book.

The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. Nancy Cubitt, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. John McFall, M.A., Senior Minister of Cavan, Corby and Mullingar, died on 29th May, 1997; that the Rev. J. T. Turtle, B.A., Senior Minister of Second Ballybay and Rockcorry, died on 26th February, 1998; that the Rev. J. A. Fulton, B.A., retired from the duties of the active ministry in the congregations of Corvalley and Corlea on 31st December, 1997; that they have no students for the ministry under their care; that during the year the congregation of Clontibret was visited and that the Financial Reports are being printed in booklet form.

Died

Retired

Visited

The **DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. Robert Cobain, B.A., is their Moderator; that on 19th September, 1997 Dr. Samuel Mawhinney, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., B.D., was ordained, installed and inducted as Stated Supply in Cahir and Fermoy congregations, that on 27th September, 1997 Mr. Stephen Simpson, B.Sc., B.Th., was ordained, installed and inducted as Minister of Tullamore and Mountmellick congregations; that on 15th June Mr. Kenneth R. Gibson was licensed to preach the Gospel publicly as a probationer for the ministerial office; that the Presbytery has under its care as Licentiates Mr. David Montgomery and Mr. Kenneth R. Gibson, and as a student, Mr. Brian Colvin; that during the year the following congregations were visited, St. Andrew's Blackrock, Cahir and Fermoy, Dun Laoghaire, and Howth and Malahide; that the Financial Statements of all congregations are being published in a limited edition of a Year Book.

Ordained

Installed

Licensed

Visited

BUSINESS BOARD

Convener: THE ACTING CLERK

1. The experiment of last year, by which a backdrop was provided for the Assembly platform, proved popular and the ability to project words on to a screen has been widely commended. Similar provision has been made this year. It should be remembered, however, that words shown on the screen are an informal aid to assist the House. The official and definitive record of Assembly decisions is to be found only in the attested Minutes.

2. The Board decided not to take up an offering at the opening night of the Assembly.

Dublin Memorial re Opening Night Invitations

3. Last year's Assembly received and granted the prayer of a Memorial from the Synod of Dublin concerning the sending of invitations to the opening night of the General Assembly to a wider range of Churches including the Roman Catholic Church. Within the terms of the prayer, the Inter-Church Relations Board was instructed to send certain relevant documents to Presbyteries which were to forward any further comments they wished to make to the Convener of the Inter-Church Relations Board by 31 December, 1997. The Inter-Church Relations Board was then to report on any comments received, this year or last year, to the Business Board.

4. Of the 21 Presbyteries, 6 did not reply, 3 supported the issuing of invitations and 9 were against. Comments from the remaining 3, in which no votes were taken, were that "the matter was too divisive to put to a vote", "a vote could have gone either way" and "reaching out should begin at the bottom rather than the top".

5. Responses from Presbyteries failed to indicate growing support for invitations to be issued to other Churches and the Board does not recommend any change to existing invitations' procedures at this time.

Assembly Voting Procedures

6. In response to correspondence, the Board considered whether or not to change procedures when votes are taken at the Assembly.

7. It had been suggested that the doors should be sealed as soon as the Moderator announces a vote by ballot, without the ringing of the division bell, with the result that members of Assembly seated on the gallery or elsewhere would be unable to vote.

8. The Board rejected the argument that persons seated on the gallery are less well informed about the debate than those on the floor of the House and, consequently, decided they do have a right to vote.

9. While no change in the current procedures is recommended, members of Assembly are reminded that they have a duty to act responsibly when they are part of an important decision-making process and should exercise their vote only when they are sufficiently informed about the issues under debate.

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

11. During the current year the administrative work relating to the General Secretary's Office and the General Assembly has been greatly assisted by Rev R McM Mackey, who prepared and took the Minutes of the Assembly and also by the invaluable support of Mr Stewart McCullough, particularly in assisting with the preparation of the Assembly Reports. The secretaries in the General Office have carried additional responsibilities with a very high degree of competence and deserve the appreciation of the whole Church

Other Churches

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

Church of Ireland Synod 1998: Very Rev Dr D H Allen, Rev James Brogan, Mrs Ruth Dawson, Mr Lionel McKee.

Methodist Conference 1998: Very Rev Dr S Hutchinson, Rev Mary Hunter, Mr F J Newell, Ms Joan Cowle.

Presbyterian Church of Wales: Rev J H MacConnell.

Église Réformée de France: Rev S J Campbell.

Presbyterian Church in Brazil: Rev Dr W P Addley

Board Membership

The Business Board is appointed in accordance with the provisions of Par 275 of the Code to take office on the 15 March preceding the Assembly. The Board for the year 1998-1999, together with the associated Arrangements Committee, is as follows:-

- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Moderator-Designate, the former Clerks, preceding three Moderators, all Assembly Conveners and Secretaries of Commissions and Boards, Financial Secretary, Youth and Information Officers.
- (b) Rev. W.T. Corder; W.J. Moorhead — Rev. Dr. J. Thompson; W.H. Scott — Rev. J. Harper; S.B. Cunningham — Rev. S.W.W. Neilly; Alan Robinson — Rev. J.G. Trueman; D. McKee — Rev. Dr. M.A. Barry; W. Flack.
- (c) Rev. J.J. Andrews; W. Matthews — Rev. J.W. McAuley; J. McKee — Rev. T.J. McCormick; P. McGonigle — Rev. J.A. Thompson; J.K. Getty — Rev. F.J. Kelly; J. McIlroy.
- (d) Rev. T.C. Morrison; A.W. Marshall — Rev. Ruth Patterson; M. Kelly — Rev. Dr. W.J.H. McKee; Miss V.J. Wilson.
- (e) Rev. M. Bolton; A. Craig — Rev. J. McWhirter; R.W. Alcorn — Rev. B.A. Hunt; J. Cochrane — Rev. T.J. Conway; R. Kyle.
- (f) Rev. P.A. McBride; R. Sheppard — Rev. J. Carson; John Rowland — Rev. D.T. Moore; S. Sharpe.

A. ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE (5) Rev. R. Vallely, Convener

- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Moderator-Designate, Deputy Clerk, Information Officer, Hospitality Secretaries, H.W. Templeton, T.H. Cochrane; Rev. R. Vallely.
- (x) Revs. S.S. McFarland, P.T. Dalzell; G.Y. Crooks, S. Nelson.
- (y) Revs. T.C. Morrison, W.T. Cordner, T.J. McCormick, T. Conway; S. Sharpe, A.W. Marshall, Wm. Matthews, M. Kelly.

The Methodist Conference 1997

Very Rev Dr D H Allen reports:

1. The 228th Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland was held in Carlisle Road Methodist Church, Londonderry from 6-10 June, 1997.
2. The Presbyterian delegation consisted of Mr J C Grant, Mr. A. Craig, Rev Dr J Fell and the Very Rev Dr D H Allen.
3. Rev Kenneth Best, Londonderry, the outgoing President, handed over to the new President, Rev Dr Norman W Taggart from Coleraine.
4. This conference also marked the 250th Anniversary of the first visit of John Wesley to Ireland. Mr Wesley landed at Dublin City Quay on 9th August, 1747. It also coincided with the Celebrations for the 1400th Anniversary of the death of Colomba who founded the settlement of Derry in 546 AD.
5. The President of the British Conference chaired the Conference proceedings and most of the sessions in a most efficient and confident manner.
6. The delegation found the procedures for the meetings very different from our Assembly pattern. There seemed little likelihood of any reports or recommendations being defeated. There also seemed to be little concern about keeping to the times scheduled for reports, with some major reports being switched at a moment's notice.
7. The annual Ordination Service and Communion Service were taken together on the Sunday evening. With a packed church and overflow hall, each candidate giving a word of testimony followed by the communion, it became a very long evening, but was nevertheless very impressive.
8. The delegation was received warmly and given opportunity to convey greetings.
9. The reports were topical and at times quite controversial. The voice of the womenfolk was strongly heard and the area of political contact hotly debated.

The URC Assembly 1997

Very Rev Dr D H Allen reports:

1. The 1997 Assembly of the United Reformed Church was held in the Guildhall, Portsmouth from 7-11 July.
2. The Assembly is rather unique in that it permits delegates from other Churches to participate and vote in its business, portraying the ecumenical outlook of the United Reformed Church. The Rev David Campbell (General Secretary of the Bible Society in N Ireland) was our voting delegate.

3. The hospitality afforded to the visiting delegates was warm and generous with the first day being marked by both a reception during the afternoon and a dinner in the evening.

4. The Assembly itself began with a Communion Service and this was followed by the Constitution of the Assembly.

5. Each day began with worship and Northern Ireland was mentioned daily in prayers during what was a very troubled week of Republican violence.

6. The main debate of the week was concerned with the sensitive issue of human sexuality particularly in relation to ministry and as the debate continued it centred specifically on the call to ministry of those in a practising homosexual or lesbian relationship. It was resolved that the Assembly would neither uphold nor refuse to uphold a call in opposition to a decision taken by a local church and concurred in by the relevant District Council.

7. The diversity of opinion within the United Reformed Church was evident in much of the business, however all debates were conducted within a spirit of grace and goodwill. The sensitivity of the Moderator, particularly in matters of contention, was manifest throughout the week.

The Welsh Assembly

Rev Dr J B Moore reports:

1. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales was a largely residential Assembly located at St David's College, Lampeter, of the University of Wales, from 14-17 July, 1997. This contributed greatly to the Assembly's 'togetherness' with informal discussions, supper gatherings and singing in rooms and kitchens in the evenings after the more formal sessions.

2. The business of the Assembly was more informal and briefer than ours. Resolutions were concise and often not debated. Differences were expressed charitably.

3. The Moderator, the Rev Harri Owein Jones, BA, was installed on the second evening of the Assembly and visitors from other Churches, including the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, were invited to address the Assembly on the opening evening.

4. The Church is very self-consciously Welsh, almost all the proceedings being in Welsh with simultaneous translation for non-Welsh speakers. The singing was characteristically tuneful and moving.

5. The Church's ethos, organisation and administration owe much to its Calvinistic Methodist roots.

6. Sadly, membership is declining; most obviously in the large industrial conurbations of South Wales. But however depressing the picture seems to be Wales has a wonderful history of visitations of the Spirit and fervent, potent preaching and, as one was taken to some of the historic scenes of awakening, one could not but wish that God would 'do it again' not only in Wales but in Ireland, too, in our day.

7. Prior to the Assembly there was a Youth Weekend and some 30 young people attended the Assembly itself as Delegates and on the Wednesday morning contributed a thoughtful and challenging programme.

8. It was an interesting experience to participate in another Church's Assembly and I am grateful for the warm welcome I received from their office-bearers and delegates. Incidentally it was good to learn of the high standing in which the Rev Professor Stephen Williams, a son of the Welsh Church, is held and to be able to convey our appreciation of him.

9. I wish to thank our Church for the opportunity given me.

General Assembly of the Uniting Church of Australia

Rev Prof J C McCullough reports:

1. The eighth General Assembly of the Uniting Church of Australia took place in Perth, Western Australia, from 5 - 12 July, 1997. It opened with a packed gathering in Perth Concert Hall. Members and visitors were piped in by 50 bagpipes and then welcomed on didgeridoo by the Noongar people to their traditional Aboriginal land. The incoming President gave a challenging address.

2. The main business of the Assembly was as follows:

- to appoint a Moderator Designate. It was a particular delight for Irish Presbyterians to know that he is to be Rev Prof James Haire, a former Presbyterian Church in Ireland minister and overseas worker. He will make a fine president in 3 years time;

- to discuss relationships with the indigenous peoples of Australia. It was decided to participate in a 'Say Sorry Day', when non-indigenous Australians can give a sign that they are sorry for the past;

- to debate a report on sexuality which contained an important section on homosexuality which the report considered should not be a bar in itself to practicing ordained ministry. This debate was terminated without a conclusion and a committee of former moderators was appointed to take the matter forward;

- to debate a funding crisis in the church;

- to receive the results of a nation-wide (including New Zealand) survey on the state of the church in Australasia. It showed that the age profile of the Uniting Church is the highest of all churches in Australia with 49% of members being over 60 years old; that it is the only church in Australia to have a declining membership; that it scored lowest in what was described as vitality but highest in community involvement of all churches in Australia;

- to debate the need for continuing education of ministers. They have a compulsory continuing education for ministers and if ministers do not achieve the goals set for them, they will have great difficulty finding another parish;

- to receive a report on the future of the theological colleges and of training for the ministry;

- to discuss the role of the eldership. In the discussion of the single tier government for local congregations there was a danger that the crucial role of the eldership could be gradually phased out. This was of particular concern to those who came to the Uniting Church from a Presbyterian background.

3. This was an Assembly of drama and difficult decisions, but it was marked by an excellent spirit. There was a genuine desire to listen to the Holy Spirit (one Pacific Islander said that his prayer for the Assembly was that the Holy Spirit would interfere in their decisions!) and there was also a real striving

for consensus. It was a privilege to be associated with this Assembly and I would thank the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the opportunity to go there.

ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

THANKS

1. The Arrangements Committee is thankful for the helpful co-operation of the Church House Staff in all departments especially acknowledging the support of the Rev R F S Poots in spite of his additional responsibility as Acting Clerk. We congratulate the Rev John Dixon on his nomination as Moderator-Designate and thank him for his co-operation in the arrangements for this Assembly.

TRANSPORT

2. The Presbyterian Church has often found generous support in the Business Community and the Arrangements Committee acknowledges that generosity over the years when various firms have provided complimentary limousines for the use of the Moderator during Assembly Week. In 1998 we are indebted to Wiltons in Belfast and Bairds in Antrim.

CATERING

3. We encourage members to use the catering facilities within Church House for coffee breaks and lunches. The purchase of coffee/tea break tickets at 6 for £5, available from the Arrangements Desk at the Carrickfergus window, assists the flow at break times. At the request of the General Assembly in 1997 the caterer has been asked to consider the use of coffee and tea which carry a Fair Trade mark.

ASSEMBLY RALLY

4. At the request of the Evangelism Board and with the support of the Moderator-Designate, the special emphasis at the Rally will be Evangelism especially the Life 2 Programme. The Guest Speaker is Mr John Blanchard whose ministry in writing and speaking brings blessing to many.

VOTING CARDS

5. These should be obtained as soon as possible from the desk at the Carrickfergus window where they are available on Monday evening/Tuesday morning after which members should contact the Financial Secretary's Office. **Admission to the Private Session is only for those who have and show their own voting card.**

EXPENSES

6. All members may claim a daily attendance allowance but travel expenses cover the cost of only one return journey in the week. Claims should

be made on the appropriate form obtainable from the Reception at the Wellington Street entrance.

2000 AD

7. The Arrangements Committee asked the General Board to set up a Working Group to make plans for celebrating the year 2000 AD.

PRAYER

8. On the Friday afternoon prior to the 1997 Assembly a Prayer time was arranged in the Chapel of Church House. This practice will hopefully continue in 1998 seeking to present all aspects of our Assembly business before God. We invite members to include the arrangements, the business and the personalities within their prayers as we approach the 1998 General Assembly.

ROY VALLELY, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommended Order of Business be adopted.
3. That the professional amplification controller and the visual display operator be admitted to the private session.
4. That a grant of £8,500 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Committee.
5. That the Business Board, with its associated working committee, for the ensuing year beginning 15 March, 1998 be appointed in accordance with Par 275 of the Code.

MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, to meet in Belfast, on 1st day of June 1998.

The Memorial of the Rev Norman John Linkens, BD, Respectfully Showeth:

That he is sixty-five years of age;

That he was ordained to the Christian Ministry by the Presbytery of Ayr in Muirkirk congregation in 1964, and after serving in that and two other congregations of the Church of Scotland he was installed in Westbourne congregation in East Belfast in September 1978;

That he was installed in Dunlop Memorial congregation in North Belfast in September 1987;

That he resigned from the charge of Dunlop Memorial in February 1996 to become Stated Supply in the congregation of Cloughey and Portavogie and since then he has remained a Minister without Charge under the care of the North Belfast Presbytery.

Memorialist now prays your Venerable Court, in consideration of his thirty-three years service in the active ministry and his work in the congregations

of Cloughey and Portavogie, officially to constitute him a member of the appropriate Courts of the Church, as a Retired Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as from 30 June, 1998 and to appoint him a member of the Presbytery of Ards.

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

NORMAN JOHN LINKENS

Licensed and transmitted by the Presbytery of North Belfast at its meeting in Abbots Cross on Tuesday, 3 February, 1998 with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

THOMAS I HARTE, Moderator

JOHN R DICKINSON, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted by the Synod of Belfast at its meeting at Townsend Street Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, 10 March, 1998 with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

S JAMES CAMPBELL, Moderator

W D F MARSHALL, Clerk

* * * * *

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, to meet at Belfast on 1 June, 1998.

The Memorial of the Presbytery of Donegal Respectfully Showeth:

That at Presbyteries, a high proportion of voting elders are not familiar with the names of nominees being proposed for the position of Moderator of the General Assembly.

That the present practice prevents them from finding out, before the voting takes place, anything about the qualities which commend the nominees.

That this present practice causes embarrassment to many members of Presbyteries, does not do justice to the nominees, and is not in keeping with the democratic spirit to which we aspire.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Court to refer the following proposals to Presbyteries for discussion and report to the Convener of the Business Board not later than 31 December, 1998 for report to the General Assembly:

1. Proposers wishing to have a nominee considered by Presbytery must provide written information for members of Presbytery. This should be circulated by the Clerk of Presbytery and should reach members not later than two days in advance of the Presbytery meeting.

2. Information should:

- (a) be not more than 200 words;
- (b) consist of biographical background, along with the wider interests and activities of the nominee;
- (c) be signed by the proposer;
- (d) be submitted with the agreement of the nominee.

3. At the Presbytery meeting, further information or debate on the nominees will not be permitted.

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

Adopted and transmitted, simpliciter, by the Presbytery of Donegal, meeting at Raphoe, on 4 March, 1998.

P A McBRIDE, Moderator
B BROWN, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted, simpliciter, by the Synod of Dublin, meeting at Ballybay, on 10 March, 1998.

JAMES CARSON, Moderator
R W J MacDERMOTT, Clerk

BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Convener: Rev IVOR SMITH
Secretary: Mr STEPHEN LYNAS

1. We continue to make full use of the latest technology to get the Church's message to the outside world and to improve our communications throughout the Church.

2. Over 80 ministers are now on email. Significant savings to the Church and increased speed and availability of information to ministers make this a very valuable facility. The Board encourages more ministers to get on-line.

3. The Board took a decision in February to develop a Communications Strategy for the Church. This is being discussed with heads of department and the various Board conveners.

4. During the year we bade farewell to Ms Nola Wright and Miss Etta Halliday. Both served the Church well and we pay them warm tribute.

5. Ms Wright has worked in the Department for 26 years. Faithful and conscientious in all she did, Nola made a valuable contribution to the work of the Department and the wider Church. We thank her warmly for a job well done.

6. Miss Halliday has served the Church well for 5 years as the first full-time director of the Video Unit. The quality of work produced in that time has been first class and we are sorry to lose the services of such a talented person. We thank her warmly for her excellent contribution to the life and work of the wider Church.

Minister in Recognised Service

Rev Dr Robert Tosh reports:

1. I continue in my position as Chief Producer, Religious Programmes for BBC Northern Ireland. Our radio output of religious programmes is the highest of any BBC National region. Last year on BBC Radio Ulster, we transmitted over 360 hours of programmes of various types - worship, music (of all kinds), journalism and reflection. In addition we contributed almost 16 hours to BBC Network Radio.

2. Our local television output is much smaller and this is constantly under review but we continue to maintain a presence on Network Television, particularly in Songs of Praise.

3. The world of television is changing at a rate that is almost impossible to assimilate. The advent of a huge number of digital television channels means that viewing habits will of necessity change and there will be much more confusion. Similarly, there will be little place on many of these for anything approaching what we recognise as religious broadcasting. The BBC remains committed to the continuance of such broadcasting and I am always aware of the support and encouragement that is provided by management.

4. I am also aware of the support and contribution of a countless number of people in the Churches without whose co-operation, preparation and

willingness to share insights and opinions my job and that of my colleagues would be impossible.

5. In addition I continue as Convener in charge of the vacancy at Magheragall.

COMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Publications Department

1. Mrs Ruth McConnell retired shortly after the General Assembly in 1997 and, with the retirement of Ms Wright as well, their positions were modified and they were replaced by Miss Jennifer Halliday as Information Assistant and Miss Victoria Devenney as Design Assistant. The staff continues to handle well the steady flow of work, with the valued help of the PROP ladies in distribution of Points for Prayer booklets and update leaflets. The Department was involved in the production of 2020 Vision material, a new information pack about deaconesses, a handbook on vacancy procedures, the LIFE 2 Handbook and United Appeal material.

Information

2. Over the past year Mr Stephen Lynas has ensured good media coverage for our Church and has kept our Church membership informed via regular newsheets for ministers and congregations. He has contributed greatly to the promotion of a corporate image for the Church.

Herald

3. Under the sound editorial guidance of Rev Arthur Clarke and the imaginative design team led by Mr Ed Connolly, the Herald has maintained a high standard of content with attractive layout.

Video Unit

4. Due to the resignation of Miss Etta Halliday, a sub-committee of the Board reviewed the situation concerning the director's post and the Video Unit itself.

W J CARLISLE, Convener

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1. The Society has a wide range of interesting publications on historical subjects and further publications are presently in preparation. During the past year the following were published by the Society:

The Bulletin, 1995.

The Autobiography of William Hamilton, edited by Dr Eull Dunlop.

Ulster Biographies by W T Latimer; republished with a new introduction by Rev Dr W D Bailie.

2. As in the past, the Society's programme of events should appeal to a variety of historical interests. Our field of study in this programme is international. Included in its scope are overseas missions and the life of an American business magnate who was a Presbyterian of Ulster background. We are also considering the events of 1798 in Ireland and will study two twentieth century personalities: W F Marshall, an Ulster Presbyterian, and C S Lewis, an Ulster-born Anglican. We will also be considering our roots in the Celtic Church.

3. We have received a letter from Mr David Wright, Senior Lecturer in Ecclesiastical History at Edinburgh University, informing us of a plan to print the Complete Minutes of the Westminster Assembly. Having consulted with the Faculty of Union College and the Convener of the Incidental Fund, the Committee felt that a gesture towards the cost would be appropriate, in view of the honoured place which the Westminster Formularies hold in our Church. The Committee recommends a donation of £1,000.

4. We invite you to visit the Society's rooms in Church House (220) which are on the second floor and are open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10.00 am - 12.30 pm and Wednesday 10.00 am - 4.00 pm. Our Assistant Secretary, Mr Robert Bonar, will be pleased to assist you in whatever way he can.

5. We thank all those who have supported the Society during the past year. The Incidental Fund remains our main source of income. Therefore, we express our gratitude to the General Assembly for its generosity.

W J H McKEE, Convener

FAMILYBOOKS LTD

1. The year just passed has been one of consolidation and has allowed the commercial success of the business to reach a satisfactory high standard. With confidence growing for the future, more time can be diverted to the special needs of our customers and expansion of new and related products.

2. This happy and confident progress is the result of the efforts of a dedicated staff under the leadership of Mrs Betty Bell and the effort is worthy of your continued support.

CLIFFORD BOYD, Chairman

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE

1. Since our last report to the General Assembly, the Committee has met on five occasions.

2. Sixty-two submissions were considered during these meetings. Most were granted direct approval but several were returned to congregational

committees for further consideration. Some requests involved on-site visits and we express our appreciation of the hospitality and welcome accorded to Committee members on such occasions.

3. The work of the Committee is facilitated if its opinion is sought early in the process of planning a scheme.

4. The Committee acknowledges the help given by Miss Rosemary Jack as a voluntary advisor in stained-glass window design.

5. The Convener and a lay expert have represented the Church in the continuing work of the Ulster Historic Churches Trust.

6. In the past few years the Committee has dealt with a number of submissions which might not have become necessary had there been proper maintenance of buildings. Some manses have had to be demolished and large-scale works to church buildings undertaken because faults were not detected due to the lack of a programme of regular inspection of the buildings.

7. A programme of regular inspection, every three or six months, would reveal potential problems before their correction becomes expensive especially in buildings which are heated for a small proportion of time. Continuing maintenance is always cheaper in the long run.

8. The Committee has become increasingly concerned that some congregations have carried out minor works without advice or approval. In some cases these works have caused more long-term damage than could have been originally envisaged, often because of a decrease in ventilation within the church building.

9. The Committee would wish to alert congregational committees to the importance of proper care and maintenance of stained glass windows. In some cases, improper installation of storm or security secondary glazing has caused serious harm. It has been known for an enthusiastic parishioner to use a power washer to clean the exterior of the church windows, with disastrous results. The Ulster Historic Churches Trust is in the process of putting together an information leaflet on the care and maintenance of stained glass windows.

J T WILLIAMSON, Convener

MEDIA COMMITTEE

1. The Committee has sought to fulfil the new remit of the Assembly in a number of ways:

2. Religious advisers for TV and radio continue to have an important role, providing a Christian perspective for the media and are a positive resource for the Church in explaining and interpreting the rapid change currently affecting broadcasting.

3. The Committee is considering ways to monitor other forms of media not currently covered by the expertise of its membership and seeking to increase understanding of the wide range of issues affecting media in order to comment accurately and effectively.

4. The new 'Media Watch' column in the 'Herald' gives an opportunity to explain/interpret relevant issues to the Church.

5. Information on how to comment about broadcasting, press and advertising issues has also been covered in the 'Herald' and a draft leaflet for wider use is being considered.

6. Coverage of 'Presbyterian' events and productions involving Presbyterians in the media during the last year has been excellent. Of particular note is the coverage of 2020 Vision and Dr John Dunlop's 'Crossing the Borders' series repeated on UTV.

7. The Committee was pleased to note that BBC Northern Ireland has appointed Miss Noreen Erskine as religious affairs correspondent. This is a new post and reveals the importance attached to religious affairs.

R HILL, Convener

PUBLIC WORSHIP COMMITTEE

1. The General Assembly in 1997 resolved:

'That the General Assembly enthusiastically look at new ways to present hymns for our Church and authorise the General Board to appoint up to 10 persons, with specific expertise to offer, to work with and advise the Public Worship Committee, detailed progress to be reported to the next Assembly.'

2. On the recommendation of the Committee, the General Board approved the following persons: Revs Dr A W G Brown, J R Dickinson, M Spratt, N M Williamson; Mary Braithwaite, Chris Blake, Joan Cowle, O McAuley, Diane Petherick, Etta Halliday.

3. The Committee considered a new hymnal and the provision of hymns on CD Roms and it was decided that, at this stage, the Committee should concentrate on the compilation of suitable material.

4. Consequently, 4 sub-committees have been set up to compile a list of selected hymns from existing hymnals; to suggest suitable 'new' material; to consider children's/youth material and to look at psalmody, including contemporary and metrical psalms.

5. Representatives from the Oxford University Press, Kingsway Communications and Hodder and Stoughton were invited to meet the Committee and provided much valuable information as to how to proceed. Draft criteria were adopted and progress reports from the four sub-committees were presented. A fuller report will be made to the 1999 Assembly.

W T J RICHARDSON, Convener

MEMORIAL RECORD

The Rev Francis Montgomery Hay, BA, Senior Minister of Leckpatrick, died on 21 June, 1997, in the 82nd year of his age and the 56th of his ministry.

Born at Trimragh, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal on 4 November, 1915, he was educated initially in his native county, then at First Derry School, Magee

University College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, where in 1937 he graduated BA. He completed his theological studies at the Presbyterian College, Belfast.

Licensed by the Presbytery of Strabane on 21 November, 1939, he was ordained and installed on 4 September, 1941 in Leckpatrick where he was to spend his entire ministry of 40 years. He retired on 30 September, 1981.

Endowed with administrative ability, Mr Hay served as Clerk of the Synod of Derry and Omagh from 1959 to 1969, becoming its Moderator in 1971 and he was Clerk of the Strabane Presbytery from 1949 to 1985, fulfilling his duties faithfully and efficiently and combining with long experience and sound common sense a gift of friendship which many enjoyed and which was regularly used to bring encouragement and reassurance to a new or junior colleague.

His was of a retiring temperament; his preaching was well-informed, interesting and to the point and his gifts of leadership were exercised in the practical as well as the spiritual aspects of congregational life. But it was as a pastor that he excelled and as a pastor that he won the affection of a people whose needs as individuals and as a community he understood so well. His kindly concern for others was expressed also in service as a chaplain to Strabane Hospital.

He is survived by his widow, two sons and four daughters.

The Rev Howard Parke Cromie, BA, retired missionary to India, died on 9 August, 1997, in the 92nd year of his age and the 65th of his ministry.

A native of Rathfriland, he was educated at Banbridge Academy and Coleraine Academical Institution, graduating BA from Queen's University, Belfast, and completing his theological studies at Assembly's College.

He was licenced by the Presbytery of Rathfriland on 19 July, 1932 and in the same year, ordained as a missionary to India where he and his wife served together in Bhavnagar, Borsad, Cambay Anand, Surat, Ahmedabad and Dahad, retiring in 1970. Skilled in both the Gujarati and Hindi languages, Mr Cromie had a strong social conscience and a deep interest in people. He served on various local councils in India, was active in the development of farming methods, and became involved in local education. In retirement he was active in PACE and was a prison visitor.

Mr Cromie and his wife in latter years went to join their only daughter in New Zealand and it was there that he died. He is survived by them both.

The Rev Brian Hall Stewart Liddell, MA, Senior Minister of First Coleraine, died on 17 September, 1977, in the 80th year of his age, and the 50th of his ministry.

A native of Portadown, he was born on 11 February, 1918. He was educated at Portadown College and Magee University College, where he began to study for the ministry.

His studies were interrupted by a period of war service with the Royal Artillery. He served in the Middle East and North Africa and took part in the Allied invasion of Italy. He was wounded and for the remainder of his life bore the pain and inconvenience of his injury.

He subsequently completed his studies for the ministry at Assembly's College and graduated in Arts from Trinity College, Dublin. Licensed by the Presbytery of Dromore on 2 February, 1947, he was ordained in Sligo on 3 March, 1948 and remained there until 1951, when he received a call to First Coleraine.

His ministry there was informed by a keen theological mind and governed by a practical, generous nature. He had a gift for reaching out and touching the hearts of people of all ages and in many different situations. He retired from the active ministry on 30 September, 1983.

A loyal Churchman, he also played an active part in the life of the wider community. He identified with the work of education and served for a time as Chaplain to the New University of Ulster; his period of army service was reflected in his support of the Royal British Legion and he retained a life-long interest in sport.

He is survived by his widow, a son and three daughters.

The Rev Thomas Edward Lindsay, BA, Senior Minister of Cloughwater, died on 31 October, 1997, in the 69th year of his age and the 42nd of his ministry.

Born at Castlefin, Co. Donegal on 7 December, 1928, he received his early education at Castlefin National School and at the Prior School, Lifford. He later entered Magee College, Londonderry, graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin in 1952 and completed his theological studies at the Presbyterian College, Belfast.

Licensed in Donoughmore by the Presbytery of Raphoe on 20 June, 1954, he was ordained and installed in Cloughwater by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 15 March, 1956. It was there that he remained until ill-health brought premature retirement on 30 September, 1991.

Gracious and gentle in his approach, Mr Lindsay was deeply loved and held in high esteem by those to whom he ministered with compassion and understanding. He placed much importance upon the old values within a Church he cherished and in every area of his calling he reflected his devotion to his Lord. He served as Moderator of the Ballymena Presbytery in 1971.

He is survived by his widow and four sons.

The Rev John Monteith Barkley, MA, BD, PhD, DD, Professor Emeritus of Union Theological College, died on 20 December, 1997, in the 80th year of his age and the 63rd of his ministry.

A son of the Manse at Malin, Co Donegal, he was educated at Campbell College, Belfast and Magee University, Londonderry, continuing his education at the University of Dublin and the Presbyterian College, Belfast. He was licensed by the Derry Presbytery on 19 May, 1935 and ordained in Drumreagh by the Presbytery of Route on 24 September in the same year. He subsequently accepted a call from the congregations of 2nd Ballybay and Rockcorry, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Monaghan on 4 May, 1939, and where he remained for almost ten years. He accepted a call from Cooke Centenary and was installed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 1 February, 1949, where he served until, in June 1954, he was appointed by the General Assembly as Professor of

Church History and Symbolics at the Presbyterian College, becoming its Principal in 1976.

A man always of the wider Church and with a deep concern for Inter-Church Relations, Dr Barkley was committed to his own Presbyterian heritage, to his own subject and to his students, for whom his descent from the podium was often the signal for one of the many anecdotes, culled from experience, with which he punctuated his lectures. He played a major part in the negotiations which brought about the union between the two theological colleges.

A lecturer in Religious Education at Stranmillis Training College from 1955-1968, his spheres of service within the Church included Sunday School, Grammar School Education, the Doctrine Committee and Public Worship. He edited the Book of Public Worship produced in 1965 and his contribution to CH3, are representative of the many publications which bear testimony to his influence at home and abroad.

Moderator of the Synod of Armagh and Monaghan in 1947 and first Clerk of the newly-formed Presbytery of East Belfast, he served the wider Church as Chairman of the Commission on Ordination of the World Presbyterian Alliance and as Chairman of its British Churches' Committee.

Respected scholar, yet one who remained both human and humane, he delighted in company, conversation and a game of bowls. Retiring in 1981, he suffered a stroke some years later which curtailed his activities, but did nothing to lessen his interest in the business of the Church.

He is survived by his second wife, the former Miss Carrie Barnett, and by one daughter.

The Rev William George Moffett Martin, BA, Senior Minister of Second Dunboe, died on 8 January, 1998, in the 94th year of his age and the 68th of his ministry.

Mr Martin was born in Newry and educated at Methodist College and Queen's University. He was licensed by the Eastern Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church on 16 September, 1930, ministering first to the congregation of Hall Lane Reformed Presbyterian Church, Liverpool, where he was ordained on 26 November, 1930. He returned to Ireland, and to the Glenmanus Reformed Presbyterian Church at Portrush, where he served from 5 October, 1933 to 3 May, 1944. Received by the General Assembly, he was called to Berry Street, Belfast, and installed on 26 July, 1944 by the Presbytery of Belfast. He moved to First Carrickfergus, where he remained from November 1947 until July 1968. The closing years of his active ministry were spent in Second Dunboe, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Coleraine on 4 July, 1968, retiring on 31 July, 1974.

Mr Martin served on the General Assembly's Doctrine Committee, was Moderator of the Synod of Belfast in 1960, and contributed to the New Bible Commentary. A wise pastor and a man of spiritual stature, he served God quietly and faithfully.

He is survived by his family, one daughter and three sons.

The Rev Thomas John Stinson, MA, Senior Minister of First Limavady, died on 28 January, 1998, in the 88th year of his age and the 53rd of his ministry.

A native of County Down, where he received his early schooling, he later began a period of further education which took him via Magee College, Londonderry to Trinity College, Dublin and Assembly's College, Belfast.

Licensed by the Presbytery of Comber on 14 November, 1943, he was ordained on 1 November, 1945, as minister of First Limavady, where he remained until retirement on having completed 35 years, on 31 October, 1980.

Under his leadership the congregation flourished, its growth reflected in the extension both of property and of organisational activity.

Held in high esteem by his own congregation, Mr Stinson served also as Moderator of the Foyle Presbytery, was chaplain to the Roe Valley Hospital and, for some years, was a member of Limavady District Council.

He took a keen interest in sport and gardening.

He is survived by his widow and two daughters.

The Rev Norman Meyer Heaney, MA, Senior Minister of Glastry, died on 29 January 1998, in the 90th year of his age and the 49th of his ministry.

Born in Dublin, his father was a Qua Iboe missionary who later became Home Mission Agent for the Presbyterian Church of Canada. After his death the family settled in Belfast. Educated at Belfast Model School and the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, he completed his training at Trinity College, Dublin and the Presbyterian College, Belfast.

Licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 18 May, 1938, he received a call to First Islandmagee, where he was ordained by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus on 10 May, 1939 and where he ministered in the years of the second World War to a community which included many merchant seamen on which war took a heavy toll.

A call to Newington congregation, Belfast, in 1944 brought him to a people whose premises had suffered in the blitz, and where he set about the provision of a new Church and the encouragement of a new spiritual growth which resulted twenty years later in a congregation of some 900 families.

In 1964 the setting for Mr. Heaney's ministry changed from a city's streets to a rural area of County Down with a call to the congregation of Glastry, where he remained for twelve years until retirement on 31 December, 1976.

In a long and fruitful life he exercised a diligent and faithful ministry in which he expressed an interest also in Divine Healing, particularly within the Synod of Belfast.

Predeceased by his wife, he is survived by a daughter, Joyce.

The Rev Alfred Wesley Williamson, BA, BD, Senior Minister of Nelson Memorial, Belfast, died on 25 February, 1998, in the 76th year of his age and the 39th of his ministry.

Born in Belfast, early education at Springfield Primary School was followed up at Belfast Technical College and he found employment with Harland and Wolff. On committing his life to Christ he enrolled in Emmanuel Bible College and spent a year at the Missionary School of Medicine in London.

Mr Williamson emigrated to Canada and began to study in Montreal, first at Sir George Williams University, from which he graduated BA and then at the Presbyterian College there, gaining his degree in Divinity. On 20 May, 1959 he

was ordained in St Mark's, Bass River, Canada, and served also in the succeeding years in St Luke's, Finch, Ontario and Stellarton, Nova Scotia. In 1967 a call from the congregations of Athy and Carlow brought him back to Ireland. He ministered, subsequently, in Killaig and Crossgar and in Nelson Memorial. He retired on 30 September, 1989.

Faithfulness in preaching was matched by a commitment to visitation. His concern for others and his sympathetic understanding were expressed also in the field of chaplaincy in Port Laoise prison and, for more than twenty years, in Belfast City Hospital where he won deep respect for his pastoral care.

He is survived by his widow, a son and two daughters.

The Rev James Thompson Turtle, BA, Senior Minister of Second Ballybay and Rockcorry, died on 26th February, 1998, in the 80th year of his age and the 49th of his ministry.

Born near Ballymena on 11 June, 1919, he attended Ballymena Academy and went on to further education at Magee University College, Trinity College, Dublin, and Assembly's College, Belfast.

An accomplished linguist, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 23 January, 1949; and on 28 April that year, was ordained in Second Ballybay and Rockcorry where he was to spend his entire ministry. He retired on 30 September, 1986. He was Moderator of both the Synod of Armagh and Monaghan and the Synod of Dublin and served as convener of the Manpower Committee of the General Assembly.

A thoughtful preacher and a diligent pastor, particularly to the sick, the aged and the bereaved, he identified closely with community affairs throughout a long and effective ministry. A promoter of the Credit Union organisation, the respect in which he was held locally was demonstrated in his appointment as first chairman of the Ballybay branch. He was a tireless worker on behalf of Monaghan General Hospital, where he served as chaplain from 1960 until his death.

He is survived by his widow and a family of nine.

REPORT BY THE CHURCH HYMNARY TRUSTEES

TO

The General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church of Wales and the United Free Church of Scotland in respect of the year ending 31 December, 1997.

CHURCH HYMNARY THIRD EDITION

1. As is anticipated with the prospect of the bringing out of a new edition of the Hymnary, the sales of the existing Hymnaries continued to decline. However, as in the previous year, the rate of decline is not as great as might have been anticipated and a total of 14,606 copies of the Hymnary in its various forms were sold producing a royalty of £5,634.44, compared with

16,228 copies and a royalty of £5,722.50 in 1996. The decline is expected to continue.

REVISED CHURCH HYMNARY

2. Following the instruction to produce a reprint of the words edition of the Revised Church Hymnary, this duly took place. 7,340 copies were sold during the year, producing a royalty of £2,192.

SCOTTISH PSALTER 1929

3. In total, 1,329 copies of the Scottish Psalter were sold, bound in the various editions of the Hymn Book, in the year 1997. This is a very similar figure to the previous year which was 1,385 copies.

IRISH PSALTER

4. The sales of the Irish Psalter increased to a total of 9,720 copies compared with the 1996 figure of 3,715.

STATE OF FUNDS

5. The Trustees are confident that they have sufficient funds to meet the costs of the publication of the Fourth Edition of the Hymnary.

POSITION OF CHURCH HYMNARY THIRD EDITION ON THE PUBLICATION OF THE NEW HYMNARY

6. The Trustees have received advice that it would be desirable that, on the publication of the new Hymnary, the Third Edition of the Hymnary would cease to be available. The Trustees consider that further consultation and debate on the subject is required so that the Churches can come to a view on the matter.

G W PENROSE, Chairman
JOHN M HODGE, Secretary and Treasurer

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly note with appreciation the work of all the staff in the Communications Department and commend to the Church's prayers and support the work of the Information Officer and the editor of the Presbyterian Herald.

Communications Administration

3. That the General Assembly express appreciation to those Boards and Agencies of the Church which involve the Communications Department in the design and production of materials and remind the Church that such expertise is available within the Department.

4. That the General Assembly congratulate the Board of Directors and staff of Familybooks Ltd on the sustained success of the bookshop and encourage the wider use of the Mobile Book Staff service.

Public Worship

5. That a copy of the book of Public Worship and Experimental Revision be presented to first year students at Union College.

6. That a Praise Grant of £50 be made to every congregation of not more than 10 families.

7. That a grant of £800 be paid from the Incidental Fund to the Public Worship Committee.

8. That the Public Worship Committee proceed towards the compilation of a new hymnbook and continue to take advice as to how it might be expandable with supplementary loose leaves, CD Roms, or other methods of presentation, and report to the 1999 Assembly.

9. That the Public Worship Committee be authorised to draw up a draft list of items of praise to be included in the proposed new Hymnbook/CD Rom and to send this down to Presbyteries for comment, such comments to be returned to the Convener of the Public Worship Committee by 31 December, 1998.

Historical Society

10. That a grant of £13,700 be paid to the Presbyterian Historical Society from the Incidental Fund.

11. That a donation of £1,000 be given toward the cost of printing the Minutes of the Westminster Assembly, as a charge on the Incidental Fund.

Church Architecture

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

General

13. That the Board of Communications, with its associated working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 227 of the Code as follows:

NOMINATION BOARD

Convener: THE ACTING CLERK

1. The 1997 General Assembly authorised the General Board to instruct the Nomination Board to bring a nomination or nominations to the General Assembly for the post of Principal of Union Theological College (Mins 1997 p56).

2. Specialists were appointed to the Nomination Board under the relevant provision of the Code as follows:

General Board	Rev S J Campbell Rev Dr D J Watts
Board of Studies	Very Rev Dr A W G Brown Very Rev Dr A R Rodgers

3. In accordance with the decision of the 1980 Assembly, the Acting Clerk reported that he had received a letter from the Faculty of the College which stated that the Faculty had recommended Rev Prof J C McCullough.

4. It was agreed that the Nomination Board recommend the Rev Prof J C McCullough to the General Assembly for appointment as Principal of Union Theological College for the period 1998-2003.

5. The Board also considered the decision of the 1997 Assembly (Mins 1997 p74) which empowered the General Board to act, if necessary, for the General Assembly in

- (i) approving a new job description for the post of Adviser in Social Service;
- (ii) asking the Nomination Board to submit a nomination or nominations;
- (iii) making the appointment.

6. Specialists added to the Board for this nomination under the relevant provision of the Code were as follows:

General Board	Mr. R D T Gibson
Board of Social Witness	Rev J M Cathcart Rev T J McCormick
Board of Finance and Administration	Mr C Robinson

7. The Board examined the job description and noted the new job title of Director of Social Service and Secretary to the Board of Social Witness.

8. The Board appointed a Specialist Committee to short-list applicants, as necessary, approve a topic for a verbal presentation to the Board and draft questions for interview.

9. Prof David Bamford was invited to act as assessor.

10. The post was advertised in the magazines of the Church and two applications were received by the closing date, which were considered by the short-listing sub-committee and both applicants invited for interview.

11. After the interviews the Board voted on the candidates. In accordance with the Code Par 276 (3), Mr. Norman J. Chambers was declared the nominee of the Board but the name of Mrs. Lorraine Girvan, who had received one-third of the votes cast, was also forwarded to the General Board.

12. A copy of the successful candidate's application is appended.

APPENDIX 1

APPLICATION FOR DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICE AND
SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

FROM: Mr N J Chambers, 7 Princess Park, Whitehead, Carrickfergus,
BT38 9QY.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name	Norman James Chambers
Address	7 Princess Park, Whitehead, Carrickfergus, BT38 9QY
Date of Birth	28 January 1944
Marital Status	Married to Miriam, with three daughters Rhonda 29, Deirdre 27, Gwyneth 24.
Career	In March 1996 I took early retirement. Since leaving the Social Services Inspectorate I have been engaged in a consultancy capacity by a number of institutions. These include the Department of Social Work, Queen's University Belfast; the Centre for Voluntary Action Studies, University of Ulster; the Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency and the Board of Social Witness.
April 1997-Present	Acting Adviser in Social Service - Board of Social Witness. During the last 9 months I have carried out the duties associated with this post and have assisted the Board in reviewing its management and organisational structure. I have also undertaken strategic reviews of: Alcohol and Drug Education PCI Enterprises Dolebusters Limited, Dublin.
April 96-January 97	Acting Chief Executive - Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency. This is a new Agency established under the Children Order (NI) 1995 and provides independent professional advice to the courts in all public care and adoption proceedings. I was engaged by the Agency pending the appointment of its first Chief Executive to set up the Agency in time for the commencement of the Children Order in November 1996. This was a demanding exercise which had to be completed within an extremely tight timescale. An organisational structure was agreed, premises were procured and adapted and the Chief Executive and Guardians were appointed and trained. I wrote all necessary policies and procedures and prepared the Agency's first Business Plan.

- April 82-March 96 **Employed by the Social Services Inspectorate of the Department of Health and Social Services.** My main responsibilities were in the Child Care and Mental Handicap fields. SSI provides professional social work advice to the DHSS and other government departments, and inspects services provided by Health and Social Services Trusts and voluntary bodies.
Between 1991 and 1996 I was the Assistant Chief Inspector responsible for advising on all aspects of child care services in the statutory and voluntary sectors in Northern Ireland.
In 1992 I led the investigation into the case of Martin Huston. The report of that investigation, 'An Abuse of Trust', recommended, inter alia, that voluntary bodies, including Churches, produce child protection guidelines for their staff and volunteers.
I was directly involved, over a period of years, in the preparatory work leading to the introduction of the Children Order (NI) 1995.
Throughout my service with SSI, I worked with senior staff in Health and Social Service Boards and Trusts and with a range of voluntary bodies.
- April 74-March 82 **Divisional Director of Child Care - Barnardos.** I was responsible for Barnardos' work in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland and was a member of a senior management team based in London.
- 1968-1974 **Divisional Welfare Officer - Antrim County Welfare Committee**
- Education and Professional Training Educated at Grosvenor High School, Belfast.
1966 Certificate in Social Work, Liverpool College of Commerce. (This is a professional qualification in social work and equates to CQSW).
1985 Master of Science, in Social Policy, Planning and Administration, University of Ulster.
Over the years, I have attended courses in accountancy, management training, public administration and a wide range of short courses in the various aspects of social work.
- Church For approximately 8 years I have been a communicant member of Whitehead Presbyterian Church. I am a member of the Congregational Committee and am Sunday School Superintendent. I have been actively involved in arranging services aimed at families and young people.
- Interests I continue to participate in sporting activities, particularly sailing and golf.

WHY I AM APPLYING FOR THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICE

I am interested in working within a context where professional social work and Christian values are coherently expressed. The Board of Social Witness, through its social witness centres, demonstrates Christian social action in areas which are particularly challenging to society (alcohol and drug addiction, ex-prisoners and sex-offenders, long-term unemployment, care of the elderly).

There are many examples of local congregations engaging in social witness as part of their ministry, using both their own resources and external funding. The Church is not, however, generally convinced that social action is its business or that work in the community is both consistent with its ministry and a vital means of contact with the unchurched. There is a major task to be done in assisting churches which are interested in extending their ministries and I would wish to support the development of such strategies.

My recent involvement at local church level of selecting a new minister and gradually introducing change is relevant in the context of trying to broaden the Church's sense of mission into the community. Personally I believe in persuasion by example and demonstration, rather than by rhetoric and debate. I would be pleased to be associated with those who are broadening the ministry of the Church to those who are in need.

Over the last 9 months I have been impressed by the quality of the work undertaken by social witness centres and the Presbyterian Residential Trust, particularly by the calibre and commitment of many of the staff. This work is highly regarded by statutory authorities and is both a powerful witness to the community and an effective demonstration of the Church's ability to work in partnership with others. I am happy to be identified with this activity and for this reason am applying for the post of Director of Social Service.

The Board of Social Witness is a large 'business', employing over 250 staff. It is required to comply with contractual agreements with a range of purchasers within the statutory sector and to fulfil statutory obligations. As such, it must be run efficiently and be seen to be effective in the way it provides services. It must be financially viable.

I believe that my breadth of professional experience at central government level, within mainstream social services and as a manager within a large national voluntary body equips me for the post of Director of Social Service.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly appoint the Rev Prof J C McCullough as Principal of Union Theological College from 1 October, 1998 for a period of five years.
3. That the Nomination Board be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 276 of the Code as follows:

INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS BOARD

Convener: Rev R HERRON

1. The Board met on two occasions during the last year. All items of business are included in Committee reports.

Ministers in Recognised Service

Rev David Campbell reports:

1. The highlight of the past year was a visit to the Bible Society of India. I spent some time with the Bombay Auxiliary where I had the opportunity to see the work of Bible distribution in the Dhani slum in Bombay as well as in the Red Light district of the city. I visited the Gujarat Auxiliary in Ahmadabad where the influence of Irish Presbyterian missionaries was very evident. The final stage of my trip took in a visit of the Bible Society of India and the new Bible Centre built in memory of William Carey, the founder of missionary work in India.

2. The Bible Society in Northern Ireland has donated £30,000 to build a Bible Distribution Centre in South Gujarat.

Rev Andrew Gibson reports:

1. Life at Belfast Bible College continues to be both fulfilling and frustrating. It is fulfilling because of the nature of the work, preparing young people for service overseas and at home; equipping people of all ages to return to everyday life better equipped to serve the Lord and enriching the lives of those who spend two or three hours a week at evening classes. On the other hand, frustration comes because there is so much work to be done, so many people to work with yet so little time.

2. As I think about my more direct contribution to the life of the Church, two events have been particularly satisfying. The first was a four week course organised by congregations in the Omagh area at which over one hundred people came together to think about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Although a wide range of opinions was represented, there was an atmosphere and openness which was most encouraging. Recently, I contributed to a Mission support evening for Congregational Mission Committees in the Ards Presbytery. Over fifty people attended and all went away with new ideas and new encouragement.

3. I look forward to continuing my service at Belfast Bible College in the coming year.

Rev Desmond Maxwell reports:

1. Belfast Bible College continues to grow in terms of the number of students and diversity of courses. Teaching continues to be a joy as well as a job for me. Classes range in content from elementary Hebrew to Hermeneutics, Old

Testament through New Testament history and, in level, from internal three month diplomas through to external three year Queen's degrees.

2. Earlier this year I was able to teach an intensive course at the Biblijne Seminarium Teologiczne in Wroclaw, Poland. I continue to maintain close links with the Ukrainian Bible Training Centres and, as ever, enjoy the support of Elmwood Congregation.

Rev David McCarthy reports:

1. In the past year the work of the Evangelical Alliance in Northern Ireland has focused on four main areas:

- (a) challenging the fear that leads to competitiveness, rivalry and tribalism within society and Church in Northern Ireland;
- (b) helping the Church realise and use its potential, especially in the area of mission;
- (c) helping evangelicals engage with their local community in the area of social action;
- (d) highlighting the profound change which is taking place in our society and the implications of this for evangelism and discipling.

2. Much of the Evangelical Alliance's activity is as a catalyst and facilitator and as such it seeks to promote evangelical unity and truth and present the evangelical concerns to the wider world.

Rev Ruth Patterson reports:

1. As always in this ministry of healing and reconciliation there are challenges and encouragements. Some of these have been:

the visit of Jean Vanier in June 1997;

a new course on 'Restoring Hospitality' drawing large numbers from all sections of the community;

'A Hand of Friendship' launched in March 1998 - using the 200th anniversary of 1798 in a positive apolitical way, encouraging Presbyterians and Catholics to re-find a friendship that existed in times of adversity. We suggest that people invite someone from the other tradition into their home for a simple meal - in an act of friendship;

the interest in and the hunger for the message of healing (at every level) as I travel around Ireland;

visitors from Ireland and overseas. Many of them now join with us daily at 12 noon in prayer for peace. We would be grateful if all member of the PCI would do the same - and pray for us.

IRISH CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Irish Council of Churches

1. The autumn gathering took place in Cooke Centenary Church on 23 September, 1997. Mr Maurice Ryan gave an informative talk on Religious and Ethnic minorities in Ireland.

2. Seventh Day Adventists have been admitted to the ICC as observers. It was the unanimous recommendation of the Executive Committee that Life Link, the network of Christian Fellowship Churches, be admitted to ICC. This is to be confirmed at the AGM. Life Link has ten separate congregations and a total membership of approximately 2,500 people. Next year's President of the ICC is Rev Edmund Mawhinney and the Vice President is Rev Dr Ian Ellis.

3. The AGM is to be held at Dromantine, Newry, on 27 and 28 March 1998. This is the 75th Anniversary of the Council. There will be a lecture entitled "Seeing things differently, recovering ecumenical vision in a post ecumenical age". The speaker is Dr. John de Gruchy, Professor of Christian Ethics in Capetown University, South Africa.

The Irish Inter-Church Meeting.

4. The Meeting convened in Emmaus Conference Centre, Swords, Co Dublin on 7 and 8 November, 1997. Topics covered included: Church renewal and the new millennium, a report from the Department of Social Issues, reflections on the Second European Assembly held in Graz and a discussion on "Freedom, Justice and Responsibility in Ireland Today." Good contributions and lively discussion marked the meeting.

5. A pamphlet has been prepared with guidelines and a list of scripture readings for baptisms and marriages for inter-church couples. The Irish Missionary Union and World Mission Committee of ICC held a joint study day. The theme, was 'The Churches' Mission; Unity of Purpose - Variety of Approaches'. Discussions have taken place on appropriate celebrations of the Millennium.

6. The Department of Social Issues is looking at racial justice in the context of the increase in political refugees in the Republic. The Department of Theological Questions has been asked to look at the question of inter-communication and to prepare a statement on different Church practices based on doctrinal positions and developments and assess the implications for ecumenism. Work will also be carried out on a project entitled 'Into the Unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit,' which has the sub-title 'Christ and the Church Today.'

7. 1998 is the 25th Anniversary of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. Rev Dr Ian Ellis and Fr Michael Hurley SJ have been asked to write essays reflecting on the history of IICM. In September there will be a lecture in Ballymascanlon to mark the occasion.

Review of IICM and ICC

8. While the Irish Council of Churches and Irish Inter-Church Meeting have serviced the Churches well in the past, the time has come to consider some rationalisation of inter-church structures in Ireland. In recent years much of the work of the ICC and the IICM has been overlapping with consequent waste in time and financial resources. The IICM agenda has been expanding and the ICC's has been contracting. The proposed changes, contained in the appended Review documents, will save time and finance and allow us to become more focused and task orientated. Members of Assembly are invited to read the

reviews carefully and to forward any comments to the Convener of the Board before the 30 September, 1998. If agreement can be reached, proposed changes would come before the General Assembly for decision in June 1999.

Invitations to the Opening Night of the General Assembly

9. The Committee received responses from Presbyteries concerning invitations to other Churches to the Opening Night of the General Assembly. It was agreed that a tabulated sheet of Presbytery responses be sent to the Business Board without additional comment.

Peace Making Initiatives

10. Since 2020 Vision the Convener has been involved in networking with other Churches, Evangelical Alliance and ECONI in peace-making initiatives. The committee has been discussing how the current political and security situation affects inter-church relationships.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity & Evangelical Alliance World Prayer Week

11. Week of prayer for Christian Unity literature is made available direct from the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. Evangelical Alliance World Prayer Week leaflets can be received direct through Evangelical Alliance.

TONY DAVIDSON, Convener

APPENDIX

INTER-CHURCH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met in January, 1998. The members of the Committee are:

Church of Ireland	Methodist	Presbyterian
The Bishop of Limerick (Chairman)	Rev P Kingston	Rev A D Davidson
Rev I J E Knox	Rev T M Kingston	Rev R Herron
Ven GA McCamley	Rev E T I Mawhinney	Mrs E Cobain
	Mrs H O'Neill	Rev R F S Poots

2. The Committee noted the resignation of the Rev F W Vincent from St Patrick's Waterford to take up the position of Chaplain to the Northern Ireland Hospice. In keeping with the rules of the Alternating Ministries' Scheme, the charge was offered to the Methodist Church which accepted responsibility for the filling of the vacancy.

Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford

3. The Rev S G Anketell presented an encouraging report on the Alternating Scheme at Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford.

4. This Scheme began in 1977 and Mr Anketell is the second Presbyterian minister. Gorey is exclusively Methodist and is governed by a

Quarterly Board Meeting, whereas the other congregations are predominantly Presbyterian and have Kirk Sessions. The three congregations are represented on a Central Committee which operates harmoniously. A token of the cordial relationship which exist was the Covenant Service in Gorey for which all three congregations united. A united Bible Study in Enniscorthy is attended by about 20 people some of whom come from the Roman Catholic community and a well attended Praise Service in Gorey, held on the 5th Sunday of every five Sundays month, attracts members of all three congregations as well as worshippers from all sections of the local community.

5. All three congregations now have a worship service, conducted by the minister, each week and all have seen an increase in the number of families which, though numerically small, can represent a 25% growth in membership.

6. Although difficulties exist, such as the distances between families and the problem of organising youth work in an area where many pupils attend boarding schools, this Scheme offers exciting opportunities for ministry.

RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. Race relations issues in Ireland and the need for greater awareness and action on the part of both government and our own Church members have been the primary concerns of the Committee this year.

2. The Committee welcomes the fact that Race Relations legislation for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Commission for Racial Equality have both become operational during the past year. We wish to congratulate Ms Fee Ching Leong, a member of the Committee, who has been appointed as one of the Commissioners. This legislation and a statutory body responsible for monitoring it are both vital. However, educating the majority population about the existence and needs of ethnic minorities in Ireland and fostering positive attitudes towards those of other racial backgrounds requires a significant commitment from others including the Churches. Therefore, the Committee urges congregations to include this concern in their prayers and programmes of Christian education with all age groupings.

3. The Committee brings a resolution through the Board to continue support for the work of the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre located at 12 Upper Crescent, Belfast. MCRC promotes awareness of ethnic communities in Northern Ireland, provides anti-racism training, a reference library, an interpreting/translating service and a quarterly newsletter. The Committee welcomes, in particular, the appointment of Miss Elma Harkness, who previously served in Malawi through the Overseas Board, to the Ethnic Minority Health Liaison Project operated by MCRC. This project seeks to improve the quality of minority ethnic communities by working in partnership with these communities and health-care professionals.

4. Recognising the particular needs of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland who are refugees and asylum seekers, the Committee brings a resolution to provide a small amount of funding to both the Churches' Commission For Racial Justice and the Irish Refugee Council, to be used to assist those without access to benefits, while appealing their cases.

5. Finally, the Committee continues to be concerned about the development of positive race relations in South Africa. To that end, the Committee brings a resolution to continue support for the Leadership Exposure Programme of the Diakonia Council of Churches in Durban, South Africa, which takes clergy and lay leaders from member Churches to settlements, hostels for migrant workers, township schools and rural areas to become better informed about the conditions under which many are living and to motivate the wider church to work for structural changes required for positive relations and healthy development.

DOUG BAKER, Convener

WORLD CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. During the past year the Committee has played a part in the activities of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Leuenberg Church Fellowship (LCF). The Committee has also been developing our relationships with the Church of Scotland (CofS) and the United Reformed Church (URC).

Second European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA2)

2. Four PCI delegates attended EEA2 in June, 1997 at Graz in Austria under the theme 'Reconciliation: Gift of God and Source of New Life'. The delegation included the Moderator, Dr Samuel Hutchinson. Dr John Dunlop contributed to one of the seminars, which concentrated on the work of 'Reconciliation in Ireland'. During the Assembly, tensions were apparent between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church in Europe.

3. EEA2 was the largest Christian assembly to be held in Europe with over 600 delegates and 12,000 participants. The climax of the event was the open-air service, attended by over 20,000 people, in a large park in the centre of Graz, which was broadcast live on television. A follow-up meeting of Irish delegates was held at Mount Oliver, near Dundalk, in September. Issues arising out of the follow-up will be the responsibility of the Irish Church Relations' Committee.

Conference of European Churches

4. Four PCI delegates attended the 11th Assembly of CEC, which was also held in Graz, following on immediately after EEA2 under the same theme. The Assembly did its work in plenary sessions supplemented by smaller sections and committees. Miss Ann Taylor was appointed to the Policy Reference Committee, which had the task of deciding on the priorities of CEC over the next 6 years. The CEC Assembly was much smaller than EEA2 and had a much lower profile. However, much solid work was accomplished in the five days of the Assembly.

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

5. Four PCI delegates attended the 23rd General Council of WARC last August under the theme 'Breaking the Chains of Injustice'. The General Council explored its theme through the use of three study documents which examined:

- (i) the Reformed Faith and the search of unity;
- (ii) justice for all creation;
- (iii) partnership in God's mission.

6. The subject of the environment featured prominently in the Assembly concentrating around the argument that Christians need to understand that caring for the earth is not just a matter of being good global citizens but it is also a biblical imperative. Climate change was also considered.

7. Rev Richard Graham (PCI delegate) returned home with the view, "The Presbyterian Church in Ireland may be tiny compared to some other Reformed Churches in the world today. But we are known as a Church with a caring and missionary heart which down through the years has nurtured, supported, helped and encouraged other members of the Reformed family as we seek to do the Father's will and see His Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven".

8. The Rev John Kirkpatrick attended the WARC European Area Committee in May, 1997. He has been elected to a small working group dealing with evangelism in Europe.

United Reformed Church

9. The Convener attended the URC Assembly at Portsmouth, in July, as a voting delegate. The Rev Gabriel Ellis attended two meetings of the Ecumenical Committee at Yardley, Hastings in September and January. At both meetings Miss Ellis had the opportunity to bring the Committee up-to-date with the developments in the Peace Process in Northern Ireland and also share some of the highlights of the 2020 Vision Assembly.

Leuvenberg Church Fellowship

10. Professor Cecil McCullough attended the LCF Executive in Prague last November. Discussions included the proposed joint statement by Lutherans and Roman Catholics on justification by faith and the launch of a journal 'Europa Reformata' which would be of use to Protestants in position of leadership.

Church of Scotland

11. The idea of summer pulpit exchanges has been pursued in recent months. Some PCI ministers hope to exchange with C of S ministers this summer.

General

12. The Convener had the opportunity to preach in St. Andrew's Church of Scotland, Valetta, Malta in June 1997 and convey greetings from the Inter-Church Relations Board. St. Andrew's is a member of the Presbytery of Europe.

DAVID CAMPBELL, Convener

WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. The World Development Committee has three functions:
 - (a) to raise money for development projects;
 - (b) to educate our members on development issues;
 - (c) to speak up on behalf of the people who cannot speak for themselves.

2. The majority in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland would rank the importance of these in that order. Most in the Two-Thirds World would rank them in reverse order. They say that first and foremost we need to speak up for those who are powerless and cannot change their lives for the better because of the injustice of current trading and financial structures that make and keep them poor. We also need to raise awareness of development issues in this country.

3. 1998 sees the end of our three year campaign 'Building Communities'. During the campaign we have raised well over £1 million. It is, however, sad to note that approximately 150 congregations do not contribute to the World Development Appeal. In some Presbyteries more than one half do not contribute.

4. In the last year we have tried to fulfil our education and advocacy role as well as raise money principally by means of the annual appeal.

5. A group of four young people, who funded themselves, went to India to see development funded by both Christian Aid and Tear Fund. They were led by Mr Mark Gray, the assistant minister in Gilnahirk, one of our former missionaries in Malawi. They had a wide exposure to different types of projects - rural and urban, which addressed the differing problems faced by the very poor. Since their return they have been available for deputation work and have talked with knowledge and conviction. The Committee hopes to repeat the exercise, perhaps every two years, being convinced that the first-hand experience of seeing development work not only changes the attitude and lives of the people who go, but also, through them, the attitude of many within the Church. Such possibilities of 'exposure visits' should not only be restricted to the young.

6. Our advocacy role is being pursued in a 'Fair Food' campaign which breaks new ground as it involves not only ourselves but the Methodist and Church of Ireland Churches as well as Christian Aid and Tear Fund on an all-Ireland basis. The campaign is designed to persuade supermarket chains to adopt a code of practice on the treatment of workers in the Two-Thirds World, which is externally verifiable. At the heart of the campaign is the demand that we do justly. It is wrong that we eat food that has been produced by workers in the Two-Thirds World who themselves cannot feed their own families properly. The campaign seeks to get members of our congregations to save till-roll receipts and then present them to supermarket managers with the request for information as to whether or not the group has adopted or is adopting the code of practice. It is planned to run this campaign until the end of June.

7. In September we are going to be joining with all the other main Churches in Great Britain and Ireland in supporting the Jubilee 2000 campaign which focuses on the reduction of debt, in particular, of the eight most indebted countries. Details of how we will be supporting the campaign will be available at a later date.

8. While development has at its core the call to justice, justice is not just good deeds but response to God's image in others. We are all made equally in the image of God. Within Judaism there is no concept of charity as we understand it. World development is not about charity, it is the practice and advocacy of justice where we in our giving and living demand a fair deal for the oppressed.

ROGER PURCE, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the report be received.

World Development

2. That the General Assembly affirm the need to teach world development as an integral part of a Christian response to injustice in the relationship between the industrialised North and the Third World.

3. That the General Assembly encourage congregations to distribute the World Development Appeal materials to every contributing family.

Irish Church Relations

4. That the following appointments be made:

To the Irish Council of Churches - Revs W T Bingham, S J Campbell, J M Cathcart; Mrs P Crossley; Revs A D Davidson, G A J Ellis; Miss D Gilmour; Revs Dr R J G Gray, R Herron, Dr S Hutchinson; Mrs M Irwin; Revs J G Johnston, D Mark, C D McClure, A N Other; Miss C McRoberts; Rev D Nesbitt; Mr J A Patterson; Mrs E Sheppard; Mr D Whitcroft.

To the Irish Inter-Church Meeting - Revs J M Cathcart, A D Davidson, Dr J Dunlop, R Herron, Dr S Hutchinson; Mrs M Irwin; Revs Dr T W J Morrow, Dr J C McCullough.

To the Irish Inter-Church Committee - Revs A D Davidson, R Herron.

General

5. That the following grants be made from the Incidental Fund:

Irish Council of Churches	£25,600
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	£4,000
Conference of European Churches	£3,105
Leuenberg Consultation	£500
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	£7,876
World Alliance of Reformed Churches Partnership Fund	£787
Race Relations Grant:	
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre, Bryson House, Belfast	£750
Diakonia Council of Churches	£1,500
Churches Council for Racial Justice	£375
Irish Refugee Council	£375
General Work of the Board	£5,000

6. That the Inter-Church Relations Board, with its associated working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 278 of the Code as follows:

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF THE IRISH INTER-CHURCH MEETING

REPORT OF THE REVIEW GROUP

1. Introduction

The Review Group was set up by the Irish Inter-Church Committee at its meeting in September 1996. It had its first meeting in November 1996 and its final meeting in November 1997. In all there were 7 meetings. Membership was Most Rev G Clifford, Mr A Connolly, Rt Rev Monsignor P Devine, Most Rev A Farquhar, Rev Dr I Ellis, Pastor P G Fritz (replaced by Major G Blurton), Rev R Herron, Rev E Hewitt; Joint Secretaries: Rev Dr T Norris, Dr R D Stevens.

The task of the Review Group was to carry out a review of the IICM: its basis of membership, composition, constitution, legal structure, finances, staffing, activities and methods of working; and to make recommendations. It was recognised that the implementation of significant changes would require the approval of the member churches.

2. Background

2.1 The Irish Inter-Church Meeting

The first historic meeting between the member churches of the Irish Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church took place in 1973. Subsequent meetings have been held at roughly eighteen months to two year intervals. In the early period the only continuing structure was a Steering Committee to organise the meetings. There was a reorganisation in the mid-1980s which created the Irish Inter-Church Committee (IICC) and the Departments of Social Issues and Theological Questions. In September 1992 Sister Roisin Hannaway was appointed part-time Administrative Officer with the Irish Council of Churches acting as an employing body.

Since the mid-1980s the IICM has developed a significant agenda. This has included: representation to government and other bodies; the production of reports and documents; the organisation of events; the organisation of visits to and from the former Soviet Union, and to the Middle East; and the hosting of visits from the British Churches, the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Catholic Bishops' Conferences (CCEE). All of this has meant that the IICM has been developing its representative capacity in such a way that it increasingly becomes the body in Ireland that Councils of Churches (particularly those with Roman Catholic participation) and international church bodies relate to. Appendix 1 gives a background to the work of the IICM as it has developed since 1973.

The IICM has proved to be a flexible instrument capable of development. However, it has no proper constitution or legal basis and, therefore, cannot employ staff or get the full tax benefit of being a charity.

2.2 The Irish Council of Churches

The ICC has been in existence since 1922 as a forum for the larger and some of the smaller Protestant Churches. Since the late 1960s one of its major roles has been promoting relationships between its member churches and the Roman Catholic Church. It has been the main servicing agent as this relationship has developed.

As inter-church relations have progressed many more issues can and need to be dealt with on a more representative basis and not just on an intra-Protestant basis within the ICC. The IICM agenda has been expanding and the ICC's has been contracting. Because of these developments the ICC has been considering what its future role should be within the context of what inter-church structures are now appropriate in Ireland. It was the Council's view that the best way this could be done was through a review of the IICM. An approach was made to the Irish Inter-Church Committee who agreed at its September meeting in 1996 to the setting up of a Review Group.

Appendix II outlines the inter-relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Irish Council of Churches, and the links between the Council and the IICM.

3. The Current Structure of IICM

Irish Inter-Church Meetings currently take place every two years with the following representation:

Roman Catholic Church	21	
Church of Ireland	5	
Presbyterian Church	5	
Methodist Church	2	
Other ICC Member Churches	6	(one of whom is a member of the IICC)
Irish Council of Churches	3	

together with the members of the IICC as follows:

Roman Catholic Church	7
Church of Ireland	2
Presbyterian Church	2
Methodist Church	1
Other ICC Member Churches	1
Irish Council of Churches	2

—
56

The Chairpersons of the Departments of Social Issues and Theological Questions, the Joint Secretaries (one of whom is the General Secretary of ICC) and the Treasurer attend the IICC and the IICM.

The Presidents of the ICC and the Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference normally act as co-chairpersons of the Meeting and the IICC.

Those who attend the Meetings have no responsibility for the IICM structure, nor is the working of the structure responsible or accountable to them. Those who attend Meetings may only have a limited knowledge of what the IICM does, as they are often only appointed for a particular meeting. All of this made sense at the beginning, but there are now issues around the purpose of the Meeting which need to be looked at.

The member churches appoint the members of the IICC and the two Departments (except the ICC places on the IICC).

4. The Need for a Re-Organised IICM

The main points from 2. Background are the following:

- the increasing agenda of IICM as more issues are dealt with on a fuller inter-church basis, reflecting the relationships that have been developed over the years.
- the development of IICM as a representative body, relating to governments, Councils of Churches, international church bodies, etc.
- the lack of a proper constitutional and legal basis to support the current work and to allow for future developments
- the ICC carrying the main administrative burden of IICM at present
- the need (as seen from the ICC side) for a rationalisation of inter-church structures
- the ICC has been used up to now as the main servicing agent of the IICM and the need for a more equitable sharing of burdens

From 3. **Current Structure of the IICM.** There are issues around how the Meetings can be used to deepen the relationship between the churches.

Beyond and more important than issues of appropriate structures, all churches are now operating in the context of increasing secularism and indifference. Added to this there is in Northern Ireland a context of conflict, division and sectarianism which puts an onus on the churches being seen to work together as much as possible. This suggests the particular importance today of co-operating together, where faith, church discipline and conscience make this possible, as a witness to Irish society, North and South, “so that the world may believe” (Jn 17:21).

Since the first IICM in 1973 churches have been able to journey in faith together. Relationships have developed which have enabled us to explore openly our differences and express what we have in common. Churches increasingly need each other as they seek to do God’s will in a rapidly changing Ireland.

All of this, we believe, points to the urgent need for a reorganised IICM. Such a reorganisation will raise issues regarding appropriate structures, the basis of membership, composition, financing and staffing. Detailed recommendations on these and other matters will be made below.

5. Principles in Developing Our Proposals

In developing our proposals we have sought to ensure that:

- there is continuity with what has already been developed over the last 25 years;
- they allow for change and development;
- they are acceptable to the member churches and sensitive to their concerns, aspirations and fears;
- there is an adequate theological basis;
- they give smaller churches an appropriate place;

- they offer effective ways of working and cooperating at different levels which seek to fully involve the appropriate bodies and people from the member churches;
- they make it possible for all the present member churches to participate in the reorganised body and provide a mechanism for other churches to join;
- they seek to provide for the possibility of appropriate links with the Church Leaders' Group;
- there is an adequate constitutional and legal basis;
- the structures and administrative arrangements are suitable for what we are seeking to do;
- they are economical in financial terms with an appropriate sharing of burdens between the member churches.

6. The Role and Work of a Reorganised IICM

We recommend that a reorganised IICM should seek to:

- be a forum where churches meet, deliberate and consult together;
- assist the churches to grow in understanding of each other in accordance with the will of Christ;
- assist the churches to co-operate and act together where appropriate;
- foster and assist inter-church initiatives at local level;
- make known to the churches and the community what is happening at all levels in the area of inter-church activity.

We now make proposals as to how this can be done in practice.

6.1. Being a Forum for the Member Churches

6.1.1 Forum Meetings. We believe that one important way to enable the churches to meet, deliberate and consult together would be through a regular forum meeting. We envisage that the forum would normally meet annually.

The emphasis should be on providing an opportunity for churches to grow in understanding of each other and for relationships between them to develop. The forum meeting would also help to establish the direction and agenda of the IICM.

To do all of this will require the churches to appoint people to be their representatives on the IICM rather than to attend 'one-off' meetings. It will also require significant continuity of membership. However, the need for some continuity of membership will have to be balanced against the need regularly to give new people an opportunity to participate.

6.2. Assisting the Churches to Co-operate and Act Together

6.2.1. Department of Social Issues. DSI has moved away from being a body that commissions reports to being a body that brings the 'social responsibility' people of the churches together. It has become more proactive and willing to go out into the community, eg the recent Poverty Hearing in Belfast. Activities like this should be encouraged. We see no need to make any significant change in DSI at present.

6.2.2. Department of Theological Questions. DTQ brings theologians from the churches together. It has recently published 'Freedom, Justice and Responsibility in Ireland Today' which consumed almost all its energies for some three years. The Department is currently being reconstituted. We suggest

that an important role for DTQ is to bring what has been done by the churches internationally to the attention of the churches in Ireland.

6.2.3. In General. The emphasis should be on a **re-organised IICM promoting co-ordination and co-operation** between appropriate people and committees of the member churches. Meetings can be convened for particular purposes, groups can be set up for specific tasks, and it may be that one church can do a particular thing on behalf of all the churches, or be the lead church.

We recommend that the Irish Ecumenical Church Loan Fund and the Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund for Ireland (now operating under the auspices of the ICC) should be integrated into the new structure. The question of whether the Churches' Peace Education Programme (now operating under the auspices of the ICC and the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace) should be similarly linked should be left until after the reorganised IICM comes into existence.

6.2.4. The Irish Inter-Church Committee. The IICC gives direction to and co-ordinates the work of the IICM and this is a role that would not change in a new structure, although it will be enhanced given the changes proposed. We make recommendations concerning the IICC's composition at 7.6.

6.3. Local Inter-Church Initiatives: A Key Priority

At the moment contact is maintained with local groups. Over the years a number of one-day meetings have been held in different areas to promote interest and involvement in local inter-church activity. Weekends have been held for local groups in 1995 and 1997. We believe that work at local level is of vital importance and is an area that must be developed further; it is here that sharing together as Christians is made real. We see an important role for a reorganised IICM in encouraging and facilitating co-operation at local level, and supporting communication and links between groups.

6.4 Communication

It is important that the work of the IICM and of inter-church activity in general is communicated. At the moment the IICM has a low profile. The Irish Ecumenical News does a little in this area but more thought needs to be given to the whole issue of communication.

7. Proposals for the Structure of a Reorganised IICM

7.1. A Properly Constituted Entity

We recommend that the IICM should become a proper legal entity with an appropriate constitution which will make it capable of obtaining charitable status. Legal advice about this will have to be obtained at an appropriate time.

7.2. Basis of Membership

The current IICM is a relationship between the member churches of the Irish Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

The ICC's basis of membership is the following:

“The Irish Council of Churches is constituted by Christian Communion in Ireland willing to join in united efforts to promote the spiritual, physical, moral and social welfare of the people and the extension of the rule of Christ among all nations and over every region of life.”

We believe that it is important that a re-organised IICM should have a more confessional basis. We recommend the following:

“The Irish Inter-Church Meeting is a fellowship of Churches in Ireland which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

And that full membership should be open to:

- (i) those Churches which accept the basis of commitment, and
- (ii) those Churches which do not, on principle, have any statement of faith within their tradition and which cannot therefore subscribe formally to the statement of faith in the basis but which make a commitment to the aims and purposes of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting and agree to work in the spirit of the basis.

What we have proposed is similar to what pertains in the ecumenical bodies in Scotland, England and Wales.

7.3. Aims and Functions

We recommend that a reorganised IICM should have the following aims and functions:

- (i) to be a forum where the member churches meet, discuss and consult together;
- (ii) to assist the member churches to grow in their understanding of each other, in accordance with the will of Christ;
- (iii) to assist the member churches to co-operate and act together as appropriate;
- (iv) to foster and support inter-church initiatives at local level;
- (v) to make known to the churches and community what is happening at all levels in the area of inter-church activity.

The IICM will continue not to be a forum for church union negotiations.

7.4. Composition

We believe that in order to provide continuity with the existing IICM it is important to continue the present 50/50 Roman Catholic/Protestant representation. We recommend the following:

Roman Catholic Church	37
Church of Ireland	10
Presbyterian Church	10
Methodist	5
Other Churches (currently 6) 2 each	12
	—
	74

to be appointed annually.

Ex-Officio: Treasurer, General Secretary (or equivalent), chairpersons of Departments, members of the Church Leaders' Group

Observers: representatives of churches not wishing to be members of the IICM and from inter-church and Christian bodies may be invited to attend Meetings as observers.

Consultants: individuals with particular expertise may be invited to attend Meetings.

Consideration should be given by the churches to the balance of gender and age.

If new churches were admitted to the IICM the total numbers would have to be re-balanced to preserve the 50/50 make-up.

The existing IICM has 56 people attending, plus ex-officio members.

7.5. Forum Meetings

The appointed representatives of the member churches would attend the Forum meetings. Some of them would be members of the IICC and possibly of the Departments and Working Groups.

We recommend that the role of the Forum meeting should be to:

- provide an opportunity for deepening the relationships between the churches;
- discuss and deliberate on issues of importance to the member churches;
- help to establish the direction and agenda of the IICM;
- perform necessary legal and constitutional functions, receive accounts, elect office bearers, etc.;
- receive reports from the IICC, Departments, Sub-Committees, etc.

The aim would be to keep business to a necessary minimum.

7.6. Irish Inter-Church Committee

7.6.1. Responsibilities We recommend that the IICC should have the following responsibilities:

- (i) to give direction to, co-ordinate and oversee the work of the IICM, its Departments and Committees;
- (ii) the overall management of staff and resources.

7.6.2. Composition: We recommend that the Committee be composed as follows:

Roman Catholic Church	11
Church of Ireland	3
Presbyterian Church	3
Methodist Church	2
Smaller Churches	3
Co-opted (to provide flexibility and under-representation of various kinds)	3
	25

Ex-officio: Treasurer, General Secretary (or equivalent), Departmental Chairpersons.

The membership would be members of the IICM but continue to be appointed by the member churches.

It is hoped that either through church appointment or co-option that the joint secretaries of the Church Leaders' Group would be members.

(The current IICC has a membership of 15 plus ex-officio members).

Smaller Church Representation: we recommend that representatives of the smaller churches would serve for three years and would then be replaced by representatives of churches without current representation on the IICC. If unable to attend meetings there would be an alternate from a church not currently having representation on the IICC. We recognise that our proposals do not allow for the smaller churches to have a place each on the IICC, as they now have on the ICC Executive Committee. To do this and preserve the 50/50 Roman Catholic/Protestant balance would mean creating an executive body of

unacceptable size. What we have recommended is, therefore, a compromise which, however, improves on the current situation in the IICC.

7.7. Presidents

We recommend the following:

The Forum meeting should appoint two Presidents from the membership of the ICC for a two-year period; one being nominated by the Irish Episcopal Conference and the other being nominated by another member church under a system of rotation similar to that currently operating in the Irish Council of Churches to appoint Presidents. The Presidents will, as appropriate, chair meetings of the IICM and the IICC; and, as occasion demands, represent the IICM on public occasions and make statements on its behalf.

7.8. Relationships with Inter-Church Bodies and the Church Leaders' Group

7.8.1. Relationships with other Inter-Church Bodies. The reorganised body should have the power to establish appropriate relationships with other representative inter-church bodies.

7.8.2. Relationships with the Church Leaders' Group. The Church Leaders' Group is an informal group currently consisting of

- the two Archbishops of Armagh
- the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church
- the President of the Methodist Church

The Joint Secretaries are the Clerk of the Presbyterian Church and the Secretary of the Methodist Conference.

The Group responds to invitations, deals with a variety of correspondence, often asking for support or sponsorship, and it sometimes makes statements in the community/political area. It does not have a policy making function.

The Group has been an important witness, particularly but not exclusively, in relation to the Northern Ireland situation. There has, however, been a continuing source of concern among some of the smaller churches that they have not been able to have an association with the Church Leaders' Group.

We believe that it would be important to create a linkage between the Church Leaders' Group and a reorganised IICM while allowing the Group to retain its role and independence. We would suggest the following:

- members of the Church Leaders' Group to be ex-officio on the Forum meetings;
- that either through church appointment or co-option the secretaries of the Church Leaders' Group be members of the IICC.

8. Staffing

Appendix III outlines what current ICC/IICM staff do and what implications there are for the future. We assume that a reorganised IICM would have the same level of staffing as the current ICC plus IICM, but it might be organised differently, eg more time might be given to developing local inter-church activity.

9. Finance

Appendix IV gives an illustrative budget at 1996 prices assuming that a reorganised IICM would have the existing ICC plus IICM staffing level. On this basis the member churches' contributions would work out as follows:

Roman Catholic Church	£33,500 stg
Presbyterian Church	£14,000 stg
Church of Ireland	£14,000 stg
Methodist Church	£3,500 stg
Smaller Churches	£3,000 stg

(at 1996 values)

Transitional arrangements might be a possibility so that those who are having their contribution increased substantially would not have to assume the full burden immediately.

10. Inter-Church Centre

It is recommended that the current Inter-Church Centre in Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, would be an appropriate administrative base for the reorganised IICM.

11. Timetable

We recommend that the IICC put proposals to the churches for their **comments** with a view to having replies by the end of October 1998. Revised proposals, in the light of the comments made, would then be put to the churches for **decision** in 1999. The Church Leader's Group will also be consulted.

It is recognised that the Irish Council of Churches, in the light of the Review Proposals, will be putting proposals about its own future to its member churches, co-ordinated with the Irish Inter-Church Meeting proposals.

If there is agreement by the member churches, decisions concerning a reorganised IICM could be implemented in the year 2000.

12. Conclusion

We believe that these proposals provide an opportunity for the churches to take another step on the journey commenced with the first Inter-Church Meeting in 1973. A re-organised IICM would be a very suitable joint millennium 'project' for the Irish Churches as we move towards the year 2000, and as we consider the challenges to and opportunities for Christian faith in the years beyond.

Major G Blurton
 Mr A Connolly
 Rt Rev G Clifford
 Very Rev Mgr P Devine
 Rev Dr I M Ellis
 Rt Rev Dr A Farquhar
 Rev R Herron
 Rev E Hewitt
 Rev Dr T Norris
 Dr R D Stevens

APPENDIX I

BACKGROUND TO THE IRISH INTER-CHURCH MEETING

The first historic Inter-Church Meeting between the constituent members of the Irish Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church took place at Ballymascanlon in September 1973. The meeting heard papers with prepared comments from 'the other side' on four areas of concern, viz:

- (1) Church/Scripture/Authority
- (2) Social and Community Problems
- (3) Baptism/Eucharist/Marriage
- (4) Christianity and Secularism

Working parties were set up to carry forward study under these headings. By the Spring of 1975, when the Meeting was held for the third time, the fourth Working Party presented a Final Report and others presented Final Reports on part of their remits.

A Fourth Meeting was held in May 1977 and papers were heard on the following topics:

- (1) The Church in the Gospels and St Paul
- (2) Historical Breaches in Christendom
- (3) Theology of Christian Unity
- (4) Principles and Practice

The Fifth Meeting was held in March 1980, and two Survey Papers on Inter-Church Activities were presented. Working Parties on Marian Devotion, and the Eucharist and the Implications of Unity were established. The Sixth Meeting was held in March 1983 when papers on the themes 'Christian Witness in a Secular Society' and 'Mission to those in Prison' were presented.

The Seventh Meeting was held in November 1984 when proposals for the reorganisation of the Meeting were considered and agreed. After agreement from the Churches the Meeting was re-organised with an Irish Inter-Church Committee (which co-ordinates activities) and Departments of Theological Questions and Social Issues being set up.

Further Meetings have been held approximately every 18 months. The Eighth Meeting was held in March 1986, when the subject of 'The Church and the Technological Age' was considered and the Ninth Meeting in September 1987 dealt with the subject of Marriage. The Tenth Meeting, on the theme of 'Youth Work and the Churches', took place in April 1989. The Eleventh Meeting took place in November 1990 when the subject was 'The Church in Urban Society'.

In May 1992 the Twelfth Meeting dealt with the subject of 'Irish Churches in a New Europe'. In October 1993 the first residential Meeting was held and it considered the subject of 'Sectarianism'. The 1995 meeting was held in November with its primary focus being on the Churches' particular contribution to Peace. Another meeting will be held in November 1997.

A part-time Administrative Officer to service the Meeting and its Departments took up post in September 1992. The General Secretary of the Irish Council of Churches is Joint Secretary of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting and the I.C.C. President is Co-Chairman. The work, structure etc., of the Meeting is

currently being reviewed. A video on inter-church relations: 'Together in Christ?' was produced in 1992.

Department of Theological Questions

Bible Study Notes and information on Cults have been produced by the Department. A booklet with biblical study notes for Advent and Lent - 'Reading the Bible Together' - has been prepared (1991). A study on the theological implications of the Report 'Marriage and the Family in Ireland Today' has been carried out. Documents on 'Salvation and Grace' and 'Ecumenical Principles' were published in 1993. The Department published a study on 'Freedom, Justice and Responsibility in Ireland Today' in early 1997.

Department of Social Issues

A Joint Group on Social Problems was set up in 1970 between the Irish Council of Churches and the Catholic Hierarchy as a result of an initiative by the Council, to advise on the role of the Churches in Irish society in such matters as world poverty, employment, housing conditions, drug addiction, alcoholism, etc.. Working Parties produced Reports on:

Drug Abuse (1972)

Housing in Northern Ireland (1973)

Use of Alcohol among Young People (1974)

The Churches' Response to Under-development in Rural Ireland (1976)

Violence (1976)

The Environment (1980)

Leisure (1982)

Following the re-organisation of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting the Joint Group became the Department of Social Issues and Working Parties set up by the Department have issued Reports on:

The Church and the Technological Age (1986)

Marriage and the Family in Ireland Today (1987)

Young People and the Church (1990)

The Challenge of the Urban Situation in Ireland Today (1990)

Sectarianism: A Discussion Document (1993)

A review of the Department's work was carried out in 1994 in order to enable it better to respond to social issues on an inter-church basis. The Department was restructured and commenced its new mode of operation.

Materials are being produced on Community Development and the Churches and a Northern Ireland Hearing on Poverty was held in Belfast in April 1997. Work continues on follow-up.

Week Of Prayer For Christian Unity

An Irish Order of Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is produced by a Committee set up by the Meeting.

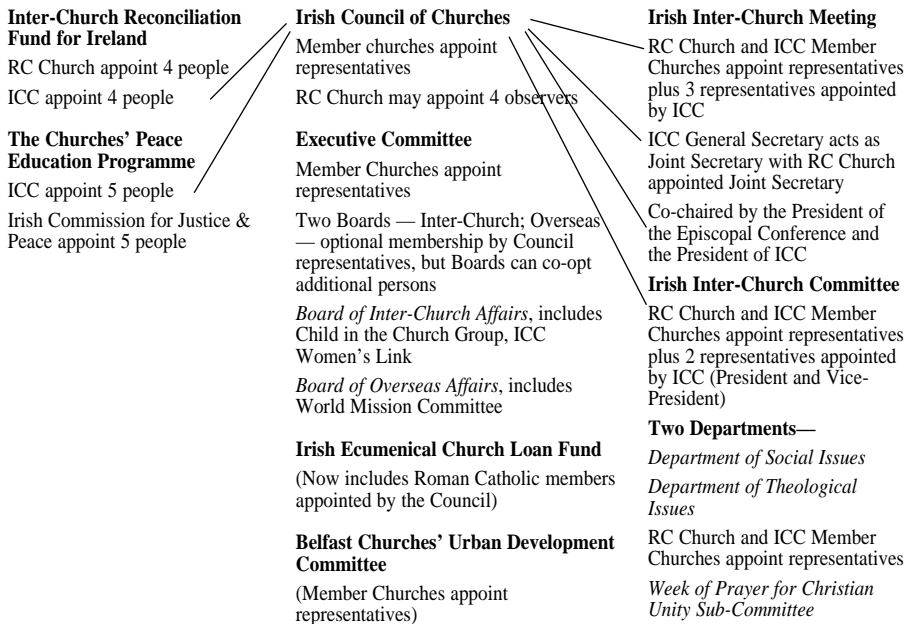
Local Ecumenism

Contact is maintained with ecumenical groups. A number of one-day meetings have been held in different areas in order to promote interest and

involvement in local inter-church activity. A weekend for local groups was held in February, 1995 and another one was held in February 1997.

APPENDIX II

IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES/ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS



APPENDIX III

STAFFING

1. Current ICC Staffing

- (a) There are one and one-third Executive staff (a full-time General Secretary and a one-third time Associate Secretary) and two part-time secretarial/bookkeeping staff. The ICC General Secretary and the secretarial/bookkeeping staff are also providing services for the IICM.
- (b) The Role of the General Secretary; The General Secretary **services** and **co-ordinates** the ICC structure, in particular the Council (two meetings a year), the Executive Committee (three times a year), the Board of Inter-Church Affairs (twice a year) and the Belfast Churches' Urban Development Committee (five times a year) and is responsible for ensuring that decisions are carried out.

He in part services the IICM structure.

He **represents** the Council at CCBI, Member Churches Assemblies, international gatherings, etc.

He **maintains relationships** with the Member Churches and with bodies such as the Irish School of Ecumenics, Corrymeela, the Community Relations Council, etc. He **supervises** staff in relation to ICC, the Churches' Peace Education Programme, the Development Officer of the Belfast Churches' Urban Development Committee and the Administrative Officer of the IICM. In conjunction with the trustees of the Inter-Church Centre he ensures that the **Inter-Church Centre is maintained** in good order.

He has a **wider role in relation to inter-church matters**, e.g. he meets with and speaks to groups and individuals, the media when required, he writes articles, acts as resource, etc.

- (c) **The Associate Secretary** services the Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund, the Irish Ecumenical Church Loan Fund, the Board of Overseas Affairs and the World Mission Committee. Funding for this post mostly comes from outside the ICC Budget. His main work is for the Reconciliation Fund and the Loan Fund.
- (d) The ICC acts as employer for the IICM Administrative Officer.
- (e) The ICC acts as employer for the Development Officer of the Belfast Churches' Urban Development Committee - funded by Making Belfast Work.

2. Current IICM Staffing

Sister Roisin Hannaway works one-third time. She services DTQ, DSI and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity sub-committee, under the direction of the ICC General Secretary as Joint Secretary of IICM. She would in part service the ICC and IICM, again under the direction of the Joint Secretary. There would be other tasks which would be done in close consultation with the Joint Secretary.

3. The Churches Peace Education Programme

The Programme is a separate legal entity with trustees from ICC and ICJP, funded by the Department of Education. It employs two teachers and one support staff. Some of the ICC General Secretary's time is given to the Programme in terms of acting as a supervising support person.

Comment

The ICC General Secretary is already doing a considerable amount for the IICM and he has a resource role in relation to inter-church matters. In a reorganised IICM with a wound down ICC the new Chief Officer should have less of a servicing load than the old ICC General/IICM Joint Secretary, assuming that other staffing remained the same. This should release some time for other things, eg local inter-church activity. He/she would:

- be responsible for the overall co-ordination of the IICM's work
- service the IICM and ICC and be responsible for ensuring that decisions are carried out

- be responsible for ensuring that the Departments, sub-committees, programmes, etc. are serviced
- be responsible for supervision of staff
- represent the IICM at CCBI, etc.
- maintain relationships with member churches, other inter-church bodies, etc.
- have a general role in relation to inter-church matters, promote inter-church concerns, meet with and speak to groups and individuals, liaise with the media, etc.
- run the Inter Church Centre and maintain relations with tenants.

A part-time Associate Secretary or two part-time associate secretaries would be responsible for servicing particular areas of work.

An administrator or two part-timers, as now, would provide the administrative, secretarial and bookkeeping back-up.

The Peace Programme staff could be integrated into the new structure.

APPENDIX IV

ILLUSTRATIVE BUDGET FOR RE-ORGANISED IICM AT 1996 VALUES

(All prices in Sterling)

Expenditure	£
Executive Staff - salaries and expenses (One and two-third staff)	41,000
Office Staff (One person or equivalent)	15,000
Stationery, Postage and Telephone	3,900
Travel Expenses - members (4)	4,200
Catering and Accommodation (3)	2,600
Printing and Publishing Costs (net)	1,000
Property Cost (inc. contribution to heat, light and cleaning)	3,000
Bank and Audit Fees	600
Insurances	1,400
Miscellaneous (e.g. office equipment)	2,300
	75,000

Notes

(1) This is a budget at 1996 values based on actual ICC and IICM expenditure in 1996 and assumptions listed below.

(2) Assumes existing ICC/IICM staff complement retained.

(3) Based on one overnight Forum meeting per year paid by IICM (existing IICM practice).

(4) Based on paying travel expenses to Forum, IICC, Department meetings, etc. (existing ICC practice)

Income**1. Services**

We can assume the following income for services (1)	£
Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund for Ireland	4,000
Ecumenical Church Loan Fund	2,500
Miscellaneous	500
	<hr/>
	7,000

2. Interest

Interest on IICM fund balances	1,000
	<hr/>
	8,000

3. Required to be raised from Member Churches	67,000
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Note

1. The income from the ICRFI and ECLOF largely pays for the existing part-time executive staff member.

Member Church Subscription

Based on a 50-50 Roman Catholic Church/Protestant Churches basis on how the current member churches' contributions to ICC are apportioned we would receive something like the following:

Roman Catholic Church	33,500
Presbyterian Church	14,000
Church of Ireland	14,000
Methodist Church	3,500
Smaller Churches	2,000
	<hr/>
	67,000

Note: this is at 1996 values. It will have to be adjusted to allow for inflation in the period between 1996 and when a revamped body comes into existence.

APPENDIX B**REVIEW OF THE IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES****REPORT OF THE REVIEW GROUP****1. Introduction**

The Review Group was set up by the ICC Executive Committee at its meeting in November 1997. The membership was The President, the Vice-President, Major G Blurton, Rev T Davidson, Rev Dr I Ellis, Rev Dr J McMaster, Dr David Poole and the General Secretary.

The task of the Review Group was to carry out a review of the ICC in the light of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting (ICCM) Review Proposals, and to make recommendations. This document, therefore, needs to be read in conjunction with the ICCM Review Proposals.

2. Background

- (a) **Introduction:** The ICC has been in existence since 1922 as a forum for the Protestant Churches. Since the late 1960s one of its major roles has been promoting relationships between its member churches and the Roman Catholic Church. It has been the main servicing agent as this relationship has developed.

As inter-church relations have progressed many more issues can and need to be dealt with on a more representative basis and not just on an intra-Protestant basis within the ICC. The IICM agenda has been expanding and the ICC's has been contracting. Because of these developments the ICC has been considering what its future role should be within the context of what inter-church structures are now appropriate in Ireland. It was the Council's view that the best way this could be done was through a review of the IICM. An approach was made to the Irish Inter-Church Committee who agreed at its September meeting in 1996 to the setting up of a Review Group. This Review Group reported in January 1998.

- (b) **Work of the Council:** The Council currently has two Boards: **Inter-Church Affairs; Overseas Affairs** and the following groups and committees working under its auspices:

Child in the Church Group - (bringing together 'Sunday School' people in the member churches)

Women's Link (bringing together the Women's Church Organisations of the member churches)

World Mission Committee (bringing together the World Mission Agencies of the member churches)

Belfast Churches' Urban Development Committee (the committee promotes the economic and social outreach of Protestant Churches in the Belfast area. It has a Development Officer employed by ICC and funded by Making Belfast Work)

Political and Peace Developments Group (bringing together people in the member churches involved in peace and political developments)

Occasional Evangelism Forum (bringing people together in the member churches concerned with evangelism)

The Ecumenical Church Loan Fund Committee (the Fund gives low interest loans to church and community projects)

The Council operates a peace education programme for schools with the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace of the Roman Catholic Church. This joint programme is called The Churches' Peace Education Programme and is a separate legal entity with trustees appointed by the Council and the Commission. It employs three people.

The Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund for Ireland receives monies from churches abroad and gives grants for peace and reconciliation work in Ireland. The committee is jointly appointed by ICC and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Council appoints people to the following bodies:

The Commissions and various fora of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI)

The Christian Aid Board and Irish Committee

The European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society (shortly to become the Church and Society Department of the Conference of European Churches)

The Northern Ireland Committee of the Christian Education Movement (CEM)

The Inter-Church Centre is held on behalf of the Council with the Officers acting as administrative trustees.

3. Implications of the IICM Review Proposals

The IICM Review Proposals recommend that the Irish Ecumenical Church Loan Fund and the Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund for Ireland come under the IICM auspices. The future of the Churches' Peace Education Programme should be left, the Review suggested, until after the reorganised IICM is up and running. We concur with these recommendations.

Implicit in the IICM proposals is that the reorganised IICM becomes the main Irish inter-church body, and that it would become the body that most Councils of Churches and international church bodies would relate to mainly. It could make appointments to CCBI Commissions, etc. It could also make appointments to CEM.

4. The Future Role of the Council

- (a) Acceptance and implementation of the IICM proposals will bring a period of change and transition. In this context we recommend that the ICC has the following functions:
 - carrying out legal functions in connection with the Churches' Peace Education Programme (if required) and the Inter-Church Centre.
 - fulfilling functions in relation to appointments, e.g. Christian Aid.
 - acting as a forum for issues of common concern to the member churches as and when requested.
- (b) In particular we recommend that:
 - the Boards of Inter-Church Affairs and Overseas Affairs be stood down once a reconstituted IICM comes into operation. We envisage that a reconstituted IICM will find appropriate ways for many of the concerns of both Boards to be carried on
 - there be careful consultation with all the various bodies and committees mentioned in 2 (b) to see what might be the best way forward for them in their particular circumstances.

5. How the Council might Operate

(1) We recommend that:

- (a) those appointed by the ICC member churches to the reconstituted IICM shall also be appointed to the ICC;
- (b) the Council shall meet annually, normally in conjunction with an IICM meeting to:
 - (i) receive the accounts
 - (ii) appoint officers

- (iii) fulfil functions in relation to appointments, eg to Christian aid
- (iv) receive any necessary reports
- (v) any other business that might be required

The Officers shall continue to act as trustees of the Churches' Peace Education Programme (if necessary) and administrative trustees of the Inter-Church Centre.

- (c) those appointed by the ICC member churches to the IICC (or those appointed as alternate members) shall act as the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee could meet as little or as often as required and could do so in conjunction with IICC meetings.

2. Staffing: We envisage that an ICC, having the functions outlined above will require some executive staff time. Secretarial and bookkeeping services could be bought in - perhaps from the IICM (in the way that IICM currently buys in services from ICC).

All of this could be funded from the existing balances of the Council and would not require annual contributions from the member churches.

We recognise that these proposals will have implications for existing staff which will require sensitive handling, and may have financial implications in terms of redundances.

6. An Evolving Situation

We believe that we are in an evolving situation where inter-church relations are concerned, which means that structures need to be kept under consideration. We recommend that a review be carried out after restructuring has taken place to look at how the changes have gone and what the situation now requires.

7. Timetable

We recommend that these proposals, together with the IICM Review Proposals, be put to the member churches for their comments by the end of October, 1998. Revised proposals, in the light of the comments made on both documents, would then be put to the churches for decision in 1999.

8. Conclusion

We believe that these proposals, together with the IICM Review Proposals, offer a positive way forward for the next step of the churches journey together.

Rev David Nesbitt
Rev Edmund Mawhinney
Major Geoff Blurton
Rev Tony Davidson
Rev Dr Ian Ellis
Rev Dr Johnston McMaster
Dr David Poole
Dr David Stevens

January 26, 1998

APPENDIX**BACKGROUND TO THE IRISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES****Basis of Membership**

The Irish Council of Churches is constituted by Christian Communions in Ireland willing to join in united efforts to promote the spiritual, physical, moral and social welfare of the people and the extension of the rule of Christ among all nations and over every region of life.

The Member Churches are:

- the Church of Ireland
- the Lutheran Church in Ireland
- the Greek Orthodox Church in Britain and Ireland
- the Methodist Church in Ireland
- the Irish District of the Moravian Church
- the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland
- the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- the Salvation Army (Ireland Division)
- the Religious Society of Friends in Ireland

Roman Catholic, Coptic Orthodox and Seventh-Day Adventist observers are invited to be present at the meetings of the Council.

The Council consists of 68 members appointed by the member churches (20 Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 20 Church of Ireland, 10 Methodist Church, other member churches 3 each), together with the leaders of the member churches and up to ten co-opted members, the General Secretary, Treasurer and immediate Past President of the Council. It normally meets twice a year. There is an Executive Committee which is responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the Council. The member churches appoint the representatives.

Staffing

The Council currently has the following staff:

General Secretary (full-time)

Associate Secretary (part-time servicing the Board of Overseas Affairs, World Mission Committee, Irish Ecumenical Church Loan Fund Committee and Inter-Church Reconciliation Fund for Ireland)

Administrative Secretary (part-time)

Secretarial Assistant/Bookkeeper (part-time)

The Administrative Officer of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting is employed by the Council and the Council acts as employer for the Development Officer of the Belfast Churches' Urban Development Committee.

OVERSEAS BOARD

Convener: Rev S J CAMPBELL
Secretaries: Rev R J T McMULLAN
Miss E BRIAN

OUR CHANGING WORLD AND THE UNCHANGING GOSPEL

1. Over the past year we have been studying what further steps in world mission are necessary if we, as a Church, are to be obedient to Christ's command to proclaim the Gospel in all the world and make disciples of all nations.

2. The world in which we live is changing rapidly and we need to respond in a way that will enable the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to continue to proclaim the Gospel in word and action in the countries and areas of our partner Churches and where our mission partners serve.

3. There are many influences at work in these countries. Where they have moved from totalitarian dictatorships to democratic systems of government, there has apparently been a general decline in moral standards with a rapid increase in corruption. The world economic system, which favours the rich countries in the Northern Hemisphere, has brought grinding poverty to many of the 'already poor' in third world countries. The continued desire of individuals and groups for power in the affairs of their nations has brought wars and rumours of wars in many places. Thousands have been displaced from their homes or lost their lives and it is usually the women and children who suffer most.

4. How do we enable our partner Churches to respond to these ever-changing circumstances and what sort of help can we provide for our missionaries as they live and serve Jesus Christ in these difficult circumstances?

5. In Central Europe, eight years after the mainly peaceful revolution, the questions of ethnicity and language, who has the right to rule and how can human dignity be maintained for all whom God has created, are still very much to the fore. We are looking critically at our relationships with our partner Churches in these areas and seeking to discover how we forge loving relationships with people rather than with administrations. Much of the contribution to the Churches and people of Central Europe has been through material aid and we are led to ask "What of the Gospel?"

6. We have also been examining the changes taking place within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and we have discovered that the majority of our active membership is over fifty years and that there is a large gap in the 25-50 age group. Our children and young people are growing up in a world where the moral and ethical standards of the Church of Jesus Christ are no longer respected. Through various means of communication they are being conditioned for life in a secular world where there is no place for God or Jesus Christ.

7. Our children and young people should be introduced to the world which has been created by God and to the people in it for whom Christ died and to the Church of Jesus Christ which is a loving, caring community of faith whose members are 'in' and not 'of' the world.

8. The Board affirms its policy which states that -
 “The Presbyterian Church in Ireland accepts the unchanging commission of Christ, its Lord, to proclaim the Gospel in word and action to people throughout the world, and its responsibility to stimulate the active involvement of individuals, congregations, organisations and Presbyteries and to encourage and support missionary service.”

9. More than ever the mission agencies, congregations, Presbyteries and the members of our Church need to work together recognising that there is no such a thing as Home and Overseas Mission, but rather the one Mission of God to the world, a world for which Christ died. Did not Jesus say “You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth”?

AFRICA

10. Over the past ten or so years the African continent and its peoples have suffered a series of social, political, economic, environmental, moral and natural disasters and injustices which have resulted in civil war, famine, disease and death and many have been reduced to a grinding poverty. Yet, in spite of the suffering of its peoples, Africa today still looks on the bright side and hopes for a better future.

11. And that is not a vain hope for those within the areas of our partner Churches, for they have a confidence in God the creator and sustainer of life, in Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world and in the eternal purposes of God for His people. Thus our partner Churches in Kenya, Malawi, Sudan and Togo need our continued encouragement and support in the Name of Jesus Christ if they are to emerge from this latest period of testing and trial into a future full of hope in the God who is sovereign in the affairs of humanity.

12. Our partnerships in Mission are with the Presbyterian Churches in **Malawi** (1958), **Kenya** (1975), **Sudan** (1982) and **Togo** (1987) which have been established by Presbyterian Missions within the past one hundred and twenty years. It is less than forty years since these former colonial territories gained independence and their experience since that time has gone from the confidence and progress in the sixties and seventies to the economic and moral depression of the eighties and nineties.

13. **The Presbyterian Church of East Africa** (PCEA), in February, held a Consultation attended by representatives of her five partner Churches, Rev Brian Gibson representing the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Mr Gibson was impressed by the progress made over the past few years in every area of the Church’s life, witness and service and the confidence with which it is moving into the future in the purposes of God.

14. The PCEA has been in the forefront of the search for justice, righteousness and peace in the nation and in seeking to remove the very evident ethnic tensions which have too often flared into violence. The Churches in Kenya have the potential to unite all the peoples of Kenya in Jesus Christ in the midst of a fragmented and divided socio-political situation.

15. The ministry of healing continues to be very important in the life of the Churches and peoples of Kenya, Malawi and Sudan. All locally-based and medical missionary personnel who have served over the past year in the Church

hospitals are to be thanked for their faithfulness and devotion to the healing ministry, despite working with inadequate facilities, insufficient medicines and being exposed to infection and disease daily. Much has been accomplished in Primary Health Care work and in the training of nurses and para-medical personnel. All this is done bearing witness to Jesus Christ, the one who makes people whole in body, mind and spirit.

16. In the rising generation in Africa, disease, malnutrition, famine and ethnic conflict take a heavy toll. Educational opportunities are insufficient and of those who go through primary, secondary and tertiary level education, many are unable to find jobs. Thus there is a lot of frustration among young people and while the Churches and local communities work hard to provide educational opportunities, they are unable to provide the job opportunities.

17. Some of our personnel share in this educational process and have opportunities to influence young people towards Christ and enable others to grow in their faith. The Churches are reaching young people through the work of their Youth Departments and through working in fellowship with the Student Christian Organisation in Malawi (SCOM), Scripture Union and the Kenyan Student Christian Fellowship (KSCF). We continue to support and encourage this work in all of our partner Churches and we thank God for the progress that has been made.

18. There has been tremendous growth in the Church in the past year in Kenya, Malawi and the Sudan and it has not proved possible to provide adequate pastoral support for the growing number of congregations. Our personnel have been sharing in the preparation of candidates for the ministry in our partner Churches, and also encouraging the provision of theological education by extension for many Christians who are eager to equip themselves better to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

19. In Africa today family and extended family life is very important as people in rural communities work together to support each other. Yet traditional forms of family life are being eroded by a Western life-style and the ravages of AIDS are placing a tremendous strain on the extended family in social and economic terms.

20. The Churches are placing a greater emphasis on development work which enables people to develop their God-given skills for the benefit of their families and communities. Some of our personnel share in this work together with their African colleagues and much progress has been made in rural communities. All who commit themselves to serving in the Name of Jesus Christ in the rural areas of Africa face many difficulties and frustrations, yet they have seen God at work in the lives of men, women and young people and the Church is growing, albeit slowly in some places.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

21. Our first contact with the **Latin America Continent** came in 1982 through Dr Guillermo Cook, the General Director of the Latin American Evangelical Centre for Pastoral Studies (CELEP). In 1984 we were introduced by Dr Cook to the **Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil (IPI)** which was the first of the Presbyterian Churches to emerge from its ecclesiastical isolation. In 1985 we established a partner Church relationship which led to Drs

Bill and Ruth Addley becoming our first personnel serving in the Londrina Seminary of the IPI in 1987.

22. A three-person delegation from the IPI visited our Church in March to gain an insight into the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and our Church's life, witness and service. We have invited the IPI to identify and send a minister to work within our Church for up to a year and we expect this to become a reality during 1999. We have been particularly thrilled to share in the work of the Caiuá Indian Mission, and in the church planting work of national mission of the IPI in the remote and less well developed North East of Brazil. In the intervening years we have established a relationship with the **Presbyterian Church in Brazil (IPB)**, the oldest of the Presbyterian Churches and this relationship may be formalised in the near future.

23. We continue to value our partner relationship with the **United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)**, a union of Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in 1965, joined by the Disciples of Christ in 1992. It is a numerically small Church and yet has a very important role in the life of the nation. There has been a very strong emphasis on the value and worth of all of the peoples in the Caribbean and a concern for the poor and marginalised in society. There has been in many places a renewal of the life and worship of the people of God and a growing realisation of their calling in Jesus Christ to serve Him in their local communities.

24. The Rev Oliver Daley continues to give strong leadership as Moderator of the United Church while continuing his ministry in Webster Memorial. During the year Rev Maitland Evans, General Secretary for eleven years, went on a two-year study leave in the United Kingdom and Rev Dr Richmond Nelson was appointed as locum. The Church is having to take seriously the deteriorating economic situation in Jamaica and also the fact that there continues to be a shortage of ministers for the Charges of the Church.

25. Lay leadership has a very important place in the United Church and some of our personnel have shared in lay training and youth and children's work. Several years ago the Institute for Theological and Leadership Development (ITLD) was established and in its first few years gave in-service as well as formal theological training to those accepted as candidates for ministry in the United Church.

26. In the past year the ITLD structure has been reviewed and the ministerial and lay training have been integrated. Each of the four Councils (Presbyteries) has a Regional and an Associate Regional Director of the Institute for Theological and Leadership Development. As well as the on-going work of training men and women for ministry there are new programmes of theological education and training in the various aspects of ministry in the Church in each of the four Councils. We are privileged that two of our personnel are working as Associate Regional Directors in the Cornwall and North Middlesex Councils.

27. Concern for children and young people is evident in the life of the United Church and our personnel are privileged to share in these ministries in days of great challenge and opportunity. New Church School materials are being developed and Miss Claire Trueman, who is co-ordinating this work, will complete thirty-six years of service in Jamaica when she retires at the end of this year. The work in the Children's and Senior Citizens' Homes continues and

there have been great improvements in this ministry in the past years. Volunteers from our Church have been able to share in this work. Involvement in United Church schools has been our privilege with teachers going to Jamaica for periods of two years.

ASIA

28. India, the largest democracy in the world, continues to make a significant contribution to the life of the continent of Asia. Yet there is a sense in which the peoples of the Indian sub-continent have a separate life from China and the countries we know as South East Asia. So many cultures and peoples intermingle in this continent and, apart from China, they are united through one or other of the major religions - Hinduism, Islam or Christianity.

29. The religious diversity of Asia presents tremendous challenges to Christianity and the Christian churches. In many countries the Church is being oppressed but in others there are great opportunities for the spread of the Gospel and we are privileged to share in this work through our serving personnel and through our partner Churches in seven Asian countries. Indigenous Churches and missionary societies continue to work for the spread of the Gospel and the establishment of the Church among different people groups as well as in the denominational or united churches.

30. We value our partnership with the **Church of North India**, particularly with the **Dioceses of Gujarat and Agra** and also with the institutions of the Church, especially **Woodstock School**, where several of our personnel serve. Bishop Malaviya has experienced a great move forward by the Church in Gujarat since his installation in 1995, in the areas of evangelism and church planting, training of pastors and lay people and especially in work among young people.

31. The Gujarat Auxiliary of the Bible Society of India has been encouraged in its ministry in the past year and the Bible Society in Northern Ireland is helping with the establishment of a Distribution and Training Centre in South Gujarat, where many people, from among the Bhil (hill) peoples are becoming Christians. The work of the Rural Service Centre in Ankleshwar, under the leadership of Idrack and Rachel Din, continues to make a significant contribution to the development of people in that area and is a great support and encouragement to the Church.

32. Our relationship with the Diocese of Agra continues and, as reported last year, we expect to send a women's worker to Agra in the near future. One of our ministers, Rev Brian Wilson, who went to work in Woodstock School in 1996, has been received as a pastor in the Diocese and has been given responsibility for three CNI churches in the Mussoorie area. He is the first minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to be received into the ministry of the CNI in recent years. Woodstock School, which is in this Diocese, continues its important ministry to many young Indian nationals and international students. Our personnel have been highly involved and their contribution in the past year has been much appreciated.

33. Our relationship with the **Presbyterian Church in Pakistan (PCP)** continues to grow and during the year, through the Society for Community Development (SCD), we have assisted in the training of rural pastors and

evangelists in development work. Our Young Women's Groups have helped with the uplift of pastors and evangelists in the rural areas by providing bicycles and other aids for their ministry to the people. We continue to look for an experienced minister to work in the PCP, to be an encouragement to the pastors in rural areas and to teach in the Seminary in Gujranwala. Rev Prof Arthur James gives good leadership as Moderator of the Church which continues to enjoy a rather fragile unity.

34. The work among the **Asian Community in the Wembley area of London** continued during the past year and the Moderator and Mrs Hutchinson brought encouragement to the Macwan family and the members of the Support Group when they visited for a day in March. The patient work of visiting homes, engaging in Bible Study and prayer and visiting in the Northwick Park Hospital is beginning to bear fruit. A valuable contribution to the work among Asian young people and children is made by the annual two-week visit by a youth team which visits in homes and helps with Holiday Bible Clubs in two churches in the area.

35. The past year in **Nepal** has been one of great growth in the life of the Church and there has been a greater sense of unity of purpose in the spread of the Gospel among the multiplicity of Churches which have mushroomed in recent years. Our personnel serving in the **United Mission to Nepal (UMN)** continue to be involved in the life of the Church in a way that respects the need to develop Nepali leadership. They are in Nepal to serve in a UMN project and through their daily work to bear witness to their faith in Jesus Christ their Lord and Master. Bringing the Gospel to everyone in Nepal by AD 2000 and the in-service and formal training of pastors remain the two most important tasks of the Church in Nepal.

36. The United Mission to Nepal appointed Mr Michael Askwith to be Executive Director in succession to Rev Ed Metzler who resigns in June. Mr Askwith and his wife Celia will be preparing for their service and doing language and orientation in Nepal before Mr Askwith assumes the position on 1 December. Our mission personnel continue to make a vital contribution to the work of the UMN in education, administration, medicine, rural and hydro power development. They live and witness to their faith in both urban and rural areas and are joined with their Nepali colleagues as they face the difficulties and dangers of living and working in unstable economic and political situations.

37. The people of **China** are emerging slowly from their relative isolation and, last July, Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region within the nation. The Church continues to grow and expand, with many more being trained formally and informally as pastors for ministry to the people. The official Chinese Church keeps its relationship with the Government in good standing and also maintains its vision to spread the Gospel in every part of the nation. The unofficial or unregistered Churches are growing rapidly and they cope with the difficulties they face in a variety of ways as they continue to bear witness to Jesus Christ in many different parts of China.

38. The Amity Teachers' Programme commenced in 1986 and in August this year we expect to have two teachers serving in different parts of China. We attend, as observers, the China Forum of the Church's Commission on Mission and our knowledge of events and trends in China and the Christian Church has

increased. A visit last August of a pastor from Hong Kong brought us up to date with the situation in China in relation to the Churches and the attitude of senior government officials to the possible contribution of Christians to the life of the nation.

39. The nation of **Indonesia**, with its great cultural and religious diversity, has recently re-elected Dr Suharto as President for a further five-year term. Indonesia has suffered greatly from the economic/monetary crisis earlier this year which affected most countries in South East Asia. Political and ethnic tensions continue and extreme Islamic groups, not supported by the Government, have caused severe difficulties for Christians in several parts of Indonesia and a number of churches have been destroyed.

40. We continue our partner relationships with the Churches in **Halmahera, Timor** and in **Sumba**, which are members of the Fellowship of Protestant Churches in Indonesia (PGI), whose seventy member Churches now have well over ten million members. We were privileged to receive visits from two delegates of the Christian Church in Sumba to the 1997 General Assembly and last October a team from Timor visited our Church. Rev Eben Nuban Timo, who is in Holland from Timor completing a PhD, and his family visited for three weeks over the Christmas period and this served to enhance our relations with his Church.

41. The Church in Sumba continues to move forward with its lay training programme at the LEWA Training Centre and several groups will be contributing to the development of the Centre over the coming year. We are seeking to identify a teacher of English for work in the Church in Sumba and we look forward to the day when we will have a personnel link in the island.

42. The **Presbyterian Church in Myanmar (PCM)** (formerly Burma) continues its mission to the people in the north of the country. The outreach work of the PCM is receiving an encouraging response and new churches are being established. We support the postgraduate training programme of the Church which is seeking to raise the standard of theological education in Tahan Theological College as it moves towards full accreditation in South East Asia. The youth work of the Church is very encouraging and a new generation of young Christian men and women are taking a very active role in the life of the Church.

43. The main religion in **Thailand** is Buddhism with the Christian Church being a tiny minority. Our partner Church is the **Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT)** and we support its Bible correspondence course known as 'The Lamp'. This reminds us of Psalm 119 verse 105 "Your Word is a Lamp to my feet and a light to my path". In the past year the ministry of 'The Lamp' has grown and developed and Mrs Supaporn Insaeng and the team continue to visit in schools, prisons and in different areas of Thailand encouraging those who are taking the Bible correspondence courses and leading some to faith in Jesus Christ.

THE MIDDLE EAST

44. Over the past year the Peace Process in the **Middle East** has moved from crisis to crisis. Both Yasaar Arafat, the Palestinian leader, and Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, are in difficulties in their respective

constituencies. Arafat is being pressed to take a tougher line with the Israeli Government, yet to do so might shatter the fragile Peace Process. Netanyahu, whose coalition Government has a majority of one in the Knesset, is failing to return parts of the occupied territories to the Palestinian Authority for, if he did so, his coalition allies would quickly desert him.

45. In **Israel** a Bill proposed by a member of the Knesset in February, if introduced and passed, would forbid all forms of proselytising in Israel as well as ensuring that conversion from one faith to another would be proscribed. The General Board has written to the Israeli Prime Minister pointing out the implications for Israel if this Bill is presented and passed by the Knesset.

46. Elsewhere in the region there are continuing reports of persecution of Christians in the Southern part of **Egypt**. While we have no reports of persecution of the 700,000 Orthodox Christians in **Iraq**, they suffer with the whole population from 'sanctions'. Christians in Iraq feel that they are ignored by the West. They try to leave Iraq for security and economic reasons and many are found in Jordan. In **Turkey** Christians want to be known as Turkish Christians and not as an ethnic minority, but they are caught between the Kurds and the Turkish military and are accused by both of aiding the other.

47. Last December three of our personnel went to work at the **Stella Carmel Centre in Israel**, the first Presbyterians to work in Israel for a number of years. The Centre hosts many conferences of Jewish and Arab believers and is also a centre for reconciliation. Several congregations meet at the Centre which has a very important ministry to the followers of Jesus the Messiah and we are privileged to share in this ministry in these days of opportunity.

EUROPE

48. We have continued to promote relationships at different levels between the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and our partner Churches in Central Europe and in France and Spain. We have been concerned at the continued emphasis on material aid for the very needy people in Central Europe and there is a need for a greater concern for the spiritual welfare of its peoples and particularly the rising generation. We are in the process of planning and producing a number of video programmes on Central Europe which will illustrate the relationships that have been established between individuals and congregations and we expect these to be ready in the Autumn.

49. During the year a partnership agreement was drawn up with the **Church of the Brethren** in the Czech & Slovak Republics. This provides for the development of relationships between congregations and two or three have already been established. We hope to further develop our relationship with our partner Churches in Central Europe by providing opportunities for exchange of personnel for study and orientation purposes. There have been several visits of groups from congregations during the year and these have been gladly reciprocated. Much still remains to be done in building up relationships at local level so that fellowship with Christians in Central Europe can become a meaningful reality. Rev Dr Samuel Jindra, from the Church of the Brethren, did post-graduate study at Union Theological College and Petra Nemcová, from Ostrava Church of the Brethren, completes the second part of the Counselling Course in June.

50. We have maintained our relationships with several of the six districts of the **Reformed Church in Hungary and Romania**. Rev Janos Szollosi, from Cluj, and Janos & Momo Victor and family are studying in Union Theological College and the Belfast Bible College respectively. Visits have been made to the districts of Bishops Csiha and Tökés last May by Rev Terry McMullan, and Rev John Kirkpatrick visited Budapest and met with our personnel while there. Prof McCullough will represent our Church at the General Assembly of the Transylvanian District in Cluj in May and he will also be exploring the possibility of more ministers coming to study in Belfast.

51. We expect to send a team to teach English in two situations in Transylvania this summer and it is hoped that this will further develop relationships between our Churches. A Youth Board team will spend two weeks working with disabled children from Chernobyl at a camp near Debrecen in Hungary.

52. Our relationships with the **Église Réformée de France (ERF)** have grown and developed during the year at both national and local level. Rev Jim Campbell is to represent our Church at the National Synod of the ERF which will be held this year in May in Nantes to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the Edict of Nantes (1598). The edict ended the French wars of religion. The Huguenots were given a measure of freedom to exercise their religion and were also granted civil equality and fair administration of justice.

53. We expect a PCI minister to be called to work in a parish of the ERF from July this year. Rev Gordon and Mrs Sandra Campbell have been on furlough with their family since last July and Mr Campbell is currently on study leave. He hopes to take up the post of Reader in New Testament in the Reformed Faculty of Theology in Aix en Provence in the autumn. We look forward to the day when we will receive a French minister on secondment to our Church. We continue our support for the work of Mr Stephen Pacht among the people of Israel in France and reports have been received of a good and fruitful summer outreach campaign in Paris with many contacts being made. For the period of outreach at the World Cup in July Stephen will be joined by three French Jewish Christian men, all of whom are potential future missionaries.

54. Over the past thirteen years strong links have been developed with the **Spanish Evangelical Church (SEC)** and particularly with the Presbytery of Andalucia. Mr Dani Reyes, who completed his BD in Belfast last June, was married to Miss Ruth Jamison in July and returned to Spain in the autumn. Mr Reyes is serving in Torre del Mar this year, pastoring the English-speaking congregation as well as engaging in other work in the Presbytery and is ably supported by his wife.

55. The SEC emerged in 1868 when a measure of religious freedom was granted to non-Roman Catholics. Today the SEC is a united Church and while there is a strong reformed influence, the local Churches tend to be congregational in ethos. The SEC have requested two ministers/church workers for the Andalucia and Levante Presbyteries to engage in pastoral ministry and in mission and evangelism. Plans are being made for a visit of three to five Spanish pastors this year to experience the life of our Church and to establish friendships with local congregations. The twinning of a Presbytery or congregation of the PCI and the SEC is envisaged for 1999.

56. The work in **Hamburg** among the people of Israel was commenced in 1845 by Rev James Craig and was continued from 1884 by Rev Arnold Frank in what is called the golden age of the Hamburg Mission. For several reasons, and particularly as a result of the holocaust, the work of the Jerusalem Church has decreased. For the past few years we have been considering the future of our relationship with the Jerusalem Church in Hamburg and a resolution will be brought to the Board later this year and any action taken reported to the 1999 General Assembly.

EDUCATION IN MISSION

57. A revised three-year cycle of Presbytery Deputation Tours is now in place with tours being held in seven Presbyteries each year. Deputation tours are still an important means of sharing vision for, and information about, our work in mission overseas. We continue to strive to communicate in relevant and effective ways but the success of these tours depends largely on the level of support and enthusiasm generated by ministers, mission agents and congregational mission committees.

58. It is heartening to see many congregations with a strong interest in the work of the Gospel around the world but some still only show a marginal interest or none at all. We are pleased to see that a number of Presbyteries are actively engaged in encouraging congregations to take mission education seriously and to develop and maintain ongoing support of our work overseas through prayer and generous giving beyond their United Appeal commitments, as well as in other imaginative ways including visits overseas.

59. We see a need for congregations and Presbyteries to take a more active interest in missionaries from within their own Presbytery who are serving under the Board or with other mission agencies. There is scope for organising Presbytery Mission Rallies (or other appropriate gatherings) to coincide with missionaries' furlough dates, rather than waiting for the next Presbytery Deputation Tour. These rallies would bring people up to date with what is happening overseas.

60. Congregations and Presbyteries need to ensure that overseas mission is firmly on the agenda for young people and that appropriate and imaginative steps are taken to enable them to be regularly informed about the needs of overseas work and, in particular, to the challenge of a call to overseas missionary service.

61. Regular prayer is a key means whereby individuals and Church fellowships here at home can be involved in the ongoing work of mission overseas. The annual Points for Prayer Handbook, bi-monthly Prayer Updates, weekly Prayerline and missionaries' Prayer Letters are all important aids in enabling prayer to be relevant, focused and effective. We give thanks to God for the many individuals who pray regularly and faithfully for our personnel and partners in mission.

62. Prayerline appears on the PCI web site (<http://www.presbyterianireland.org>), whilst a recording continues to be available by 'phone on Belfast 326009. To facilitate congregations including it in printed Sunday announcements, Prayerline is now updated each Thursday morning. Since last September, it has also been available via e-mail

(internet:overseas@presbyterianireland.org). Some eighty individuals or Churches are currently receiving it by this means, with on average two to three new e-mail addresses being added each week.

63. No new videos have been commissioned since the very successful Malawi series, launched in late 1996. Preparations are in hand for the production of a set of programmes on the life and witness of the Church in Central Europe. This new series is scheduled for completion later this year and will include material related to the 1998/99 Sunday School and Youth Project which is also focusing on Europe.

64. The current selection of education in mission materials is good but is almost exclusively addressed to an adult audience. During the coming year we will be liaising with Church Education and Youth departments to produce (or find) a selection of mission education materials suitable for use in Sunday School and youth groups.

65. Plans are in hand to hold an education in mission seminar (or seminars) for Presbytery mission agents with four objectives:

- (1) to brief them on their role in the promotion of world mission;
- (2) to encourage them in their work;
- (3) to provide guidance and ideas on how to be more effective in promoting interest and involvement in overseas mission at congregational level, and
- (4) to review the role the Overseas office plays in mission education and to identify what more can be done or done differently to better effect.

PERSONNEL VISITS AND VISITORS

66. During the past year the following missionaries passed to higher service: Rev Howard P Cromie (India) 1932-70; and Mrs Florence Lyle (India) 1914-53. Rt Rev Joseph Chrispal, Bishop Emeritus of the Gujarat Diocese of the Church of North India, passed away in his eightieth year.

67. We gladly record our appreciation for the faithful witness and service of Drs Paul & Athena Carnaghan at Ekwendeni Hospital, Malawi from 1992-97; Miss Elma Harkness at Ekwendeni & Mulanje Mission Hospitals, Malawi from 1993-97; Rev John & Mrs Joan Hanna in Singapore and Indonesia from 1982-97, Mr Norman & Mrs Pauline Kennedy at Tharaka Rural Development Centre in Kenya from 1989-97 and Miss Joy Williamson at Livingstonia Secondary School, Malawi from 1995-97.

68. A careful reading of our missionaries 1997 reports indicates that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has over sixty missionaries fully committed to the task of making Christ known by word and in action in their overseas situations. We thank them for their devoted witness and service in the name of Jesus Christ as they live and work in remote and sometimes dangerous and difficult situations.

69. During the past year the following visits were made to attend consultations called by our partner Churches and united missions and to give pastoral care to our missionaries many of whom serve in rural locations: Rev John Kirkpatrick to Hungary, Romania and the Czech Republic; Rev Brian Gibson to Kenya and Malawi; Rev John Seawright to Israel; Mr Nigel Eves to Nepal; Prof Cecil McCullough to Romania, Cyprus and Lebanon; and Rev Terry

McMullan to Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Kenya, Spain, India, and Nepal. We were delighted that the Moderator and Mrs Hutchinson were able to visit Mr Christopher & Mrs Nivedita Macwan and experience the work in the Asian community in the Wembley area of London and also to visit the Jerusalem Church in Hamburg.

70. We are glad to report that during the year thirteen missionaries were appointed to serve overseas mostly in long-term capacities - in Israel (3), Jamaica (3) and Malawi (7) (See Appendix). We rejoice with these new missionaries in their calling and encourage our people to pray for them as they settle in to their new situations and commence serving Jesus Christ in the place of His appointment.

71. Dr Jack Thompson continues his work at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World (CSCNWW) in New College, Edinburgh. As well as research and writing on mission issues, the supervising of overseas post-graduate students and helping with the training of those involved in International Christian Leadership, Dr Thompson is working on a number of research projects about African Christianity and also on a Dictionary of Malawian Christianity. Dr Jack and Mrs Phyllis Thompson have both been installed as Elders in the Church of Scotland congregation of St Andrew's and St George's in Edinburgh.

72. Last summer young adults served as volunteers in Jamaica, Nepal, India and Malawi and medical, physiotherapy, dental and nursing students spent up to two months on overseas electives. A candidate for our ministry is spending up to a year with his wife gaining pastoral experience in the St Andrews Presbyterian parish in Nairobi, Kenya. We also arranged overseas placements for several Bible College students. A team was sent to Romania to teach English last summer and a Youth Board team went to Wembley to help with holiday Bible clubs in two of the local churches. We thank God for the positive experiences of these young adults and we thank them for the deputation they have undertaken throughout our Church during the past year.

73. We are always happy to welcome visitors and delegates from our partner Churches and since our last report we have received Revs David Umba Dingu & Johanis Josef Radjah from the Christian Church in Sumba, Indonesia; Rev Bernard Anterion, President of the Commission on Ministry of the Église Réformée de France; Rev Enrique Capo, President of the Spanish Evangelical Church; Mrs Rose Wedderburn, Deputy General Secretary of the United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands; Dr David & Alice Wang from Hong Kong, a speaker at the Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention; Rev Gabriel Gai Riam, Co-ordinator of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan's Relief & Development Agency; Rev Eben Nuban Timo and family from the Evangelical Christian Church in Timor; Dr Zeno Emmanuel from the Memorial Christian Hospital, Sialkot, Pakistan; Rev Laszlo Kallay, the International Secretary of the Kiralyagomellek District of the Reformed Church in Romania; and a three person delegation from the Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil - Rev Gerson & Mrs Sandra R Anunciacao and Rev Edilson B Nogueira. Mr Michael Askwith, the Executive Director Designate of United Mission to Nepal, visited member bodies in Ireland with his wife Celia at the end of March.

THE HOME BASE

74. We were delighted to receive an all-age group from the Prague 6 congregation last July. In October a team of ten persons from Timor, Indonesia visited the congregations and people of our Church and took part in a series of meetings and events, including a Presbytery deputation tour.

75. The nerve centre of the Board's work is the Overseas office and we thank all our staff for their devoted service throughout the year, and the way in which they have dealt with telephone inquiries and welcomed those who call in to the office for information about the Overseas Mission. We are in the process of installing a communication system which will enable the work to be carried out more efficiently and the time and skills of our office team to be used more effectively. We work in close co-operation with the Christian Education and Youth Secretaries and staff. We receive much valuable help and advice from the Clerk's office and appreciate the services provided by the Finance office.

76. We welcomed Mr Nigel Eves last June as the officer responsible for Education in Mission and Partner Relations in succession to Mr Stewart McCullough who retired last July. Mr Eves has been very active in the organisation and implementation of deputation tours and in the provision of information and publicity about our missionaries and the situations in which they bear witness to Jesus Christ. He brings to this office a wealth of experience in the business world and as an elder in the congregation of High Street, Holywood. He is beginning to formulate plans for the more effective communication of the task in Mission that confronts our people as we move towards the twenty-first century.

77. We value the willing co-operation of the Presbyterian Women's Association through its Executive Committee and the staff in the office and we thank them for their encouragement in the overseas work. We thank the members of the PWA for their continued support and encouragement and for the financial and prayer support of our missionaries. We also record our appreciation for the publicity given by the Wider World quarterly magazine, whose Editor is Mrs Alison McCaughan, to the overseas work of our Church. Miss Brian has been gaining experience of the work, particularly in Nepal, over the past two years as the Board's Associate Secretary. We were saddened at her illness earlier this year and pray for a full recovery in the coming months.

78. The Board and its working committees, of which there are seven, seeks to fulfil its remit as set out in the Code, Par 279. The Board and our area and other committees meet normally twice each year, in February and October, with the October Board meeting being held at the close of the annual residential conference. Many members of the Board serve on one of the seven committees and are able to participate in the discussions and decision-making process, while the annual residential conference enables us to discuss and make recommendations about policy matters and receive inspiration and information about the overseas work.

79. Over the past financial year congregations, individuals and organisations, the Presbyterian Women's Association, Young Women's Groups, Children and Youth and the Junior Boys' Brigade have contributed approximately £236,000 to projects and special objects within our partner Churches. We record our thanks to all who work hard for the benefit of others

and we appreciate being able to make these additional funds available to those most in need. Special mention is made of the Sunday School & Youth Project which raised £78,000 for projects in India, Nepal and the work in Wembley, the PWA Birthday Thank Offering Fund which raised almost £16,000 for education facilities in Sudan; the Young Women's Groups project which raised over £12,000 for the uplift of Pastors in Pakistan and Church Extension/Theological Education in Jamaica and the Junior Boys' Brigade which raised £18,000 for a bookvan and books for the Christian Literature Association In Malawi.

80. Over the past year we have encouraged congregations and individuals to share in the overseas mission work of our church. We have been encouraged by the response of our members who have committed themselves to prayer and to supporting us financially through the United Appeal. We record our thanks to the United Appeal Board for helping to ensure that the target of honour for the total appeal is reached each year.

81. We value our membership of the Evangelical Mission Alliance and the opportunity to meet with others who are taking new initiatives in the mission of Jesus Christ. Our attendance as observers at several of the Forums of the Church's Commission On Mission provides much useful information about what is happening in missionary work today. Our membership of the British & Irish Association of Mission Studies provides opportunity to reflect on mission issues and concerns and to examine the methods being used to proclaim the Gospel in different contexts.

82. Change is the 'buzz' word of this decade in our society, in the world and in the Church of Jesus Christ. We must assess the effects of these changes if we are to continue to proclaim the unchanging Gospel effectively in the coming days.

83. We conclude this report by giving thanks to God our Father, to Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord and to the Holy Spirit who sustains, strengthens and guides us as we seek to fulfil our calling to go and make disciples of all nations. To God be the Glory.

APPENDIX

In this report the names of missionaries or volunteers in mission have not been mentioned but their names and years and spheres of service are listed below and are to be taken together with this report

BRAZIL

Mabel Colson	1990	Caiuá Indian Mission Dourados
Lynn & Heather Cochrane	1996	Independent Presbyterian Church National Mission in Mossoro

INDIA

James & Willi Barton	1966	Woodstock School
Linda Jackson	1996	Woodstock School
Norman & Joan Duncan	1994	Associate Director of Training, OM India
Brian Wilson	1996	Woodstock School

ISRAEL

- * Colin & Marjorie Dickson 1997 Stella Carmel Centre
 * Fiona Smyth 1997 Stella Carmel Centre

JAMAICA

- Claire Trueman 1962 Christian Education Co-ordinator,
United Church
 James & Pat Cameron 1990 Directors, Children's Homes
 Mark McMullen 1992 Boys' Brigade Skills Training
Programme
 Leonora Wasson 1994 Associate Regional Director,
Cornwall Council
 * Diana Winfield 1997 Associate Regional Director, North
Middlesex Council
 * Christine McMahan 1998 Director of United Church Senior
Citizen's Home

KENYA

- Stephen & Angelina Cowan 1985/9 Outreach & Development Work,
PCEA Tuum
 Uel & Gill Marrs 1989 Theological Education by Extension,
PCEA
 Deborah Ford 1996 Teaching at PCEA Pastoral Institute
 Kate Warnock 1996 Kiriani Community Training Centre,
PCEA

MALAWI

- Freda Algje 1969 Principal, Wives School, Zomba
Theological College
 John & Betsy Mann 1989 Chaplaincy, teaching and pastoral
work
 Richard & Brenda Kerr 1991 Synod Medical Co-ordinator and
teacher, Mzuzu
 Naomi Martin 1991 On furlough/study leave
 Margaret Young 1995 Midwife, Ekwendeni Hospital
 Diane Cusick 1995 Wives School, Zomba Theological
College
 Dick & Moreen Gordon 1996 Zomba Theological College &
Medical work
 Colin Dick 1996 Medical Officer at Ekwendeni
Hospital
 * Neil & Sara Kennedy 1997 Medical Officer & Teacher,
Embangweni
 * Clare McIntyre 1997 Karonga Girls' Secondary School
 * Shirley Rutherford 1997 Naming'azi Farm Training Centre
 * Shirley Stronge 1998 Nurse Tutor, Embangweni

NEPAL

Linda McKee	1985	Assistant to Executive Director, UMN
Max Watson/Alison Rodgers	1990	Medical Officers, Tansen Hospital
Joy Gowdy	1992	Tutorial teacher, Butwal
Pauline Orr	1993	Nurse/Tutor, Tansen Hospital
Amanda Christie	1995	Kathmandu International Study Centre
David & Sandra Rodgers	1995	Medical Officer, Amp Pipal
Sharon Creighton	1996	On furlough
Helen Johnston	1996	Personnel Officer, UMN
Peter Lockwood	1996	Khimti Hydro Project
Richard & Denise Ross	1997	Gandaki Boarding School

ROMANIA

Ilona Walsh	1993	Teaching & Church work, Zalau
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FRANCE

Gordon & Sandra Campbell	1989	Reader in New Testament in Faculty of Theology in Aix en Provence
Rodney & Denise Cameron	1998	Église Réformée de France

GREAT BRITAIN

Jack & Phyllis Thompson	1970	New College, University of Edinburgh
Christopher & Nevidita Macwan	1989	Working among Asians in Wembley

Short term missionaries serving for a minimum of two years, are supported in overseas locations. Their names and spheres of service are as follows -

CHINA

Stephen Graham	1996	Teacher, Shangrao Teachers' College
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INDIA

Sheena McKean	1996	Teacher, Woodstock School
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JAMAICA

* Karen Gilmer	1997	Teacher, Oberlin High school
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MALAWI

* Donald & Patricia McNutt	1998	Teachers, Livingstonia Secondary School
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HUNGARY

Trevor Purvis	1996	Teacher, Papa Reformed College
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* Appointed 1997/98

Volunteers in Mission are sent into overseas locations for up to one year and their names and spheres of service are as follows:

NEPAL

Joanne Thompson 1998 Medical Officer, Okhaldunga

KENYA

Jenny Jones 1997 Teaching Crafts, Kiriani Community Training Centre

Candidate for Ministry on overseas placement:

KENYA

David & Maggi Steele 1997 St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Nairobi

We work together with partner Churches and united missions and we list below those in leadership with their respective positions:

BRAZIL

Rev Mathias Quintela de Sousa President, Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil

Rev Abival Pires International Relations, Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil

Rev Noidy Barbosa de Souza General Secretary, Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil

CHINA

Bishop K H Ting Hon. President, China Christian Council
 Dr. Wenzao Han President, China Christian Council
 Rev. Su Deci General Secretary, China Christian Council

CZECH REPUBLIC

Rev Pavel Cerny President, Church of the Brethren
 Mr Karel Fojtik General Secretary, Church of the Brethren
 Rev Pavel Smetana President, Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren

FRANCE

Pasteur Michel Bertrand President, Église Réformée de France (ERF)
 Pasteur Marc Richalot General Secretary, ERF
 Pasteur Yo Ludwig Secretary for International Relations & Mission, ERF

HUNGARY & ROMANIA

Bishop Gusztav Bolcskei Presiding Bishop, Hungarian Reformed Church
 Bishop Kalman Csiha Transylvanian District of Reformed Church, Romania

Bishop Laszlo Tokes Kiralyhagomellek District of Reformed Church, Romania

INDIA

Rt Rev D K Mohanty Moderator of the CNI Synod
 Dr V S Lall General Secretary of the CNI Synod
 Rt Rev V M Malaviya Bishop of the Gujarat Diocese of the CNI
 Rt Rev M Andrews Bishop of the Agra Diocese of the CNI

INDONESIA

Rev Dr Beni Fobia Moderator, Evangelical Christian Church in Timor
 Rev S S Duan General Secretary, Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera
 Rev D Umbu Dingu General Secretary, Christian Church in Sumba

JAMAICA

Rt Rev Dr J Oliver Daley Moderator, United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands
 Rev Dr Richmond Nelson Acting General Secretary, United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands

KENYA

Rt Rev Dr. Jeseo Kamau Moderator of Presbyterian Church of East Africa
 Rev Patrick Rukenya Secretary General of Presbyterian Church of East Africa

MALAWI*Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP)*

Rev A M Mfuno Moderator, Synod of Livingstonia
 Rev Dr O P Mazunda General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia
 Rev L J Chinthenga Acting Moderator, Synod of Blantyre
 Rev M E Kansilanga General Secretary, Synod of Blantyre
 Rev E N Kamunga Moderator, Synod of Nkhoma
 Rev A A Sasu General Secretary, Synod of Nkhoma

MYANMAR (BURMA)

Rev Dr Lalengzaua Administrative Secretary, Presbyterian Church in Myanmar

NEPAL

Rev Edgar Metzler Executive Director, United Mission to Nepal
 Mr Michael Askwith Executive Director Designate, United Mission to Nepal

Pastor Robert Khartak

Senior Pastor of the Church in Nepal

PAKISTAN

Rev Arthur James
Elder Vincent David

Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
Executive Secretary, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

SPAIN

Rev Enrique Capó

President, Permanent Commission, Spanish Evangelical Church

Rev Alfredo Abad

Secretary, Permanent Commission, Spanish Evangelical Church

SUDAN

Rev John Gatluok Chol
Rev Peter Odok

Moderator, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan
General Secretary, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan

Rev Paul Bol Kuel

Associate Moderator, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan/Akobo

Rev Peter Gai Lual Marrow

Executive Secretary, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan/Akobo

THAILAND

Mrs Supaporn Insaeng

Director, Lamp of Thailand (a ministry of the Church of Christ in Thailand)

TOGO

Pasteur Fatsema Amiou
Pasteur Mathieu Ahogo

Moderator, Presbyterian Church in Togo
General Secretary, Presbyterian Church in Togo

ZAMBIA

Rev David Chiboboka

General Secretary, Synod of Zambia of the CCAP

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly encourage the Overseas Board to seek new ways of enabling our partner Churches to fulfil their mission, to bear witness to Jesus Christ and to be salt and light in their nations.
3. That the General Assembly convey to our partner Churches in Africa our support through prayer and in other appropriate ways, as they seek to provide pastoral care for their growing membership and as they encourage their people who cope with increasing poverty, disease, death and ethnic tension in this difficult period of their history.

4. That the General Assembly give thanks for the developing partnerships in mission with the Presbyterian Churches in Brazil and the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands with the prayer that God would richly bless their witness and service in the coming days.

5. That the General Assembly rejoice in the unity, witness and service of the Church of North India and in the spread of the Gospel among the peoples of the sub-continent, and encourage the Overseas Board to look for appropriate ways to share in Christ's mission in consultation with our partner Churches in India and Pakistan.

6. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the growth of the young Church in Nepal, which faces an enormous task in providing pastoral care and Biblical teaching, encourage those serving in Nepal to support Christ's Church in appropriate ways and urge our people to pray for the furtherance of the Gospel in that land.

7. That the General Assembly encourage the Overseas Board to strengthen its partner relations with the Churches in Indonesia and especially in Halmahera, Sumba and Timor, and convey their warm Christian greetings and prayers to our partner Churches as they engage in mission and evangelism in the midst of a deteriorating economic and social situation.

8. That the General Assembly rejoice in the courageous witness to the Gospel by Christians throughout the Middle-East, encourage the move towards greater unity in the body of Christ and pray that recent reverses on the diplomatic front will not prevent further progress towards a just and lasting peace in that area.

9. That the General Assembly give thanks for the growing relations with our partner Churches in Europe with the prayer that through an increasing number of exchange visits we will be mutually encouraged in our witness to Jesus Christ as we look towards the new millennium.

10. That the Overseas Board, in the light of our changing world and our changing constituency, review our education in mission programmes, and seek new and challenging ways of encouraging our Church family to share in the mission of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.

11. That the General Assembly give thanks for the faithful witness and service of our missionaries and their colleagues in our partner Churches and missions in many different and often difficult and dangerous situations and commend them and their families to the whole church for prayer and practical support as they continue to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

12. That the General Assembly thank congregations, organisations and individuals for their valued support for the mission of Jesus Christ in prayer and by their giving and further thank all who have given their time and talents to help our Church fulfil its missionary calling.

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

HOME BOARD

Convener: Rev Dr J B MOORE

Secretaries: Rev R F S POOTS

Miss E BRIAN

1. Life in Ireland today is one of vibrancy, uncertainty and challenge. The Republic is booming economically but its life and beliefs are increasingly pluralistic. The North looks to the future expectant, unsure, still violent and still struggling to live with difference.

2. For the Church it is a time of unprecedented challenge as by God's grace we endeavour through the Home Board to take up the challenge to serve city congregations in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway and smaller scattered congregations in the south and west, inner-city congregations in Belfast where indifference is widespread and social problems are enormous and the new growing congregations of Church Extension.

3. The Home Board's ministry is therefore strategic as it supports by prayer, interest and finance those who answer God's call in Jesus Christ to serve His Church in Ireland to-day. In particular we are responsible for assistantships, almost exclusively in Belfast, new ministries in the 'Golden Mile' area of Belfast, Movilla Church Extension, Carlow and Clonmel, deaconesses working in hospitals, Friendship Houses, and Advice Centres as well as in congregations.

4. In response to the Strategy for Mission Committee's proposals talks continue between the Board, the Board of Evangelism and Training and the Board of Social Witness with a view to setting up a new Board of Mission for Ireland. Such a Board would have many advantages but there are a number of difficulties to be worked through.

Retiring Convener

5. The Church owes an immense debt to the Board's office-bearers. We mention especially the Rev Alistair Bill who completes a significant and notable term of service at this Assembly. He has been assiduous in his labours on behalf of the Home Mission, wise in his counsel, efficient in his work, caring in his relationships with the Churches and he deserves not only the thanks of the Mission but of the whole Assembly.

6. We pay tribute, too, to Miss Elizabeth Brian who is recovering from surgery and whom we commend to your prayers and love.

7. The Rev Derek Poots has been Acting Clerk of the Assembly during the Moderator's year of office. We have missed him but look forward to his return to a more 'on the ground' role!

8. We express our gratitude also to the Conveners of Church Extension, the Rev George Moffett and Mr Hubert Taggart, OBE, and to Mr J W Russell and the highly successful Presbyterian Mutual Society.

ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE

1. Interviews for fifth year students, and some others who are taking courses outside Ireland, were held on 22 December, 1997.
2. Fifteen requests for assistants were received this year and arrangements were made for the assignment of fifteen students. A maximum of nine are expected to be available for assignment next year.
3. Fourteen licentiates will become eligible and available for call on 15 May, 1998 and a further twelve are expected to reach eligibility in May, 1999.

R F S POOTS, Acting Convener

HOME MISSION COMMITTEE

PWA HOME DEPARTMENT

Mrs P Sleith reports:

1. PWA continues to work in association with the Home Mission Committee to “provide for the recruitment, training, organisation and support of deaconesses and woman workers in various areas of the Church’s life and interest”. There are 27 deaconesses, 1 woman worker and 1 probationary deaconess serving the Church.

Personnel

2. Following recommendations made by the PWA/Home Board Personnel Committee the following appointments and decisions were made.

Personnel Changes

3. Mrs Sandra Jardine resigned as Woman Worker in Tullycarnett congregation on 8 June, 1997.

4. Mrs Jacqueline O’Neill began as a Probationary Deaconess in Christ Church, Dundonald, on 1 August, 1997.

5. Miss Edna Morrow resigned as Deaconess in Hamilton Road, Bangor on 31 August, 1997.

6. Miss Evelyn Whyte was Inducted as Deaconess in First Lisburn on 21 September, 1997.

7. The Home Board renewed the appointment of Miss Eleanor Drysdale to First Holywood following the Installation of Rev J N I McNeely.

8. Mrs Sharon Heron was Commissioned and Inducted as Deaconess in Strand congregation on 16 November, 1997.

9. Approval was given by the Home Board for Mrs Leta Halliday to extend her service as Woman Worker in W J McQuiston Memorial congregation for a further year.

10. Miss Anne Burrows (Belvoir Park Hospital) and Miss Sarah Swindle, (Musgrave Park & Forster Green Hospitals) retired from full-time employment on 31 January, 1998. Both are working part-time from 1 February, 1998.

11. Miss Ruth Petticrew has been seconded for two years to Youth & Community Ministry in Townsend Street Social Outreach Centre.

12. During the year the PWA/Home Board Personnel Committee met with all the Deaconesses and the Woman Worker and they each shared something of the work in which they are involved.

13. Discussions are on-going with representatives from Donegal about the future role of a deaconess within the Presbytery.

PRESBYTERIAN MUTUAL SOCIETY LIMITED

Mr J W Russell reports:

1. The Directors are pleased to report that the Society has passed another significant milestone in its development with the total assets now exceeding six million pounds.

2. Increasing numbers of Presbyterians are making use of the services available. This is evident from the figures which show that the last financial year has seen new investment rise to over £1.5m and repayments total £630,000.

3. Considerable progress has been made in putting available funds to best use through lending to shareholders with new advances to borrowers this year climbing to £2.4m.

4. Over 1,500 shareholders have benefited from the successful results achieved with a dividend of 7% distributed at 31 March, 1998.

5. We conclude with our thanks to God for His guidance over the year and pray for His continued blessing in the future.

HOME MISSION GENERAL

Introduction

1. The work of Home Mission is essentially two-fold: firstly, as a supportive agency to over 70 small congregations throughout Ireland, encouraging the work and witness in such congregations, assisting with grants for up-keep of buildings and for travel, assisting with salaries of deaconesses and assistant ministers in needy urban areas and providing summer assistants for various situations; secondly, and increasingly, to seek out new areas for expansion and development, such as was found in Nightlight and the 'experimental' ministries.

2. At this time of meeting in General Assembly we send greetings to those in the Home Mission family: to all ministers and their families, to elders and office-bearers, and to members of congregations. May each and everyone know the blessing of the Lord as we continue to serve Him, who is our light and our salvation, the stronghold of our lives.

Personnel

3. The Rev Ken McConnell retired from the congregations of Dunfanaghy and Carrigart on 31 December, 1997, having served there since 1989.

4. The Rev John Scott resigned from the congregations of Ballina, Ballymote, and Killala on 31 August, 1997, having served for 2 years, upon his appointment as a university chaplain in Liverpool under the auspices of the United Reformed Church.

5. The Rev Fred Vincent resigned on 31 January, 1998 from the united Presbyterian-Methodist congregation of Waterford on his appointment as Chaplain to the Northern Ireland Hospice in Belfast. He had served in Waterford since 1993.

6. We thank each of these ministers for their work in the Home Mission and wish them well in retirement or their new sphere of service.

7. During the year a number of ministers were ordained, installed in the Home Mission and inducted to various charges as follows:

8. Rev Dr Samuel Mawhinney started in a second Home Mission Development 'experimental' ministry, with responsibility for Cahir and Fermoy, on 19 September, 1997.

9. Rev Stephen Simpson began work as minister of Tullamore and Mountmellick on 27 September, 1997.

10. Rev Chris Aitcheson filled the long-standing vacancy of Kells, Corboy and Mullingar on 13 March, 1998.

11. We extend a warm welcome into the Home Mission to all of these brethren and their families and wish them the blessings of God in their life and work.

Experimental Ministries

Rev Stephen Johnston reports:

12. Since moving to Carlow in the summer of 1997 we have settled very well. Ruth and I are happy in our new surroundings and the children have settled into school. This focusing of our work in one area is good. It should help to consolidate the work already done and may create opportunities for the future. The team ministry involving Mr Philip and Mrs Liz Kelso continues to function very positively.

13. Another significant development this year has been moving the time of Sunday worship from the afternoon to 11 am. So far the signs all indicate that this has been a good decision.

14. The perimeter wall at the front and partly at the side of the church building has been removed and renovation of the front area and facade of the building undertaken. This work was instigated and carried out by the local County Council, at its expense. It has literally opened up our position in the community and the congregation is very happy about what has been done.

15. We have also begun a process of trying to improve the corporate life of our little Church community and our witness in this part of Ireland where God has placed us.

Rev Dr Samuel Mawhinney reports :

16. In September we moved to live in Clonmel, a large town of 18,000 people ten miles from Cahir. We have settled well into the situation and are thankful for the Lord's provision.

17. My primary responsibilities are to develop the work in Cahir and in Fermoy. The Cahir congregation meets for Sunday worship at 12 noon, with an average attendance of 21. The Tuesday Bible Study/prayer time, which took place in a member's home, has moved to the manse in Clonmel. An outreach service at Christmas was well attended. The Children's Club, average attendance of 18, continues weekly under the leadership of Mr Keith Preston of the Irish Mission.

18. The Fermoy congregation meets for worship on the first and third Sundays of the month at 10 am. Currently we meet in the local Church of Ireland hall and we are grateful for loan of this facility. The addition of the Moreland family (Irish Mission) has been encouraging, with Miss Julie Moreland leading the praise. Each Thursday we hold a Children's Club in the local resource centre with 9 children attending. Although the numbers are smaller than before, participation is excellent. The hotel Bible Studies have restarted, with an average attendance of eight.

19. In Fermoy one young lady has come to faith and we praise God for His saving power.

20. Approval has been given by Presbytery and the Home Board for the repair and renovation of the Fermoy church building. A very generous donation from 1st Antrim has allowed us to proceed with this work immediately.

21. Though our primary work is in Fermoy and Cahir we have also been encouraged to work in Clonmel itself. Since most of the Cahir congregation live in Clonmel and, since we believe it to be God's will to move the Church here, this will be the primary focus of our work in the coming year. Accordingly we have organised an evangelistic Bible Study in a hotel for six weeks after Easter and are seeking suitable premises for a continuing weekly Bible Study. There is also a weekly Children's Club run by Mr Keith Preston, with about 20 attending. We also hope to start a teenage Bible Study with those young people who have made a commitment to Christ over the years through the faithful teaching of God's Word to them in the Club.

22. We are sorry that the Preston family will be leaving us in the summer to go to Cavan/Monaghan. We thank God for their faithful ministry in Clonmel and Cahir and we trust that God will bring us other workers to continue what has been established here.

Nightlight

23. The outreach work of Nightlight is continuing in the entertainment area of Belfast with Mr John Luke as Director. A team of 28 volunteers, working on rota, take Christ onto the streets on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from 11 pm through to 3, 4 or even 5 am.

24. The volunteers are committed Christians of all ages and from a wide range of backgrounds who have a burden for the work of Nightlight and who have experienced clear direction from God to become actively involved in

taking the challenge of Christ to others. New team members go through application vetting and interview procedures and then receive on-the-job training. While not all those dealt with by Nightlight are under 18 years, the team adheres to the PCI Guidelines concerning the Children (NI) Order 1995. The team is constantly changing as individuals' personal circumstances alter and it is always encouraging to welcome new people on board.

25. Nightlight continues to be based at the Kinghan Church in Botanic Avenue where team members can meet for prayer before and after the work on the streets. It also provides somewhere to bring anyone in need of help and counselling. A regular Saturday morning (1 am to 3 am) Tea Bar is set up on the footpath outside the church and this has become an important contact point.

26. Mr Luke receives numerous invitations to speak to congregations and this reflects on the high level of support and interest shown by the Church in general. To help fulfil more of these requests some of the volunteers have agreed to take on deputation engagements. In October, 1997, Mrs Alison Sinclair was appointed to the post of temporary, part-time resource worker and, in that role, she has been able to produce prayer letters, information packs and leaflets and other resource material as well as co-ordinating deputation.

27. The work of Nightlight is overseen by a General Committee which meets twice a year, the day-to-day decisions being made by the smaller Executive Committee in consultation with Mr Luke.

28. The financial interest in the work continues to be a great source of encouragement. During 1997, £22,100 was received from congregations and individuals. Young Women's Groups have decided to take Nightlight as its Home Project for 1998/99 and, as well as being of financial benefit, there will be opportunities for Groups to see, at first hand, what is involved in this work.

Finance

29. We would again express our grateful thanks to the United Appeal Board, and all those who contributed through each congregation, for the £220,000 we received, being our full budgeted allocation for 1997.

30. During the year income exceeded budget by 19% (approx. £50,000) due mainly to a large number of donations for Nightlight and a better than expected return on investments. Expenditure was 13% lower than budget (£44,000). Administration was more expensive, but grants and especially field costs were less than budgeted. The closing balance of £314,000 seems high, but all of this will be required to run Home Mission during the year.

31. Repair grants, totalling £76,000, which were allocated to 6 congregations, some dating from 1996, have not been drawn down which adds to the high credit balance.

32. We are grateful to have received bequests from the estate of Jeannie S Fleming (£200) and the estate of Miss E McLaughlin (£7,264.73).

33. In connection with the Development Ministries, the house in Kilkenny was sold in the summer of 1997 and a house bought at Carlow, the proceeds from the former financing the latter. This was to facilitate the move of the Johnston family to Carlow.

34. A new manse was bought for the Mawhinney family in Clonmel and this was funded out of existing monies.

35. Home Mission Repair Grants were paid in 1997 for work on improvement to congregational property in Enniscorthy and Wexford, Co Wexford; Arklow, Co Wicklow; Tullamore, Co Offaly; Boyle and Ballymote, Co Roscommon; Killala, Co Mayo; Kells, Co Meath; Naas, Co Kildare; Waterford; Howth, Co Dublin; Donegal and Rossknawlagh, Co Donegal; Stonebridge and Smithborough, Co Monaghan.

36. Home Mission congregations are encouraged to keep their exterior notice-boards in good repair and also to encourage the local authorities to provide direction posts, especially where buildings are off the beaten track. Where such notice boards are in a poor condition, the Committee will be glad to assist with replacement or refurbishment.

37. We would remind congregations wishing to receive repair grants that all applications must be approved before the work begins. It is also very helpful when work is being planned if an early contact is made with the Secretary or the Convener to advise of what is envisaged.

Alternating Ministries Scheme

38. The Alternating Ministries Committee is primarily a liaison group for the 5 charges which alternate between having a Methodist and a Presbyterian minister. The Committee consists of 5 representatives from each of the denominations. In recent years it has only been necessary to hold meetings annually.

39. On 24 September last we enjoyed the hospitality of the people of Galway, where the Committee met and discussed various developments in their Home Mission areas. The Presbyterians present were pleased to hear that:

- (a) services in Killarney are now held throughout the year, rather than merely in the summer;
- (b) the Methodists have appointed an additional worker to be based in Athy.

40. As a result of our discussions it was agreed to suggest to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster and to the Dublin and Midlands and Southern Districts of the Methodist Church, that there may be areas, especially in the Midlands, where closer co-operation might be profitable.

41. Informal reports were received from each of the schemes and matters of common concern were aired. Reference was made to the problems of changing over from one ministry to the next, to the property difficulties in Waterford and the need to have structures which allow for the representation of each congregation in both denominations. It was noted in respect of insurance that in each of the manses the cover for the building includes some £12,000 cover for contents.

The next meeting is planned for September, 1998 in Belfast.

Strategy for Mission Recommendations

42. As a result of the General Assembly decisions in 1997, a small sub-committee was appointed by the Home and Evangelism Boards to consider their implications. A report is printed as an appendix.

43. It is encouraging to report the increasing co-operation and team work of Home Mission ministers and Irish Mission workers, who support each other in various situations. A meeting of Irish Mission workers, Home Mission ministers and other ministers who work alongside Irish Mission workers, has been planned for Monday 16 November in Lucan.

Urban Mission Support

44. As a result of a number of representations made to the Home Mission from urban congregations in Belfast seeking help with mission in their areas, a sub-committee has been appointed to consider the need for and the issues involved in a policy for urban mission support. The need for such a policy is agreed, but at the time of writing no further work has been done.

Deputation

45. Home Mission ministers are encouraged to make themselves available to undertake deputation at Sunday services, mid-weeks, PWA and other meetings. We would especially encourage involvement in the deputation planned to Presbyteries for the first 3 Sundays of March each year, in co-operation with Church Extension and the Irish Mission.

Summer Assistantships

46. This scheme, which is administered and grant-assisted by the Home Mission, received only 3 applications from students seeking summer assistantships this year.

Administration

47. We in Home Mission are grateful to Presbyteries for monitoring grant applications and keeping us advised of changes in situations. In particular I would thank the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster and their Home Mission Advisory Committee, under its long-serving Convener, the Rev David Caskie, for the amount of time and energy given to this supervisory role. In this regard we thank Dr John Reid for his invaluable professional expertise, freely given over many years.

48. During this year when the Secretary has been Acting Clerk of Assembly much of the detailed work has been in other hands. Mr Stewart McCullough has meticulously taken care of the minutes of both Home Mission and Home Board meetings, and helped in the area of publicity. We thank him for his expertise and willingness. We are privileged to have Mrs Rosemary Thompson as Home Mission Treasurer and are grateful to her for undertaking substantial additional work in the area of finance, some of which has involved considerable travel to Home Mission situations.

49. I would also pay tribute to the indefatigable work of the secretaries in the office. Mrs Jennifer McClure and Mrs Joyce Anderson carry the work of Home Mission in the midst of other competing responsibilities and do so with good humour and willingness.

50. I conclude with thanks to our Heavenly Father who has blessed us in many ways in the past year and by his grace enabled us to advance his work. May all involved in it know his blessing in the days to come.

ALISTAIR R BILL, Convener

APPENDIX

Board of Mission in Ireland

(Joint report of the Home Board and the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training)

Strategy for Mission Proposals

This is a joint report of a sub-committee established by the Home Board and the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training.

1. The 1997 General Assembly passed the following resolutions:

That the General Assembly direct the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training and the Home Board to begin a process of working together towards the creation of a single Board for the mission of the PCI in Ireland and that they bring legislation accordingly no later than the 1999 Assembly. (GA Minutes 1997 p61, Res 12).

That the General Assembly strongly encourage the Home Mission, Irish Mission, Church Extension Committee and other agencies of Presbyterian mission in Ireland to begin a process by which they may continue their increasing levels of co-operation and work towards incorporation within a single agency, and that they jointly report to the General Assembly annually on their progress. (GA Minutes p72, Res 14).

Proposed New Board

2. To begin to carry through these resolutions the Home Board and the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training appointed representatives to a sub-committee.

3. Its work has focused on the first of the resolutions. Given that there was largely agreement among the constituent Committees as to the advisability of this restructuring, we outline for approval by the 1998 Assembly the embryonic form of the new Board. It is planned that detailed legislation will come before the 1999 Assembly, in accordance with the decision of the 1997 Assembly.

4. With the approval of the Assembly the proposed new Board will be composed of the following committees: Home Mission, Church Extension, Evangelism, Irish Mission, Divine Healing.

The Christian Training Committee will transfer to a proposed new Board of Studies and Christian Training.

The Marriage and the Family Committee will transfer to the Board of Social Witness. We are grateful to that Board for its willingness to take on this additional responsibility. It is recognised that some safeguards would need to be

in place in order to maintain continuity in this Committee during the change-over period.

5. The placing of the Assignment Committee, whether in the new Board of Mission or in the new Board of Studies and Christian Training, is proving more difficult, with good reasons for its being in either board. However, it is envisaged that it should remain under the 'Home' Board for the time being.

6. The name of the new Board was discussed at some length. While we propose that it be the Board of Mission in Ireland, we acknowledge that this is not completely satisfactory. Other committees, eg within the Social Witness and the Youth Boards, can legitimately argue that they are also involved in mission. However, no other suggestion sufficiently commended itself to the sub-committee.

New Mission Agency

7. Some initial thought has been given to what would be involved in bringing about one mission agency. Further discussion will be continued over the next two years.

8. It is expected that the new Board, if approved, will take on responsibility for forwarding the process.

9. While acknowledging that the Home and the Irish Missions have deepened in their working relationship in recent years, the sub-committee recognises that the merging of the Home Mission and the Irish Mission may be possible only out of an effective new Board of Mission.

CHURCH EXTENSION COMMITTEE

1. Assisting Church Extension charges, monitoring new developments and planning new church buildings are all part of the remit of the Church Extension Committee. During this past year financial help has been given to some Charges. This is directly related to the finance that is available. The Committee has endeavoured to monitor new developments and would appreciate more in-put from Presbyteries. The plans for the new building at Movilla were examined and discussed on a number of occasions.

2. The following is a summary of the work of the Committee during 1997.

Newtownards Area

Movilla

3. The congregation now has 220+ families (1996 - 177) Specified Sources £26,370 (1996 - £19,177). We give thanks to God for the continuing growth at Movilla.

4. After discussion with the architects and representatives of Movilla, plans for the new church building were agreed and forwarded to the Planning Authority. Building will commence in 1998.

Belfast Area*Taughmonagh*

5. Assistance was given to Taughmonagh towards the cost of supplying and fitting new PVC double glazed windows in the church.

New Mossley

6. Wire grills were fitted to the windows in the church. A major problem is lack of storage space. At present a proposal is being considered as to how this problem can be solved.

Coleraine Area*Ballysally*

7. There are some problems with the buildings and a number of maintenance issues that are causing concern. A meeting is to be arranged with the Conveners and representatives of Ballysally to examine these issues.

Londonderry Area*Strathfoyle*

8. Rev S Stewart was installed as minister of Donagheady and is now stated supply in Strathfoyle. We pray God's blessing on his ministry.

Sites*Ballymacoss, Lisburn*

9. We still retain our option on this site.

10. The DOE has produced a new plan for the development in the Lisburn area. This will be examined and, if thought necessary, the DOE will be approached re an option on another site.

Antrim

11. The development around Antrim is being kept under review.

Carrickfergus

12. We still hold this site.

Sunday School Support

13. In 1997 Sunday School contributions to Church Extension totalled £1,856. We thank Sunday School teachers and all the children for their regular support.

United Appeal Allocation

14. The request for £225,000 has been met in full.

Elders in Church Extension Charges

15. Under the present system a Church Extension Charge is not permitted to elect and ordain elders. Spiritual oversight is exercised through an Interim Session composed of elders from other congregations within the Presbytery. While the Committee acknowledges the work and commitment of Interim Session members, it is often true that, due to commitments in their own congregations, they are unable to become fully involved in the everyday life and work of the Church Extension Charge. After a charge has been running for a period of time there would be people who could serve as elders. The Committee is considering how a change in the system could be introduced.

Conclusion

16. The Committee thanks all who regularly support the work of Church Extension through the United Appeal, earmarked contributions, covenants and private donations and all other support that comes from Church organisations.

17. Grateful thanks is expressed to all who work and serve within Church Extension.

G MOFFETT, H TAGGART, Conveners

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Mutual Society

2. That the work of the Presbyterian Mutual Society be commended to all members of the Church.

Alternating Scheme

3. That the General Assembly appoint the Home Board Convener, Home Mission Convener, Home Mission Secretary, Revs D C Caskie, Dr R W J MacDermott, to the Alternating Ministries Scheme Committee.

Convenership

4. That the resignation of the Rev A R Bill, as Convener of the Home Mission Committee, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev. R. L. Craig be appointed in his place

Proposed New Board

5. That the General Assembly give general approval to the proposals as set out in the Appendix, 'Board of Mission in Ireland' and that appropriate legislation be presented to the 1999 Assembly in preparation for the appointment of a Board of Mission in Ireland by the Assembly of 2000 AD.

General

6. That the Home Board, with its associated working Committees, for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 280 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED**Anent Pars 280(1), 304(1) and (3), 305(2), 306(2), 307(1) and (5) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 208(1), 304(1) and (3), 305(2), 306(2) and 307(1) and (5) of the Code the words "Home Department" be deleted.

R F S POOTS

Anent Par 305(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 305(1) of the Code the words "P W A Home Department" be deleted and the words "P W A Secretary" substituted in their place.

R F S POOTS

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Executive Secretary: Miss ELIZABETH BRIAN

Theme for the year: "Christ - Our Hope"

(This report should be read in conjunction with the reports of the Home Board and the Overseas Board.)

1. In the kind of world in which we live, it is not always easy to be optimistic, but Christ and His love gives us grounds for hope. This was our message during 1997/98. Christ is our Hope, in our homes, in our Churches and in the community in which we live.

2. Miss Elizabeth Brian, the Executive Secretary, has been off ill since mid-January. The PWA Executive Committee is very grateful to Mrs Phyllis Sleith, PWA Central President, for helping out during Elizabeth's absence.

Serving on the PWA Executive Committee

3. The Executive Committee met on 10 occasions throughout the year. Members carry the responsibility of steering the work of the Association.

4. Membership of Executive Committee 1997/98

Mrs M Russell (Ards)	Mrs G Irwin (Foyle)
Mrs M Thompson (Armagh)	Mrs M Patterson (Iveagh)
Mrs A Erwin (Ballymena)	Mrs G Drennan (Monaghan)
Mrs H Murdock (North Belfast)	Mrs C Finlay (Newry)
Mrs D McMullan (South Belfast)	Mrs H Greer (Omagh)
Mrs L Robinson (East Belfast)	Mrs M Binnie (Route)
Mrs N Johnstone (Carrickfergus)	Mrs P Sleith (Templepatrick)
Mrs H Hull (Coleraine)	Mrs P Orr (Tyrone)
Mrs E McLaughlin (Derry/S'bane)	Mrs M Pepper (YWG C' man)
Mrs P Johnston (Donegal)	Mrs A McCaughan (Wider World)
Mrs M Boggs (Down)	Mrs R Maguire (ex officio)
Mrs M Boyd (Dromore)	Miss E Brian (ex officio)
Mrs C Poynton (Dublin/Munster)	

5. New members for 1998/99:-

Mrs Zoe Vallely (Carrickfergus)
Mrs Hilary Hull (Coleraine)
Mrs Hilary Jess (Dromore)

6. Office-Bearers 1997/98

President:	Mrs Phyllis Sleith
Home Vice-President:	Mrs Cherry Poynton
Overseas Vice-President:	Mrs Margaret Thompson
Home Treasurer:	Mrs Marbeth Russell
Overseas Treasurer:	Mrs Gwen Irwin

7. Office-Bearers to be installed at the Annual General Meeting on 14 May, 1998:

Home Vice-President: Mrs Lois Robinson
 Overseas Vice-President: Mrs Margaret Thompson

8. Mrs Cherry Poynton has served as Home Vice-President for three years. During these years she has given generously of her time in attendance at meetings of Boards and Committees. PWA would take this opportunity to thank Mrs Poynton for her dedicated service.

9. The Annual Prayer Meeting, held on 1 May, 1997 in the Chapel, Church House, was well attended and gave encouragement to PWA.

10. The Annual Meetings were held on 8 May, 1997 and again, at both meetings, the Assembly Hall was filled to capacity. As 1997 was the 25th Annual Meeting, former Presidents were introduced. The Central President, Mrs Phyllis Sleith, gave the closing message.

11. On Saturday 20 September, 1997 the PWA Annual Conference was held in Stormont Church Hall. Missionaries and deaconesses shared the challenges of service to-day and representatives of the General Committee reviewed the way forward for PWA into the new Millennium.

Finance

12. PWA continues to need more than £600,000 each year to support its personnel at home and overseas and depends solely upon the generosity of its members throughout Ireland. The Executive Committee would place on record its thanks to all PWA members who contribute so faithfully.

Birthday Thankoffering

13. The Birthday Thankoffering to date amounts to £15,245 and is going towards the refurbishment of the PWA flat at Marlborough Park North.

Bequests

14. PWA acknowledges with thanks the following bequests:-

Mary Jane Pollard	£1,300
Mabel Cromie	£1,000
Florence Elizabeth Curry	£3,825
Grace Kirkpatrick Black	£ 500

Faithful Service

15. The dedicated service given daily to PWA by Mrs Rita Maguire, Miss Margaret Young and Miss Naomi Campbell, in the office, ensures the efficient administration of the Association and PWA acknowledges this with a deep sense of gratitude.

16. PWA expresses gratitude to Mrs Margaret Clarke and the members of the PROP group for their continued willingness to provide voluntary assistance during the year. Once again they joined with PWA retired personnel for a coffee morning on 12 June, 1997.

Serving at Home

17. PWA is grateful for the continuing support given by the Secretary of the Home Board, Rev Derek Poots. His willingness to help and advise on many issues is very much appreciated.

18. The Deaconess Carol Service was held in the Kinghan Mission on 12th December, 1997. PWA Executive members and office staff joined the deaconesses and woman workers for the service.

19. During the year, office-bearers of the Deaconess Association and PWA office-bearers have met together to further consider the role and development of the Diaconate. These meetings have also provided an opportunity for discussion and the sharing of concerns.

20. New deaconess and woman worker information packs were produced for use in branches.

Service Overseas

21. In all aspects of overseas work PWA is guided by Rev T McMullan. His insight and understanding of personnel and partner relationships is shared freely with PWA and the Executive Committee is deeply appreciative of his continuing support and encouragement.

22. PWA continues to support personnel overseas, pay a proportion of some grants to partner Churches and have responsibility for the upkeep of the PWA flat. Currently 18 missionaries are supported by PWA.

Brazil	Miss Mabel Colson
India	Miss Linda Jackson
Israel	Miss Fiona Smyth
Jamaica	Miss Claire Trueman
	Miss Leonora Wasson
	Miss Diana Winfield
Malawi	Miss Freda Algie
	Miss Naomi Martin (study leave)
	Miss Margaret Young
	Miss Diane Cusick
	Miss Clare McIntyre
Nepal	Miss Linda McKee
	Miss Joy Gowdy
	Miss Pauline Orr
	Miss Amanda Christie
	Miss Helen Johnston
	Miss Sharon Creighton
Romania	Miss Ilona Walsh

23. Throughout the year consultations between the Overseas Board and PWA Executive Committee have continued, in order to establish the best way in which the Overseas Board and PWA may work together in the future for the good of the overseas mission of PCI.

24. In September, 1997 Mrs Phyllis Sleith visited Kenya. In a very full programme she visited PCI missionary personnel, was a guest of the Women's Guild of PCEA and an observer at a Consultation with Partner Churches of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan. Mrs Sleith also handed over a cheque, amounting to £15,667.71, for Church Schools in Sudan which was the amount given by PWA members to the 1996/1997 Birthday Thankoffering Fund.

25. In April 1997 Miss Elizabeth Brian, as PWA Executive Secretary and Associate Secretary of the Overseas Board, visited missionaries in India and Nepal and attended the UMN Board of Directors' meeting.

Wider World

26. Wider World has enjoyed another excellent year and has included articles about our Church's work in Ireland and overseas, news of our workers as well as articles which seek to inspire and challenge. There has also been a Children's Page compiled by Mrs Adrienne Campbell and the covers of the magazine are produced by Mr Raphael Sutter.

27. 27,000 copies of Wider World are printed each quarter. Copies of the magazine are sent to partner Churches on all five continents.

28. Sincere thanks are due to all the contributors to the magazine and to the congregational agents who work very hard to promote the magazine within their local Churches.

Young Women's Groups

29. This year YWG shared the PWA theme "Christ - Our Hope". The booklets produced by the Programme Planning Committee were much appreciated and widely distributed.

30. The new office-bearers are Mrs Amanda Cooper, Newsletter Editor, and Mrs Margaret Pepper, Chairman. Gratitude is expressed to the retiring office-bearers; Mrs Charlotte Stevenson for her leadership and dedication as Chairman and to Mrs Heather Hamill who produced the Newsletter in a very capable manner.

31. Mrs Annie Erwin replaced Mrs Marbeth Russell as PWA representative on YWG Central Committee.

32. The venue for the Spring Rally, on Thursday 1 May, 1997, was First Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church. Mrs Christine Finlay spoke on how Christ is our hope in our suffering, sorrow and sin. There was a good attendance with all but one Presbytery represented.

33. The final Annual Coffee Morning was held on Thursday 23 October, 1997 in Church House. A cheque for £6,000 was handed over to Rev Terry McMullan for work in Jamaica and another for £6,050 to Rev Robert Liddel for work in Pakistan. Rev Frank Sellar received a cheque for £13,000 in aid of the Adelaide Road Church project in Dublin. In future, cheques will be handed over at the Annual Rally.

34. Projects for 1997/98 are as follows:-

Home - The Nightlight ministry, led by Mr John Luke, in Belfast.

Overseas - Children's hospital admissions, medical supplies and resources for the AIDS prevention and education programme in Livingstonia, Malawi.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev J M CATHCART
Secretary: Mr N J CHAMBERS

Everyone needs what you've got!

1. A shoe company sent two salesmen to a small foreign country to set up a franchise. The first one sent home a fax saying, "Nobody here wears shoes, book me a flight home." The other faxed home saying, "Send me a shipment, everybody here needs shoes." The truth is that many people at some time in their lives will need what the Board has to offer. So often the question is asked, "What is the Church doing about"?" or "What is the Church saying about"?" What are we doing about the elderly, the student, the deaf, the alcoholic, the ex-offender, the unemployed? What are we saying about infertility and childlessness, homosexuality, euthanasia and child protection? You will find out what the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is doing and saying about these issues in the reports which follow.

2. What do Christians do? Wormwood, the junior demon in CS Lewis's *Screwtape Letters*, might reply:

3. ".....their function is to live happy and contented lives, keeping themselves to themselves, and having nothing whatsoever to do with poorer members of the community. Good Hades, you don't want to be mixing up with the riff raff! If you're not careful, some of them might start coming to your church and lowering the tone of the place. No, you don't want to let that happen."

4. Wormwood's caricature of the Christian community does not apply to all of the Presbyterian Church. It does not because many of our Churches are concerned about the poorest members of society and the root causes of poverty, family dysfunction, mental ill-health and crime. The Board of Social Witness is grateful for United Appeal Board support in sustaining a wide range of social witness ministries to people who are unable to live with their families because of ageing, alcoholism and drug addiction, or because they have been rejected by society as a result of having committed a serious offence. We see this as the expression of incarnational theology as we identify with people irrespective of the cause of their human condition and minister to their need. In doing so we are reminded that God judges us not according to what we believe, but by the effect our belief has upon our outlook, choices and actions.

5. But we are not complacent. We know that the family is the most omnipresent social cement in every religion and society in recorded history. We also believe that parents should be able to raise their children in a society that is just and equitable in the way that resources are allocated by Government. The rise in the incidents of divorce, the increasing number of children born outside of marriage and the increasing divide between the relatively affluent and those who are poor causes us concern.

6. Our response to these symptoms of social, economic and moral dysfunction will take different forms. We must lobby Government to implement legislation and social policies that protect vulnerable people, particularly those

who are poor. We must continue to articulate the case for the protection of the unborn child, to oppose the popularisation of gambling, the recreational use of drugs, the lowering of the age of consent for homosexual practices and to express a biblical view of morality on many other policies where we believe societies should be protected.

7. Our witness must, however, go beyond lobbying and political argument. The Church must engage with people where they are, irrespective of the circumstances that brought them there. This approach, we believe, is consistent with the example of Christ (Luke 18 35-43).

8. The evidence of recent history is that Churches that have learned to respond to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of people have been transformed. This approach should not be confused with the 'social gospel'. In fact, through community participation, opportunities for reflection and evangelism increase dramatically.

9. The local church needs to review its strategy for mission and consider how it ought to engage with the community in which it is located. This will involve listening to what members of the community say are their needs and the underlying problems within the neighbourhood and identifying with them, thus providing a platform for evangelism. Social action should be separate and distinct from mission strategy.

10. The Board of Social Witness will aim to support Presbyteries and local congregations which are interested in social action approaches by making available advice and support.

11. The Board is pleased to welcome Mr Norman Chambers as the Director of Social Service, in succession to Mrs Pamela Noonan (née Lockie). He brings a wealth of experience in Social Services and has already proved his worth to Church and Board.

12. This Assembly brings to an end the Co-Convenership of Rev Jim Sleith and Mr W J Cairns of the War Memorial Hostel Committee. Their leadership has been visionary and courageous both in the development at Derryvolgie and in the sale of Brunswick and Howard Houses. We thank them for the time and energy they have given to this Convenership and for their contribution to the overall work of the Board.

13. We bring a resolution asking that the Social Witness Centres Committee be thanked and discharged. This Committee has developed and nurtured key projects such as Carlisle and Thompson Houses and PCI Enterprises which now have their own management structures and should be invited to report direct to the Board through its Standing Committee. We thank Rev Rodney Thompson for his brief Convenership of the Social Witness Centres Committee.

14. Carlisle House has brought its work onto the street with the opening of a new information centre 'INSIGHT'. This is based in Upper North Street and is open 2.00 - 5.00 pm on weekdays and 2.00 - 8.00 pm on Thursdays. Schools are able to make appointments for morning visits - here literature is available on both the prevention and cure of alcohol and drug misuse.

15. Rev John Faris has convened the Southern Social Witness Development Committee for many years and has decided to retire. We thank him for all he has done in promoting the work of the Board in the Republic and

for ensuring that the all-Ireland dimension of our mission has not been lost. We look forward to continuing this with his successor.

16. Finally, it is necessary to thank a number of people for their professional and skilful help; Mr Norman Chambers for his work as Acting Adviser, Mrs Rosemary Thompson (Honorary Treasurer), Miss Arlene Wilson and Mrs Ellen Wilmont in the office, Mrs Phyllis Sleith for her spell in the office, all the hardworking conveners and committee members, Mr Charlie Robinson for his guidance over the finer details of job descriptions and employment regulations and to a number of government departments and agencies without whose vital financial support our work could not continue.

Rev John Faris, Convener of the Social Witness Southern Development Committee, reports:-

1. **The Volunteer Scheme** continues with Miss Anna Martin working with Abbey and Miss Andrea Crumpler working with Adelaide Road, Donore congregations and the linked Dolebusters projects.

2. **The Dublin and Munster Presbytery Drugs Awareness Project** had a reasonable response in the Dublin area, although attendances might have been higher. There seemed, however, to be little response in congregations outside Dublin. The way ahead may be to encourage these smaller more isolated groupings to work with other denominations each in their own locality to have a Christian approach to these issues. We record our appreciation of the hard work in this project of Rev Fred Vincent who has left Waterford to take up a post with the Northern Ireland Hospice.

3. Our discussion on **Strategy** has got to the point where we feel we should work towards the appointment of a specialist in social witness with experience of our Church in the South who could work on a short term basis (not more than three years) to help one or two congregations. A working group has been appointed to formulate detailed, costed proposals. One on-going point of study is a proper definition of 'social witness' in the southern context. It is felt it should be more than 'social work'. It has an evangelistic aspect, yet it must not be simply a bait for making converts. Social witness may be a valid outworking of discipleship even though none are converted, but we must not neglect Christ's call to spread the good news.

4. **Grants** and other **expenditure** (eg the volunteer scheme) have been approved as before, but it is likely that there will need to be increasing provision over the next couple of years for the proposed 'specialist'.

Ministers in Recognised Service

Rev John Chambers, Chief Executive, Relate Northern Ireland reports:-

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

1. Relate Northern Ireland was founded as the Northern Ireland Marriage Guidance Council on 4 September, 1947.

2. In September 1997 we celebrated 50 years along with scores of couples who were celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary. Mr & Mrs

Robert Wylie from Londonderry were actually married on the day the organisation was formed.

3. Unfortunately, we also faced quite a serious financial deficit during the year, which has curtailed some of the developments we need to make. Despite this we moved into our first premises in Newry in Ballybot House. We also started counselling from the Parents' Advice Centre in Ballymena and we are about to start counselling in Omagh once again.

RESEARCH

4. I reported last year on the interim report on the short-term effects of going to Relate as reported by our clients. We have now received the final report which followed-up clients 6 months and 12 months after counselling.

5. A year after completing counselling 83% of clients indicated they were glad they went to Relate and about half indicated that going to Relate had helped save their marriage. That is a very gratifying figure as people who come for counselling are usually experiencing extreme problems. Those who follow through the counselling to the end are much more likely to have a positive outcome. There was a considerable reduction in their level of psychological distress and these improvements were maintained over time.

6. After ending counselling, most clients got on-going support from other professionals. 16% said they consulted their clergy as compared to only 1% who were referred by clergy in the first place.

7. A very large number of clients wished they had gone for counselling sooner. Many of those who separated said they were convinced they would still be together if they had only come sooner.

8. For many people who parted during or after counselling, the experience helped them deal with the trauma and reduced their distress.

9. We are studying this valuable information carefully and already we are changing some aspects of our service in the light of this report.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. Over the last session the Alcohol and Drug Education Committee has spent a great deal of time thinking about future strategy. This was carried out against the background of two overriding concerns:

- the need to adequately respond to the growing menace of drug abuse in our society;
- the importance of being good stewards of the resources provided by our Presbyterian people through the United Appeal.

2. The Committee was convinced of the need to expand our work and make the most effective use of the resources at our disposal. To that end the Committee agreed a strategy which involved both closer co-operation with others and a larger degree of decentralisation of the work.

- **Co-operation** It is crucially important that we work more closely with other Church agencies such as the Youth Board, Carlisle House etc. To that end discussions have been held and one Committee meeting had Carlisle House as its venue. The ADE Committee members were

deeply impressed with the nature of the work being carried out at Carlisle House and by the genuine Christian commitment of the staff. In addition to Church bodies we have sought to enlarge our relationship with Government Agencies, Health Boards and other specifically Christian organisations working in our field, such as Hope UK. In the coming year we will endeavour to build upon these contacts.

- **Decentralisation** It is the Committee's desire to arrive at a situation where every Presbytery area is served by local workers holding supplies of resources which are easily accessed. A Volunteer Training programme is being set up. A close partnership has been established with Hope UK which runs such a scheme on the mainland. It will provide us with high quality literature, customised for our needs, at discount prices and will help in setting up a fully accredited NVQ standard training programme and in the training of 6-10 volunteers as part of a pilot programme beginning in September, 1998. The volunteers, when trained, will be able to conduct meetings in congregations, schools, community and youth groups as well as being able to supply relevant literature. They will also become cascade trainers for future volunteers.

3. One consequence of the new strategy is that the full-time post of Education Officer, as presently constituted, has had to be declared redundant. The Committee would thank Mr Laurence Kerr for his committed service over the past 6 years and would commit him to the prayers of the whole Church.

W B BOYD, Convener

PRESBYTERIAN WAR MEMORIAL HOSTEL COMMITTEE

1. Derryvolgie Hall continues to run successfully, with a very high demand for all 88 rooms. The income and expenditure account shows a surplus for 1997 of £35,000 before interest and depreciation.

2. We rejoice that at Derryvolgie the highest aspirations of those who established the War Memorial Trust are being fulfilled in an environment that is both biblical and contemporary. Together with our colleagues on the University Education Committee there is an effective Christian witness at Queen's and in the University area.

3. We gladly pay tribute to the ministry of Rev Steve Stockman and all who work with him.

4. Responsibility for the sale of the Hostel property in Howard Street and Brunswick Street was given over to the Trustees and the sale was completed on 6 March, 1998 for a sum of £2,500,000.

5. Income from this sale will be used to fulfil the terms of the War Memorial Trust.

W J SLEITH, W J CAIRNS, Co-Conveners

PRESBYTERIAN RESIDENTIAL TRUST COMMITTEE

1. Although placed in a sphere of work where there are ever increasing demands for professional care and constantly diminishing resources, the Presbyterian Residential Trust continues to maintain high standards, widespread respect and high occupancy in all our facilities. This is, in no small measure, due to the dedication of staff at all levels and the work of the House Committees.

2. The new nursing home in Dublin, a project shared with Dublin Central Mission of the Methodist Church, will be called Mount Tabor. The building is very attractive and forms part of the Sandymount Church Complex. The first residents will be admitted in mid-April. Following somewhat prolonged negotiations with the Tritonville Close Committee and representatives of Frazer House Trust, the Residential Trust has invested £500,000 in this project and will have access to 7 beds, and 2 seats on the management board.

3. We have agreed to extend the sheltered housing provision at Tritonville Close, Dublin.

4. A study of Corkey House building has led to the conclusion that it would be unwise to enter into the capital investment which a new building would require. Accordingly the Trust Committee has made the commitment to maintain the present facility at the required standard for as long as this is possible.

5. This study has highlighted the fact that almost all our homes are over 20 years old and the need for increased expenditure on maintenance has to be considered. At present there is no reserve fund. House Committees do maintain the homes to an excellent standard, but we realise that as buildings get older the number of repairs and necessary refurbishments increase.

T J McCORMICK, Convener

SOCIAL WITNESS CENTRES COMMITTEE

1. During the past year the Committee has continued its role of overseeing the work of the 3 existing Social Witness Centres.

THOMPSON HOUSE

2. The hostel has had a 90% occupancy rate throughout the year. This is evidence of the need for a service for ex-prisoners and ensures a good level of income.

3. The Hostel, which is well run and is highly thought of by the Probation Board with which a good working relationship is enjoyed, provides a strong Christian witness to residents and Bible studies are organised.

PCI ENTERPRISES

4. PCI Enterprises provides training for long-term unemployed men and women using funds provided under the Government's Action for Community Employment programme. This funding is now being curtailed in favour of the 'New Deal - Welfare To Work Policy'. Under this policy 18-24 year old unemployed people and lone parents are to be trained for work.

5. The Management Committee is actively considering what scope exists for an extended project under the Government's 'New Deal - Welfare to Work Policy'. Discussions have taken place with the North Belfast Presbytery and others about the possibility of joint action in the field of unemployment.

CARLISLE HOUSE

6. For most of the year the Unit has been fully occupied. In addition to the 8 weeks rehabilitation programmes attended by those who are addicted to alcohol and other drugs, Carlisle House holds information evenings every Tuesday, which were attended by approximately 1,300 people in 1997.

7. In November, 1997 the 'Insight' information and resource shop was opened at 7a Upper North Street, Belfast. This is staffed on a rota basis from Carlisle House and is visited by school groups and members of the public.

8. In January, 1998 work commenced on an extension to Carlisle House which will provide additional space for recreational and other activities under the able leadership of Dr Anne Watts.

FUTURE OF THE SOCIAL WITNESS CENTRES COMMITTEE

9. As each of the social witness centres has developed its own management structures, the need for a parent committee (SWCC) is no longer as great as it was in earlier years. Accordingly, the Committee recommended to the Board of Social Witness that it be discharged.

10. In future the three social witness centres will report to the Board of Social Witness through its Standing Committee.

R B THOMPSON, Convener

SOCIAL ISSUES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. *Euthanasia*: The Committee's main project this past year has been a Euthanasia Seminar Tour in 7 Presbyteries. This venture has been conducted jointly with CARE for Northern Ireland and the seminars have been well attended with approximately 60 to 70 people at each. They have been well received and have been a real help to people. It is clear that some of the issues raised have been complex and we would have needed more discussion. We thank Dr Wesley Magowan and Prof Stephen Williams for their commitment to the project and their thoughtful and helpful presentations.

2. *Infertility and Childlessness*: We hope to be in a position to go to the design and print stage of leaflets very soon to help people struggling with these problems.

3. *Homosexuality*: The Committee is aware that there is much confusion and hurt surrounding this controversial issue. We believe that it would be helpful if the Church looked at this issue again, the last report to Assembly being 1979. That Report substantially represents the current position of our Church to-day but it is out of print and also some matters may need more emphasis to-day than they merited then. We also believe that the issue of homosexuality ought to be seen in the wider context of sexuality as a whole and of how the Bible relates to all sexual relations whether they be heterosexual or homosexual. The Committee will study this topic in the coming year.

4. *Abortion*: The Committee notes the increased pressure in certain quarters to extend the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland. We have forwarded resolutions to the Government stressing our strong opposition to such a move. We continue to monitor the situation and hope that the wider Church membership will pray and write to their Members of Parliament asking them to be vigilant and to oppose any extension of this Act which, in effect, has produced a situation of abortion on demand in England and Wales.

N A L CAMERON, Convener

CHILD PROTECTION WORKING PARTY

Rev N A L Cameron reports:

1. Over the past year the Working Party has continued to respond to queries and to monitor the on-going adoption of the guidelines by congregations. It has become clear that a substantial amount of work has still to be done in the areas of monitoring, training and helping congregations to implement their own child protection policies.

2. The Working Party has been able to secure the help of Mrs Stephanie Windrum on a short-term basis (up to 46 weeks) to assist with training and to help congregations to implement the Guidelines. Mrs Windrum took the initial training sessions for ministers at Presbytery level and these proved to be of a high standard and very helpful. She can be contacted through the office.

3. We believe that there is an on-going monitoring role in this important area of child protection. Accordingly we are seeking the approval of the Assembly to change our name to the Child Protection Monitoring Group and to the extension of its work for another three years. The Group would continue to be responsible to the Board of Social Witness.

4. The membership of the Child Protection Monitoring Group would be as follows:

- Moderator and Clerk (ex-officio)
- Rev Norman Cameron (Convener)
- Mr Norman Chambers (Director of Social Service)
- Mr Paul Gray (Orphan and Children's Society)
- Mr Graeme Thompson (Youth Board)
- Rev Ian McKee (Sunday School Organiser)
- Mr Ronnie Orr (External Expert)
- A representative from the Marriage and Family Committee

KINGHAN MISSION COMMITTEE

1. Sometimes in the Kinghan Church we are tempted to look at other Churches and become envious of their success.

2. Last year we held our first Alpha course - specially geared for deaf people - it worked!! About 30 deaf people attended regularly - most from the Kinghan and others from the Deaf Christian Fellowship and the Christian Fellowship Church. God really blessed us and many were deeply touched by the Holy Spirit. As a follow-up, our members studied Nicky Gumbel's book - 'A life worth living'.

3. Many years ago God gave us a vision of Kinghan as a place of prayer, praise, teaching and healing. During the last year we have seen a greater move forward and sense that more members are becoming people of prayer and praise who can share what God is doing in our lives.

4. We have seen team ministries develop in other Churches: now it is happening in Botanic Avenue. Miss Kathy McClurg is our part-time secretary and she shares in ministry in the Church to individuals and small groups as well as sharing in the services. We have just appointed a lay-assistant, Mrs Anne Rodgers, and we look forward to her joining the team full-time.

5. Still there are so many deaf people who are not connected with any Church and we must explore new ways of reaching them for Christ and for His Church. We are glad of the opportunity to make contact with children at Jordanstown School. Our monthly family service was moved from a Sunday evening to the morning and, while we have more young people attending with their families, some have been unable to make it in the morning because parents have commitments in their local church.

6. We are grateful to Rev Henry Gray, Convener and the Kinghan Mission Committee, as well as to Mr Norman Chambers and the staff in the Board of Social Witness office, to the United Appeal Board and those who gave generously.

G GRINDLE, Superintendent
H GRAY, Convener

OLD AGE FUND, WOMEN'S FUND AND INDIGENT LADIES' FUND

1. The Directors of the above Funds report that, during the last financial year which ended 31 December, 1997, 161 beneficiaries (47 in the Old Age Fund, 89 in the Women's Fund and 25 in the Indigent Ladies' Fund) received grants.

2. The total distribution of the funds in grants, donations and gifts was £73,713, (£20,927 from the Old Age Fund, £39,810 from the Women's Fund and £12,976 from the Indigent Ladies' Fund).

3. During the year 12 grants ceased because of the deaths of beneficiaries and 6 beneficiaries withdrew because of improved financial circumstances. Fourteen new beneficiaries were added to the roll.

4. A 'Special Gift' of £100 was sent to every beneficiary prior to Christmas.

5. 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.

6. The Directors assure the Church that all monies that come to the Funds are carefully and wisely spent.

7. 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.

8. The Directors of the Funds wish to thank the staff for the effective and sympathetic way in which they carried out the administration of the Funds during the year.

ERIC W McDOWELL, Honorary Secretary

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the General Assembly welcome Mr Norman J Chambers as the Director of Social Service and Secretary to the Board of Social Witness.

3. That the Rev W B Boyd, Acting Convener of the ADE Committee for the past year, be appointed Convener.

4. That the resignations of the Rev W J Sleith and Mr W J Cairns, as Co-Conveners of the War Memorial Hostel Committee, be accepted, that they be thanked for their services and that Mr Hubert Martin be appointed in their place.

5. That the resignation of the Rev R B Thompson, as Convener of the Social Witness Centres Committee, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Social Witness Centres Committee be thanked and discharged.

6. That customary grants made by the Social Issues and Resources Committee, up to a total of £1,920, be met by the Incidental Fund.

7. That the Working Party on Child Protection be renamed the Child Protection Monitoring Group and that it be continued for a further three years.

8. That the General Assembly welcome the Volunteer Training Scheme set up by the Alcohol and Drug Education Committee and encourage all Presbyteries and congregations to avail themselves of the services of those trained.

9. That the General Assembly recognise Sunday 15 November, 1998 as ADE Sunday and encourage ministers and leaders to use the materials provided to educate their congregations and groups on drug-related matters and addiction on this or other suitable date.

10. That the Board of Social Witness, with its associated working Committees, for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 281 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Convener: Very Rev Dr D H ALLEN

Secretary: Rev D J TEMPLE

1. The Board of Evangelism and Christian Training has met on three occasions during the year.

2. It is our privilege to be of service to the Lord and to our Church as we reach out to those still outside the kingdom of God. In these crucial and critical times we are seeking to respond to the great commission, to make disciples, to reach people of all ages with the Good News of the Gospel and to encourage their spiritual growth.

3. LIFE2 will be launched on 13 September, 1998. We are delighted at the response already from various congregations throughout the Church. The call to undergird this time of outreach with prayer has had a wonderful response, with thousands joining the Prayer Triplets. I would like to commend the literature and publicity materials that are available.

4. Prayer is vital if the work is to advance with the blessing of God upon it. God has placed us in the world to be witnesses to Him. We long to see every congregation in our Church throughout this island taking up the opportunities to reach out to others.

5. Our mission field will not only be to those on the fringes of our congregations but also to all in our parish areas who have no commitment to Jesus Christ. The Lord will hold us accountable for the use we have made of our time in sharing our experience.

6. I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to my predecessor, Rev Jackson C Buick, for his enthusiasm, energy and encouragement for the work of evangelism in this land.

7. During the year the Conveners and their committees have been busy, maximising on the opportunities before them. I would express to them the sincere thanks of the whole Church for their dedicated service. I would also record the appreciation of the Board to Rev David J Temple and the Irish Mission office staff for their invaluable and courteous help through the year.

8. I am delighted at the way in which Rev Dr B Kingsmore, our Promoter of Evangelism, has been used to encourage and advance the work of Evangelism throughout the Church. I warmly commend his ministry and urge as many as possible to avail themselves and their congregations of his gifts as we approach LIFE2.

9. We would pay warm tribute to Rev Graham Connor and the Rev Isaac Thompson who are retiring from the convenerships of the Evangelism Committee and the Divine Healing Committee. Their positive vision, wisdom and sensitive leadership has enabled their respective committees to contribute in an effective way to the ministry, mission and well-being of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

10. In response to a resolution of the 1997 Assembly the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training and the Home Board have approved a joint-report concerning the setting up of a new Board of Mission in Ireland. This report is printed as an appendix to the report of the Home Mission and a resolution is included in the Home Board's resolutions.

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

1. The Committee continues to be encouraged during this initial planning stage of the LIFE2 programme. We are thrilled to know that many of our ministers, Kirk Sessions, congregational evangelism committees and others have been seeking God's guidance in the planning of outreach in ways appropriate to the various situations in which our Church ministers in Ireland.

2. Dr Brian Kingsmore continues to be available to Presbytery agents, ministers, elders and others in helping them understand the setting of our mission and the call to evangelism in particular. We are delighted at the number of congregations that have availed of his expertise. Almost all of his work is currently focused on the LIFE2 programme and he is still available to be of service to congregations, whatever stage they have reached locally. The Committee would like to thank so many Presbyteries for giving time to Dr Kingsmore, or one of those from the Steering Group, to bring the programme into focus. We have learned a lot from these meetings and have tried to address questions raised in them.

3. We will continue to send prayer information on a regular basis to the ministers of our Church. We are glad that it is being distributed widely. The prayer triplet programme has developed apace. By early March, 10,000 leaflets had already been distributed. We are hopeful that this is a real sign of our Church looking in faith to God to work in us and through us for His glory throughout the first year of LIFE2.

4. Every congregation involved in outreach between September, 1998 and June, 1999 will want to encourage us all to pray for them. It is, after all, a very simple and direct way of giving expression to the fact that we are not mere congregationalists but Presbyterians. We are relying on ministers to supply this information to the office for inclusion in the prayer material.

5. The development of the prayer triplet programme through Operation Andrew has already resulted in almost 1,500 people agreeing to pray specifically for their friends and to plan to bring them to the local LIFE2 events. We hope every congregation will consider the Operation Andrew programme, sent to ministers, as a useful tool in developing a strategy towards those who need to be evangelised.

6. LIFE2 will be launched on Sunday 13 September. We are asking every congregation to have a LIFE2 service at morning worship. Each Presbytery is deciding how the campaign will be launched on the evening of that Sunday. Publicity material will be made available for those evening events when the information is to hand.

7. It is our prayer that LIFE2 will not be a campaign which ends in June 1999 and the Committee will be giving future consideration to the on-going work of evangelism in our local congregations.

8. We hope to ask congregations to send us details of their programme, and, where possible, an assessment of its effectiveness. Through this process we hope to learn more about our situation in Ireland and share with the wider Church the work of God amongst us.

9. As out-going convener I want to express my thanks to Rev David Temple, Secretary of the Board, and to all his office staff, who have always been willing to go the second mile to help both convener and Committee. I would like to pay special tribute to Dr Brian Kingsmore. He is a tireless enthusiast and a dedicated servant of this Church. May God grant us a rich outpouring of his Spirit in all our endeavours for Christ to reach the lost.

G CONNOR, Convener

APPENDIX

EVANGELISM PROMOTER'S REPORT

Rev Dr Brian Kingsmore reports:-

1. Every major denomination in Ireland is declining. What growth there is, is among Pentecostal and Charismatic groups. This, together with our understanding of the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 18-20), should be enough to force us in the PCI to re-examine the cultural context in which we now live with a view to determining the best strategies we need to use in order to arrest this decline, as we preach the Gospel. This has been a basic theme which I have gladly presented to many Presbyteries, Sessions, evangelism committees and individual leaders over the past year, especially in the light of the LIFE2 campaign.

2. However, to quote the eighteenth century poet, critic and essayist, Samuel Johnstone, "men more frequently require to be reminded than informed" - my experience is truly summed up in this phrase.

3. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland does not need more information, rather reminded that our model of Church evangelism and Christian nurture is no longer valid in today's world. Recognition of this fact is the starting point for all the evangelism that needs to be done through LIFE2 and beyond. Paul's experience in a non-Christian society, such as Corinth, points the way forward for us. In spite of the depravity, corruption and vice, a healthy Church was planted. Their Gospel impacted people of the community, especially the suffering of Christians for the faith. Tertullian wrote, "Faithfulness in public suffering is the bait that wins men for our school." The Corinthian Christian's life-style so impacted their world that the Church grew and grew. LIFE2 seeks to encourage that type of witnessing and the biggest obstacle faced by the keen ministers in our Church is lethargy. When the comfort-zone of many communicants is invaded, however right the cause or compelling the mission, inertia sets in. But the LIFE2 manual (with the emphasis on prayer, nurture, Bible studies and multi-faceted approaches in outreach) when thoroughly

explained, has been a means of rousing many to a new awareness of what God wants done in and through our Church. The Prayer Triplet ministry has been an especially encouraging aspect of my work, for which we thank God and all who take this outreach to heart.

This past year has been busy, but rewarding. Thanks to all who have, and are still, praying for this ministry.

IRISH MISSION COMMITTEE

1. The Irish Mission has been seeking since 1710 to share the blessings of the Gospel with all the people of Ireland; seeking to live up to the words of our motto of "Speaking the truth in love." (Ephesians 4 v 15); seeking to plant new Churches and encourage new growth in existing Churches; but we work in a country which is changing dramatically.

THE CITY OF DUBLIN

2. Dublin is the largest city in the Republic of Ireland and has now virtually the same population as Northern Ireland (1.5 million). In this city there are more Moslems than Presbyterians. Dublin is one of the most secular cities in Europe where vast numbers of people, especially those under the age of forty, have no significant Church connection. Like all large cities, there are the attendant problems of alcoholism, drug abuse, violence, loneliness and homelessness. It is into this city centre and the vast housing estates that the love of Christ needs to be demonstrated in a very practical manner.

3. Two Irish Mission Workers and their families are based in Dublin. Mr Stephen McGookin is Superintendent of the Presbytery City Mission whose primary role is to reach out to needy people in the city centre. This involves befriending people, spending time with them, showing love and practical support as well as sharing the Gospel through the services held in the Mission which operates out of the church hall attached to Ormond Quay and Scots Presbyterian Church. The Irish Mission is concerned about the future viability of this work in its present form and will discuss this with the Dublin and Munster Presbytery.

4. In October, 1997, Mr David Boyd began to work with Dolebusters which is an unemployment resource centre run by Adelaide Road, Donore, Congregation. His role is to establish relationships with those using the scheme and to develop an evangelistic thrust to the social action programme initiated by the congregation.

5. The Irish Mission and the Home Mission Committees are exploring with the Dublin and Munster Presbytery Strategy for Mission Committee the possibility of setting up a Church plant team in one of the large housing estates in the city.

6. One major factor affecting possible new staff appointments in the Dublin area is the high cost of housing. The Irish Mission Committee (with the support and approval of the United Appeal Board) has used some large bequests to assist staff to buy housing on a joint-purchase agreement though this issue will have to be considered carefully before future appointments are made.

CORK

7. In October, 1997 Mr Harry Moreland and his family moved to Cork, the second largest city in the Republic with a population of approximately 136,000 and one Presbyterian congregation. Mr Moreland works along with Rev John Faris (Trinity, Cork and Aghada) and Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney (Cahir and Fermoy) and is seeking to develop effective outreach in the very different communities of Cork and Fermoy.

WORK AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUTH

8. In a country where 1 in 3 people are under the age of 17, work among children and young people has a vital importance, especially as few children have ever been to a Sunday School. All our workers engage in this form of outreach through clubs, school visits etc and find parents are supportive. However, more local support is needed in running meetings.

OUTREACH TO ADULTS

9. Many adults have little interest in spiritual things and attempts to reach them, through video evenings or door-to-door visitation, can be discouraging. Out of 100 homes visited as few as 14 may result in meaningful conversation. Yet people of all ages have found faith in Christ.

WORKING WITH THE HOME BOARD AND PRESBYTERIES

10. Our workers have been encouraged by two recent appointments of Home Board ministers. Rev Stephen Simpson, in the congregations of Tullamore and Mountmellick, works alongside Mr John Chinnery in Tullamore and Mr Sam Francey, based in Portlaoise. Rev Dr Sam Mawhinney ministers in Cahir and Fermoy alongside Mr Keith Preston, based in Clonmel and Mr Harry Moreland who recently began work in Fermoy. Sharing in work with others with whom time can be spent in prayer and planning has been a great encouragement. In November, 1997, a conference was held for all Home Board ministers working alongside Irish Mission workers. This proved very beneficial to all who attended and it is hoped to hold similar gatherings on a regular basis.

STAFF CHANGES

11. In October, 1997, Mr and Mrs Tom McCrea retired after 11 years service with the Mission. We want to pay tribute to them for their unique ministry combating the cults, educating congregations about cult teaching and influence, producing literature to help people answer cult representatives calling at their homes and counselling those who need help to leave the cults.

12. Mr Peter Maitland was appointed as an Irish Mission worker at the end of 1997 and will succeed Mr Keith Preston in the Clonmel/Cahir area this summer when Mr Preston moves to a challenging new situation in the Clones/Monaghan/Cavan area, at the invitation of the Monaghan Presbytery.

OFFICE SUPPORT

13. We want to pay tribute to the commitment and wise leadership of our Superintendent Rev David Temple. There have been many changes within the

Mission during the last year and our Superintendent has travelled extensively to discuss matters in person with workers and their families, Home Board ministers and Presbytery representatives.

14. We also appreciate the contribution made to our work by our office staff, Mrs Mandy Higgins, Mr Nehru Dass, Miss Roberta Irvine, Mrs Elaine Shaw and Mrs Evelyn Craig who quietly and efficiently support the Mission and the work of other committees within our Board.

THE WAY FORWARD

15. The Irish Mission employs 12 full-time workers backed up by our Superintendent and office staff. But, to be fully effective, the Irish Mission needs the support of the whole Presbyterian Church in Ireland in order to speak the truth in love to all the people in the mission-field on our doorstep.

16. The Irish Mission Committee is concerned that there are parts of Ireland in which congregations are small and scattered and there are no Irish Mission workers. In Northern Ireland we now have only one worker - Mr Tom Moorehead - who has a faithful ministry in the Glens of Antrim and beyond. We ask for the prayer support of the whole Church as we seek the Lord's will for other future developments which will be worked out in conjunction with Presbyteries and other Boards of our Church.

17. In a growing number of areas, people are meeting regularly to pray for revival in Ireland. Without such prayer the future for Ireland is bleak.

18. Many find encouragement through reading the reports in the *Christian Irishman* and we commend this magazine to a wider readership. Some congregations have a partnership with an Irish Mission worker. This allows regular telephone discussions and sometimes visits to our workers and helps develop informed prayer support within our congregations. We encourage more congregations to arrange partnerships through the Irish Mission office.

19. We commend the work of the Irish Mission and all our workers with their families to the prayerful support of the Assembly.

DOUGLAS COWAN, Convener

CHRISTIAN TRAINING COMMITTEE

1. The Christian Training Committee continues its work of producing suitable training materials for Church members. At the General Assembly last year, a leaflet on Church Membership was launched. It is encouraging to report that "What should a Church Member be?" has already sold over 5000 copies. A number of congregations have used it in general visitation work and also as part of their preparation for the LIFE2 programme. We commend its use throughout the Church. Work continues on a study-guide which outlines the distinctive Biblical beliefs of the Presbyterian Church. The Committee is also considering the production of a basic guide to communicant membership and is always interested in ideas for new materials which have been suggested by those directly engaged in congregational life.

2. During the year efforts have been made to promote training materials through presbytery training agents. The Committee is grateful to the Christian Irishman magazine for advertising and promoting our resources. The provision of a complete set of training materials for ministers in their first charges continues and appreciation has been expressed for this scheme. The Committee, however, is well aware that it does not have a monopoly in the production of training materials, much useful material is available from other boards and agencies of the Church.

3. In last year's report reference was made to the use of our materials by Churches in the United Kingdom and overseas. This trend continues and it was heartening to hear recently of a missionary working in Europe making use of literature produced by the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training. The Committee would be glad to send sample materials to missionaries.

4. Following an Assembly resolution (1997 Minutes p72) representatives of the Christian Training Committee met representatives of the Board of Studies together with the Strategy for Mission Committee to explore how best they might work together for the training of ministers and members. Both the Strategy for Mission Committee and the College and Training Review Committee have suggested that the Christian Training Committee should be placed under a 'Board of Christian Training' or a 'Board of Studies and Christian Training'. The Christian Training Committee is in favour of the proposed re-alignment believing that it will provide a more efficient and effective Christian training ministry to congregations. The present structure of the Christian Training Committee and Christian Training Centre under two different boards has not always led to the most efficient use of personnel and resources. The Christian Training Committee is committed to ensuring that Church members receive the best form of Christian training and is glad that the whole area of Christian Training is under review. We pray that real progress will be made so that God's people may be fully equipped to serve Him as a new century approaches.

W J JOHNSTONE, Convener

DIVINE HEALING COMMITTEE

1. Wholeness of body, mind and spirit is important not only for the members of our denomination at large but especially for ministers in positions of leadership. In past years the Committee has been instrumental in introducing time off for ministers after Christmas and Easter and in highlighting the need for sabbaticals, which need is now being addressed by most Presbyteries.

2. Much of the Committee's work has been taken up with stress in the ministry. This is being addressed in three areas:

- (i) a list of suitable professionals and resources within PCI is being drawn up and made available to ministers who are not able to cope with stress;
- (ii) consultation is being planned with the relevant department of Union Theological College so that help can be provided in a preventative role in training for the ministry;

- (iii) Presbyteries are being encouraged in their care for ministers. A consultation/seminar involving Presbytery moderators and other Presbytery representatives is planned for 14 May, 1998.
3. 'The Human Cost of Caring' is the title of the Committee's survey report on stress in the Christian Ministry and will be available to ministers, Kirk Sessions and students for the ministry.
4. During the year the Committee has been reminded that many of our Church members are confused about 'Divine Healing' and 'Faith Healing'. The Committee would want to highlight again its publication, 'Divine Healing - A Gift for To-day's Church', which is available from the Irish Mission office. The Committee is seeking to encourage more positive preaching about healing throughout our denomination as well as about the sovereignty of God and suffering.

J ISAAC THOMPSON, Convener

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COMMITTEE

1. The Presbyterian Marriage Care Counselling service continues to offer counselling to people whose marriages are under stress. We encourage more ministers to use this valuable service and to make it more widely known within their congregations. Anyone can arrange an appointment with one of the trained counsellors by telephoning 01232 322284 any week-day during the hours 9.30 am and 4.30 pm and asking for Marriage Care Counselling.
2. The Marriage Care Counselling service is an affiliated organisation of the Association of Christian Counsellors. This affiliation helps us to aim for high standards in training, competence and supervision in Christian counselling.
3. We are also presently seeking to expand the service by adding additional volunteer counsellors. We value the prayers of the wider Church for this ministry which is increasingly needed in our society.
4. Rev J W McAuley continues to act as Secretary in the pastoral interviews of couples who plan to marry where one or both have been divorced.
5. Rev John Brackenridge continues to represent the Church on the Inter-church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages.
6. The Presbyterian Family Holiday at the Share Centre took place at Easter 1998 and again received widespread support from the whole Church.

T STEELE, Convener

APPENDIX

REPORT ON THE INTER-CHURCH STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIXED MARRIAGES

1997 - 1998

The Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages met in Dundalk on 21 November, 1997. In the absence of the Rt Rev Michael Mayes,

the Most Rev Anthony Farquhar, Auxiliary Bishop of Down and Connor, Co-Chairperson of the Committee, acted as Chairperson for the meeting.

1. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

It was noted that the Rev Ronnie Nesbitt has taken the place of the Very Rev Hamilton Lecky who has retired from the Committee. It was noted that a letter of appreciation had been forwarded to Dean Lecky for his considerable work and energy over many years as a member of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages.

It was also noted that Fr Hugh Connolly, who had acted as Joint Secretary to the Committee, had retired. Tribute was paid to Fr Connolly's dedication and service and it was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to him on behalf of the Committee. Fr Connolly's successor, Fr Aidan O'Boyle, was welcomed as a new member of the Committee.

The Committee heard apologies from Rt Rev Michael Mayes, Co-Chairperson and Very Rev John Dinnen, both of whom were unavoidably absent.

2. REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE INTER-CHURCH STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIXED MARRIAGES 1996-1997

There was a brief discussion of the previous year's Report and it was noted that this has been approved and distributed to each of the Churches.

3. REPORT ON MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSES

Mgr Patrick Devine reported on arrangements for Inter-Church Marriage preparation in the Greater Dublin Area. Six courses are planned for the coming year beginning in January. Each will take place over two weekends.

A new format for these Courses has now been designed with six couples from the Association of Inter-Church Families now conducting these courses with the help of two Chaplains. It was noted that between 80 and 100 couples attended these courses last year.

It was also noted, however, that there seems to be a difficulty in recruiting new couples to organise and facilitate these courses. Clearly, some thought and reflection will have to be given to this problem if the courses are to continue as successfully as heretofore.

The Rev Brendan Murray and Rev John Brackenridge reported on Pre-Marriage Courses which had been organised this year in the greater Belfast area for couples preparing for Inter-Church Marriage. It was noted that these courses continue to be well received by participants and, as a general rule, take place twice yearly. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of the total number of Inter-Church couples avail of these courses.

4. RECENT TRENDS IN INTER-CHURCH MARRIAGE

It was agreed that recent trends in the celebration of Inter-Church Marriage Services continue to be, in the main, very positive. Although the trends specific to Inter-Church Marriages have not given cause for concern during the past year, it must be acknowledged that judging from the trends within each of the

traditions, it is clear that an even greater number of couples are choosing not to marry at all.

While the Committee agreed that the Churches must continue to reach out to all who feel alienated, how this is to practically take place continues to be a matter of debate.

It was acknowledged by the Committee that these are occasions for pastoral care and sensitivity and all strategies should be used to help renew couples in their commitment to their own Churches.

It was also noted that while trends in Inter-Church Marriages are in the main very positive we should not underestimate the very real difficulties which must be faced by the couples involved. In this regard, it was noted that where there is a good working relationship between the clergy and the couples involved, this is a source of great help and encouragement to the couples and their families.

5. DOCUMENTS ON INTER-CHURCH MARRIAGES AND BAPTISM OF CHILDREN OF INTER-CHURCH COUPLES

It was noted that a draft of the documents on Inter-Church Marriages and Baptisms of children of Inter-Church couples have now been circulated to the Churches. The Committee commended Dr David Stevens for his work.

Furthermore, Dr Stevens had circulated members with a draft document on the Pastoral Care of Inter-Church Marriages. It was agreed to forward individual comments to him, for his consideration for a further draft of the document, before the end of the year.

6. PASTORAL CARE OF INTER-CHURCH FAMILIES

During a discussion on the pastoral care of Inter-Church families, it emerged that this valuable work is complicated by a number of factors. It was noted that many couples move to a different parish after their marriage which makes it difficult to organise visits from clergy and ongoing pastoral care.

It was also noted that a worrying trend may be emerging as to couples' level of interest in or commitment to ongoing pastoral care by the clergy of their respective Churches.

Mgr Devine reported on an initiative which takes place in the Foxrock/Dundrum areas of Dublin where an Inter-Church Service takes place once or twice each year bringing together the newly married couples. Clergy from all the Churches also attend and there is a social gathering afterwards. This is found to be a very worthwhile initiative which facilitates ongoing contact with all of the couples and their clergy.

7. NEXT MEETING OF THE INTER-CHURCH COMMITTEE

It was agreed that next year's meeting of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages take place in Mount Olive, Dundalk on Friday, 13 November, 1998 at 2.30 pm.

Members of the Committee

Most Rev Gerard Clifford	Rt Rev Mgr Patrick Devine
Very Rev John Dinnen	Most Rev Anthony Farquhar (Co-Chairperson)
Mrs Olive Marshall	Rt Rev Michael H G Mayes (Co-Chairperson)
Very Rev Brendan Murray	Rev Ronnie Nesbitt
Rev Aidan O'Boyle	Rev David Turtle
Rev John Brackenridge	

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Evangelism Committee

2. That the resignation of the Rev Graham Connor, as Convener of the Evangelism Committee, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev W J Parkes be appointed in his place.

3. That the General Assembly encourage each congregation to reach out to those outside of Christ through the LIFE2 programme.

4. That the General Assembly commend all opportunities to pray for the lost, especially through the Operation Andrew initiative.

5. That thanks be expressed to all who have served as visiting evangelists during 1997 and encouragement be given to congregations to release those with evangelistic gifts during the LIFE2 campaign.

6. That the General Assembly support Bible Sunday on 6 December, 1998 and call on the Church to continue to pray for all involved in the translation of the Scriptures and production of Bible studies and aids throughout the world.

Divine Healing Committee

7. That the resignation of the Rev J Isaac Thompson, as Convener of the Divine Healing Committee, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev Dr S D H Williamson be appointed in his place.

General

8. That the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training, with its associated working Committees, for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 282 of the Code as follows:

YOUTH BOARD

Rev DANIEL KANE, Convener

Miss ROSALIND STIRLING, Youth Officer

1. A survey of 700 young people from a random selection of British Churches last year revealed that only one third believed there was such a thing as 'absolute truth'. Veteran author and youth speaker, Josh McDowell, commenting on the findings of the survey, placed the 'blame' squarely on the culture our young people are an inescapable part of, where something is right only if it feels right.

2. Mr McDowell suggested that we in the Church have failed to grasp the shift that has taken place within society. He further suggests that young people growing up in his generation had the message, 'That's wrong because it says in the Bible *Thou shall not*', preached from the pulpit and then reinforced by parents, school teachers, the government, peers and the pop music of the day. To-day, however, we are turning an entire generation of young people loose into a relativistic culture with nothing more than a statement 'thou shall not', the consequences of which will be that our young people will not survive.

3. For a number of years now the Youth Board has attempted to alert youth leaders, ministers, parents and young people to the insidious nature of the culture our young people are a part of. We continue, through events like 'Training Trevor', and also now through the support of three Youth Development Officers, to train and equip our leaders that they may engage in a youth ministry that is founded firmly on the truth of the scriptures, while recognising and addressing the very real pressures of the culture our young people must contend with.

4. In 1997 the Assembly approved the appointment of a Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland and Mr Graeme Thompson has been appointed with agreed funding from the United Appeal Board for two years. Mr Thompson is available to any congregation who would like advice or assistance with any aspect of its youth work. He is also keen to develop good information resources. We commend him to the Church, asking for prayerful support.

5. Miss Iris Stevenson, in Donegal and Monaghan and the Rev Keith McCrory, in Dublin and Munster, continue to give faithful and energetic service to the Board. They enable congregations to engage in better quality and more highly skilled youth work which, under the Spirit of God, we trust will be more effective in bringing young people to saving faith in Jesus Christ and keeping them loyal to the Church.

6. The Youth Board continues to support the creative and energetic work done by the body of full-time youth workers based in a wide range of local congregations. A regular support day and annual residential provide valuable development opportunities for them.

7. The Board continues to be grateful to the Youth Officer, Miss Roz Stirling, for the vision and enthusiasm she brings to her work. We were sad to say farewell to Mrs Jean Gibson at the New Year after seven years of unstinting

service to the work of the Youth Office. We are grateful to all who serve in the Youth Office.

8. Mr Maurice Kennedy continues with the Board under the new title of Youth Board Development Officer, an enhanced remit which includes securing both general and designated funding for the work of the Board and involvement in new areas of the Board's work, as well as a continuing direct role in the physical development of the Youth Centres.

9. The Nexus Ireland project is in a stage of consolidation and review. The new multi-purpose dining hall and kitchen with ancillary rooms were opened by Her Excellency President Mary McAleese on 20 April, and the building dedicated to the Glory of God by the Moderator. We thank God for his provision of these excellent premises. We believe that ministry is more important than maintenance of buildings, so we continue to rejoice in the services of Mr Ian Scott, appointed with European funding, as our Lucan Youth Centre Director with primary responsibility for the centre's reconciliation programme.

10. The Youth Board at the October meeting agreed that the Youthreach festival, having completed its 16th year in the summer of 1997, should take a break for one year and so allow a careful review of both the festival and the current provision for Presbyterian young people in the summer. A SWOT Review Group was established which sought opinions throughout the Church. As a result of its report it was agreed that in 1999 two events would be established. A focused Bible teaching, Bible school type event for the 16+ age group, which would have a strong emphasis on developing a biblical understanding. A second event would be established for the younger age group of 11+ along similar lines to the former Youthreach event, but with an emphasis on young people coming in youth groups accompanied by their youth leaders. This event may move away from the summer towards the autumn half-term holiday weekend. The responsibility for both events will again come under the remit of the Youth Events Committee.

11. During the last year two members of the Youth Link NI staff resigned and the organisation used this as a window of opportunity to review its internal staffing structure. As a result Miss Lynda Gould and Mr David Gardiner were appointed as Youth Development Officers. We look forward to working in partnership with them as Youth Link NI continues its valuable role of serving its constituent Churches.

12. CYSC continues to provide a necessary Protestant training resource in training youth leaders in effective youth ministry.

13. At the present time a major review of the Northern Ireland Youth Service is taking place. Strategic review groups have been established to formulate recommendations for an improved Youth Service. The Youth Board, through Youth Link NI and on an individual basis, has been making a response to the relevant bodies to reflect the considerable contribution made by church-based youth work. The consultation and final recommendations from this process will be available in January, 1999.

14. The Board wishes to thank all those who supported the Youth and Sunday School Project 'Sumba' in 1997/98, which focused on Indonesia, and commends the project on Central Europe for 1998/99.

15. The Board continues to be grateful for the generous support of our Church, not least through the financial assistance we receive from the United Appeal Board which is our major source of funding. We are also thankful to the Department of Education of the Government of the Republic of Ireland for their substantial grant for Youth Development work in the Republic.

16. The Board regrets the resignation of the Rev Philip McCrea as convener of the Youth Overseas Committee. We pay tribute to all the hard work and energy he put into this demanding convenership, and wish him God's richest blessing and a recovery to full health and strength.

YOUTH TRAINING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. The Training and Resources Committee continues to develop its strategy for encouraging, challenging and nurturing Youth Leadership within Presbyteries and local congregations. The next phase of this strategy involves broadening the role of each Working Group without adding significantly to the overall cost of the Committee's work.

2. This change in emphasis has coincided with the stepping down of all three Chairpersons and the reorganisation of the membership of each Working Group. The Committee is grateful for the commitment of Rev Dr Stewart Jones, Rev Adrian Moffet, and Mr David Whitcroft over the last few years and is delighted to have other high calibre Chairpersons in Rev Mairisine Stanfield, Mr Graeme Thompson and Mr Ian Scott to take their places.

RESOURCES WORKING GROUP

3. Under the Chairperson, Mr Graeme Thompson, this Group seeks to resource Youth Leaders, Churches and Presbyteries by providing help in developing vision and strategy for local contexts alongside other resources such as people, places and materials.

TRAINING WORKING GROUP

4. The new Chairperson of this Working Group is Rev Mairisine Stanfield. The Group has responsibility to provide specific training which will improve the effectiveness of Youth Leaders by offering the basic Youth Leadership Training Course to groups of leaders from Presbyteries or individual churches.

5. This year the course was run in the Presbyteries of South Belfast, Carrickfergus, Newry and with the Year Team. For the first time two of the previously trained facilitators ran courses.

6. The Group is currently investigating the possibility of developing a network of Youth Leaders similar to networks already piloted in the southern Presbyteries.

RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP

7. This Group has struggled since its inception to encourage Youth Leaders to place reconciliation on the agenda for themselves and their young people. The new Chairperson, Mr Ian Scott, has, in conjunction with the Youth Officer and the Working Group, prepared a lengthy proposal for the Community Bridges Programme which will provide the finance to help develop a strategy for training Presbyterian Youth Leaders to deliver effective programmes of reconciliation. The first stage in this three year strategy is to train a team of facilitators who already have spheres of influence within the work of the Youth Board.

TRAINING TREVOR WORKING GROUP

8. Following the success of last year's event, "Dry Bones Dancing", the fifth Training Trevor will be held on Saturday, 13 June, 1998 at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown. The theme is "Close Enough To Whisper".

DAVID STANFIELD, Convener

YOUTH CENTRES COMMITTEE

1. The Youth Centres Committee is encouraged by the activities held at each of the Centres: Guysmere, Lucan and Rostrevor, and reports that during the past year an ever-increasing number of young people and leaders have benefited from the facilities.

2. Mr Ian Scott has been appointed Director of Lucan Youth Centre. His work concentrates on enabling young people to think through the issues associated with reconciliation. Results to date have been very encouraging. We have been grateful for European finance for this.

3. This year our Centres are continuing to be used to facilitate various camps. Rostrevor will host a music camp providing workshops and seminars for those with musical talents from 12-18 July. The Lucan Soccer camp, 2-7 August, alongside the Summer camp, 16-21 August, is undoubtedly a repeatable activity from last year. The Guysmere Girls' Camp, 28 June - 5 July and the Boys' Camp, 10-18 July, will be exciting holidays for many campers. For those who have a greater sense of adventure we have the Adventure Camp held at Shannagh-More in Newcastle, 10-14 August and, following the success of the soccer camp in Lucan, we have an additional day camp for soccer enthusiasts at Guysmere from 10-14 August.

4. The Centres Committee welcomes the 'Commitment to Care' document for the guidance to leaders taking young people to our Centres in relation to child protection. The Committee is endeavouring to ensure that the highest possible standards are pursued at every level.

5. Building work at Lucan has finally been completed and we were pleased to have the new facilities officially opened by the President of Ireland on 20 April, 1998.

6. The Committee welcomes the re-deployment of Mr Maurice Kennedy to work within Northern Ireland. Maurice will focus his attention on Guysmere where, along with the Guysmere Committee, he will investigate further development at the centre to provide more accommodation. A special word of thanks is given to Mr and Mrs Kennedy for all their enthusiasm in the past.

7. We thank God for those who, over the past year, have come to faith and for young Christians who have been challenged into further avenues of service as a result of ministries within the centres.

D I J McNIE, Convener

YOUTH HOME MISSION COMMITTEE

1. This is the age when all around us changes very quickly. The Child Protection Act has brought about changes, financial constraints have brought changes, the pressure of people needing summer jobs brings changes. So, with these influences, the Youth Home Mission Committee continues to play its part in not only listening to what congregations are saying, but in trying to anticipate the work that lies ahead and how best we can serve the Church as a whole. Once again, the major part of our work was in the area of Summer Outreach and Year Team activities.

SUMMER OUTREACH

2. First of all we thank Mr John Luke for all his work as Chairperson of this Working Group during the past year. However, due to an added work-load in other areas of the Church, he reluctantly 'retired' very early from this job. We are grateful to the Rev John Flaherty for taking on this position. Eighteen Outreach Teams are being sent throughout Ireland. We would commend this work to all young people of PCI as a way to serve Christ through the summer holidays. If any congregation is thinking about hosting a Team, please make application to the Youth Office as soon as possible, but no later than the September previous to the summer in which the team is required.

YEAR TEAM

3. On behalf of the Youth Home Mission Committee we thank the Rev James Hyndman for his leadership, enthusiasm, support and help as Chairperson of this Working Group. We wish him well as he takes on the convenership of the Youth Events Committee and welcome Miss Ann Taylor as Chairperson of the Working Group. We want to encourage young people to think about giving a year of service to PCI. Young people should be between the ages of 18 and 25. Information about being a member of a Team, or for a Church desiring the placement of a Team, should be obtained from the Youth Office.

4. We thank the Rev Leslie Addis for his help in chairing the Evangelism and Social Witness Working Group. A new Chairperson will be appointed soon.

M G McCLELLAND, Convener

YOUTH OVERSEAS COMMITTEE

1. The Youth Overseas Committee carries out its work under three working groups.

OUTGOING TEAMS WORKING GROUP

2. This working group continues to give young people encouragement and opportunities to experience the Church of Jesus Christ in different cultural contexts overseas. Our prayer is that this will help young people develop a missionary mind-set and expand their horizons beyond themselves.

3. During July, 1997 a team of young people visited South Africa as the first leg of an exchange visit. They experienced at first hand the rich diversity of South African culture. The programme had two main thrusts, namely: to look at the whole process of reconciliation which has taken place in South Africa in recent years and learn from the dynamics of both the pre- and post- apartheid periods. The second thrust was to examine the Church's role in the birth of this new nation. The young people were also involved in an international Youth Conference. Since their return the young people have been doing some comparative studies between the South Africa model and our own situation.

4. Plans are well underway to visit Nepal, Hungary and Wembley during summer 1998. We are also thankful for a growing number of individual young people who make their own private arrangements to go overseas for short-term missionary work and experience.

INCOMING TEAMS WORKING GROUP

5. This working group seeks to facilitate young people visiting our denomination and having an experience of Ireland. This is part of partnership in mission and our Church derives great benefit from such visits.

6. Unfortunately, during 1997, neither of our planned visiting teams were able to come because they could not recruit suitable teams at the time.

7. A team of twelve young people and two leaders, selected from the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, will be with us during the last two weeks of July and the first week of August. It is proposed that they will be involved in children's holiday Bible Clubs in various congregations. They will also take part in a PCI youth leaders' conference at Rostrevor to discuss, debate and pray about the role of the Church in a divided society.

8. We are delighted that the return leg of the Hungary exchange will take place in 1999.

MISSION PROMOTION WORKING GROUP

9. An 'off the shelf' youth fellowship programme called 'Take 5' is being prepared to examine the issues of partnership, problems, poverty, participation and persecution in relation to mission.

10. It was acknowledged that there was a need to get through to youth leaders who had little or no overseas missionary interest. In an attempt to rectify this situation it is proposed that each Presbytery Youth Council should appoint

a Presbytery Youth Mission Agent with the remit of promoting overseas mission and liaising with this working group.

11. Steps are also being taken by this working group to encourage Presbytery Mission tours to have a greater emphasis on youth.

D J KANE, Acting Convener

YOUTH EVENTS COMMITTEE

1. The Youth Events Committee continues to bring young people together for worship, Bible teaching, fellowship, and fun. This is done through four working groups.

YOUTH NIGHT WORKING GROUP

2. Last year the Rev Steve Stockman presented us with 'The Real Jesus'. This year we welcome Mr Dave Male as our speaker with the theme 'I want to know what love is'.

YOUTHREACH WORKING GROUP

3. Youthreach has been running now for some sixteen years, and has brought much encouragement to many of our young people over that time.

4. As referred to earlier in this report an ad hoc group was set up to do an in-depth review of the past successes of Youthreach and to establish the current needs within the Church for a summer festival event. In order for this to be done carefully and effectively there will not be an event in the summer of 1998.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES WORKING GROUP

5. The aim of this working group includes such things as: to connect young people with issues of the social gospel, to motivate young people and challenge the Church in this area, to be indirectly evangelistic and not merely for young Christians, incorporating elements of fun, learning and action.

6. TGI Christmas was the exciting event, hosted by the Youth Board in association with Tear Fund and Christian Aid, on 19 December, 1997. Such was the response that over 200 young people were turned away. The proceeds from TGI were passed on to World Development. TGI will take place again on Friday 18 December, 1998 when the success of 1997 will be built upon following the review of the first event.

STARTING AS A STUDENT

7. Starting as a Student gives relevant information, help and advice to new students at tertiary level. Many have found this event an invaluable preparation and a great opportunity to meet fellow students who may be going to the same third level institution. In September, 1998, the Youth Board will join with partner Churches, Scripture Union and UCCF (Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship) to host a joint event. This co-operation is on a trial basis

and will be reviewed prior to the October Board. Stranmillis College, Belfast is the venue on Saturday 5 September for the 1998 Starting as a Student event. The keynote speaker is Rev David Bruce.

R J HYNDMAN, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

General

2. That the General Assembly appoint the Revs David Stanfield, Dr Stewart Jones; Mr Graeme Thompson, and Mr Trevor Long to be representatives on the Board of Management of the Churches' Youth Service Council.

3. That the General Assembly appoint to Youth Link NI Groups:

- (a) Youth Link Executive - Rev D J Kane and Youth Officer.
- (b) Training and development - Mr Graeme Thompson and Mr Trevor Long.
- (c) Cross-Community - Rev David Stanfield and Mr Ian Scott.

4. That the following grants be paid from the Incidental Fund:

Youth Link NI - £6,500; PCI Family Holiday - £6,000.

5. That the General Assembly welcome the appointment of Mr Graeme Thompson as the new Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland.

6. That the resignation of Rev P G McCrea, as Convener of the Youth Overseas Committee, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that Rev P C Lyle be appointed in his place.

Youth Overseas Committee

7. That the General Assembly rejoice in the opportunities afforded to young people to gain first hand experience of overseas mission through the planned trips to Nepal, Hungary and Wembley.

8. That the General Assembly welcome the visit of young people from the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa in this their centenary year.

Youth Training and Resources Committee

9. That the General Assembly encourage congregations to make the most of the resource and training opportunities provided by the Youth Board.

10. That the General Assembly commend and pray for Training Trevor on 13 June, the Youth Leadership Training Course and the work of the Reconciliation Working Group.

Youth Home Mission Committee

11. That the General Assembly encourage congregations to pray for all young people who offer their service to Christ through the PCI Year Team or Summer Outreach Teams.

Youth Centres Committee

12. That the General Assembly commend the three Youth Centres, Guysmere, Lucan and Rostrevor and also the camps to be held this summer to the support and prayers of the Church.

Youth Events Committee

13. That the General Assembly commend Starting as a Student on 5 September and TGI Christmas on 18 December to the prayers of the Church and ask congregations to encourage their young people to attend.

General

14. That the Youth Board, with its associated working committees, for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 283 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Convener: Dr R J RODGERS, OBE
Secretaries: Rev R F S POOTS, OBE
Rev J H McINTYRE

1. From time to time the active engagement of the Church in education has by some been resented and even challenged - whether this engagement stems from its desire to influence the formulation of policy at national or local level, or from its claim, as of right, to a share in governance, or from its articulation of a conviction that it has an obligation to be involved in anything which will so directly shape the lives and attitudes of children and young people. Sometimes, and legitimately, a response to such challenge has been made by reference to the past investment of resources by the Church in the provision of plant, manpower and financial support. Sometimes, and justifiably, reference has been made to the assumption of leadership responsibility over the years, and including the present, by Church representatives in various aspects of educational endeavour. Sometimes, and reasonably, it has been argued that even in our regrettably more secular age there is still a residual expectation that education is an arena where the Church should be found and its presence is welcomed by at least some of the other partners in the service.

2. If, however, we are to command the continuing respect of our friends and, at the same time effectively confound our critics, then it is important that our representatives bring to educational engagement demonstrably relevant expertise, an informed commitment, a freedom from even the suspicion of a sectarian bias and a genuine desire to promote only the highest and the best for all the children and young people passing through our formal institutions of learning, as well as for those growing up in the various congregations within our own communion. The three Committees of this Board are animated with a desire to assist in the recognition of these imperatives.

3. During the year, the Rev J H McIntyre acted as Joint Secretary of the Board and Co-Convener of the State Education Committee with the Rev R F S Poots. His knowledge of educational affairs coupled with competence and courtesy, made him an ideal person to fill this role. The Church is indebted to him.

RETIRING CONVENER

4. This year Dr R J Rodgers, OBE, completes his seven years as Board Convener. Dr Rodgers has brought a wealth of experience and a passion for the wider recognition of the spiritual aspect of a balanced education to the work of the Board. He has guided all discussion in his usual quiet, tactful and dignified manner and has won the respect of all concerned. The regard in which he is held in the wider education circles in Northern Ireland was recognised when, in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, he was awarded the OBE. We congratulate him on this award and thank him for his influence and work in the Board.

Recognised Ministries

Rev David Bruce, General Director of Scripture Union (Northern Ireland), reports:

1. All Christian mission in Ireland is taking place in a context of change. A recent survey by Christian Research looks at Church membership figures since 1980 and projects forward to the year 2000. While the UK-wide picture over this 20 year period shows a catastrophic 21% decline in church membership, in Northern Ireland there is a small projected increase of 2% overall. Anglican, Presbyterian and Irish Catholic figures are largely static over this period, while Methodist membership declined by 30%. By contrast, the New Churches grow exponentially (although the numbers are still comparatively small at 3,800 members). Traditional Pentecostal Churches are also growing significantly.

2. What we in Scripture Union note with concern alongside these figures, is a gradual move away from the Bible and, in particular, from personal Bible reading as a vital part of spiritual growth. This can be seen in measurable commercial terms (sales of adult Bible reading notes from all publishers are declining gradually) but more persuasively in the general lack of biblical literacy among children and young people. It is obvious to us that many children have no exposure to the Bible at home or in Sunday School and the schools' RE curriculum, while admirable at many levels, is not an adequate substitute.

3. It may be tempting to consider that a 2% increase in the face of such overall decline in church membership is a cause for encouragement or even rejoicing for the Northern Irish Church. The truth is that we in Northern Ireland are not immune from the pressures which militate against Christian values and, while the edifice of organised religion may still stand, its very foundations are at risk while our children and young people are led towards a Christianity which sits loosely to the Word of God. On this front, at least, we need to get back to basics.

Rev Patricia McBride, Chaplain at The Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe, Donegal, reports:

1. My work continues to develop during my second year in this ministry. From the start, I have found warm co-operation amongst the staff in alerting me to special needs among pupils and we have been developing one systematic approach to ensure the best pastoral care for pupils.

2. Opportunities for Christian worship in the school are provided with daily year-group Assemblies and other services.

3. Christian Union meetings in the Day-School and at the boarding-house provide informal times of discussion, learning and prayer.

4. Classroom teaching enables me to get to know pupils throughout the school and liaison with parents and guardians is an all-important aspect of my work.

5. I am encouraged in this work and value the prayerful support of the Church.

Rev Robert McMullan, General Director of Scripture Union (Republic of Ireland), reports:

1. An RTE programme broadcast last summer, which looked at the work of Ovoca Manor and the National School Adventure Weekends which it runs throughout the winter and spring, had some very positive results.

2. An RE teacher in a Catholic Community School in Tallaght, West Dublin, saw the programme and was so intrigued by the place and what Scripture Union was trying to do there that he asked us to organise a retreat for one of his classes. We are hoping that this will open up further opportunities for a similar ministry in other schools in the future.

3. The Christian Teachers in Secondary Schools' Conference was very well supported and it is planned to hold it again this year. National School Teachers are now being invited to be involved in our Teachers' Support Group.

4. Scripture Union is seeking to develop its work throughout the Republic. Up until now our base has been in the greater Dublin and, to a lesser extent, in the Cork areas. It is now our desire to establish supporter bases in other parts of the country.

5. Densmore Lodge, a new residential and Conference Facility for Scripture Union at Ovoca Manor, is almost complete and due to be opened by Her Excellency President Mary McAleese in September. The cost of it will be IR£350,000.

6. Increased work, expected of the Regional Secretaries within Scripture Union (now known as the International Team), has meant that I have been forced to resign as the representative for the Britain and Ireland Region.

7. Council and Staff continue to be very grateful for the interest which the Assembly has in the work of Scripture Union in the Republic of Ireland.

STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NORTHERN IRELAND

Funding

1. The new government wasted no time in acknowledging the shortage of resources in the education sector in Northern Ireland. Additional funds were allocated to reduce the number of teacher redundancies and thus reduce class sizes. There have been several similar announcements over the year, however there is a need to adequately fund the education service to ensure that the potential of all our children is fulfilled. An adequate budget for the year would mean that further 'drip-feed' monies would be unnecessary, proper planning and management could be implemented and the backlog of accommodation repairs, replacements and new-builds could proceed.

2. The move towards a unified formula for allocating funds to schools is now underway. Some have gained and some have lost in the process which has revealed several problems, especially in the funding of the smaller secondary schools with less than 300 pupils whose future, as a result, is seen to be under threat.

Educational Administration

3. The Minister declared an end to the speculation about the future of educational administration in the Province by retaining the present five Education and Library Boards. More services are to be organised on a five-Board basis and further inter-Board co-operation is to be encouraged in other areas.

4. Appointments to the five Education and Library Boards were announced by the Minister in September. The Presbyterian Transferor Representatives are as follows:-

BELFAST BOARD:	Rev J R Dickinson Rev Dr W D Patton
NORTH-EASTERN BOARD:	Rev D Clarke Mrs C M Poots Mr J A Scott
SOUTH-EASTERN BOARD:	Rev H S Boyd Rev J H McIntyre Rev Dr R J Rodgers
SOUTHERN BOARD:	Mrs M E Niblock
WESTERN BOARD:	Rev R Herron

Dr R J Rodgers has since resigned and the name of his replacement has not yet been announced.

5. The Board wishes to express its gratitude to those who served on the ELBs and school Boards of Governors for the four-year term which finished during the year.

Transferor Representatives' Council

6. This body, made up of the Transferor Representatives from the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches and the Church of Ireland on the ELBs, continues to make the views of the Churches known and responds to the various Department of Education for Northern Ireland initiatives. Recent responses have been to the Education Order 1998, the consultation paper on Pre-School Education, The Guidelines for Transformation to Controlled Integrated Status, the General Teaching Council and the proposed Professional Qualification for Headship being required of new school principals.

7. A TRC delegation meets the Minister of Education three times a year to raise concerns and ensure that the Churches' views are heard in the decision-making process. In addition delegations meet with the chief executives of the five ELBs and with the R E Advisors for a two-way exchange of views about matters of interest.

8. The TRC is aware of the need to support Transferor Governors at the local level and intends circulating a news sheet on a termly basis. The role of governors in particular has become much more complex in recent years and the whole Church continues to be indebted to the transferor governors for their very valuable contribution.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Primary Schools

Rev J S B Drennan, Director of Primary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:

1. Last year I reported that educational reform was taking a long time to reach the statute books. Just as the process seemed to be coming to a conclusion the General Election resulted in the formation of another administration, following which nothing new has come to the fore.

2. In recent days the new Boards of Management, along with the community representatives, have been elected and will be in place for the next three years.

3. Some reservations have been expressed about the latest offer of computers from the Tesco group, on the grounds that it might be contrary to the guidelines set out by the Department of Education. This is being investigated.

4. As with Northern Ireland, school transport accounts for a large percentage of the annual budget. For this reason the previous government set up a committee to review the working of the system with a view to improving its working at no extra expense to national finances. One of the suggestions is to place a financial levy on all parents. I am waiting for the comments of the various Presbyterian schools to see what response we will be making.

5. We invite the Church to pray for an increased number of Christians to enter the teaching profession and, while appreciating the excellent contribution of women teachers, would wish to encourage more men to do so.

Secondary Schools

Mr B Duffy, Director of Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:

1. The change of government in the Republic resulted in the Education Bill 1997 being replaced by a modified version (No. 2). The main difference between the Bills is that the regional Boards, seen by many as wasteful bureaucracy, were deleted from Bill No. 2. Other concerns expressed by the Presbyterian Church, mainly to do with the maintenance of the ethos of Protestant Schools, were taken seriously by the new government and were incorporated in the new Bill. The Bill is welcome in many respects as it will give citizens the statutory right to education and will promote diversity of types of school.

2. The Bill also lays emphasis on the disadvantaged in society and will amend the Intermediate Education Act of 1878 to allow the assessment of Religious Education in state examinations. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has produced a draft syllabus for Religious Education and will, presumably, implement it once the legal obstacle has been surmounted.

3. The Presbyterian Church is represented on the Secondary Education Committee (along with the Methodist Church, the Church of Ireland and the Religious Society of Friends) which disbursed to families by means test a Block Grant from the government of £2,740,989 for the 1996/7 school year. There was

some concern on the Committee that the grant was not raised in the government's budget, which would have resulted in a decrease in grant levels in the future. A strong case has been made to the government that increases must be consistent and annual in order to provide a secure line of funding for Protestant education. A small interim increase has been granted but representations will need to be made continually in order to ensure proper funding.

Religious Education in Day Schools

Rev W T J Richardson, Organiser of Religious Education in Day Schools, reports:

1. I often wonder if the average person in our pews appreciates fully the work of teachers in our day schools, - primary and secondary - in relation to the teaching of Religious Education.

2. Sixteen years of receiving reports from schools and from Presbytery Agents have filled me with admiration for the work carried on by teachers, often under difficult circumstances from constant curriculum changes, time-tabling difficulties and sometimes lack of the necessary funding. Of course, there are exceptions where, due to lack of co-operation by principals or staff, the teaching of RE appears to be shoddy and inadequate. Thankfully, however, these cases are very much the exception to the rule.

3. To date I have received reports from 16 of the possible 19 Presbyteries for Northern Ireland. I pay tribute to many of our Presbytery Agents who in September ensure that teachers are furnished with the necessary Statistical Forms and who exercise a supervisory capacity in ensuring that parish ministers go into school to fulfil the statutory role given to them.

4. Our ministers continue to fulfil the useful role as transferor representatives or Boards of Governors and more often than not act as chairpersons of these boards. They are frequently found conducting assemblies and teaching classes allocated to them.

5. Not infrequently principals refer to our ministers as an extension of their staff whose role as counsellor, and advisor, is greatly appreciated.

6. In a day when parental encouragement to children and young people is sometimes not forthcoming to attend Sunday School, Bible Class or Church the role of RE in day schools is becoming more and more important. It is fair to ask where do many of our children and young people get religious teaching, if it is not taught in our day schools? Because of this, it is incumbent upon our ministers, transferor representatives and members to give every encouragement to both teachers and pupils and to do all in their power to ensure that our young people emerge from formal education with a solid foundation of the Holy Scriptures indelibly imprinted on their minds.

J H McINTYRE, Convener

CHURCH EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Training

1. During the past year 64 training classes were organised for Sunday School teachers, Bible Class leaders and Children's Church leaders in seven Presbyteries.

Publications

2. The Sunday School department continues to publish annually, Teachers' Guides and worksheets with a 'Presbyterian flavour'. The four lessons published in August, 1997 were, *Following Jesus*: 1. At the table (Communion); 2. On the move (Church Extension); 3. In the home (Family Matters); 4. Into all the world (Overseas Work). The topics for 1998/99 on the theme of *Following Jesus* are 1. Leadership, 2. Evangelism, 3. The Presbyterian Orphan and Children's Society and 4. Overseas. The Committee encourages congregations to incorporate these within their chosen curriculum.

3. An Order of Service for the Commissioning of Sunday School Teachers and Bible Class Leaders has been drawn up and sent to all ministers and superintendents.

4. An information sheet headed, "*Good Practice for Sunday School Teachers and Bible Class Leaders*" was drawn up and circulated to all Sunday School superintendents and ministers.

5. A Training Manual for New Sunday School Teachers and Bible Class Leaders has been compiled and is to be piloted in a number of congregations prior to publication.

Sunday School and Youth Project

6. The Sunday School and Youth Project, Sumba, at the time of writing has brought in the magnificent sum of £28,839. Sunday School & Youth Groups who contributed so generously to this project are thanked for their support.

7. The Sunday School and Youth Project for 1998/99 will focus on Central Europe.

8. The Sunday School Organiser led a team to prepare for the Gosford Fun Day on Saturday 2 May, 1998 - the Sunday School and Youth Project being the beneficiary.

Awards of Bibles

9. The Committee expresses thanks to the administrators of the Local Bible Fund for enabling it to make the following awards of Bibles during the year:

11 teachers with 30 years or more service;

32 children with 5 years or more unbroken attendance.

Thanks

10. The Committee expresses thanks to Mrs Donna Thompson for the efficient and courteous manner in which she runs the Sunday School Office,

attends to the many and varied requests for assistance and supports the Sunday School Organiser in his work.

I T McKEE, Convener

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. In last year's Report the proposal that the three main Protestant Churches consider working together to strengthen chaplaincy work in the Dublin area was considered. This year the Committee embarked on extensive discussions with those primarily responsible for the present commitment. All were supportive of the concept, and the University Education Committee now plans to engage in discussion with those who made the initial proposals. In the meantime we are very well served by Rev Keith McCrory and Rev Katherine Meyer, both of whom have been very active in their particular spheres of service.

2. At Queen's, the Bush and Derryvolgie Hall continue to flourish. In June of last year we lost the services of the Bush Catering Manager, Mrs Belanne Thompson. We welcomed Mrs June Carton in September. Both have had considerable impact on the witness in Elmwood Avenue and the whole of the catering team are to be commended on their work amongst students and staff. Revs Noel Williamson and Steve Stockman continue to lead in advancing Christ's Kingdom in the Queen's and Stranmillis areas.

3. At the University of Ulster, the chaplains have embarked on a refurbishment of the Mixers Bar at Jordanstown. Rev David Stanfield has been leading the developments there. Rev Robert Davey, part-time chaplain at Magee College, has submitted his resignation. The Committee thanks Mr Davey for his contribution to the work at UUM and wishes him well in his new area of responsibility.

4. Our parish ministers in Cork, Galway and Limerick are also involved in University and other third level chaplaincy work. They are always pleased to hear of students or staff who come to any of these Institutions. With growing numbers at third level these are important points of witness.

5. The Committee has recently undertaken to comment on the Dearing Inquiry Report and will be reporting in the very near future.

6. We commend to your prayers the work of all those who have pastoral responsibilities in the third level institutions in Ireland.

Queen's University

Rev Noel Williamson reports from Queen's University:

1 The most significant event of the year has been the arrival of a new Vice-Chancellor, Dr George Bain, from the London Business School, following the retirement of Sir Gordon Beveridge. Accelerated changes in policy and strategy are anticipated, resulting in a further expansion of student numbers in the next few years. The proposed introduction of new courses, such as classics and philosophy, illustrate a potential, though regrettable, blurring of the distinction between higher and further education.

2. Well over 400 Presbyterians registered as new students in September reflecting the overall increase in the student population which now totals 11,264 full-time and 12,918 part-time students, with 4,000 academic and support staff.

3. We enjoyed a very active year at 'The Bush' which has again proved to be a popular meeting-point and platform for our programmes.

4. My thanks go to Mrs June Carton for her excellent work in providing super catering all year and to her team Iris and Debbie. My thanks also to our Convener, Prof. Hasley Mitchell, for his continued interest and support.

University of Ulster

Rev David Stanfield reports from the University of Ulster at Jordanstown:

1. The chaplaincy team at Jordanstown is diverse in terms of gifting, age, gender, political aspiration, cultural identity, denomination, whether lay or ordained and yet there is a tremendous unity of spirit and common purpose.

2. This purpose is expressed in three passages of scripture: Luke 24 v 13-35; Acts 2 v 42-47; Isaiah 61 v 1. We seek to journey with students and staff reminding them of the presence and power of the risen Lord. We endeavour to be a community of believers who provide opportunities for worship, teaching, prayer, fellowship and sharing. We proclaim the good news at every opportunity, bind up broken hearted and offer freedom and a new perspective from the past in the name of Jesus.

3. It has been a great delight to see four people come to faith this year and others renewed in their faith. Much of my time has been spend nurturing these new believers.

4. The University, which continues to be generous towards our material needs, is currently considering building a small room which would provide a more suitable space for 'counselling' conversations. It has been exciting to see people receive healing as a result of prayer, including one physical healing.

5. During the year MIXERS, our alcohol-free bar, was completely refurbished at a cost of £16,000. It's re-opening was eagerly anticipated, especially by the international student community.

6. This has been a year of new beginnings, especially in the sphere of social action. It has been a time of increasing boldness and new experiences of the Lord's favour. Thank you once again for your continued support and encouragement.

Coleraine Campus

Rev Peter Lyle reports from the University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus:

1. This has been a busy and fruitful year. Many of the students I inherited during the academic year of 1996/97 were final year students and so I really started from scratch again in September last year. Approximately 35 first year students registered their presence with me. In total I have contacts with about 70 students.

2. I believe that it is very important that the Presbyterian presence is in evidence around the Campus and I work hard at trying to be at as many functions to which the chaplains are invited.

3. As the post is part-time, my day 'on duty' is a Wednesday when I am available for all students and staff. I also run a fellowship group over lunchtime and spend some time with Presbyterian students. My wife and I also run social events throughout the year in our home and other places. My contacts have been enhanced by the fact that all students now receive a free e-mail address - this enables me to contact more students in a few minutes than I could in a couple of weeks. An interesting and encouraging venture this year was to take a PWA Group with a few of the students. I talked about the work and the students were interviewed about their experiences in the University.

4. The inter-chaplaincy work continues and I am fully involved in the organisation of such events as a series of Lenten Talks by different Christian Staff members.

5. I have sought to develop links with the Christian Union which have proved very successful and I have been to and spoken at a number of meetings. I have also been appointed to a CU advisory group by the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship.

6. It has been a privilege to counsel students with varied problems and to present Jesus.

Magee Campus

Rev Robert Davey reports from the University of Ulster, Magee Campus:

1. Magee campus of the University continues to expand. This year the student population reaches about 3,000, with about one third of these being part-time. The number of Presbyterian students is very small, so the chaplain's task is not too onerous. The Christian Union continues to provide a valuable spiritual home for students at their weekly fellowship.

2. I have been chaplain to Magee campus for almost five years, and have enjoyed the work immensely. I feel now, though, that it is time to step down. The University Education Committee will now ensure that the position is advertised among local ministers before appointing a successor.

3. I have appreciated the friendships made with students, staff and other chaplains at the University and the support of the University Education Committee.

Dublin

Rev Katherine Meyer reports from Trinity College, Dublin:

1. 1998 is a year of celebration for the Trinity College Chaplaincy, as we are marking two anniversaries, the 200th anniversary of the building of the College Chapel and the 25th anniversary of its 'opening', that is when it ceased being a place of worship for the Church of Ireland alone and began to be shared for that purpose by all Christian traditions equally.

2. Our celebrations were inaugurated at the launch of a special library exhibition on the history of the Trinity Chapel, in October. Our annual ecumenical service for the opening of the academic year was held later in the month and, in November, the musical group ANUNA, whose membership

includes a number of Trinity staff and graduates, gave a benefit concert, which was fully booked, for the Trinity College Chapel.

3. In the meantime, however, our ordinary activities have continued. The inaugural Week of Prayer for Christian Unity lecture was given in 1997 by Prof Enda McDonagh and was entitled "Inter-Church Christians: Beyond Ecumenism". In February, we organised our annual day out, this time to the Enniskillen region. The day included some sightseeing, but also a memorable afternoon visit and conversation with the Churches' Group of Enniskillen Together, which ended with a shared service of evening prayer. We are grateful to the Session of Enniskillen Presbyterian Church for lending us their church hall for this purpose.

4. As always, this year, I have made contact with any incoming Presbyterian students of whom I am made aware and I am also available to other students.

5. Other activities this year have included a weekend in Glendalough on the Bible, drama and story-telling, led by a trained theologian and mime!

University College Dublin

Rev Denis Campbell reports:

1. There are only 34 Presbyterian students out of a student population of around thirteen thousand. Two receptions were held in the first term and two in the second, hosted jointly with the Church of Ireland and Methodist Chaplains. On Shrove Tuesday a joint communion service led by the three chaplains was followed by a party.

2. Several students worship on Sundays at local Presbyterian churches.

3. All the chaplains meet together for prayer and planning on Wednesday mornings.

Dublin City University and Dublin Institute of Technology

Rev Keith McCrory reports:

1. This past year has been both challenging and encouraging in terms of my work amongst third level students and staff in Dublin. Both Dublin City University and Dublin Institute of Technology are institutions in flux with multiple building projects trying to keep up with increased student population. This flux, bringing with it changes in faculty location as well as organisation, has at times brought great pressure upon the staff and students of both institutions. In the midst of this pressure, mixed with the on-going pastoral needs and personal tragedies that, sadly, are common amongst our students, the chaplaincy teams seek to witness to the love and lordship of Jesus Christ.

2. In DCU the chaplains are greatly helped by the wonderful facilities provided in the University's chaplaincy centre. A modern chapel, quiet room, library, kitchen and offices all set in the middle of the campus provide a great starting point for ministry. Sadly, in DIT there is no such luxury of a single site with a central facility and spread out as it is over seven main campuses and seven additional smaller sites the chaplaincy team here has much more of a struggle to effectively connect with the student and staff population. For this

reason the DIT chaplains have been carrying out a major review of the service they are providing and as one of the facilitators in this process it has been encouraging for me to see renewed clarity of purpose slowly begin to emerge.

3. Relationships are the key in all areas of ministry and through my involvement with the CU, student lunches, chaplaincy events, student activities and what we call 'loitering with intent', I have been able to build and deepen my relationships with quite a few students and staff. I have been particularly encouraged by the growing opportunities to meet with students individually to share my faith and to offer care and support during their more difficult times.

4. An enormous spiritual vacuum seems to exist amongst those who are now coming to third level education in Dublin. More and more of our young people are turning their backs on the Christian faith and it remains both a privilege and a great challenge to be involved in filling that vacuum with the good news of Jesus Christ.

R H MITCHELL, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the resignation of the Board Convener, Dr R J Rodgers, OBE, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev James McAllister, OBE, be appointed in his place for a maximum period of five years
3. That the resignation of the Rev J H McIntyre, as Joint Secretary of the Board and Co-Convener of the State Education Committee, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev R F S Poots continue in these roles.

State Education Committee

4. That the General Assembly welcome the additional funds made available to the education service since the election of the present government and encourage the Minister to allocate realistic resources to allow the quality of education to be further improved and the backlog of accommodation needs to be met.

5. That the General Assembly appreciate the valuable contributions of the Transferor Representatives on the Education and Library Boards and on school Boards of Governors during their four-year term of office, now ended, and offers support to the new representatives in their work.

6. That the General Assembly welcome the increase in the Secondary Education Committee Block Grant recently implemented by the government of the Republic of Ireland. However, the Assembly note with concern the absence of a policy to ensure adequate and consistent funding for Protestant education through the Block Grant. The Assembly call on the government to provide consistent and realistic funding through annual increases in the Block Grant based on a formula agreed with the Secondary Education Committee.

Church Education Committee

7. That the General Assembly thank Sunday Schools and Youth Groups for their generous support for Project Sumba and commend the 1998-1999 Project focusing on our Church's work in Central Europe.

8. That the General Assembly encourage all Sunday Schools and Bible Classes to use the four Guides and Worksheets prepared by the Sunday School Organiser and also 'Signposts', the catechism workbook.

University Education Committee

9. That the General Assembly commend the work of the chaplaincies and those who provide pastoral care to students to the prayers of the Church and urge all of our young people attending Universities and Colleges in Ireland, to make full use of the facilities provided.

10. That the General Assembly urge the Government to take into account the special needs of Further and Higher Education in Northern Ireland as it seeks to implement the Dearing Committee recommendations.

General

11. That the Board of Education, with its associated working Committees, for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 284 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 284(2)(e) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 284(2)(e) of the Code the words "including relationship with the Sabbath School Society for Ireland" be deleted.

R F S POOTS

BOARD OF STUDIES

Convener: Very Rev Dr A W G BROWN

Secretary: Rev J H ROBINSON

1. Throughout the year the Board of Studies carried out its responsibilities of interviewing and assessing candidates for the ministry, overseeing and extending pastoral care to ministerial students in all locations of study and providing in-service courses for licentiates.

2. Much of the day-to-day outworking of these responsibilities, together with the administration of the Board and Committee on Studies, was undertaken by the Director of Ministerial Students.

3. This year the Rev Principal T S Reid retires from his position as Principal of the College and Professor of Practical Theology. The Union College Management Committee Report makes reference to the contribution made to the life of the College and Church by Principal Reid. The Board thanks him warmly for the service he has given to it and to our students in particular.

4. The Board has been pleased to co-operate fully with the current Review of College and Training, and looks forward to participating in the new structures and strategies which result.

5. The number of licentiates becoming eligible for Call this year and for the next few years has received constant attention.

6. The most recent personnel projections indicate that there will be a slight over-supply of licentiates from now until the year 2001, although it could approach a 'supply equals demand' situation, depending on the retirement pattern of ministers.

7. Beyond 2001 and by the year 2004 (the farthest to which projections are possible with any degree of accuracy) there would appear to be an increasingly significant under-supply of licentiates which could be in the region of 15-20 by 2004.

8. This projected short-fall is of major concern to the Board and requires the attention and action of the Church now so that opportunities for mission and ministry, in their widest senses, will not be missed due to lack of ministerial leadership.

COMMITTEE ON STUDIES

1. The Committee met three times during the year.

2. Through the Director of Ministerial Students it continued to give advice to prospective candidates and to set courses and administer examinations in accordance with the Regulations of the General Assembly and the direction of the Board of Studies.

3. In the academic year 1997/98 there were 44 students under the care of Presbyteries as listed in the appended schedule.

4. Six students were granted permission to study at Universities/Colleges other than Union: two at Aberdeen, one at Edinburgh, one at Princeton, New Jersey and two at Regent College, Vancouver.

5. The Committee expresses its thanks for the work of the following external examiners:

OT Language and Biblical Theology - The Rev I J Patterson, BA, MTh.

NT Language - The Rev W P H Erskine, MA, BD.

NT Greek (Qual) - The Rev W P H Erskine, MA, BD.

Systematic Theology - The Rev D Bradley, BA, BD.

Church History - The Rev T N Hamilton, BA, BD.

Homiletics, Public Worship and Pastoral Work - The Rev Dr D C Irwin, MA, BD.

6. During the year the Committee, aware that the Board is charged with certifying the eligibility of licentiates following their prescribed period of probation and post-college courses, considered the question of how long a licentiate could be absent from his/her duties (for whatever reason) without,

- (i) the absence being brought to the attention of the Board and
- (ii) the length of the period of probation being affected.

7. The Board, subsequently, approved the following guidelines:

- (a) absence from work of up to six weeks in total (excluding holidays) will not normally be reported to the Board;
- (b) absence from work for seven weeks in a one-year probation, or three calendar months in a two-year probation, will normally result in an extended period of probation;
- (c) absences due to illness must be certified by a medical practitioner;
- (d) other causes of absences will be investigated by the Board.

STUDY IN A MISSIONARY PARTNERSHIP

Rev Dr Ian Hart reports:

8. Students who are studying for the ministry of our Church at Union College are encouraged to spend one of the 3 theological years or, if they prefer a 'year out', studying theology in a country where we have a missionary partnership. Such a time can be a very enlightening and stimulating experience. For example, overseas Churches are often struggling with very different issues from those we are preoccupied with in Ireland. We sometimes need to be freed from local practices and we may realise that we have been following social conventions rather than the gospel. In recent years students have taken up this opportunity in Kenya (St Paul's United Theological College, Limuru), in Jamaica (United Theological College, Kingston), and in Singapore (Trinity Theological College).

PRE-THEOLOGICAL SUMMER SCHOOL AND PHASE I INTERVIEW

9. The Pre-Theological Summer School and Phase I Interview was held in Union College from Tuesday 17 to Saturday 21 June, 1997. The Interviewing Panel comprised: The Very Rev Dr J Ross; the Revs R F S Poots OBE, Dr W D Patton, J S Carson, R L Craig, M Stanfield, T C Morrison, H S Boyd, D I J McNie, D C Porter, F A Bradley, D B Knox; Messrs H R F Plester and S Agnew

MBE and Mrs M Robinson, together with the Very Rev Dr A R Rodgers (Director), the Rev J H Robinson (Secretary), and Dr D E Eagleson MA, DipVocG and Mrs H Mullan BSc PGCE (Vocational Consultants), acting as advisors to the Panel.

10. Eleven candidates were in attendance and completed the normal aspects of the interviewing process. Of these, eight are being recommended to this General Assembly, one is not being recommended at this time and two are not being recommended.

11. The 1998 Pre-Theological Summer School and Phase I Interview is planned for 15 to 19 June. The size and personnel of the Interviewing Panel has been approved by the Committee.

J STAFFORD CARSON, Convener

APPENDIX

SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS

ARDS	Christoph Ebbinghaus	Regent, Vancouver
	Colin J Gamble	Union
	Cecil A Grant	-
	Simon Henning	Union
	Maurice M Stewart	Union
BALLYMENA	Jonathan Wylie	Union
	Lee H Eagleson	Union
	Samuel D Finlay	Union
EAST BELFAST	Colin K McDowell	Union
	Stephen Richmond	UUJ
	Michael N Davidson	Union
	Graeme J Kennedy	Union
NORTH BELFAST	Andrew N Kerr	Union
	William H G Crawley	Princeton
	J Moore Casement	Union
SOUTH BELFAST	Mark Jones	Regent, Vancouver
	David B Murphy	Union
	J R Ian Harbinson	Union
	Peter G McDowell	Union
CARRICKFERGUS	Cheryl A Reid	Union
	Colin Burcombe	Union
	R Ian Carton	Union
COLERAINE	Stephen J Lockington	Aberdeen
	Geoffrey D Allen	Union
	Philip B Wilson	Aberdeen
DOWN	Mervyn Gibson	Union
DROMORE	Samuel J Castles	Union
	Michael McClenahan	-
DUBLIN & MUNSTER	Brian D Colvin	Union
IVEAGH	T David Hagan	Union
	Edwin S McDowell	Union

	Ronald D McDowell	Union
	John A Peacock	Union
NEWRY	Kenneth W J Hanna	Union
	Kenneth Henderson	Union
	David S Henry	QUB
	William J A Moody	Union
	Robert J Stevenson	Union
OMAGH	David W Reid	Union
ROUTE	David J Steele	-
TEMPLEPATRICK	Louise J Robinson	Edinburgh
	David A Simpson	UUJ
TYRONE	Colin W A Martin	Union
	Adrian T S McAlister	-

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met five times during the year. Meetings of sub-committees were also held.

2. Principal T S Reid has indicated his intention to retire on 30 September, 1998. The Committee records its debt of gratitude to Principal Reid for his 14 years of service to the College. He was ordained in 1958. After serving the congregations of Cargycreevy, Gilnahirk and 1st Newtownards, in 1983 he was installed as Professor of Practical Theology at Union Theological College. Principal Reid used his experience of parish ministry fully as he applied practical principles of ministry in his teaching. His time at College was marked by a deep concern for the students in his care. He was always generous with his time to any seeking his advice. His sense of humour and his way of illustrating points for sermons helped many in pulpit preparation as he brought to them, through his teaching, the joys and difficulties as well as the privileges of ministry. His courage in the face of serious illness was an inspiration to us all. The Presbyterian Theological Faculty of Ireland recognised his contribution to the academic work of the College by conferring upon him the degree of D.D. *Honoris Causa*. We shall miss the contribution of Principal Reid and also the encouragement and interest of his wife, Mrs Anne Reid. We wish them both a long, blessed and happy retirement.

3. In December, 1997 the death took place of the Rev Professor Emeritus John Monteith Barkley. Professor Barkley was appointed to the Chair of Church History in 1954 and served as Principal of the College from 1976 until his retirement in 1981. He was Convener of a number of General Assembly Committees. Professor Barkley was a man of scholarship whose interest in, and care for, the students of the College marked him out as a valued academic and teacher. His last years were marked by serious illness when he was cared for devotedly by his wife. As a College and as a Church we thank Almighty God for the life and work of Prof John Barkley.

4. The Committee welcomed the appointment of Very Rev Dr A W G Brown as Chairman and the Rev Lesley Carroll as a member. The Committee received, with regret, the resignation of Mr R W Hamilton (appointed by the Trustees of the General Assembly) and records its appreciation of Mr Hamilton's contribution to its work.

5. On 1 August, 1997, Mr Stephen Gregory MA, FLA, took up his appointment as College librarian. Mr Gregory has already proved a valuable addition to the College staff.

6. The Principal reports on behalf of the Faculty that:

(a) The numbers enrolled are as follows:

	Ministerial	Non-Ministerial
First Year	4	15
Second Year	14	12
Third Year	12	7

In addition, 9 part-time students are taking one or more modules. There are currently 22 post-graduate students enrolled.

(b) The number of ministerial students in the first year is the lowest for almost forty years. This appears to be part of a trend for the next three years at least. It is impossible to predict what impact Government policy on student contributions to fees will have on the enrolment figures for non-ministerial students.

(c) The College hopes to introduce evening classes to cater for the number of people who are interested in theological study. The intention is that there will be courses of general interest as well as degree-oriented courses.

(d) Plans are well advanced for the introduction of the Master of Divinity degree for graduate students. It is intended that those who already hold Bachelors' degrees in theology will have the opportunity to undertake courses to up-grade them if they so wish.

(e) Consideration is being given to the introduction of a higher degree for ministers who are already in parish ministry.

7. A new telephone system has been installed. It has been necessary to install a new heating system both in the College and at No 26 College Green. Tenders are being sought for the rewiring of No 26. It is expected that economies from the new system will pay for the additional expenditure over the next few years.

8. The College Forward Plan and Forward Financial Plan has been put on 'hold' until the recommendations of the Overview of Funding Committee are known and General Assembly decisions have been made. Papers from the Faculty and the Honorary Treasurer have been submitted to the Sub-Committee on the College and Training review.

9. College salaries were increased in line with Church House increases and in accordance with the formula for Professorial Salaries and Pensions.

10. The College records its thanks to the United Appeal for its financial support. Every effort is made to economise consonant with required standards. The deficit for the year 1997 was £10,286 (1996 - £38,431). The Residential facility continues to be a major area of deficit. Expenses, less receipts, amounted

to £24,980 (1996 - £18,470). The residential accommodation requires major up-grading.

11. The UTC and Edgehill Co-ordinating Committee met on one occasion during the year. Working relations continue to be harmonious and helpful to both Colleges.

12. Once again it has been a pleasure to co-operate with the Christian Training Centre in the Summer School.

13. The Management Committee records its appreciation of the work of the academic and administrative staff for helpful and efficient performance of their duties. Their ready co-operation enables the College to run well for the benefit of all the students.

MARGARET L JOHNSTON, Convener

STUDENTS' BURSARY FUND COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met three times during the year.

2. There were 35 students for the Ministry who received benefit from the Bursary Fund in the last academic year.

3. The total expenditure of the fund during 1997 was £229,560 while the income from all sources amounted to £272,003, £188,000 coming from the United Appeal.

4. We thank all who contributed to the Fund during the year. This could have been by direct giving or through offerings at services of licensing, ordination, or installation. These financial offerings are much needed and appreciated. We would remind conveners and Presbytery Clerks that an attractive leaflet in the form of a bookmark is available to publicise the Fund at such services. The Pulpit Supply Association administered by the students at Union contributed £1,939.

5. After consultation with the College Management Committee and the Students' Council, the Committee has agreed that from the academic year 1998/9 the grants will be paid in 2 instalments at the beginning of each semester.

GEORGE MOORE, Convener

MAGEE FUND SCHEME COMMITTEE

Magee Director's Report

1. The various training programmes held at the Christian Training Centre and at many other locations throughout the Church, continue to receive encouraging support for the most part. Thanks must be given to all those who have led the different seminars and workshops. Most of all we give thanks to God for His guidance and leading during the year that has gone. Two of our new programmes were particularly well supported. One of these was for congregations in and around the Belfast area on 'Covenanting' and in the

1998/99 programme two further locations will be available on this subject for the remainder of Presbyteries. The other new 'item' was on 'Preparing Church Banners' and it is hoped to offer these workshops in other locations in the new programme.

2. God willing, I hope to retire on the 30 September, 1999 and will be asking the General Assembly to set up the mechanism to appoint a new Director of Christian Training at the 1999 General Assembly.

3. The new programme for 1998-99 is now ready and ministers, elders and laity are asked to give their support both by their attendance and prayers.

4. The programme starts with the Summer School of Theology, which begins Monday, 15 June. The theme for the 1998 School is 'Learning and Sharing Together' and it runs from 15 to 18 June. It is open to ministers, elders and laity and is both residential and non-residential. Meals can be obtained provided these are notified at time of booking. We are privileged to have a team of outstanding speakers. Professor Patrick Miller is a scholar of world renown and will be coming from Princeton, USA. His theme will be 'Interpreting the Psalms'. The other main speaker is Mr David Turner, who is a distinguished London lawyer and also a member of the Select Vestry of All Souls, Langham Place. His theme will be 'Law and Grace'. Members of UTC Faculty will conduct a wide variety of afternoon seminars and daily devotions will be led by Rev Charles McMullen. Details and booking forms can be obtained from the Christian Training Centre. The Summer School can only be a success if it has the support of ministers, elders and members throughout the Church.

5. The books, written by the Director, entitled 'Living Leadership' and 'Valuable Visiting' continue to be much in demand. In fact the Church of Scotland requested copies for their bookshop in Edinburgh. Nearer home these publications can be obtained from either Familybooks or the CTC. There is also a wide variety of videos and tapes available for hire from the CTC.

6. The Bible Correspondence Course continues to attract enrolments and past students have found the course both enriching and challenging.

7. Thanks goes to those who have supported the courses that have been held. The support of the Magee Committee has been very encouraging and much appreciated. Special thanks goes to the Rev Charles McMullen for all his in-put and help throughout the year. The work of my secretary, Mrs Mary Coles, continues to be invaluable and is greatly appreciated.

8. The prayers, interest and support of the whole Church are sought for all the work being done through the Christian Training Centre in the year ahead.

A HAROLD GRAHAM, Director

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly accept the retirement of the Rev Principal T S Reid from 30 September, 1998 and that he be thanked for his services.
3. That the work of the Director of Ministerial Students be commended to the whole Church for support and prayer.

4. That the work of the Magee Director of Christian Training and the Bible Correspondence Course be commended to the whole Church for support, participation and prayer.

5. That the books 'Living Leadership' and 'Valuable Visiting' be commended to elders and lay workers to help and encourage them in their work and witness.

6. That the General Assembly encourage support for the Summer School of Theology to be held at UTC and CTC from 15 to 18 June.

7. That the General Assembly receive notice of the retirement of the Rev Dr A H Graham as Magee Director of Christian Training, from 30 September, 1999 and that he continue in post until that date.

8. That the General Board be empowered to approve a job description for a new Magee Director of Christian Training drawn up by the Magee Fund Scheme Committee in consultation with the Board of Studies and the General Board's College and Training Review Committee; invite the Nomination Board to proceed to present a nomination or nominations to the 1999 Assembly; take any other decisions, as necessary.

9. That the following grants be paid from the Incidental Fund:

June Residential Course and Interview	£465
Pre-Term College Retreat	£1,020
Applicants' Overnight Course	£300
Licentiate Courses	£550
Meetings for students and spouses	£600
Honoraria for Extern Examiners	£295
Communication Skills courses for students outside Ireland	£85

TOTAL £3,315

10. That the General Assembly note that the Students' Bursary Fund Grant for 1998/9 will be £3,250 and the married allowance £1,400. The children's allowances will continue to be paid at CMF rates.

11. That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Board of Studies, be accepted as students for the Ministry and placed under the care of their Presbyteries:

Robert Alexander Campbell	Badoney and Corrick	Derry and Strabane
Niall Samuel Robert Lockhart	Elmwood	Dromore
Christopher William Peter Kennedy	Hamilton Road, Bangor	Ards
David Joseph McClelland	Ballyrashane	Coleraine
Glenn Alexander Chestnutt	Dervock	Route
William James Hayes	Abbey, Monkstown	North Belfast
William Joseph Moody Parker	Sloan Street	Dromore
Angus Vere Stewart	High Street, Antrim	Templepatrick

12. That the Board of Studies, together with the appropriate working committees, for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par. 285 of the Code, as follows:-

COMMITTEE ON RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES

1. The Committee held three stated meetings during the year.
2. An application was considered from a minister in the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, for recognition as a minister in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Committee examined the background in education and ministry of the applicant, and decided unanimously not to grant the request, on the grounds that his reasons were not adequate (Code Par 219).
3. A former minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, who has now retired, has applied to be received as a Minister without Charge (Retired). The Committee requires official credentials from the appropriate Church before proceeding with the application. Such credentials must be received within a reasonable time, otherwise the application will fall by default.
4. In accordance with the decision of the General Assembly of 1996, the Committee interviewed Mr Richard John Montgomery on 22 January, 1998. It was agreed that Mr Montgomery be recommended by the Committee to the General Assembly in 1998, to be received as a Minister without Charge, under the care of East Belfast Presbytery.

ROBERT JOHNSTON, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That Mr Richard John Montgomery be received as a Minister without Charge and placed under the care of the East Belfast Presbytery.

COMMISSION ON TRUSTS

1. Attention is drawn to the Capital Account of the General Investment Fund. The Commission advised the acceptance of the Trust Funds.

A J RANKIN, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Commission on Trusts for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 130 of the Code as follows:-

BOARD OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Convener: Mr O J G WHITE

1. The Board met three times and was represented at numerous other meetings during the year.

2. The audit of the central Church accounts was put out to tender during the year. Five firms of auditors submitted written proposals. A sub-committee, representing the Trustees and the Board, interviewed representatives of the firms. After careful deliberation of the merits of the proposals, the Committee decided to recommend that Ernst and Young continue as auditors. The Committee considered the whole procedure very worth while in ensuring that the Church obtained value for money in what is an expensive but necessary procedure. In recommending the appointment of auditors to the General Assembly the Board noted that, in the past, its recommendation related to a year already almost half gone. Accordingly the Board is proposing that Ernst and Young be appointed for the financial years 1998 and 1999. In future its recommendation will be for the year succeeding each General Assembly meeting.

3. The Board appointed a specialist sub-committee to consider the best way forward to ensure that the Financial Secretary's Office computer systems were 2000 compliant. After careful consideration the Committee decided to try to replace the current bespoke software with a package solution. Eighteen firms were invited to submit proposals. These were eventually whittled down to three suitable solutions which were then analysed in detail to ensure that they met the processing requirements. Taking account of all the relevant criteria, one firm has now been chosen and a firm contract is in the process of being prepared. The target implementation for the new systems is 1 January, 1999 which will give a full year to run off the old system. The Committee was disappointed that the current suppliers of software declined to quote for the new generation of package software but wishes to record its thanks to Graham Computing Services for the many years of fruitful co-operation between the two organisations.

ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee continues to maintain a careful oversight of the affairs of Church House, Assembly Hall and the Spires Shopping Centre.

2. The overdraft continues to be reduced and the cash-flow projection anticipates its clearance by the end of 1999, thus enabling the Board to cease the 10p in the £ of stipend assessment on congregations (Incidental Fund).

3. All units in the Spires Shopping Centre are presently let. They are carefully managed to ensure a minimum of arrears and bad debts have been kept to a minimum.

4. Lettings for the Assembly Hall and ancillary accommodation realised £61,666 compared with £62,421 in 1996 (which included £12,000 from the Pantomime).

5. The Committee would express its gratitude to all congregations for their continued support.

6. The Committee has set in motion plans to install comfort cooling in a section of the 2nd floor of Church House. The results will be closely monitored and used to make a decision about installing this in the rest of the building over a period of time.

7. The Committee would express its sincere thanks to Mr Harry Orr (Building Manager) and his staff, Lambert Smith Hampton (Managing and Letting Agents), Gordon McKnight Partnership (Architects), and Cleaver Fulton and Rankin (Legal Advisors) and the Friends of Church House.

R I A ALLELY, Convener

FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met three times during the year.

2. The Committee continued to assist departments in staffing matters especially the Board of Social Witness.

3. Revised Conditions of Appointment have been issued to all staff under the control of the Board of Finance and Administration.

4. Overdraft facilities granted were constantly reviewed. Those in respect of the replacement of Corkey House and Phase II of the Derryvolgie Halls of Residence were now no longer required.

5. The second review of Section 31 of Fair Employment Commission legislation was completed during the year.

6. Selection procedures in respect of the appointment of auditors has been carried out and a resolution in respect of the appointment is appended.

7. The Committee is engaged in the process of replacing the computer system within Church House.

8. The Committee has considered how best to carry out the personnel function in the future.

9. The Committee pays tribute to the dedication of staff to their duties and their role in providing support to congregations, ministers and the public.

C ROBINSON, Convener

GETTY BEQUEST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Allocation of Income

1. The Convener presented a statement of account for the year 1997 which showed that the balance available for distribution was £9,056 compared to £7,361 in 1996.

2. It was proposed by the Rev R F S Poots, seconded by Mr O J G White, and agreed to allocate £9,000 as follows:

	1997	1996
	£	£
Overseas Board - Foreign Mission	1,287	1,030
Overseas Board - Jewish Mission	644	515
Home Board	1,800	1,440
Belfast City Mission	5,269	4,215
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£9,000	£7,200

3. It was also agreed that Mr G Ferguson would look at the amounts he had received to date, in addition to the normal allocation, and see if the higher allocation to the Belfast City Mission was still required.

Membership of Committee

4. It was agreed to ask Rev J C Buick if he would be willing to act in place of Very Rev Dr J Girvan, who was no longer able to attend.

Meetings of Committee

5. In view of the little business which the Committee generated, it was agreed that the Convener be asked to look at the possibility of the business being devolved to another body, such as The Trustees of the Church.

T H COCHRANE, Convener

INCIDENTAL FUND COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met on 3 occasions during the year.
2. The Fund Account (including the General Purposes Fund) showed a credit balance at the year end of £80,000.
3. The Committee reviewed applications for funding and recommends that the following grants be paid in 1998.

	£
Arrangements	8,500
Inter-Church Relations	49,868
Public Worship	800
Religious Education Statistics Forms	200
Social Witness	1,920
Youth Board	6,500
PCI Holiday	6,000
Architecture	1,500
Peace and Peacemaking	2,400
Historical Society	13,700
Church and Government	4,220
Environmental Panel	150
Board of Studies	3,315
Strategy for Mission	3,000
Westminster Minutes	1,000
	<hr/>
	£103,073

4. The Committee records receipt of £25,000 from Familybooks in 1997 and confirms that the balance of a loan granted in 1995 will be paid in August of this year (1998) - £25,000. (Loan granted £50,000).

5. The Committee records a loan granted to 2020 Vision Committee of £10,000 to be repaid in full from the sale of CDs and Audio Tapes.

6. Thanks are recorded to all members of Committee and all others who helped in any way.

J D McCLEERY, Convener

STATISTICS COMMITTEE

1. While recognising the volume of sterling work carried out by many people involved in the completion of the Statistical Returns, the Committee is concerned at the apparent inability of some congregations and Presbyteries to meet the timescale for submission to Church House. Minor errors were detected in a number of submissions, requiring time-wasting contact with those involved.

2. Statistical and financial data for 1997 is summarised in Tables 1-5. Comparative figures for the preceding year also appear in these tables.

3. The trends for the headline statistics over the last 20 years are shown by way of line graphs.

4. The Committee reviewed the statistics in some depth and would draw attention to the continuing decline. It is hoped that the content of the detailed figures will be used to identify areas where the appropriate boards and committees can target their efforts so that the mission of the Church can be advanced, particularly in the light of the planned LIFE2 initiative.

5. An agreement has been reached with the Evangelism Committee to include the church-wide census activity, last carried out in January, 1997, with the annual statistics cycle.

6. Work on the handbook for those involved in finance and statistics within our Church is underway, albeit later than originally planned. The first sections will be available during 1998.

D W LAMB, Convener

TABLE ONE

PERSONS AND AGENCIES

	1996	1997	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	185	185		
Ministers in Active Duty	429	427		2
Retired Missionaries	5	4		1
Missionaries in Active Duty	55	61	6	
Total Ministers and Missionaries	674	677	3	
Licensures	15	12		3
Congregations	559	560	1	
Total Families	118,300	117,530		770
Persons of All Ages	297,205	295,297		1,908
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	100,421	98,345		2,076
Baptisms	2,621	2,581		40
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	2,042	1,912		130
Communicants	122,397	121,814		583
Attended at Least One Communion during year	82,094	80,808		1,286
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	7,291	7,324	33	
Number on Rolls in Sunday Schools and Bible Classes	38,062	36,960		1,102

TABLE TWO
CONGREGATIONAL INCOME

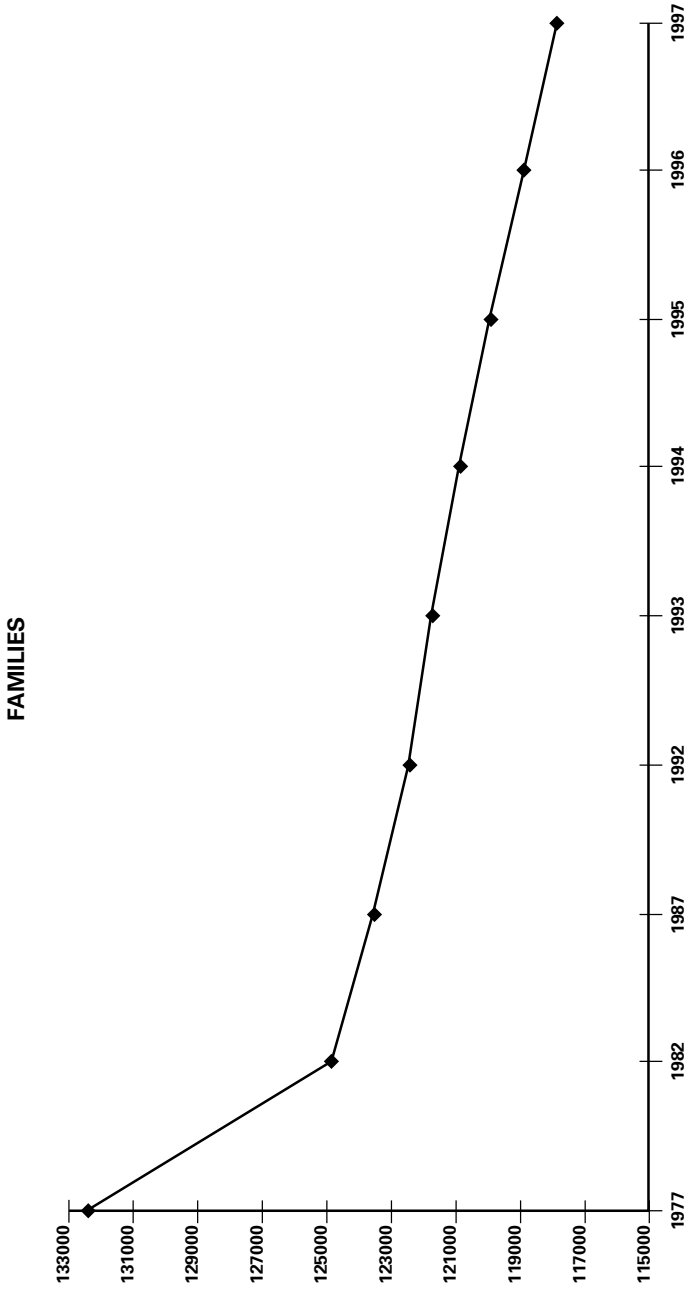
	1996		1997		% Difference	
	£	IR£	£	IR£	N.I.	R. of I.
Specified Sources	18,427,001	938,325	19,323,566	1,002,827	4.9%+	6.9%+
Building Fund etc.	8,926,708	721,051	8,925,511	581,322	.0%+	19.4%—
“For Others”	3,872,387	204,893	4,159,513	216,377	7.4%+	5.6%+
Raised from other sources	3,593,856	488,408	3,586,341	521,638	.2%—	6.8%+
Bequests etc.	2,491,026	57,108	4,469,571	117,845	79.4%+	6.4%+
Total Receipts	37,310,973	2,409,784	40,464,501	2,440,006	8.5%+	1.3%+
Total Receipts Less						
Bequests etc.	34,819,947	2,352,676	35,994,930	2,322,161	3.4%+	1.3%—
Bequests	713,774	14,447	1,774,116	64,981	48.6%+	49.8%+

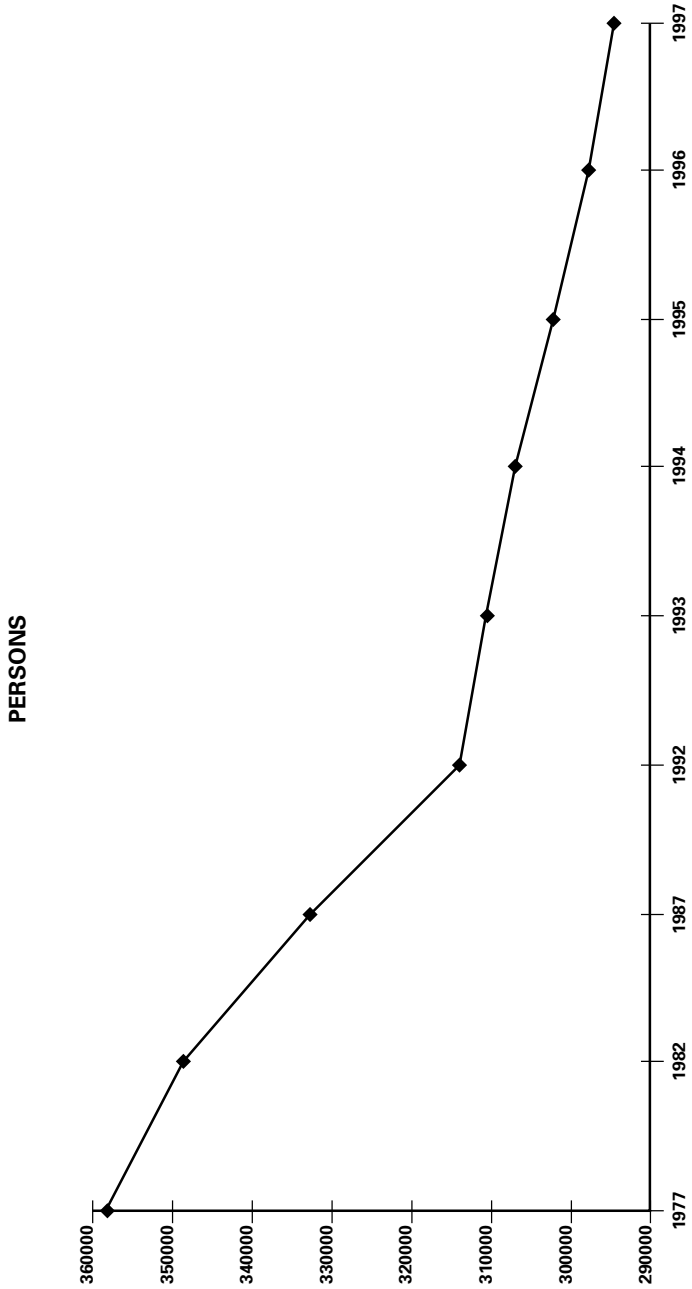
TABLE THREE
CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE

	1996		1997		IR£	% Difference N.I.	R. of I.
	£	IR£	£	IR£			
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	10,197,472	591,211	10,725,705	580,098		5.2%+	1.98%—
Payments under Assembly Assessments	4,752,393	280,950	4,818,767	277,453		1.4%+	1.2%—
Building, Repairs, etc.	9,664,554	632,897	9,997,984	549,787		3.5%+	13.1%—
United Appeal Schemes	2,297,003	95,409	2,454,705	103,146		6.9%+	8.1%+
Supplementary Schemes							
Other Religious and Charitable Objects	2,331,943	152,358	2,418,707	177,672		3.7%+	16.6%+
General Expenses	5,423,008	430,807	5,656,726	474,195		4.3%+	10.1%+
Total Payments	34,666,373	2,183,632	36,072,594	2,162,351		4.1%+	1.0%—

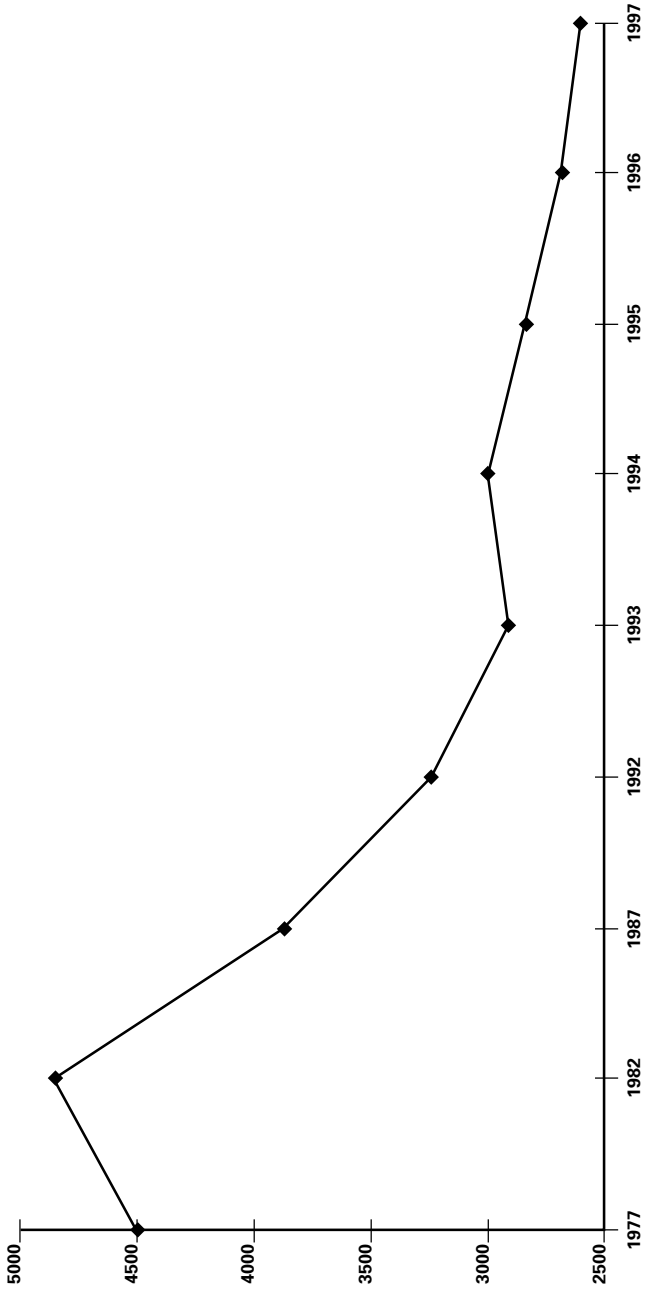
TABLE FOUR
CONGREGATIONAL BALANCES

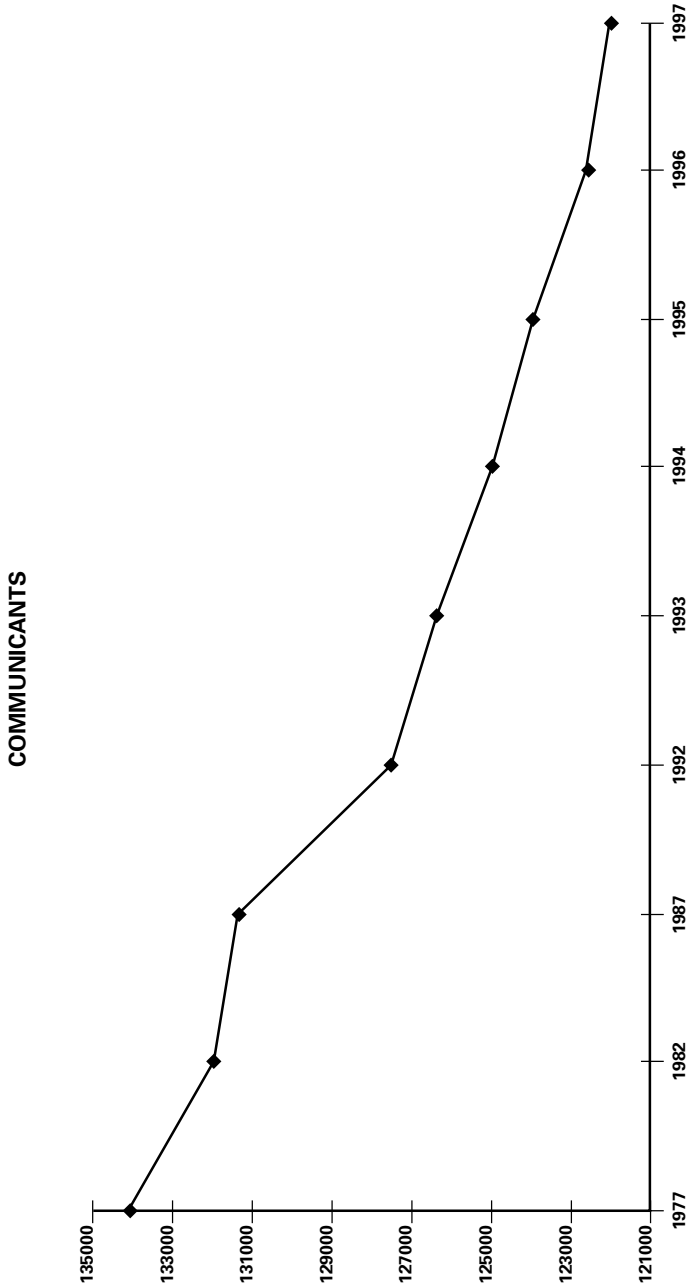
	Closing 1996		Opening 1997		Closing 1997		% Difference N.I.	R. of I.
	£	IR£	£	IR£	£	IR£		
Credits	15,095,198	1,021,614	14,803,299	1,019,526	16,106,169	1,142,188	8.8%+	12.0%+
Debits	3,403,520	82,278	3,403,867	78,928	3,848,266	66,128	13.1%+	16.2%—
Net Credits	11,691,678	939,336	11,399,432	940,598	12,257,903	1,076,060	7.5%+	14.4%+





BAPTISMS





APPENDIX

Salary Scales of Executive and Administrative Posts. (The undernoted figures are inclusive of a 4% increase applied as from 1 January, 1998 following the annual review). Additional points have been added at the top of certain executive grades.

EXECUTIVE POSTS**Scale 1 (£15,960 - £19,092)**

Building Manager
Youth Development Officer

Scale 2 (£18,120 - £21,942)

Dean of Residence
Director of Nightlight

Scale 3 (£20,352 - £24,968)

Executive Secretary, PWA
Secretary for Education in Mission
Secretary - Residential Trust
Promoter of Evangelism
Sunday School Organiser/Christian Education Secretary
Director - Video Unit
Financial Accountant

Scale 4 (£22,512 - £28,296)

Youth Officer
Superintendent of Irish Mission
Director of Social Service
Information Officer

Scale 5 (£24,968 - £30,588)

Deputy Financial Secretary
Director of Ministerial Students
Convener of Overseas Mission

Scale 6 (£26,868 - £32,892)

Deputy General Secretary

Scale 7 (£30,586 - £39,540)

General Secretary
Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS**Scale 1 (£8,088- £9,492)**

Junior Secretary
Telephonist
Building Manager's Assistant

Scale 2 (£9,492 - £11,088)

Secretary
Telephonist/Receptionist
Information & Technology Assistant
Design Assistant
Information Assistant

Scale 3 (£10,740 - £12,540)

Senior Secretary
Production Assistant
Administrative Assistant

Scale 4 (£12,264 - £14,232)

Personal Secretary
Information and Technology Officer
Financial Assistant
Administrative Assistant

Scale 5 (£13,488 - £15,684)

Personal Secretary
Computer Controller
Publications Manager
Administrative Assistant
Youth Board Development Officer

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That Ernst and Young be appointed as auditors of all Committees, Boards, Trusts, Commissions and Agencies of the General Assembly for the financial years 1998 and 1999.

Incidental Fund Committee

3. That the assessment for the Incidental Fund for 1998 be 3.5p in the £ of Stipend.
4. That the assessment for the Re-development of Church House project be 10p in the £ of Stipend.

Getty Bequest

5. That the following be appointed to the Committee of Management in accordance with the terms of the Will of the late John Getty:

Revs Dr S Hutchinson, J C Buick, Dr T J Simpson, Dr A J Weir, R J T McMullan, R F S Poots, J N Seawright; Messrs T H Cochrane, G Ferguson, W H Henry, D Lamb, J F Rowan and O J G White.

General

6. That the Board of Finance and Administration, with its associated working committees, for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 286 of the Code as follows:-

UNITED APPEAL BOARD

Convener: Rev W COWPER LYNAS

Secretary: THE ACTING CLERK

1. The Board has been greatly encouraged to find that almost £30,000 was contributed above the Target set for 1997. It expresses thanks to all who gave to the United Appeal, particularly those congregations which gave more than their target figure.

2. The Board was able to pay in full the proposed allocations for 1997.

3. During the year the Board consulted with the Social Witness, Youth, and Studies Boards, as well as the Irish Mission, the Kinghan Mission and Union College.

4. After considering all the financial statements and budgets, the Board has proposed a Target for 1999, as set out in Schedules III and IV.

5. The Board is considering at the moment the possibility of paying grants on account to agencies during the year, in order to relieve the burden of overdraft interest. This would be dependent on the strength of the balance of the Board's account in any year.

6. The Board would again urge ministers to speak to their congregations, from time to time, on the work funded by the United Appeal, and encourage them to give generously.

7. The Convenership of the United Appeal Board must rank as one of the most challenging positions in the service of the Church. It involves the preparation of literature to educate Church members about the needs of the boards and agencies, a commitment to persuasive deputation speaking, a thorough knowledge of money matters and the ability to lead a team in the allocation of limited funds in a manner which displays balanced and fair judgement.

The Rev W Cowper Lynas has carried out this task with professionalism, courtesy and to the admiration of the Church. His period as Convener has been marked by annually increased giving by congregations to the enrichment of the mission of Jesus Christ.

SCHEDULE I

Presbytery	Contributing Families 1996	United Appeal 1998 £
Ards	10,869	263,009
Armagh	4,136	100,084
Ballymena	8,213	198,739
Belfast North	8,107	196,174
Belfast South	4,583	110,900
Belfast East	10,255	248,152
Carrickfergus	6,371	154,166
Coleraine	4,777	115,595
Derry & Strabane	3,787	91,638
Donegal	1,308	31,651
Down	5,228	126,508
Dromore	5,564	134,638
Dublin & Munster	1,343	32,498
Foyle	3,065	74,167
Iveagh	3,685	89,170
Monaghan	1,008	24,392
Newry	2,772	67,077
Omagh	2,541	61,487
Route	3,834	92,776
Templepatrick	4,888	118,281
Tyrone	4,087	98,898
	100,421	2,430,000

SCHEDULE II

	Requested 1998 £	Proposed Grant 1998 £
Home Mission	289,000	230,000
Church Extension	289,900	270,000
Christian Training & Evangelism	58,000	50,000
Irish Mission	220,000	215,000
Education Board	170,000	150,000
Students Bursary Fund	174,600	170,000
Chaplains Committee	16,000	15,000
Youth Board	221,700	200,000
Rostrevor Centre.....	2,000	2,000
Guysmere Centre.....	5,000	4,500
Lucan Centre	500	500
Social Witness Board	56,400	53,000
Social Issues & Resources Committee.....	2,600	1,000
ADE Committee	37,100	25,000
Thompson House.....	13,000	5,000
PCI Enterprises.....	5,000	1,000
Carlisle House	45,100	30,000
Old Age Fund	0	0
Residential Trust.....	12,000	5,000
Shankill Road Mission	40,000	15,000
Overseas Board.....	762,300	740,000
Communications Committee	94,200	90,000
Media Committee	38,200	30,000
Union Theological College	299,600	225,000
Kinghan Mission	33,800	10,000
Forces Committee.....	0	0
Director of Ministerial Students	73,100	53,000
Contingencies		30,000
	2,959,100	2,620,000
Less Bequests		190,000
		2,430,000

SCHEDULE III

Presbytery	Contributing Families 1997	United Appeal 1999 £
Ards	10,358	258,884
Armagh	4,125	103,099
Ballymena	8,069	201,674
Belfast North	7,802	195,000
Belfast South	4,497	112,396
Belfast East	9,927	248,112
Carrickfergus	6,261	156,485
Coleraine	4,832	120,769
Derry & Strabane	3,720	92,976
Donegal	1,315	32,867
Down	5,125	128,092
Dromore	5,357	133,891
Dublin & Munster	1,345	33,616
Foyle	3,063	76,556
Iveagh	3,679	91,952
Monaghan	1,006	25,144
Newry	2,809	70,207
Omagh	2,549	63,709
Route	3,581	89,502
Templepatrick	4,833	120,794
Tyrone	4,092	102,274
	98,345	2,458,000

SCHEDULE IV

	Requested 1999 £	Proposed Grant 1999 £
Home Mission	230,000	230,000
Church Extension	278,784	275,000
Christian Training & Evangelism	59,000	55,000
Irish Mission	257,000	250,000
Education Board	175,000	155,000
Students Bursary Fund	50,000	45,000
Chaplains Committee	21,000	21,000
Youth Board	231,538	220,000
Rostrevor Centre.....	2,000	2,000
Guysmere Centre.....	5,000	2,000
Lucan Centre	2,500	2,000
Social Witness Board	64,450	57,000
Social Issues & Resources Committee.....	1,500	1,000
ADE Committee	30,000	30,000
Thompson House.....	10,000	5,000
PCI Enterprises.....	3,000	1,000
Carlisle House	40,950	35,000
Old Age Fund	0	0
Residential Trust.....	35,000	5,000
Shankill Road Mission	20,000	5,000
Overseas Board.....	806,350	785,000
Communications Committee	115,523	100,000
Media Committee	60,000	50,000
Union Theological College	258,830	230,000
Kinghan Mission	40,000	30,000
Forces Committee.....	0	0
Board of Studies	52,000	52,000
Contingencies		100,000
	2,849,425	2,743,000
Less Bequests		285,000
		2,458,000

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the United Appeal for 1999 be as set out in Schedules III and IV.
3. That the General Assembly accept the resignation of Rev W Cowper Lynas, as Convener of the United Appeal Board, that he be thanked for his services and that Mr M H Stewart be appointed in his place.
4. That the United Appeal Board for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 287 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF MINISTRY AND PENSIONS

Convener: Rev D S GRAHAM

1. The Board has responded to feelings in the Church at large that Assessments need to be kept under strict surveillance and as a consequence it is proposed to reduce the level of assessments levied by CMF by 4.58%.
2. The Revised Assessments for 1998 were approved as follows:

	1998	1997
CMF	28.75 p in £ Stipend	(33.33)
WMF	6.75	(6.5)
RMF	9.5	(8.25)
MPS (1978)	16.25	(16.25)

3. During the year the Board approved a revised payment under the Eire Differential backdated to 1.1.98. It was increased by 10% to IR£1,650 for 1998.

Retiring Co-Convener

4. We pay tribute to Mr Lindsay Graham who comes to the end of his seven-year term as Co-Convener of the Retired Ministers' House Fund Committee. Mr Graham joined the Committee in 1991 and in the same year was appointed in succession to Mr Alistair McQuoid as Co-Convener.

Although responsible for managing the work of a busy estate agency Mr Graham entered fully into every part of the Committee's work. At a time when various difficulties added to the complexity of the work and the commitment of time necessary, he put in whatever extra effort was needed. His professional skills and wide experience were at the disposal of the Committee and members quickly realised the value of his advice. His assessment of any situation was realistic and sound. When meeting with people applying to the Fund or considering their applications, he did so with understanding and appreciation of their needs.

The Committee has benefited greatly in having Mr Graham as Co-Convener of the Retired Ministers' House Fund during the past seven years.

CENTRAL MINISTRY FUND COMMITTEE

1. At the end of the year the CMF had a retained balance of £1,166,709. A steady increase in stipends, slightly above the level of inflation, along with substantial income from investments in Augmentation and Sustentation Funds have contributed to this healthy situation.

In the expenditure from the Fund, the movement from the payment for Ordained Assistantships to the support of Licentiate-Assistants and Associate Ministers is again quite evident. The CMF Committee will continue to monitor the cost of the Associate Ministries.

2. The balance in the Fund has enabled the raising of the basic ministerial minimum to £15,210 from £14,760, with comparable increases in the scale of increments. It is anticipated that the overture on the books to establish the three additional increments will become law this year. With the allowance made for augmentation, this means that the basic minimum has been increased by 3.9%.

3. This year no subvention is being sought for the RMF. In order to show each Fund meeting its own needs, a realignment of assessments has been agreed. Consequently the Central Ministry Fund is requesting a reduction from 33.33% to 28.75%, a very significant reduction.

4. With the requirement on Northern Ireland students to pay university fees from the next academic year, the CMF has accepted the need to review the scale of Family Grants for 3rd level education. The CMF is also bringing forward an overture to contain the scope of Family Grants for 3rd level education.

5. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 1998:-

(a) Ministerial Minimum	£15,210	(14,760)
after 5 years service	£15,591	(15,129)
after 10 years service	£15,972	(15,498)
after 15 years service	£16,350	(15,867)
after 20 years service	£16,731	(16,236)
after 25 years service	£17,112	(16,605)
after 30 years service	£17,493	(16,974)

(b) **Family Grants**, payable as per regulations:

	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland
Birth to 10 years	£190 (180)	IR£440 (420)
11-15 years	£285 (270)	IR£690 (660)
16 years and over		
(i) at school or similar	£400 (330)	IR£1,275 (1,200)
(ii) at University or similar	£625 (525)	IR£2,350 (2,250)

The grant in respect of any child who is 16 years of age and over falling into category (b) and who is in receipt of a maintenance or training grant shall be reduced by £1 for every £1 by which such maintenance or training grant exceeds £850.

(c) **Augmented Grants:** The amount a minister may earn, apart from congregational work, without the Augmented Grant being affected shall be £2,500 under Par 316(2)(d)(i) or £1,500 under Par 316(2)(d)(ii) of the Code, the total in no case exceeding £2,500.

- (d) **Bequests:** A minister may receive up to £750 per annum from bequests received during his/her ministry without grants being affected.
- (e) **Differential Grant:** The Republic of Ireland differential for 1998 - IR£1,650 (IR£1,500).
- (f) The extra payment of £15 per month to retired ministers is to be continued.
- (g) That in reckoning augmentation for 1998, the Central Ministry Fund shall not take account of a sum not exceeding £900 (£600) being income from the Commutation, Sustentation, and Central Ministry Funds. (Code Par 316(2)(e)).
- (h) That in reckoning family Grants for 1998 the Central Ministry Fund shall not take into account the above mentioned sum of £900 (£600).

J McVEIGH, W J ALEXANDER, Joint Conveners

COMMITTEE ON RETIREMENTS AND PENSIONS

(a) WIDOWS OF MINISTERS' FUND

- 1. The Fund showed a deficit on the year of £5,190, leaving a retained balance of £66,969.
- 2. The Board approved the following recommendations for 1998:-
 - (a) Widows Pension - £3,802;
 - (b) Widows not in receipt of NI State Pension - £3,802 plus £475;
 - (c) Widows not in receipt of NI State Pension or PWFA - £3,802 plus £500;
 - (d) Widows whose husbands were not eligible for NI State Pension - £3,802 plus £3,365;
 - (e) Eire Differential - IR£800.

(b) RETIRED MINISTERS' FUND

- 1. The Fund showed a satisfactory surplus of £178,904, leaving a retained balance of £378,787.
- 2. The Board approved the following recommendations for 1998.
 - (a) Basic Retirement Allowance - £7,605
 - (b) Supplemental Grant for those living in the Republic with no State Pension - £5,376 (married), £3,365 (single).
 - (c) Eire Differential - IR£1,200.

(c) MINISTERS' PENSION SCHEME 1978

- 1. The reports from the Trustees, Auditors and Investment Manager for the year ended 31 December, 1997 are included in the published accounts.
- 2. The Trustees have awarded a discretionary increase of 3.7% on all pensions in payment (in excess of the guaranteed minimum pensions) for the year commencing 6 April, 1998.

3. All the requirements of the Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the accompanying relevant statutory regulations have been met within the prescribed time-scale.

4. The Committee wishes to test the feelings of the Assembly on the option of early retirement for those in normal health where the retirement benefits would be payable immediately but actuarially reduced to ensure a neutral cost to the pension fund.

The Committee will be happy to research this issue if so instructed.

5. The Committee recognises the need for advice to ministers in receipt of non-pensionable income, eg hospital chaplaincy.

It will be prepared to examine ways of providing information on the personal pensioning of such income if so instructed.

6. Reserve Forces Pension:

(a) The 1997 Assembly had requested the Committee to investigate the financial implication for ministers and their dependants of the Reserve Forces Pensions Act 1996;

(b) The Committee can report that the Act is to be welcomed in that it provides for the Ministry of Defence to pay to MPS 1978 the Church's **pension** contribution for ministers called up for war or warlike operations, thus ensuring no break in the members' **pension** entitlement;

(c) The benefits which a reservist or his/her family may receive from the Armed Forces Pension Scheme and the DSS as a result of death or injury attributable to military service are not affected by the Act and are sufficiently generous to allay any fear of financial hardship for dependants.

This is especially true if, additionally, the Church and the Trustees elect to maintain intact the **life assurance benefits** under the MPS 1978 for those ministers on call-up.

R I A ALLELY, R. KERR, Joint Conveners

RETIRED MINISTERS' HOUSE FUND COMMITTEE

1. During 1997 the Committee approved loans amounting to a total of £146,000 to assist 6 ministers in the purchase of homes for their retirement. A further 5 loans amounting to £85,000 have already been approved this year. Our aim is to provide loans each year to between 8 and 10 servants of the Church to assist them in making provision for retirement. The Fund is not restricted to ministers and at present several widows of ministers and deaconesses are being supported by the Fund.

2. A bungalow at Ballywillan Road, Portrush which had been left to the Fund by the late Mrs Michael has now passed into our possession. At the time of writing this report it was in process of being sold. We are grateful for this gift and appreciate the on-going interest and support which the Fund receives through bequests.

3. During the year there was an increased interest in the Fund shown by ministers and other servants of the Church. At least 20 requests for information were received, and an information leaflet has been prepared and is available from the Financial Secretary's Office. While we see no need at present to alter the rules regarding the use of the Fund we have decided a list of priorities which will be taken into account when deciding on how best to allocate the money which we have available. At present we are seeking to restrict advances to a total of £160,000 per year and are particularly interested in assisting those who require a loan for less than 5 years.

4. Taking into consideration the rise in interest rates during 1997 the Committee agreed that the interest rate charged on loans should be increased from 4% to 5% from 1 January, 1998.

5. The Committee is grateful for the help and advice it receives from the staff in the Financial Secretary's Office and place on record its appreciation of the work which Mr Ted Jackson does for the Fund.

6. With the moving of the Committee to the Board of Ministry and Pensions we have lost several of those members who had been nominated by the Board of Social Witness. We express our thanks to them for their support and trust that the new Committee will quickly knit together and come to terms with the needs and responsibilities of the Fund.

L GRAHAM, L CASEMENT, Joint Conveners

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Central Ministry Fund

2. That retired ministers be paid, in the current year, a special grant (Code Par 315 (5) of £15 per month from the Central Ministry Fund.

3. That the scale of Assessment for CMF for 1998 be 28.75p in the £ of Stipend.

4. That in the ensuing year family grants be paid in accordance with Par 315 (4) of the Code, provided that post secondary level studies are towards a primary degree, or other recognised third level qualification, as determined by the Board; that the student is not in receipt of income above the level to be determined annually by the Board and that these studies are commenced not later than 31 December following the student's 21st birthday.

Retired Ministers' Fund

5. That the scale of assessment for RMF for 1998 be increased from 8.25p in the £ of Stipend to 9.5p in the £ of Stipend and that the Subvention payment of £235,000 from CMF cease.

6. That permission be given to the respective Presbyteries upon request to release for retirement under the '65' rule: Very Rev Dr David Henry Allen (New Row, Coleraine), Rev James Clarke (Balteagh and Bovevagh), Rev David Johnston (1st Newtownards), Rev Francis John Kelly (2nd Randalstown), Rev

David Pinkerton Kirkwood (Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler), Rev David Cyril Scott (Cremore and Tyrone Ditches), Rev David Malcolm Scott (St Columba's, Lisburn), Rev Dr Albert Allen Sleith (Cregagh), Rev Hugh Barkley Wallace (Bushmills), Rev Ronald Joseph Wilson (Portstewart), Rev Thomas Luke (Drumreagh and Dromore), Rev Dr Robert William Johnston MacDermott (Sandymount, Dublin), Rev Dr Brian Kingsmore (Evangelism Promoter).

Widows of Ministers' Fund

7. That the scale of assessment for WMF for 1998 be increased from 6.5p to 6.75p in the £ of Stipend.

Ministers Pension Scheme Fund (1978)

8. That the scale of Assessment for 1998 for MPSF (1978) be 16.25p in £ of Stipend as shown in the column 'Stipend paid to Minister' or as fixed by the Union Commission in the case of a vacancy.

9. That the Board be instructed, in consultation with the Committee on Retirements and Pensions, to investigate the possibility and implications of introducing the option of 'early retirement for ministers in normal health' and report back.

10. That the Board, through its Committee on Retirements and Pensions, investigate ways of providing information on personal pensioning with regard to non-pensionable income such as that from hospital chaplaincy work etc.

Retired Ministers' House Fund

11. That the resignation of Mr Lindsay Graham, as Co-Convener of the Retired Ministers' House Fund, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that Mr Noel McLaughlin be appointed in his place.

General

12. That the Board of Ministry and Pensions, with its associated working Committees, for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 288 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 313 (1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 313 (1) of the Code be deleted, and that the following be substituted in its place:

“Contributions from the congregations of the Church assessed on the stipend paid to the minister in the preceding year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy, at a rate which shall be determined annually by the Assembly on the advice of the Board of Ministry and Pensions”.

W J R ROBINSON

Anent Par 315 (3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 315 (3) of the Code the words “and for ministers of more than 10 years service, or of more than 20 years service, or of more than 30 years service, since ordination of 105%, 110% and 115% respectively of the Basic Ministerial Minimum;” be deleted, and that the following be substituted in their place

“and for ministers of more than 5 years service, or of more than 10 years service, or of more than 15 years service, or of more than 20 years service, or of more than 25 years service, or of more than 30 years service since ordination of 102½%, 105% 107½%, 110%, 112½%, and 115% respectively of the Basic Ministerial Minimum;”.

W J R ROBINSON

Anent Par 316 (1) (a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 316 (1) (a) of the Code be deleted, and that the following be substituted in its place:

“in respect of the CMF assessment, a sum not less than one-quarter of the annual sum due according to the regulations for the time being of the General Assembly”.

W J R ROBINSON

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 315(4) of the Code**

It is hereby Overtured to the General Assembly to enact that, in Par 315 (4) of the Code, the words “provided that post secondary level studies are towards a primary degree, or other recognised third level qualification, as determined by the Board; that the student is not in receipt of income above the level to be determined annually by the Board and that these studies are commenced not later than 31 December following the student’s 21st birthday”, be added, following the words “educational institution”.

JOHN McVEIGH

MEMORIAL TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet at Belfast on the 1st day of June, 1998.

The Memorial of the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster Respectfully Showeth:

That all ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland who are working for the Church are “called” to their ministry either by congregations or through the Boards of the Church.

That ministers working within the congregational structures are entitled to a manse or manse allowance, entitled to claim for family grants, entitled to claim travel expenses, entitled to have clearly stated manse and telephone expenses, entitled to join, contribute to and remain members of the ministers’ pension

scheme, entitled to increments according to years of service, entitled to claim from the Augmentation Fund, entitled to the annual increment on minimum stipend, required to join the Widows of Ministers' Fund in accordance with the General Assembly's rulings.

That certain anomalies are occurring with the structures whereby ministers receive payment.

That the Coleraine Assembly and the Coleraine Assembly Conference have encouraged the Church to venture into new ministries and thus the Church should clarify the relevant elements of the Code to give comparable employment to ministers working in Ireland, outside the congregational structure.

That since all ministers receive a Call then all ministers should, for the time the minister is working for the Church under such a Call, be remunerated under a uniform structure.

That there should be no financial disadvantage to them for taking short term employment, within the Church, outside the congregational structures or loss of qualification for future benefit.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Court to ask the Board of Ministry and Pensions and all other relevant Boards and Committees, to examine the anomalies which exist within the current system and report back to the General Assembly in 1999 with recommendations.

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

Adopted by the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster, meeting at Dublin on 3 February, 1998.

FRANK SELLAR, Moderator
ALAN MARTIN, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted by the Synod of Dublin, meeting at Ballybay on 10 March, 1998, with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

JAMES CARSON, Moderator
R W J MacDERMOTT, Clerk

SHANKILL ROAD MISSION COMMISSION

Conveners: Rev K SMYTH
Mr JAMES O'NEILL
Superintendent: Rev W M CAMPBELL

1. We give thanks once again for our Heavenly Father's unfailing love and mercy to us. This is set against the background of a tense and volatile political situation and an uncertain economic climate in the greater Shankill area.

Mission Facilities

2. The three charity shops, offering good second-hand clothing and furniture, were well used by the community in the past year, bringing help to many families on a tight budget.

3. The café and coffee shop, under the excellent leadership of Mrs Rosalind Wilson, has maintained its high standards and proved a popular rendezvous for a wide cross-section of Shankill people.

There have been many opportunities, through literature and volunteers, for the good news of the gospel to be shared with the customers.

4. The Mission provided office space for the Northumberland Enterprise and Training Services Limited, under its Project Manager, Mr. Orville Webb.

5. The Greater Shankill Community Council Executive, of which the Superintendent and Mr John McFarlane are members, also met during the year in a vacant room, keeping Shankill Road Mission in the centre of community activities.

Hostel

6. The hostel for single homeless in 56-58 Shankill Parade continued to provide an excellent service of care and compassion during the year. Mr John McFarlane (Manager) worked very hard not only to provide the best of material comforts but also counselling and spiritual help as and when requested.

The work continues to flourish under his enthusiastic leadership.

Visits

7. Several groups visited the Mission to discover for themselves the extent of the work carried out in the Master's name in West Belfast.

8. On 14 October, 1997 a group of Indonesian young people, with Rev John Hanna, came for lunch and a tour of the Mission.

9. On 21 October, 1997 the Superintendent received a visit from the Independent T.V. Network Religious Advisors with Very Rev Dr John Dunlop and spoke about the work of Shankill Road Mission and the problems facing the Church in West Belfast.

10. On 17 December, 1997 Rt Rev Dr S Hutchinson and Mrs Hutchinson visited the Mission to see at first hand the volume of work for Christmas and the other areas of the Mission's outreach.

Renovations

11. A major programme of renovation was undertaken, replacing over one hundred existing windows in the Mission with modern PVC double-glazed windows. The project was financially supported by the Belfast European Partnership Board for Peace and Reconciliation, keeping costs to the Mission to a minimum.

Centenary

12. The Mission celebrated the Centenary of its founding, by Rev Dr Henry Montgomery, by holding a series of special services in March. An illustrated history of the Mission, written by Rev William McBride Campbell and Rev Noel Williamson, was available in conjunction with the services.

Farewell to Conveners

13. The Commission would wish to place on record its sincere thanks to Rev Kenneth Smyth and Mr James O'Neill, the Co-Conveners, whose term of office ends at this Assembly. Both men brought a variety of gifts to the work of the convenership. Their wise counsel and untiring zeal in the work were an inspiration to the Commission in its task of outreach and social witness in the greater Shankill.

Thanks

14. The Commission would once again commend and thank the Mission staff for their faithful and tireless work in the daily routine of service.

Thanks are also extended to all those congregations and individual Church members who have supported us both prayerfully and financially.

Without this broad support and prayerful goodwill the work of the Mission would be much more difficult.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly give thanks for 100 years of witness of the Shankill Road Mission and commend the Superintendent, Rev William McBride Campbell, and Mission Staff to the prayers of the Assembly as they continue this witness.
3. That the resignations of Rev K Smyth and Mr James O'Neill, as Co-conveners of the Shankill Road Mission Commission, be accepted, that they be thanked for their services and that Rev J S Dallas be appointed in their place.
4. That the General Assembly accept the resignation of the Rev W M Jackson, Mr R N C Watts and Mr M McQuillan as Trustees of the Shankill Road Mission and appoint, in addition to the continuing trustee, the Very Rev Dr A J

Weir, the following office holders provided that such office holders are for the time being members in full communion of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland:-

The Superintendent of the Shankill Road Mission for the time being;

The Honorary Treasurer of the Shankill Road Mission for the time being;

The Conveners of Commission of the Shankill Road Mission for the time being;

The Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the time being;

The Financial Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the time being;

The General Assembly's Solicitor of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the time being.

5. That the Shankill Road Mission Commission be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 129 of the Code as follows:

(a) Moderator and Clerk of Assembly;

Revs J M Cathcart, W M Campbell;

Moderator and Clerk of Belfast South Presbytery;

Clerk of Session of Shankill Road Mission Congregation.

(b) Revs K Smyth, J S Dallas, Dr I Hart, J W Neilly, R F S Poots, E D Smyth, N M Williamson, G Moffett, K McConnell, F McKeown; James O'Neill, W Caswell.

TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

1. The following is an extract from the Minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees at their Annual General Meeting held in Church House, Belfast, on 2 April, 1998.

2. The Report of the Executive Committee and the Statement of audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 1997 of the following were laid before the Trustees, and were adopted by them:

- The General Investment Fund
- The Commutation Fund
- The Non-Participating Trust Funds
- The Magee Fund
- The Tops Wilson Trust Fund
- The Fire Insurance Trust Fund
- The Fortune Mission Bequest

3. Moved by Rev R C Graham, seconded by Very Rev Dr A J Weir and unanimously agreed, that the Report and the Statements of Accounts be adopted, signed by three Trustees, inserted in the Appendix to the Minute Book and lodged with the Clerk of Assembly to be laid before the Assembly in June. The Report and the Statement of Accounts were, therefore, signed by Mr J I Bill, Mr Alan Speer and Sir Eric McDowell and lodged in accordance with the foregoing resolution.

4. It was reported that the Executive Committee had also received and examined the audited Accounts for 1997 of Getty Trust, and The Ministers Pension Scheme (1978) and had accepted these for inclusion in the volume of Accounts to be submitted to the General Assembly. On the proposal of Rev R C Graham, seconded by Very Rev Dr A J Weir, this report was received.

5. Three retiring members of the Executive Committee were re-appointed for a further three years, these being Sir Eric McDowell, Mr A T Ross and Mr J I Bill.

6. Mr D Bell and Sir Eric McDowell were nominated members of the General Assembly, according to the provision of the Code Par 97 (h) (iii).

Trust Funds

7. **Mrs A M Davidson Trust.** The total income available in 1996 for distribution was £5,990.15. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Union Theological College	£2,650.00
Church House Redevelopment	£2,650.00
Nexus	£690.15
	£5,990.15

8. **Sir Wm V McCleery Estate.** The total income available for distribution is £31,274.74. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Central Ministry Fund	50%
Retired Ministers' Fund	30%
Widows of Ministers' Fund	20%

9. **Estate of Miss Irene Scott:** The total income for 1997 available for distribution amounts to £6,479.89. The Board of Trustees recommend to the General Assembly that this be allocated as follows:-

Carlisle House	£2,479.89
Church House Redevelopment	£3,000.00
Guysmere Development	£1,000.00
	<hr/>
	£6,479.89

10. **Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown.** The total income for 1997 available for distribution amounts to £4,158.56. The Board of Trustees recommend to the General Assembly that this amount be paid to Church House Redevelopment Appeal.

GENERAL INVESTMENT FUND

11. Declaration of Dividend	15.4.97	15.10.97
Number of shares qualifying	4,082,459	4,110,148
	£	£
Income from investment for distribution and income tax recoverable less administrative charge and Investment Advisers' Fees	429,306	610,000
Dividend per share	10.00p	13.50p

In the year 1997 £80,000 was transferred to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve and the balance on the Dividend Equalisation Reserve at 31 December, 1997 is £260,500.

12. The combined annual Dividend of 23.50p per share is to be compared with 22.00 for 1996; 21.50 for 1995; 21.00 for 1994; 22.00 for 1993; 25.50 for 1992; 25.00 for 1991; 23.50 for 1990; 21.00 for 1989.

13. Valuation	15.4.97	15.10.97
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	19,268,945	23,537,279
Cash on Deposit	583,843	238,586
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	201,500	260,500
Property and Ground Rents	2,124,711	2,124,711
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£22,178,999	£26,161,076
No of Shares Issued	4,082,459	4,110,148
Share Value	£5.4328	£6.3650

Crescent Church Loan Fund

14. The Committee considered applications from congregations seeking loans from the Crescent Church Loan Fund. Loans totalling £80,000 were made.

Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)

15. The joint sub-Committee, representative of the Trustees and the Board of Ministry and Pensions, continues to monitor the investments, meeting regularly with the Fund Managers. In accordance with statutory requirements the Report of the Trustees and the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) together with the Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 1997 are included in the Volume of Accounts.

Ethical Investment

16. The report last year stated that the Trustees regularly review their policy on ethical investment. The Trustees understand this to be an on-going review which will continue to be treated as a priority.

17. The report also stated that the Trustees had decided to review the matter of armaments and other ethical issues during the year.

18. This decision resulted in the holding of in-depth consultations with representatives of the Church's investment advisers and of the company which manages the Ministers' Pension Scheme as well as a useful meeting between representatives of the Trustees and the Convener of the Peace and Peacemaking Committee, who was accompanied by a member of the Committee.

19. Ethical investment presents the Trustees with a tension when set alongside the duty of managing investment funds to maximum advantage for the beneficiaries. The Trustees are conscious that over-restriction on areas of investment could result in reduced return to funds and also to congregations which have invested in the General Investment Fund. The same can be said for the management of the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978). However, the Trustees are no less concerned to seek to represent the mind of the Church even if the result is a reduced return.

20. A further issue is the definition of 'ethical'. In general terms, the whole of the trade in armaments is not unethical in so far as arms production and sale is essential to the security and protection of the state.

21. It is not possible to guarantee that every investment can be above criticism. Business deals and company take-overs can change an ethical source of investment to-day into an unethical one tomorrow.

22. The Trustees can, however, give the assurance that, while seeking to maintain the best returns on capital as they are in duty bound to do, they will continue to seek to be sensitive to the mind and will of the Church as a whole.

Sale of War Memorial Hostel Property

23. The General Assembly of June, 1997 granted permission for the sale of the property situated at Howard Street and Brunswick Street. The Board of Social Witness, at its meeting on 25 September, 1997, instructed the Trustees to sell the properties.

24. The property was offered for sale by Private Treaty and, following receipt of offers, was sold for £2,500,000 and the sale completed on 6 March, 1998.

R F S POOTS, Acting Secretary

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommendation regarding the Mrs A M Davidson Trust be adopted.
3. That the recommendation regarding the Sir Wm V McCleery Trust be adopted.
4. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Irene Scott Trust be adopted.
5. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Ida Mary McGeown Trust be adopted.
6. That the General Assembly support the continued study and review of principles relating to ethical investment.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW TRUSTEE

Nomination of the Synod of Armagh and Down - Mr John Millar

RESOLUTION

That Mr John Millar be, and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in room of Mr R W Hamilton, resigned, and of the due appointment of Mr John Millar as a said Trustee attestation is made by the signature of the Moderator of the General Assembly and of the Clerk of the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1871.

STRATEGY FOR MISSION COMMITTEE

Conveners: Rev W A KENNEDY
Rev D J McKELVEY

1. This report brings to an end a particular phase of the life of the Strategy for Mission Committee. We have worked for the past 6 years on a somewhat different approach from that taken by the Committee in its first life as a Committee of the Home Board. The Committee has sought to be a 'think tank' for the Church and to change the culture of the PCI. The watchword we have sought to inculcate into the being of the Church is that we should be 'a Church with its mind set on mission'.

2. We have attempted also to produce a strategy which is not 'top down' but which is predominantly 'bottom up', but we also see Presbyteries in the middle as being at the heart of encouraging and sustaining local strategies.

3. We have never lost sight of the fact that the renewal of the Church and effectiveness in evangelism and wider mission depend primarily on the work of God's Spirit in response to a prayerful people in the Church.

4. We note that many very positive things have already happened in the Church during the years of our work. We have seen a renewed emphasis on Church planting through the Home Mission. The Nightlight Ministry on Belfast's 'Golden Mile' is a reality. The Committee itself brought the proposal for 2020 Vision to the Assembly. Some congregations have changed radically, to minister to a new generation in new and effective ways. Few congregations in worship are where they were before the Coleraine Assembly in 1990 and more and more congregations are aware of their need to reach out.

5. A major achievement of the Committee has been that the Assembly has requested every congregation "to draw up an appropriate mission statement for its own local mission which includes realistic and achievable goals as well as longer-term objectives." Presbyteries have been charged with the duty to "support and assist congregations to think strategically about their mission with appropriate advice, training and teaching."

6. We have also led the Church in the direction of resourcing ministers so that they can absorb new thinking, acquire new skills and be spiritually refreshed for leading their congregations into a life in which they are consciously 'missionary congregations'.

7. We have sought to consolidate those emphases in both Presbyteries and congregations through conferences held on February 27 and 28. Sixteen Presbyteries were represented at the training for presbytery trainers. 215 individuals representing 90 congregations were present at the day conference on Mission strategies.

8. During the year we have held many meetings with various groups to process the decisions taken by the Assembly in June, 1997. Some of our work remains on-going and other areas have, at the direction of the General Assembly,

become part of the remit of the Boards of Evangelism and Christian Training, the Home Board and the Board of Studies. Other aspects we present again to the Assembly this year in the hope of approval.

9. We are greatly encouraged that our proposals on the central training resources of the Church, which were referred to the College and Training Review Committee, have found general acceptance in its first report. There has also been considerable progress in the discussions between the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training and the Home Board on the creation of a single Board for Mission in Ireland and on the increasing levels of co-operation between the various mission agencies.

10. We are excited by the directions being taken by the sub-committee on Presbytery visitations which put the issues of mission high on the agenda for future visitations of congregations. However, the Assembly will need to be proactive and vigilant so that we do not drift backwards.

11. The Strategy for Mission Committee has been a catalyst in changing the climate of opinion within the Church. Much of what seemed threatening and radical in our thinking has now been confirmed and accepted within the thinking of those concerned for the future usefulness and effectiveness of our Church. We now seem, as a Church, to be approaching something like consensus in terms of the directions in which we need to move and we are excited by that and grateful to God for our part in it.

Church Planting and Mission Priority Areas

12. During the past year we have further revised our documents on Church Planting and on Mission Priority Areas. Unprecedented change in society demands that we be flexible in applying the basic biblical models and indeed rediscover the freedom for mission which our Church knew in the past. Mistakes will no doubt be made as we grapple with how to reach to-day's and to-morrow's people, but we need the freedom to make mistakes so that we may discover what God honours with success.

13. It will take some time for the Church to formulate definitive rules in the areas of creative mission, but we offer our revised guidelines as a beginning from which the Church can commence to move forward in faith. If accepted, they will need constant reworking and revision in the light of experience, but we commend the documents as a starting point and are asking the Assembly to bless and encourage developments under them in that understanding.

Ministerial Development Programme

14. The General Assembly referred back the 1997 report on a Ministerial Development Scheme (including In-Service Training and Sabbaticals) asking specifically for 'proposals including detailed financial arrangements'. The proposals are in Appendix III which is largely a reprint of a section of the report to the 1997 Assembly with certain changes which take into account the possibility of a new Board of Studies and Christian Training.

15. The Committee remains convinced that the work of equipping and inspiring key workers is central to a Strategy for Mission. We are heartened that

an almost identical scheme is now up and running in the Church of Scotland and a similar one in the Methodist Church in Ireland.

16. The major factor under discussion was cost - always a sensitive issue and even more so at a time when the emphasis (including our own) is on reducing assessments and keeping money at local level. What we propose, however, is not taking local money away but re-investing in training people for local ministry. Therefore, we still believe that a modest assessment is the fairest method of financing this provision - but we ask the Assembly to note these factors.

- (i) The 1.75p assessment on the Incidental Fund is a maximum - non-uptake by some of in-service training and the interest earned by monies stored for future sabbaticals will create the possibility of reduction and the phased introduction of entitlement will mean a much lower assessment in the first two years.
- (ii) Inflation will be automatically covered by the rise in stipends which has tended to be at, or slightly ahead of, inflation.
- (iii) The monies given to ministers will often, in whole or in part, be returned to the Church in payment for courses provided by Union College or the Christian Training Centre or such successors as the present review produces. Courses will be costed realistically which should mean that the demands for running costs of the central training provision will reduce.
- (iv) The cost to congregations is more than offset by the benefit they receive from ministers who are refreshed and given new vision.
- (v) The reduction in the supply fee (which has proved controversial before) does not reduce the potential income for students etc, but does require more supplies to achieve it. It brings the fee more into line with that paid in other denominations and it makes the cost of this scheme more equitable.

17. Our hope is that the Assembly will, this year, approve the introduction of this scheme so that legislation may be brought to the Assembly of 1999 and the scheme commenced as soon as possible thereafter.

Membership and Giving

18. Two major areas of Church life in which Church teaching and practice continue to be totally dissimilar are membership and giving. In the analysis of the state of the Church, presented to the Assembly in 1994, we indicated that nominalism was perhaps the largest single difficulty with which our Church wrestles in becoming a Church geared for mission. We have debated long on these problems and are convinced that only revival will solve them. We continue to pray for the revival that God is bringing and urge the Church to continue to fast and pray for it also.

19. We believe that it is important to re-state what we know the Church believes and to teach consistently the standards of Christian discipleship. To this end we offer the following summary of the implications of membership in the PCI based on the questions used at the service of Admission to the Lord's Table-

- (a) Belief in One God, as Father and Creator, as Son and Redeemer, as Spirit and Enabler. Commitment to Jesus Christ the Son as Saviour and Lord.
- (b) That this faith be expressed and sustained by commitment to the fellowship of God's people by regular attendance at and participation in worship and the sacraments.
- (c) That regular use of God's Word and prayer are the staple diet of the Christian's life.
- (d) That Christian discipleship be demonstrated by:
 - (i) witness in life and example to Christ's love;
 - (ii) involvement in Christian service according to the gifts that Christ has given;
 - (iii) generous giving, in proportion to how God has prospered, to Christ's work through His Church and other agencies.
- (e) A life which exhibits the fruit of the Spirit, openness to all His people and the world and a desire for the day when His love will be acknowledged by all mankind.

20. We recognise that these things are taught faithfully across the Church but are not consistently practised.

21. We also recognise that all Christians are but frail human beings and prone to fail. The forgiveness of God, the means of grace and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are God's provision for us all as we grow into maturity in faith and life.

22. We believe that, firstly, all members of Session should be challenged to this level of commitment as a witness to the congregation and the world, for leadership is only credible when it is seen to be committed to those things which the Church teaches as the norm.

23. Secondly, we believe that there needs to be a church-wide initiative on membership and commend this idea to our successors as one further way of challenging the Church at large to its responsibilities.

24. Such an initiative should relate to the work of the Evangelism Board and, in particular, its recent publication 'What should a Church member be' (Minutes 1997) and should dovetail with the work of LIFE 2.

25. The Church has always had lively debate as to the place of tithing in the New Testament and as a guideline for the Christian Church.

26. Our Lord, whilst castigating the Pharisees for tithing even their garden herbs and neglecting justice and love for God, continues "These you should practice without neglecting the others." (Luke 11: 42) And elsewhere he asks that our righteousness should exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

27. The Committee does not believe that the Church should impose law on its members - but that we should teach tithing as a guideline where-by the Christian may be freed to express his love for God and His Church and demonstrate a commitment to mission. A resolution is appended to test the mind of the Church.

28. Since teaching on all aspects of Christian discipleship would seem to be one of the greatest needs of the Church at this time, we add our voice to that of the LIFE 2 campaign on the need for a Christian discipleship programme within the local congregation.

Conclusion

29. A mindset is something which needs to be promoted, nourished and kept clear. If the PCI is 'a Church with its mind set on mission' then it must set in place an on-going mechanism for keeping itself ever reminded of this vision.

30. A Church which is both biblically focused and full of the Holy Spirit cannot fail to be challenged by the real needs of its host community. The New Testament is a mission document and the Spirit is given for witness. A Church which holds these two realities at the heart of its being will of necessity be 'a Church with its mind set on mission!'

APPENDIX I**Mission Priority Areas within the PCI**

1. A Mission Priority Area would be designated by the Presbytery in consultation with the Home Board, Board of Christian Training and Evangelism and the Union Commission.

2. A Mission Priority Area (MPA) within the bounds of a Presbytery might be either: a geographical area where the PCI presence and witness is inadequate or inappropriate to fulfil the mission needed to impact the people within it with the words, works and life of Christ; and/or a social space with similar need such as unevangelised young people, a student population, transient evening or weekend population, people of different culture or race, etc.

3. Within an MPA parish bounds would cease to function normally but only in so far as they impinged on the new mission work. Whilst the effect of parish bounds would be modified within the MPA, those engaged in mission activity within this freedom would be expected to operate with sensitivity towards the existing congregations of the bounds. The congregations would be expected to support and encourage the new work of mission.

4. Presbytery would have responsibility for supervising and administering the MPA within its bounds, though it would not necessarily have financial responsibility for individual projects.

5. Specialist help would be given by the agencies of the PCI which would advise, train and stimulate Presbytery on matters germane to MPAs. The Home Mission, the Irish Mission and other agencies would retain the right to call or appoint ministers, licentiates, deaconesses or missionaries to be inducted or commissioned, as appropriate, by Presbyteries for ministry in MPAs.

6. Mission activity within an MPA might result in the establishment of a Church plant, the strengthening of the life and witness of existing congregations or the establishment of agencies for outreach and/or social witness.

7. Projects for evangelism or social witness within an MPA could be proposed to the Presbytery by a congregation, a group of congregations, a group of individual church members (through Kirk Session) or an Assembly Board. Projects should have an appropriate management committee and detailed plan.

8. The Union Commission should draw up rules to enable a minister or licentiate of the PCI, who is willing to work as a 'tent maker' and/or able to raise his or her own support, to be called and inducted into work in an MPA. Similar

rules should enable a self-supporting missionary who is a member of the PCI to be called and commissioned for recognised work within an MPA. The Home Board or Board of Evangelism and Christian Training would provide an umbrella structure for such workers.

9. The Presbytery should appoint a body to oversee the administration of any MPA declared within the bounds.

10. The General Assembly should keep a watching brief over all MPA's and receive a report each year on their operation.

APPENDIX II

Church Plants in the PCI

1. A Church plant is the establishment of a new or renewed fellowship of Christians with a distinct life, witness and worship. It may, or may not, possess property or a paid ministry and it may, or may not, grow sufficiently to acquire the status of a fully constituted congregation. It may begin with the deliberate transfer of a group of people from a congregation or with the work of a missionary or missionary team in an entirely new situation or as a revitalising of a small existing congregation.

2. A Church plant may be justified on the grounds that it fulfils a need to evangelise and disciple people within either:

- (i) a geographical area where the PCI presence and witness is inadequate or inappropriate to impact the people within it with the words, works and life of Christ; or
- (ii) a social space with similar need such as unevangelised young people, a student population, transient evening or weekend population, people of different culture or race etc.

3. The nature of mission work may require considerable flexibility to create forms of life, witness and worship in Church planting which are faithful both to the contemporary context and to Scripture. In the case of co-operation with other denominations in Church planting, rules for oversight would need to be agreed as in present inter-Church schemes.

4. Under existing rules any congregation of the PCI may initiate a Church plant within its own parish bounds, with the approval of Presbytery.

5. A group of congregations, similarly, might, by agreement of Presbytery, initiate a Church plant within the area of their collective parish bounds and, together with Presbytery, make collective provision for its oversight.

6. Historically, any individual or group of individuals who are members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, may petition Presbytery for the establishment of a new congregation. Presbytery itself has the right to initiate proposals for Church plants as it has for Church Extension causes. The Home Mission presumably can also act within this right.

In the unlikely event of a congregation opposing necessary work within its own parish bounds, superior Church courts should be prepared to give firm leadership.

7. A congregation/Church plant has the right to exist without a duly installed ordained minister. However, where there is no minister, there should be a recognised leadership which, on call from an appropriate mission agency, should be eligible for ordination by the Presbytery as 'missionary elders'. Those who are in membership of the fellowship should, from an early time, have democratic rights and responsibility for the day-to-day running of their affairs. Serious consideration should be given to the necessity of Church plants and Church extension causes to establish their own Kirk Sessions.

8. A Church plant approved by Presbytery could be given the status of Home Mission Congregation or Church Extension Charge but, because it is a much more delicate situation, a greater freedom needs to be possible and consideration needs to be given to a new category. The Home Board and Board of Evangelism and Christian Training and other agencies would advise, train, stimulate and assign approved workers in conjunction with the Presbytery and have power to call ministers and other workers to Church plants to be inducted or commissioned by Presbytery

9. As Church planting is ideally suited to 'tent making' ministries and non-stipendiary ministry, the Union Commission should draw up suitable rules to make it possible for ministers or licentiates of the PCI, who volunteer to work without official salary, to be called and installed to such work. It should be made possible, similarly, for lay missionaries to be appointed to such work on a voluntary basis.

10. As has previously been the practice of the PCI, Church plants which grew successfully might apply to Presbytery to have an unordained leader received as a student for the ministry whilst in pastoral charge of the work, under special arrangements. Similarly, a Church plant which grew very strongly might petition the General Assembly to be received as either a Church Extension Charge or a fully constituted congregation. The category of Home Mission Congregation already exists but work needs to be done on extending it to new Church plants.

11. Recognising that some Church plants will depend on finance outside present PCI funds, appropriate rules need to be drawn up to accommodate and regulate monies raised and spent outside present financial structures.

12. In the case of Church plants/Fellowships which already exist and which might wish to become associated with the Presbyterian Church, Presbyteries should exercise flexibility and discretion. To facilitate the possibility of bringing independent fellowships into relationship with the historic Reformed Church the Union Commission should pursue the possibility of an intermediate status such as 'associate membership of the PCI.'

APPENDIX III

A Mission Oriented Ministerial Development Programme for the PCI through In Service Training and Sabbaticals

Purpose: To help individual ministers in the development of the perspective and skills required to give leadership and inspiration in the ongoing

commitment of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to be a Church centred on Christian mission.

- 1. Outline:** The Ministerial Development Programme would:
 - 1.1 entitle ministers in the employ of the PCI to one week of In Service Training each year and to a further week towards Sabbatical leave. Sabbatical weeks could be either added to the IST week and spent annually as a two week period of IST or saved for up to seven years to create a period of sabbatical leave (to which the IST week could be added in the seventh year to make a full two months period possible);
 - 1.2 enable ministers to reflect on, evaluate and be refreshed in their ministry;
 - 1.3 enable ministers to engage in theological reflection related to mission, development of additional personal skills for mission and benefit from personal spiritual growth and inspiration for mission;
 - 1.4 be regarded as a joint vocational task to be shared between the minister and the Presbytery or employing Board or Agency;
 - 1.5 ministers engaged in full time congregational work would be entitled to a maximum grant of £125 for each week of In Service Training or Sabbatical leave to be financed by a levy on stipend through the General Assembly's Incidental Fund (see 4 below);
 - 1.6 where medically or pastorally necessary, Presbytery should exercise its right to grant leave that is not study oriented.
- 2. Process:** The process will include the following components:
 - 2.1 The individual minister would present to Presbytery an application containing a proposal or proposals for the use of his/her In Service Training or Sabbatical entitlements for the year. The Board of Studies and Christian Training would draw up a suitable application form.. Entitlement might be used through attendance at a residential or non-residential course, a seminar which met once a month etc. Applications would include:
 - (a) A self-assessment of the individual's needs.
 - (b) Full details of courses etc, proposed to be followed/ attended.
 - (c) An assessment of the benefits to the individual and to the congregation/ Board/ Agency.
 - (d) Dates of absence.
 - (e) A budget detailing estimated costs.
 - (f) A claim to save the sabbatical week if this is the path being followed.
 - (g) (Where appropriate) nomination of a fellow Presbyter to take pastoral responsibility for the congregation during absence.
 - 2.2 An assessment by the Presbytery of the application which would take account of the In Service Training history of the individual in preceding years in order to achieve balance between the three elements in 1.3. The Presbytery, as part of its mission strategy and pastoral concern, would encourage all ministers to make use of their entitlement to In Service Training. A Presbytery would be at liberty

to find its own way of delegating this duty though it might devolve it to its 'Christian Training Committee'.

Finalised applications would be authorised by the Moderator and Clerk of Presbytery.

- 2.3 The presentation to Presbytery, through its supervising committee, of a full report and assessment by the individual at the end of each annual period of In Service Training to evaluate the particular course taken and to indicate the degree to which the agreed aims of the year had been fulfilled. A claim for expenses up to the maximum of £125.00 per week would be presented (accompanied by receipts) with this report and following authorisation by the Presbytery Finance Committee would be paid out by the appropriate fund. Where necessary advances might be made on the basis of the budget provided but all monies received should be accounted for to the Presbytery.
- 2.4 Presbyteries should send an annual evaluation to the Board of Studies and Christian Training, including a form in which individual participants evaluated the particular course which they have used, so that the various options followed by ministers might be assessed for usefulness to others and the whole scheme progress intelligently and efficiently. In the light of experience the Board of Studies and Christian Training would seek modification to the scheme where necessary.
- 2.5 The Board of Studies and Christian Training or other body should gear itself to provide information to ministers on as wide a variety as possible of In Service Training opportunities which fulfil the aims of 1.3. This might be done in printed form, through information technology and through personal consultation.

3. Implementation:

- 3.1 The scheme would begin one year after the necessary legislation is passed and in the first year the In Service Training week would be available to all ministers. Sabbatical weeks would accrue for ministers ordained for 28 years or more from year one of the scheme, for ministers ordained 14 to 27 years from year two and for ministers ordained from 1 to 13 years from year three. Presbyteries should have the right to defer particular applications for Sabbatical leave if an excessive number of ministers apply in any one year. In such a case saved weeks should not be forfeited beyond seven years. All such leave would include one Sunday free of duties per week taken.
- 3.2 The introduction and implementation of the Ministerial Development Programme would be monitored by the Board of Studies and Christian Training and procedures periodically evaluated.
- 3.3 These provisions should apply equally to all full-time staff whose work is 'ministry' in the broader sense. For instance, the programme should apply equally to pastoral or lay assistants, deaconesses, youth workers, Irish Mission workers, missionaries etc. Those working overseas, in places where relevant in-service courses are not readily

available, should be permitted to take the time as sabbatical incorporated into their furlough arrangements. Licentiates, who are covered by other provisions for ongoing training, would be excepted from this scheme.

- 3.4 The In Service Training of those working in congregations who are not ministers would be funded at an appropriate rate by the congregation. Those employed by Boards or agencies would be funded by the employer.

4. Costings:

4.1 Cost to central funds

The main cost to the central Church in the proposals is that of the £250.00 per annum per person.

We propose that this be raised by a levy on stipend by the Incidental Fund. On this basis of 430 ministers in active service, in a full year, if all took up their entitlement, it would amount to: £107,500.00 or a levy of 1.75p on Stipend as an absolute maximum.

As proposed in the Report of 1997 this would be phased in as follows:

Year 1	£71,666	(1999)
Year 2	£89,583	(2000)
Year 3	£107,500	(2001)

This would spread the cost equitably over larger and smaller congregations and would cost £87.50 per £5000 of stipend.

Stipend	Cost of Fund
£5,000	£87.50
£10,000	£175.00
£15,000	£263.00
£20,000	£350.00
£25,000	£438.00
£30,000	£526.00

Congregations with stipends of £25,000 or over are likely to have an Associate Minister who would be covered by the single figure.

4.2 Cost to congregations directly

SUPPLY FEES

The cost to congregations (in addition to the Incidental Fund contribution) would be up to two extra Sundays of pulpit supply. For most congregations this would be £77.50 x 2 = £155.00.

We propose that present high rates of pulpit supply fees should be reduced by 25%. Given that parish ministers are entitled at present to 6-7 Sundays holiday per annum (6 x £77.50 = £465.00) this would exactly balance. The cost of supply for two services would be £58.125 and 8 x £58.125 = £465.00.

This proposal has the advantage that the total amount available to students and others, who need to augment income, remains the same - though they will have to do more for it!

If the Assembly declines to accept our proposal on supply fees, IST would cost £155.00 extra per annum in this area.

PASTORAL COVER FOR MINISTERIAL ABSENCE

We do not believe this should be quantified but that, as with most informal absences, colleagues would cover for one another on a reciprocal basis. A small cost for extra travel would accrue to ministers.

4.3 Costs to ministers

The grant of £125.00 per week is not lavish and there would be a considerable element of self finance in many if not most serious IST and Sabbatical projects. The grant might cover attendance at some locally provided courses but would not cover the expense involved in attending courses in Great Britain or further afield. Sabbaticals would entail considerable expense to the individual.

4.4 Expense to providers of IST opportunities

The IST scheme links closely with the proposals of the Committee on a Central Training Unit. However, the scheme puts courses provided centrally on a self-funding basis. Those courses which are bought in by the CTU, if selected wisely, will pay for themselves through the payments of ministers attending (and of others external to PCI who take advantage of them).

4.5 CONCLUSION

The Church can only benefit from giving its ministers opportunities for In Service Training by right. This can be done with no extra expense if the Church puts the financial responsibility back on the individual who is improving his/her skills or feeding his/her understanding of mission.

However, if the burden is shared between both parties and financed as we suggest, a congregation will pay £87.50 per £5,000 of stipend for the development of its key member.

The Acting Clerk writes:

Since accepting the Convenership of this Committee, the Conveners have centred their work on stimulating the Church to have its mind set on mission. Their reports have been full and have contained a flood of ideas for the consideration and guidance of the Church in the next century. The Assembly owes them appreciation for the vision they have developed and the dedication they have given.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the many signs of renewal and enthusiastic mission within the PCI and rejoice at the new mindset increasingly seen in our congregations, Presbyteries, boards and committees.
3. That the General Assembly affirm that this Church exists for mission, that mission to its members and to this land is its reason for existence and its way of life and call on every member, session, congregation and Presbytery to

grapple seriously with the implications of this mindset for the structures, methods and culture of our Church.

4. That the General Assembly approve the paper on Church Planting in the PCI as guidelines governing the establishment and administration of Church Planting for a period of 10 years and direct the Home Board, or its successor, to promote, encourage and monitor the experiment, reporting as it sees fit and at least by a full report at 5 years and 10 years.

5. That the General Assembly approve the paper on Mission Priority Areas as guidelines governing the establishment and administration of Mission Priority Areas for a period of 10 years and direct the Home Board, or its successor, to monitor the establishment of these areas and to report to the Assembly as it sees fit and at least by a full report at 5 and 10 years.

6. That the General Assembly approve the Ministerial Development Scheme (Appendix III) as the In-Service Training and Sabbatical Scheme of this Church and that appropriate amendments to the Code and the Form of Call be brought to the Assembly as and when appropriate.

7. That the Union Commission be invited, one year after the introduction of the Scheme, to introduce legislation to reduce the pulpit supply fee.

8. That a levy of up to 1.75p in the pound of stipend be added to the Incidental Fund as from 1 January, 2000, agreed by a resolution of the 1999 Assembly.

9. That the Board of Studies (or its successor) establish a joint committee representative of all those involved in the provision, administration and use of the scheme to monitor its introduction until such times as the Review of Training presently on-going shall report its conclusions to the General Assembly.

10. That the General Assembly encourage a Church-wide initiative on membership and ask the Panel on Strategy for Mission to consult with all appropriate bodies and to further this so as to release the potential of our membership.

11. That the General Assembly recommend to Kirk Sessions that they make the summary in the report the minimum of their own discipleship as a witness to the congregation and the world.

12. That the General Assembly, recognising that as Christians we are under grace and not bound by law, commend, with our Lord, the biblical practice of tithing as a guideline for its members.

13. That the General Assembly commend to each Kirk Session the adoption as part of its strategy, of a Christian Discipleship Course (see LIFE2 Manual) as the standard introduction for new Christians and a periodic revision for all members.

14. That the General Board be instructed to appoint up to 10 persons to form a Panel on Strategy for Mission, under the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training, to keep a mission agenda before the Church.

15. That the Ad Hoc Committee on Strategy for Mission be thanked for its services and discharged and that the Rev W A Kennedy and the Rev D J McKelvey be thanked for their work as its Conveners.

NOTICE OF MOTION

That notice of motion be received to rescind the decision of 1997 “that the Strategy for Mission Committee become a committee of the General Board from June, 1998”.

W A KENNEDY, D J McKELVEY

MISSION ASSEMBLY (1997) COMMITTEE

Conveners: Revs J R DICKINSON, Dr T W J MORROW

1. “As a Presbyterian all my life I can truly say that I was never at a Presbyterian event like it. Presbyterians glorifying God and enjoying Him - almost unbelievable until Coleraine. For me personally it was a time of blessing and enrichment. But it was also just the tonic the Church needs to propel it from the 19th century into the 21st.” This response from one of the elders at 2020 Vision expresses what was the reaction of the overwhelming majority of those attending this extraordinary event.

2. 398 congregations were represented by a total of 1,193 delegates. Each morning session for worship and communion with Professor Eugene Peterson had from 1,000 to 1,400 in attendance. The evening celebrations with Dr Michael Cassidy saw over 2,000 attending on the first two nights and in excess of 2,500 for the last two evenings. We estimated on a show of hands that about one third of the congregation was new each evening which gives a total of approximately 5,000 people who came to 2020 Vision.

3. The remit from the General Assembly, for us, was to organise a conference which would seek from God the motivation and vision to engage in his mission for the next century. The structure and speakers, the planning and preparation for which we were responsible, could not have fulfilled this objective unless the Lord had determined to reveal his presence and his power among us. It was quite evident from the outset that, in spite of the flaws and inadequacies of this conference, God had chosen to meet with us in Coleraine in August of 1997 and to do so in a way that what was achieved was far beyond anything we had imagined or even had asked of him.

4. Inevitably, those of us involved in the organisation were somewhat emotionally attached to what took place and, therefore, our judgements may be fairly subjective. It was for this reason that we sent out to the congregations who attended a response mechanism. We received 120 replies. These we divided into rural, provincial town, inner-city and suburban. What was fascinating was that, in terms of positive or negative reaction to 2020 Vision, there was no significant difference between these areas. 90% were so positive in terms of encouragement and blessing that the delegates had received, that they were almost devoid of objective criticism.

5. The co-conveners found it humbling and thrilling to read the testimonies of so many whose lives had been changed through their encounter with God at Coleraine, such as the following:

“Sorry that more delegates from my church could not attend - it was such an uplifting few days, bringing everything back into perspective and renewing faith.”

“The impact on the delegates was very positive. We were encouraged and challenged. Encouraged in our walk with God, encouraged in what is happening

in our own congregation and in what we would seek to do. Challenged to do more and to pass on this vision to others.”

Less than 5% of the returns were totally negative, coming from those who found nothing to commend.

“To be completely honest, the whole event was a waste of time and a waste of money. If anyone was ever unsure that our dearly beloved PCI was beginning to lose its Reformed moorings - this monumental disaster would have confirmed it.”

6. Just over 5% were essentially affirming but with some reservations and constructive criticisms. They reflected concerns about the style of praise and celebration of communion; the use of the particular sketches in drama; and the mode of preaching exercised by both keynote speakers.

7. The seminars were generally well received and the top five, in terms of approval rating of those attending, were those dealing with Overseas mission, overcoming barriers to mission, working with other Churches together in mission, prayer and developing a leadership team.

8. The vast majority of those in attendance bore witness to moments during 2020 Vision when they encountered God or heard his Word in a manner that was life-changing. Their testimony is an expression of a deep hunger in our Church for worship that is real and for the Word that is relevant.

9. We all have special memories:

times of praise when we entered into soaring, transcendent worship;

Professor Peterson’s first address which left one minister prostrate in tears in his room before God;

the lady from Rwanda sharing her experience of grace which had brought her to forgive those who had murdered all her family;

Rev Peter Neilsen’s seminar on mission strategy in a local church which, in spite of the sauna-like conditions excited and motivated those who assembled in the big tent;

the freshness of the Lord’s Supper celebrated using Calvin’s liturgy, which one minister described as the first time he had ever experienced communion;

the close and intimate times of prayer with brothers and sisters from throughout the island of Ireland;

or Dr Michael Cassidy’s final address which, like the Old Testament prophets, told a story, in this instance of God’s intervention in South Africa so as to encourage and challenge us in Ireland and then the response of hundreds who stood as an expression of their commitment to make a difference for the kingdom of God at this critical time.

10. In all, extraordinary days of blessing for which we are so grateful to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

11. Thanks to the electronic media available to us, the usefulness of the event lives on. Video and audio cassettes of all the major addresses are available from Familybooks and could be used in a Midweek meeting, PWA, Youth Fellowship or even a Sunday service. In addition to this, we have produced a CD and cassette of praise recorded live at 2020 Vision. It contains a broad selection of songs and could be used to help people learn new items of praise or as background music as people gather for worship on a Sunday.

12. Members of the committee and the 2020 Vision Praise Band and Singers have been involved in large Presbytery rallies and other local events since the summer. The smaller groups addressed have ranged from Kirk Sessions to Presbyteries and have attracted a fair degree of interest. It is a matter of satisfaction to us that these events were the result of local initiative and were not sponsored by us.

13. The largest headache we had at the event itself was undoubtedly the day-to-day management of practical matters. As the response forms show, most people were impressed by the administration, which is interesting as we were conscious of living from 'hand-to-mouth'! The Committee is indebted to so many volunteers who worked long hours, in some cases well into the night, to ensure that the event happened. Any future such events would need to spend much more time on this aspect of arrangements than we did and would need many more people than we were able to enrol.

14. The event itself and the follow-up meetings mentioned earlier, highlighted needs which, as a denomination, we are failing to meet. Many of those who responded to the Committee expressed the overwhelming sense of being part of a Church family that they had at 2020 Vision. It is our conviction that there is a hunger in our Church for more of this and we have appended a resolution to test the mind of the Assembly on this matter.

15. Many found the communion services helpful and the Committee has received a number of requests to have these liturgies printed for wider use. In addition to this, it has also been brought to our attention that many congregations are experimenting with additional musical instruments in public worship, but have no easy access to suitable musical arrangements. Some centrally organised resource would be useful for sharing and disseminating the work of those organists and others who are writing such arrangements for their congregations. Neither of these matters falls under our brief, but they are within the responsibility of the Public Worship Committee and we would like the Assembly to refer them on.

16. Neither Convener, nor any Committee member, had any idea what proportion of our time 2020 Vision would come to devour over the last two and a half years. And whilst this work turned out to be one of the most memorable opportunities to serve our Lord and his Church which we have ever been involved in, we will none-the-less be glad to be discharged from our responsibilities at this Assembly.

The Acting Clerk writes:

17. Events like 2020 Vision do not just happen and comments in the body of the Report fail to adequately express the hours of prayer, planning and activity which, under God, lay behind the success of this venture of faith. Members of the Committee and recruits who were involved in practical responsibilities were deeply committed to the task, but the burden of responsibility rested on the shoulders of the dedicated Conveners. The whole Church is in their debt.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the General Assembly encourage congregations and individuals to make use of the video and audio recordings of the main addresses and the audio recording of a selection of live praise from 2020 Vision.

3. That the Public Worship Committee consider the desirability of producing alternative forms of the communion service for the use of congregations.

4. That the Public Worship Committee investigate the feasibility of establishing a central worship resource for congregations.

5. That an Assembly Conference should be a regular event every 3-5 years.

6. That the Mission Assembly (1997) Committee be thanked for its services and discharged and that the Rev J R Dickinson and the Rev Dr T W J Morrow be thanked for their work as its Conveners.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE TYRONE MEMORIAL

Conveners: Rev J B McCORMICK
Rev W J ORR

1. The Committee has held three full meetings to date. It has also set up a smaller 'steering sub-committee' to conduct more detailed work and bring recommendations to the main body.

2. Initial discussion established that 'simplicity' should be one of the main characteristics of any suggested new schemes. It was also recognised that existing call settlements could not be affected by the introduction of a new scheme, unless all parties were willing to change on a voluntary basis. Other matters were agreed as a preliminary to the main debate and include the following:

- (a) In line with the request of the Memorial, discussion would be limited to the question of stipend, excluding, for example, wider consideration of manse occupation or ministerial expenses.
- (b) While the principle of minimum stipend would be retained, there would be no attempt to suggest a maximum stipend.
- (c) Complicated tables related directly to 'work done' or 'responsibilities' would not form part of any proposal, being much too difficult to calculate. However, increments on the ministerial minimum for years of service would be retained and, as at present, there would likely be an indirect and approximate recognition of 'responsibilities'.
- (d) There could be no mechanism within a basic scheme to make automatic adjustment for local bequest income to ministers.

3. Having agreed the above, the Committee progressed to devise and examine schemes which would recognise existing differences in stipend (which reflected differences in congregations), but would base future increases in stipend for all congregations upon a figure set by an Assembly agency each year. All congregations would be placed on a scale according to their size and strength and the stipend increase each paid would be a percentage of the annual 'base figure': it might be less or it might be more than the 'base figure' depending on the scale chosen and any particular congregation's place on it.

4. The advantages of the above include enabling a congregation's preferred sources to increase without an automatic rise in stipend because the current 'fraction' as applied to specified sources would be abolished.

5. To date two schemes are still under consideration, each employing a different method of establishing an annual 'base figure' and each applying a different scale on which to place congregations. It was felt prudent to circulate these in draft form to various agencies of the General Assembly concerned with stipend and related assessments, for comment, before bringing any plan to the Assembly. As this consultative stage had been reached only by the end of

March, the Committee asks the Assembly to receive an interim report this year in anticipation of a scheme or schemes being brought in 1999.

The Acting Clerk writes:

6. Having launched the Ad Hoc Committee, the co-conveners decided that it made more sense to have only one convener in place. Their resignations are, consequently, presented to the Assembly.

The brevity of the report disguises an immense amount of expertise, thought and work which they invested in this study and the General Assembly is asked to record their thanks to them.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the resignations of the Revs J B McCormick and W J Orr, as co-conveners of the Committee, be received, that they be thanked for their services and that the Rev R Kelly be appointed as convener in their place.
3. That the Committee be reappointed for a further twelve months.

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