

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY



# ANNUAL REPORTS







## GENERAL ASSEMBLY



# ANNUAL REPORTS

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

**Luncheon adjournment at 1.00 p.m. each day.**

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

**References to the Minutes of Assembly are given in full.**

### Tuesday

Business Board

Education Board

Residential Assembly 2004

PWA

Nomination Board

Board of Studies & Christian Training

Communications Board

Ministry and Pensions Board

### Wednesday

Doctrine

Church and Government

General Board (Other C'ttes.)

Youth Board

Union Commission

### Thursday

Overseas Board

Board of Mission in Ireland

Shankill Road Mission

Judicial Commission

Reception of Ministers

Inter-Church Relations Board

United Appeal Board

Finance and Administration Board

### Friday

Trustees

Trusts

Social Witness Board

Priorities Committee

## NOTES

## MONDAY, JUNE 7

### Within Church House

7.00 p.m.—

Service of Worship  
Constitution of Assembly  
Memorial Roll  
Election of Moderator

## TUESDAY, JUNE 8

9.30 a.m.—

1. **BUSINESS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (90-100).**  
Arrangements Committee.
2. Reports of Synods and Presbyteries (79-89).
- (10.00) 3. Reception of Corresponding Members and Delegates.  
**Church of Scotland:** Dr. Alison Elliot, Rev. Johnston McKay, Mr. Andrew F. Stewart.  
**United Reformed Church:** Rev. Alasdair Pratt.  
**Presbyterian Church of Wales:** Rev. Dafydd Owen.  
**Church of Ireland:** Rev. Canon W.A. Lewis, Mr. Roy Totten.  
**The Methodist Church in Ireland:** Rev. W. Graham, Mrs. Sandra Dickson.  
**Irish Council of Churches:**
- (10.30) 4. **BOARD OF EDUCATION: Report and Resolutions (277-292).**  
Church Education, State Education, University Education Committees.
5. 2004 Assembly Conference Committee: Report and Resolutions (353).
- (11.30) Intermission
- 12.00 noon Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

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

## NOTES

**2.00 p.m.—**

6. PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION: Report and Resolutions (201-205).
  7. Overtures anent Pars. 308(7)(a) and 308(7)(b) of the Code (205)
  - (2.30) 8. NOMINATION BOARD: Report and Resolutions (121-127).
  - (3.30) 9. BOARD OF STUDIES AND CHRISTIAN TRAINING: Report and Resolutions (293-306).  
Ministerial Studies, College and Magee Management, Resourcing Christians for Ministry Committees.
  - (4.30) 10. BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS: Report and Resolutions (101-120).  
Communications Administration, Media, Public Worship, Church Architecture, Historical Society Committees.
  11. Overture anent Par. 277(2)(c) and (d) of the Code (120).
  - (5.15) 12. BOARD OF MINISTRY AND PENSIONS: Report and Resolutions (339-345).  
Central Ministry Fund, Committee on Retirements and Pensions, Retired Ministers' House Fund Committees.
  13. Overtures anent Pars. 223(3); 268(4)(d); 286; 288; 311(3); 311(6); 311(7); 312(2); 316(3); 314; 315(3); 318(A)2b; 319(3); 324(3); 321(1); 111(6) of the Code (345-348).
- Lapsed Business.
- (6.30) Close of Business.

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

## NOTES



## WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9

9.30 a.m.—

14. Doctrine Committee: Report and Resolutions (27-35).
15. Church and Government Committee: Report and Resolutions (36-58).

12.15 p.m.—

Worship.

2.00 p.m.—

- (2.00) 16. GENERAL BOARD: Report and other Resolutions (9-25).  
Moderator's Advisory, Forces, Chaplains, Recognised Ministries, Peace and Peacemaking Committees.
17. Overture on the Books anent Par. 93(2) of the Code (26).
18. Memorial of the Presbytery of Foyle (26).
- (3.30) 19. YOUTH BOARD: Report and Resolutions (260-276).  
Youth Events, Youth Training and Resources, Youth Home Mission, Youth Overseas, Youth Centres Committees.
- (4.30) 20. UNION COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (60-76).  
Personnel/Planning Committee.
21. Overture anent Pars. 128(1); 193(2)(a) of the Code (77).
22. Memorial of the Kirk Session of Adelaide Road, Donore (77).
23. Memorial of the Kirk Session of Clontarf (78).

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

## NOTES

Lapsed Business.

(5.30) Close of Business.

7.45 p.m.— Evening Rally.

### THURSDAY, JUNE 10

9.30 a.m.—

24. OVERSEAS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (147-176).

Asia, Europe and Middle East, Africa, Caribbean and Latin America Committees.

25. Overture anent Par. 279(2) of the Code (176).

(11.00) 26. BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND: Report and Resolutions (177-200).

Home Mission, Church Extension, Evangelism, Irish Mission, Divine Healing Committees.

27. Overture anent Par 300(1) of the Code (200).

28. SHANKILL ROAD MISSION COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (258-259).

12.15 p.m.—

Worship

2.00 p.m.—

**In Private**

29. JUDICIAL COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (59).

30. Committee on Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees: Report and Resolutions (306-308).

31. Memorial of Rev. D. J. M. Boyle (308).

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

## NOTES

- 32. Memorial of Rev. Jeffrey Godwin (309).
- 33. Memorial of Rev. Geoffrey Reilly (310).
- 34. Memorial of Rev. Maurice Sloan (311).
- 35. Memorial of Rev. Charles Tarter (312).

**In Public**

- 36. INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (128-146).  
Irish Church Relations, World Church Relations, World Development, Race Relations Committees.
  - 37. Overture anent Par. 278 of the Code (146).
  - (3.45) 38. UNITED APPEAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (332-338).
  - (4.30) 39. BOARD OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION: Report and Resolutions (315-331).  
Finance and Staffing, Incidental Fund, Assembly Buildings Committees.
- Lapsed Business.
- (6.00) Adjournment.

**7.00 p.m.—**

Lapsed Business, if any.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 11**

**9.30 a.m.—**

- 40. TRUSTEES: Report and Resolutions (349-352).
- 41. COMMISSION ON TRUSTS: Report and Resolutions (314).
- (10.00) 42. BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS: Report and Resolutions (206-257).

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

## NOTES

Alcohol and Education Services, War Memorial Hostel, Kinghan Mission, Presbyterian Residential Trust, Marriage and the Family, Social Issues and Resources Committees.

(11.15) 43. Committee on Priorities (354-360)

**12.15 p.m.—**

Worship.

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. **Questions**, which should be written out and placed in the box provided in good time, will normally be limited to two per person and ten minutes in all, unless the Moderator judge that a particular subject merits an extension of these limits.

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

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

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

Presenting a group of reports and resolutions 10 minutes

Seconding a group of reports and resolutions 7 minutes

All other speeches 5 minutes

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

Proposing a group of Reports – 10 minutes reduced to 7

Seconding a group of Reports – 7 minutes reduced to 5

Other speeches – 5 minutes reduced to 3.

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

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

13. **Amendments** may be moved without prior notice by any member so as to change the terms of a resolution 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.

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

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

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

16. In the **“Alternative” format** each Board is given 35 minutes for a “Presentation”, including not only the proposing and seconding of the Report but the introduction of guests, the showing of videos, etc as may be desired. Outside speakers require the permission of the Business Board. Assembly questions for clarification then follow, and finally the resolutions. The speeches of the proposer and seconder, and any comments from committee conveners, should all be included in the allotted period of time, and these officebearers should not speak again (except on a point of clarification or to close the debate on a resolution) otherwise the report is liable to overrun and cause business to lapse.

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

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

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

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

## NOTES

## **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND ACCOUNTS 2003 — 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.

2002 Column is period to 31 December 2002.

2003 Column is year to 31 December 2003.

**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**  
**CENTRAL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2003**

	2003 £	2002 £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		
Received from Congregations		
– Assessments	3,765,602	3,611,597
– United Appeal	2,934,238	2,890,120
– World Development	552,897	482,038
– PWA	634,532	622,378
– PWA Deaconesses	132,303	132,202
– Moderators Appeal	46,777	233,518
– Other	120,259	119,800
	8,186,608	8,091,653
Trust and Investment Income	1,368,909	1,347,825
Interest Receivable	485,037	492,976
Donations and Bequests	1,409,379	2,630,556
Residents fees	3,487,910	3,315,477
Church Publications	286,047	297,396
Funding from Outside Agencies	1,116,627	982,483
Property Rental Income	491,471	433,605
Union College Student Fees	317,761	238,465
Café and Shop Receipts	151,373	141,381
PWA & YWG Membership Fees	52,463	55,921
Fees from Youth and Other Events	79,581	64,559
Cost allocated to Trustees	73,174	71,914
Other Income	239,624	391,039
	17,745,964	18,555,250
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		
General Board	41,978	43,683
Business Board	13,447	14,107
Communications Board	308,888	299,411
Inter-Church Relations Board	565,082	479,288
Overseas Board	2,342,489	2,519,878
Board of Mission in Ireland	1,174,736	1,307,787
Board of Social Witness	4,403,429	4,370,271
Youth Board	633,316	559,791
Board of Education	399,250	412,328
Board of Studies	1,097,942	765,494
Finance and Administration	1,309,116	913,627
United Appeal Board	28,874	30,699
Board of Ministry and Pensions	3,707,657	3,630,258
Shankill Road Mission	200,394	206,392



Presbyterian Women's Associations	718,904	711,892
Local Bible Fund	132	1,699
Moderators Appeal	157,233	655,787
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>	<b>17,102,867</b>	<b>16,922,392</b>
<b>NET INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	<b>643,097</b>	<b>1,632,858</b>
Gains (Losses) on disposal of Fixed Assets	329,047	1,200,652
Transfer to Restricted Funds	-112,177	-485,857
Transfer to Designated Funds	-309,068	-680,457
	550,899	1,667,196
<b>TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD</b>	<b>28,781,571</b>	<b>27,114,375</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>29,332,470</b>	<b>28,781,571</b>

## THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at 31 December 2003

	2003 £	2002 £
<b>1. Congregational Assessments</b>		
– Central Ministry Fund	1,435,149	1,691,480
– Retired Ministers Fund	886,717	859,259
– Widows of Ministers Fund	624,762	605,535
– Sick Supply	8,107	7,990
– Incidental Fund	401,596	388,985
– Ministerial Development Fund	60,239	58,348
– Prolonged Disability Fund	349,032	–
	<u>3,765,602</u>	<u>3,611,597</u>
<b>2. Church Publications</b>		
– Herald	108,629	108,466
– Herald Advertising	29,175	35,895
– Points for Prayer	20,772	19,977
– Public Worship	–	–
– Wider World	43,181	46,336
– Christian Irishman	62,341	63,566
– Christian Irishman Calendars	17,302	19,370
– Scriptures	4,647	3,786
	<u>286,047</u>	<u>297,396</u>

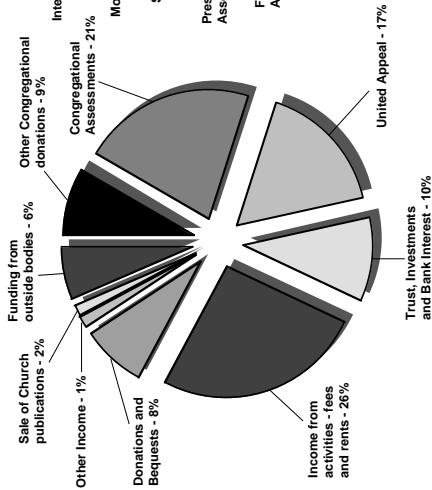
**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND****CENTRAL BALANCE SHEET**

As at 31 December 2003

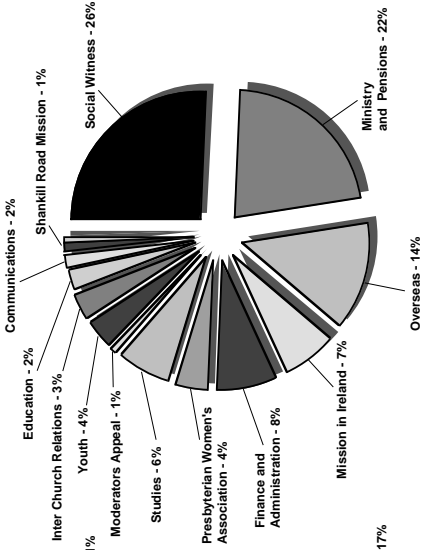
	2003 £	2002 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Land and Buildings	18,911,904	17,702,835
Computer Equipment	77,852	91,822
Fixtures and Fittings	927,094	878,562
Motor Vehicles	127,528	119,640
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	20,044,378	18,792,859
<b>INVESTMENTS</b>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2,962,677	2,990,495
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Northern Bank No. 3 Account (Statement of Liquid Funds)	11,952,646	11,257,192
Other Bank balances and cash in hand	1,628,768	1,923,736
Debtors and Prepayments	2,007,187	2,034,962
Stock	9,615	7,839
Loans	615,830	690,660
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	16,214,046	15,914,389
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors and Accruals	866,956	836,942
Loans	658,506	331,049
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,525,462	1,167,991
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	14,688,584	14,746,398
<b>DEFERRED INCOME</b>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	393,854	320,111
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	37,301,785	36,209,641
<b>Represented By</b>		
Unrestricted Funds	29,332,470	28,781,571
Restricted Funds	4,471,960	4,359,783
Designated Funds	3,497,355	3,068,287
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	37,301,785	36,209,641
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# The Presbyterian Church in Ireland Income and Expenditure 2003

**Income**  
Total £17,745,964



**Expenditure by Board**  
Total £17,102,867



## PRESBYTERIAN MEMORANDUM CENTRAL

Board/Agency	2003 £000's	2002 £000's	2003 £000's	2002 £000's	2003 £000's	2002 £000's	2003 £000's	2002 £000's
			Congregational Assessments	Other Income from Congregations	United Appeal Grants		Investment and Interest Income	
General Board					9	5		1
Business Board								
Communication Board					225	170	9	7
Inter Church Relations Board			552	482			5	6
Overseas Board			27	6	930	930	264	233
Board of Mission in Ireland	8	8	12	15	380	740	176	167
Board of Social Witness			18	63	221	138	86	95
Youth Board					203	212	8	12
Board of Education					195	230	2	2
Board of Studies			67	57	488	265	146	173
Board of Finance & Administration	462	447					31	33
United Appeal			2,934	2,890			69	52
Board of Ministry and Pensions	3,296	3,156					987	973
Shankill Road Mission					5	5	22	24
PWA			767	755			51	49
Local Bible Fund							2	2
Moderators Appeal			47	233			7	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,766</b>	<b>3,611</b>	<b>4,424</b>	<b>4,501</b>	<b>2,656</b>	<b>2,695</b>	<b>1,865</b>	<b>1,844</b>
Less Inter Board/Agency Income					(2,656)	(2,695)	(12)	
Less Gain on disposal of Fixed Assets								
<b>Per Income &amp; Expenditure Account</b>	<b>3,766</b>	<b>3,611</b>	<b>4,424</b>	<b>4,501</b>			<b>1,853</b>	<b>1,844</b>

## CHURCH IN IRELAND INCOME 2003

2003 £000's	2002 £000's	2003 £000's	2002 £000's	2003 £000's	2002 £000's	2003 £000's	2002 £000's	2003 £000's	2002 £000's
Donations and Bequests		Residents Fees		Funding from Outside Agencies		Other Income		TOTAL	
				26	26	1		36	32
						15	15	15	15
						194	338	428	51
3	4							560	492
857	927			125	109	266	510	2,469	2,715
203	1,078					106	232	885	2,240
83	327	3,419	3,244	635	565	140	131	4,602	4,563
1	2	60	63	135	135	87	75	494	499
98	96	10	8	20	20	47	56	372	412
19	11			78	73	728	1,270	1,526	1,849
12	22			98	55	481	473	1,084	1,030
4	5					500	174	3,507	3,121
90	13					56	79	4,429	4,221
26	85					84	83	137	197
13	61					115	125	946	990
								2	2
								54	248
1,409	2,631	3,489	3,315	1,117	983	2,820 (803)	3,561 (690)	21,546 (3,471)	23,141 (3,385)
						(329)	(1,201)	(329)	(1,201)
1,409	2,631	3,489	3,315	1,117	983	1,688	1,670	17,746	18,555



# REPORTS: JUNE, 2004

## BELFAST

### GENERAL BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. In the report of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Priorities last year, the General Board was designated a Management Board with responsibility, among other things, to “facilitate the co-ordination, ordering and management of the work done by the General Assembly through the Boards.” This is a particularly important and challenging function at a time of rapid change not only within the structures of the Church but in the communities which we serve. The Board has been seeking to respond in a number of ways which are outlined below, while at the same time keeping focussed on the nature and purpose of management in the Church which is to facilitate mission.

#### STAFFING

2. Change, when it is visionary, can be exciting but it is never comfortable especially for those most closely involved who inevitably feel vulnerable. The Board pays tribute to those members of staff who have found their jobs reviewed and their work redesignated. While the administration will hopefully come out the stronger for it, this has not been a comfortable experience and the patience of staff has been invaluable.

3. In the General Secretary’s Office there has also been significant change. Mrs Jean Hanna retired as Secretary to the Clerk and Moderator after sixteen years of outstanding service. Many have appreciated Jean’s friendly disposition and helpful nature. The Board wishes her well in her retirement. In her place, Mrs Joyce Anderson has become Clerk and Moderator’s Secretary and Office Manager. This is a key role in facilitating the General Assembly, again at a time when Board and Committee structures are changing. It is fortunate that Joyce not only knows the work of the Assembly well, having worked in the office for many years, but is totally dedicated and unflappable.

#### CONVENERSHIPS

4. During the year the Board has had the unusual experience of two Committee Conveners who are Territorial Army Chaplains being called up for full-time service. It is good that the Revs Principal Patton Taylor and Stephan van Os are safely back with us again and the Board is grateful to the Revs Prof Stephen Williams and Purvis Campbell for looking after their responsibilities. Stephan van Os has now come to the end of his convenueership and thanks are due to him. His experience of full-time service as a chaplain has enabled him to

develop a clear understanding of the issues involved in all the work of the Forces Committee.

5. Dr Robert Rodgers, OBE, has also felt it necessary to resign as Convener of the Chaplains Committee. This position requires detailed understanding of hospital and prison administration and Dr Rodgers undertook the task with great diligence, as well as real concern for those involved in chaplaincy. Thanks are expressed elsewhere to Mr George McCullagh, who served with enthusiasm as Co-Convener of the Church and Government Committee. While the Rev Doug Baker will continue to lead a Panel on Peace and Peacemaking, he will step down this year as Convener of the Committee. His enthusiasm for encouraging good relations at all levels is well known and the Board is grateful for all his efforts in consolidating this important work.

### **DIRECTOR OF MINISTERIAL STUDIES**

6. Last year the Assembly appointed a Panel to review the position of Director of Ministerial Students and report to the General Board. In a thorough review two major changes were introduced, one administrative and the other substantive. The Director will now be fully a member of College staff, responsible to the Principal. The scope of the work has been extended to include promotion of the Ministerial Development Programme. Thus the DMS is responsible for encouraging study from a person first feels called to ministry until retirement. The name has accordingly been changed to Director of Ministerial Studies. The Job Description is appended as Appendix I.

7. The Board also agreed the method of nomination by the Nomination Board and the membership of the Interviewing Panel.

### **EDUCATION BOARD SECRETARY**

8. The Assembly had given authority to the General Board to approve arrangements for the appointment of a Secretary to the Education Board once the proposals of the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities had been decided. Permission was given for the Education Board to proceed to a part-time appointment.

### **MARRIAGE ORDERS**

9. The Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order, 2003 came into force on 1 January, 2004. In order that all Clerks of Presbytery would have the opportunity to be fully conversant with the new regulations, a representative of the Registrar General spoke at the October Board and answered questions. A summary explaining the new regulations, prepared by the General Register Office, was sent to each minister.

10. A meeting of representatives of the Churches, convened by the Irish Council of Churches, met on several occasions to consider the responsibilities of the Churches under the new regulations. While it has not been possible to agree guidelines across the Churches, a common Register for the main Protestant denominations has been agreed. One copy will be issued to each congregation in Northern Ireland. The Board agreed that this should be a cost to the Incidental Fund.



11. In considering guidelines for our own ministers, as officiants, an initial draft was sent to Presbyteries for discussion and comment. While only a small number of Presbyteries responded, in subsequent debate at the February Board the guidelines were amended to read as follows:

### **NEW MARRIAGE GUIDELINES**

- (i) A Presbyterian minister should only officiate at a marriage if at least one of the people concerned has sufficient connection with a congregation in order to ensure that meaningful pastoral care can be offered. If the officiating minister is not the minister of that congregation, he/she should only conduct the marriage with the consent of the congregation's minister. The minister of the congregation should ensure that adequate marriage preparation is offered to the couple.
- (ii) A marriage service should normally be conducted in a Church or other place of Christian worship.
- (iii) A permanent record should be kept of all marriages in a book held by each congregation. It should be made clear that this has no legal status and the officiating minister can no longer issue a marriage certificate. Any marriage conducted outside the church building should also be entered in the book of the appropriate congregation.

12. In the Republic a new Civil Registration Act (2004) was signed into law on 27 February, 2004. At the time of writing a meeting has been arranged to consider its impact on the Churches.

### **REVIEW OF BOARD STRUCTURES**

13. The General Assembly last year asked all Boards to review their Committee structures to ensure that they adequately support the work assigned to the Board. To assist with this the General Board issued a paper outlining the various possibilities for Committees and Panels under the Boards. This is appended as Appendix II.

14. The General Board itself reviewed its Committee structures both to review the work already carried out and to integrate new work. The paper agreed by the Board is appended as Appendix III. It was also agreed, however, that during this period of transition overtures should not be presented until next Assembly.

### **SYNODS AND PRESBYTERIES**

15. While the abolition of the regular Synods was agreed in principle last year, the Assembly asked that "detailed proposals be submitted in 2004." Most Synods now have formal meetings during the Assembly to appoint Commissions and this seems to be working in the interim. The issue of nominations to various Commissions and Boards will be resolved if proposals are accepted this year, apart from appointment to the Judicial Commission. The major outstanding question is the future of the Education Board of the Synod of Belfast.

16. The Board recognised that one way of resolving the issue would be to recreate a Presbytery of Belfast. This may have advantages but would inevitably have wider implications with a knock-on effect on other Presbyteries. A resolution is attached asking the General Assembly to appoint a panel to consider the number and boundaries of Presbyteries and report through the General Board.

### **FUTURE OF CHURCH HOUSE**

17. At the last Assembly it became clear that the work being undertaken to the stonework of the Church House and Assembly Buildings complex was costing very significantly more than had been originally anticipated. The Assembly Buildings Committee and Finance and Administration Board recognised that this matter had wide implications for the whole Church and so asked the General Board to appoint a Panel to consider all issues relating to the future of Church House. It was recognised that this should not be viewed only as a financial concern, but as an opportunity to reflect both on the fine history and associations of the present building and the future needs of relevant administration to support the mission and service of our Church.

18. It was agreed that the present contract for stonework repairs should finish at the end of Phase 2, while ensuring that any necessary health and safety concerns were dealt with. The professional team are of the view that there should be no immediate concerns for at least eighteen months (from January 2004). This then gives a little time for the Church to reflect on the future. The cost to date has been in the region of £650,000.

19. The Panel, with professional advisers BTW Shiells, has been looking at various options including;

- (a) completing the stonework and other necessary renovations;
- (b) retaining the façade of the building but with a new build behind it;
- (c) building, acquiring or leasing accommodation in the city centre area;
- (d) building, acquiring or leasing accommodation along the "M1-M2" corridor. The need for easy access by public transport has been noted.

20. Recently an exciting possibility has opened up for development of a site adjacent to May Street Church, but it is very much at the exploratory stage at present. It is hoped that a fuller report exploring all these possibilities will be available to be sent out with these Reports.

### **YOUTH BOARD CENTRES**

21. During the year the Youth Board recognised that vital decisions must be taken about the future provision of residential centres. Significant expenditure will be needed at all three of the present Youth Centres if the buildings are to be secure and health and safety considerations fully resolved. This will include new issues under disability legislation. The residential accommodation at Lucan has had to be closed for health and safety reasons.

22. The Youth Board rightly considered that future provision was a matter for the whole Church, indeed some might see the future in all-age provision of conference-type facilities. The General Board was therefore asked

to appoint another Panel to advise. This work is still on-going and an update will be given at the General Assembly.

### **INTER-CHURCH COMMITTEE ON NORTHERN IRELAND**

23. The Inter-Church Committee on Northern Ireland which brings together representatives from the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Churches in Northern Ireland and the U.S.A., held its annual meeting in Belfast on 22 and 23 October, 2003. The main item on the agenda was discussion of education provision in Northern Ireland.

The group continues to support the Business Education Initiative which enables students from Northern Ireland and the border counties to experience a year of study in a Church-related College in the U.S.A. This scheme is now administered very successfully by the Department of Employment and Learning. Thanks was expressed to them by the group when attending the graduation of last years BEI students on 24 October, 2003. The possibility of extending these opportunities to theological students is being explored.

It was decided that the Inter-Church Committee would not meet next year but that the Church delegations would keep in touch and arrange another meeting when appropriate.

### **OVERVIEW OF FUNDING PANEL**

24. The Overview of Funding Panel continued to give advice on new projects and appointments. Under the new arrangements it is intended that this work will move to the Appraisals Committee of the United Appeal Board.

### **MEMORIAL OF EAST BELFAST ON MANSSES**

25. The General Board last year was asked to set up a panel to consider future arrangements for ministers living in Mansses. While the Panel has been set up it will not report substantially until 2005.

### **INTER-FAITH CONTACTS**

26. The Memorial of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery on inter-faith contacts had originally been referred to the Board of Mission in Ireland. The Doctrine Committee, however, indicated that it would be willing to look at the issues involved and the matter was transferred to it.

### **CONCILIATION PANEL**

27. The Conciliation Panel continues to work quietly under the guidance of the Rev Doug Baker. All involved are to be thanked for this useful service to the Church.

### **BARRIER ACT**

The overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code, sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was approved. Voting was as follows:

For: 19 Presbyteries; 560Votes;                      Against: 1 Presbytery; 21 Votes.

## APPENDIX I

### JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE POST OF DIRECTOR OF MINISTERIAL STUDIES

In 2002, the General Assembly brought together under the College and Magee Management Committee (i) the College itself (ii) the office of Director of Ministerial Students and (iii) the Magee Christian Training Centre – to form an enlarged Union College.

One of the three main areas of responsibility given to the College is therefore that of encouraging ministerial vocation and personal spiritual formation and the support and supervision of ministerial students from the first tentative enquiry through to licentiate training. Post ordination training and in-service training also form part of the College's remit. The College fulfils these roles on behalf of the General Assembly and in accordance with the requirements of the Board of Studies and Christian Training and its various Committees.

The Director of Ministerial Studies (DMS) is therefore the head of the department within Union College whose primary focus is that of ministerial recruitment and ministerial formation. The DMS fulfils a number of additional responsibilities within the College which are closely allied to this core function.

The DMS is a full member of the College Staff Committee and plays a full role in the day to day life of the College. He/she shares with members of the College Faculty in the general administration and management of the College.

The DMS is responsible to the Principal as his/her line manager; and is accountable to the General Assembly and the Board of Studies and Christian Training through the College and Magee Management Committee. He/she has a particular responsibility for implementing the decisions of the Committee on Ministerial Studies; and will work closely with the Committee and Board Conveners.

#### CORE TASKS

The post of DMS, like all other members of the College Staff, requires a high degree of flexibility. In the light of new developments and priorities some core tasks may be removed, amended or added.

The following is a summary of the core tasks which are currently required.

1. To encourage suitable candidates to offer for the ordained ministry. This will include the preparation of suitable materials, taking part in careers conventions, and through deputation.
2. To meet prospective candidates personally and to process enquiries and applications.
3. To liaise with Presbyteries in the selection, oversight and pastoral care of students.
4. To co-ordinate the Residential Interview in co-operation with the Convener of the Committee on Ministerial Studies.
5. Following Residential Interview
  - (a) To present recommendations to the Board

- (b) To offer pastoral care and advice to those not recommended, or deferred
- (c) To facilitate reviews, appeals and re-interviews
- (d) To administer the Pre-theological requirements
- (e) To advise re courses, exemptions etc for approved candidates.

6. To oversee all ministerial and deaconess students and where appropriate students for other ministries within the Church throughout their years of study. To make arrangements for placements and to ensure that assessments take place and that the Assembly's regulations are fulfilled.

7. To maintain appropriate contact with Ministerial students who are studying elsewhere than at Union College.

8. To ensure that all ministerial, deaconess and other Church students have the opportunity to grow in grace and godliness. This may include organising, but not necessarily conducting, Days of Prayer, Retreats, College Missions etc.

9. To oversee the drafting, acceptance and supervision of Learning Covenants.

10. To liaise with General Assembly Boards, as well as other agencies and denominations as appropriate.

11. To plan and oversee, in co-operation with the Director of Christian Training and the Professor of Practical Theology, the course of part-time study required for Licentiates of the Church.

12. To have overall responsibility for promoting ministerial development and for the Ministerial Development Programme, in co-operation with the Director of Christian Training.

13. To be responsible for the administration of the core tasks and any other additional tasks that fall to the post.

14. To undertake such other duties as may reasonably be required.

**In order to clarify more precisely what these core tasks involve, some GUIDELINES have been appended at the conclusion of this job description.**

### **ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Under the general direction of the College and Magee Management Committee, duties additional to the core tasks will be required that are of relevance to the post and to the talents and qualifications of the person appointed. Such additional duties may include:-

1. The organisation of College Worship under the guidance of the Faculty.

2. A general pastoral role within the college, shared with other members of staff, includes the particular care of a pastoral group. There may be scope for the development of this pastoral role within the wider college community (including the residents in the Gibson Chambers).

3. Some teaching within the College, including the Magee Institute for Christian Training within a subject area in which he/she may be suitably qualified.

4. Some general promotional work for the College. Any such responsibility must always be exercised out of a due regard for the policy of the

Board to encourage ministerial students to take such parts of their theological course at other approved colleges, as may be deemed most appropriate for them.

*The post will carry a salary of £34,437 (2002-2003).*

## APPENDIX II

### PANEL ON BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

The system of Boards and Committees appointed by the General Assembly has served the Church well for many years. More recently there has been a recognition that in a period of rapid change more flexibility needs to be built into the structures, so there has been a greater willingness to appoint Board committees and specialist panels. This paper is intended as a guide to conveners and others so that Committees and Panels may be appointed in a way which still maintains an appropriate relationship to the Courts of the Church.

A minimum requirement for membership of any Board or Committee is membership of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Consultants may also be invited to sit and deliberate (Code Par 146 (4) (5)).

#### (A) BOARDS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

These are standing committees “each having supervisory responsibilities over a broad field of work for which they are answerable to the General Assembly” (Code Par 268(2)). The membership of each Board is specified by the Code and appointed annually by the Assembly. Unless ex-officio, no member can serve for more than nine years. The nine-year rule does not apply to the Business Board.

#### (B) COMMISSIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A Commission may be appointed.

- (a) “to deal with matters referred to it, in which it shall have Assembly powers so far as these matters are concerned.”
- (b) “Matters may also be referred to a commission of Assembly in which it has not been given Assembly powers and upon which it must report to the Assembly, with recommendations, for decision by the Assembly itself.” (Code Par 126(1)(a)(b))

The membership is again specified in the Code and appointed annually, except for the Judicial Commission which is appointed every five years. The nine year rule applies to all but the Judicial Commission.

#### (C) COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A Board may include “a number of official working committees ... appointed by the Assembly to promote particular aspects of work under the supervision of the board.” (Code Par 268(2)(a))

“In addition to their ex-officio members, a working committee shall consist of not more than twelve members, two-thirds of whom shall be drawn from the Presbytery or Synod nominees to the Board, and one-third nominated by the

Business Board on the recommendation of the Committee's Convener". (Code Par 269(3)).

While the Code has not yet been changed, following the resolution of the General Assembly (Reports, 2003, p 313, par D3 and res 16), Committees of the General Assembly will be appointed on a 50:50 basis. All members of Assembly Committees become members of the supervising Board.

#### **(D) AD-HOC COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The Assembly may from time to time appoint "occasional" committees, "for specific purposes, independently of boards, subject to annual renewal." (Code Par 268(3)). These should be strictly time-limited and the purpose clearly defined. While an Ad Hoc Committee reports directly to the Assembly, it should also report during the year to the General Board. The membership is open and appointments made on the recommendation of the Business Board.

#### **(E) BOARD COMMITTEES**

The above Boards, Commissions and Committees are appointed by the General Assembly. It follows that in the work for which they are appointed they take precedence over any other Committee or Panel. However, in recent years Boards have found it useful to appoint their own Committees or Panels.

A Committee may be appointed by a Board to (a) co-ordinate the work of the Board or (b) for a specific purpose not covered by any of the working committees of Assembly. (See Reports, 2003, p 258, pars 6, 7). It can be particularly helpful for a Board to have a committee taking an overview of e.g. finance or personnel. A Board committee can only make recommendations to the Board in terms of policy, but may be given authority by the Board to act on its behalf in specific matters which are clearly defined. Any action it takes should be within its specific remit and reported to the Board.

It is recommended that membership of a Board committee should be at least two-thirds drawn from the Board and that the nine-year rule should apply. Membership of a Board Committee does not confer membership of the Board.

#### **(F) PANELS OF A BOARD**

A Board may also set up a panel of people with particular experience or expertise to look at some clearly defined issue or area of work. There is no restriction to the membership, but the panel is purely advisory. In some circumstances a panel may report through one of the working committees, but should always be appointed by the supervising Board.

#### **(G) SUB-COMMITTEES**

A Board or Committee may appoint a Sub-Committee to look at a particular issue. The membership is drawn entirely from the appointing body to whom it must also report.

### APPENDIX III

#### REPORT TO GENERAL BOARD : 26<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY, 2004

#### RESTRUCTURING

The General Board Conveners, with Conveners whose Committees are moving to the General Board, have met on three occasions to consider the possible re-structuring of the Board and make the following recommendations.

##### 1. THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

- It is important that the Board retains its representative role as the most representative forum of the Church outside the General Assembly.
- It would be useful to find a way to share important information from other Boards, while recognising their independent role in decision-making. The General Board could at times be a useful sounding-board for others, as well as offering a co-ordinating role.
- There is an important role in providing leadership and envisioning the Church. This will involve a different way of working, giving room and time to “think long thoughts”.
- The role of the General Board in setting priorities has been recognised. This group should become a “think-tank” for the Church.
- Some way needs to be developed so that the Church can speak into the immediate situation. The role of the Church and Government Committee should be redefined.
- A section of the agenda on “Clerk’s Business” might be useful at times to raise issues that are not within the specific remit of any of the Committees.

##### 2. THE STRUCTURES OF THE BOARD

To fulfil this role the panel suggests six Assembly Committees plus a Business Committee.

**I THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES** may be grouped as:

**(A) RELATIONS WITHIN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:**

**MINISTRY ISSUES** would include the work of Moderator’s Advisory and Recognised Ministries with any other similar issues which are largely internal to the structures of the Church.

**DOCTRINE** would continue as a theological think-tank.

**PRIORITIES** main function would be to prioritise the mission and ministry needs of the whole Church. It will therefore need to develop a close relationship with the other Boards and provide co-ordination between Boards. It may also give guidance at times to the Business Committee on the Board’s own priorities.

**(B) RELATIONS BEYOND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:**

**CHURCH AND SOCIETY** would be an extension and re-definition of the work of Church and Government to cover not just relations with government but the whole of civil society in e.g. areas such as human rights, equality, racial/ethnic issues, assylum seekers etc. It would also relate to the Church and Society Commission in Brussels.



**GLOBAL CONCERNS** would largely be an issue-based Committee looking at global concerns, e.g. environment, race relations in the global context, etc.

**CHURCH RELATIONS** would continue the work of inter-church relationships, including relations with ICC, IICM, CEC, WARC.

**II PANELS** would also be appointed by the Board to consider specific areas of work. Currently the panels would include Environment; Race-Relations; Peace and Peacemaking. Others may be appointed. The present Panels would relate primarily to the Global Concerns Committee, but would also access the Church and Society Committee for local issues. At least the Convener of a Panel will need to be on the appropriate Committee/s.

**III THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE** would be a co-ordinating/steering Committee to draw up agendas, initiate business and act where appropriate between Board meetings. It is recognised that the agendas will have to vary to allow time for issues to be explored. One or two of the Committees may introduce substantive debate on specific issues so as to better inform the Church. Other Committees on that occasion would only present business needing decision. The length and timing of the Board meeting will have to be further considered.

## FORCES COMMITTEE

1. The aims and objectives of the Forces' Committee may be summed up as follows: i. To provide a point of contact for members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland serving with the Armed Forces and ii. Keeping the work of our chaplains in the mind of our church. In every meaningful sense of the word our chaplains are called to be missionaries in an environment that is profoundly secular in its orientation. They may serve at home or in settings far from these shores, but at all times their calling is to know Christ and make him known to those among whom they minister.

2. Our Church has five full time commissioned chaplains serving with the Regular Forces. At a time of considerable change within the Armed Forces it is satisfying to note that there is a continuing necessity for chaplains to meet the spiritual needs of the men and women who serve in the Forces. There are currently vacancies for chaplains to the Army while the Royal Navy have recently indicated that there are vacancies for one and possibly two new chaplains within their ranks. The Convener would be glad to hear from any minister, preferably under the age of 40, who might be interested in finding out more about this type of ministry. It is possible to arrange visits to military units where opportunities exist to see chaplains in action and to ask questions in an informal setting about this work before proceeding with a formal application.

3. The Rev Terry Maze is our sole chaplain in the Royal Navy. Over the years Terry has exercised a valuable ministry in the Navy and his gifts have been recognised to the point that he is now at the pinnacle of his military career, serving as Principal Chaplain CSFC in Portsmouth. Terry has not only had a responsibility for the pastoral needs of sailors going on operations but has also had to focus his mind on questions to do with the provision of chaplaincy cover

for those belonging to minority faiths in the Navy and the best approach to handling this difficult subject with integrity. This year sees Terry retiring from the Navy. As a Committee we extend our warmest thanks and appreciation for all the work he has done over the past 25 years as a Naval chaplain. He has flown the flag for the PCI faithfully over the years and the fact that our church is well regarded in Naval circles is due in no small part to the energy with which he has exercised his ministry over the years. We wish both Terry and Mickie God's blessing for their future retirement.

4. In the Army we are served by the Rev Norman McDowell, who is currently at ATR Pirbright where he is involved with adult recruits, with all the challenges this involves as they cope with the changes from a civilian to a military environment. The Rev Philip Patterson continues as Chaplain to the Army Training Regiment, Bassingbourn. He writes of the numerous opportunities to bear witness to the gospel and of the interest among young men and women in spiritual issues which is far greater than their peers in civilian life due to the challenges of operational tours and frequent absences from home. The Rev Dr Paul Swinn, having served in the recent war in Iraq is now, as we write, once again serving in Iraq. This is a major commitment which will continue for all our Armed Forces certainly for the foreseeable future. In a recent email from Iraq Paul spoke of both the highs and lows of his ministry. He has had to cope with death through tragic circumstances of a young soldier, has involved himself in humanitarian projects, but also speaks of the satisfaction of speaking briefly at a church service in St Paul's Church, Ahmadi, Kuwait where he was able to bear witness to the values of the gospel at a memorial service to mark the liberation of Kuwait and remember the British dead of both Gulf Wars. At this challenging time we commend both Paul and his family to God as they cope with his enforced times of separation from them, something that impacts on the overwhelming majority of forces chaplains from time to time.

5. The Rev David Edgar is presently stationed in the south of England at RAF Lyneham. He has now spent 14 years as an RAF chaplain and continues to find the challenge of this ministry rewarding as he ministers across the rank structure with both officers and enlisted men and women. The Rev Jonathan Wylie continues to find his work in the RAF rewarding. He is currently located at RAF Brize Norton. During the recent war in Iraq he was fully involved with the families who came to receive the bodies of loved ones who had been killed in the conflict, Jonny writes: "this has been an especially harrowing time with the repatriation of the dead the focus of so much attention on the base. Meeting all the families of those dead servicemen is something that I will never forget. Trying to minister to people in that situation was incredibly difficult but also incredibly rewarding. To be able to bring something of the love of God to families shattered by such sudden, incomprehensible and public grief was tremendously powerful, humbling and perhaps most encouragingly of all, almost universally appreciated — the Chaplain really in action."

6. We continue to have a full complement of TA chaplains serving with various units here in Northern Ireland. This year has been a demanding one for our TA chaplains. The days of the TA being perceived as a weekend dining club are long gone. Anyone who is now a member of a TA unit faces the very real possibility of being called up for some future operational duty somewhere in the

world. Two of our four chaplains were called up for operational duties. The Rev Stephan van Os went on Op Oculus to Bosnia with his unit 253 Field Ambulance RAMC[V], Sunnyside Street. Co-located with the main British army hospital in Sipovo he was deployed as chaplain to the UK Battle Group, ministering to Gurkhas, but also the multinational elements of Dutch and Canadian servicemen and women in the part of Bosnia known as the Republika Srpska. The Rev Prof Patton Taylor was called up for service in Afghanistan. The dangers to life and limb for our serving personnel are well rehearsed through the media because of incidents which take place on a regular basis. Patton has had to do much of his travel by helicopter because road travel is frequently not safe. There have been suicide bombings as well as a host of unpublicised incidents which have stretched his faith but also given him the opportunity to bring a significant word from the Lord for those caught up in situations they had desperately hoped to avoid. The Committee expresses its deep appreciation for the hard work these ministers have undertaken over these recent months.

7. The Forces Committee seeks to encourage all our chaplains in their work and it also commends those organisations which frequently supplement their work and provide additional support during hard and difficult times. 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. Representatives from these organisations are available in Northern Ireland to speak at midweek meetings. Their insight into the challenges and problems of military life will enable people in our congregations to pray more intelligently for our servicemen and women.

8. Each year the Royal British Legion, The Royal Air Force "Wings Appeal" and the Royal Irish/UDR Benevolent Fund seek our support. We bring these worthy causes before the General Assembly once again in our resolutions. Our congregations have in the past supported these funds with great generosity and the Committee hopes that this support will continue.

SW van OS, Convener

## CHAPLAINS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee has responsibility for supervising the work of the chaplaincy service provided by the Church in hospitals and prisons.

2. The Convener, Dr RJ Rodgers, tendered his resignation from the start of 2004 because of his wife's illness. The Committee expressed its gratitude to him for his able and dedicated service, and assured him and Mrs Rodgers of their prayers.

3. In the interim the Clerk of Assembly is acting as Convener and the Committee thanks him.

4. The Committee records its appreciation of all who work in the front-line ministry, values their care and witness, and commends them to the prayers and support of the Church.

5. Through people retiring or moving to other congregations there have been resignations and Presbyteries have co-operated in nominating replacements.

6. The Committee is arranging an event for all hospital chaplains. The purpose is to assure chaplains of the Church's concern, offer encouragement and inspiration, and provide an opportunity for mutual support.

7. A triangular relationship exists involving the Four Main Churches, the Northern Ireland Hospital Chaplains' Association and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Discussions are continuing with regard to the responsibilities and roles of each.

8. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety brought to the attention of the Committee two documents. One sets out Codes of Conduct for Health Care Chaplains. The other offers guidance for managers and those involved in the provision of chaplaincy/spiritual care. The Department stated its intention to adopt these documents formally. At the time of writing this report, the Committee is considering the documents and will forward its comments to the Department.

PAUL ERSKINE, Chairman

## MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. The Moderator's Advisory Committee met once during the year to appoint assessors to help in a matter of difficulty in the Foyle Presbytery.

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

## RECOGNISED MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

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

The Committee's recommendations are as follows:-

<i>Presbytery</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Ards	Rev C D Mawhinney	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev David McKee	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev D M Spratt	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
North Belfast	Rev J S Carson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev C I McKnight	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev W A Shaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.

	Rev W M Smyth	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev W G Stewart	To be retained as Minister Without Charge.
	Rev F W Vincent	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Belfast East	Rev R A Crooks	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Dr Eliz Jamison	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Rex Pedlow	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev W J Harshaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Carrickfergus	Rev D R Byers	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev R J Montgomery	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Coleraine	Rev J D Mark	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Derry/Strabane	Rev J C Teeney	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Down	Rev David Stanfield	To be retained as Minister without Charge
	Rev R N Stewart	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Dublin & Munster	Rev Ruth Gregg	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Iveagh	Rev E G McAuley	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Route	Rev Dr Victor Dobbin	To be retained as Minister without Charge.

2. Arrangements have been made to consider a request for an organisation to be approved under the recognised ministries scheme. A recommendation will be brought in the Daily Minutes.

3. It was noted that two ministers are presently called to recognised work under the Inter-Church Relations Board. It was agreed that legislation should be introduced to allow such calls under the General Board and in the interim those ministers affected should report through the General Board.

DONALD J WATTS

## PEACE AND PEACEMAKING COMMITTEE

1. The Peace and Peacemaking Committee continues to be concerned about various forms of violence and the underlying divisions in this society and our world. During this past year the ongoing scourge of both loyalist and

Republican paramilitarism, the increase in racial attacks in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the upsurge in fighting in Iraq, the growing doubts surrounding the basis on which the decision to go to war with Iraq was made, and fresh waves of violence in Israel/Palestine, have all pressed home the need for nations, groups and individuals to find alternative ways to address conflicts and learn to live with difference. The task of the Committee is to challenge and assist PCI individuals, congregations, boards and committees in identifying ways in which they may contribute to such a process, as an integral part of faithful discipleship as followers of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

2. *"After the Cows Come Home"* was the title of a day conference in November attended by over 170 Peace Agents and others from more than 50 different congregations. The theme referred to the need to go beyond talking about peace to the challenge in the Church's Peace Vocation to *"be initiators of programmes of action that will contribute to peace in this society"*. Several speakers shared stories of ways in which their congregations are currently doing this. While the Committee is encouraged by these and other examples, all Kirk Sessions are urged to look at least once each year at what additional practical steps they might take in their context to improve relations across sectarian, racial and other barriers.

3. Presbytery Peace Agents in East Belfast, Down, Dromore and Route have all organised gatherings for congregational peace agents to meet to share information about initiatives being taken by congregations and for mutual support and/or training. Peace Agents in other Presbyteries have used reports or speakers to keep this aspect of discipleship on Presbyteries' agendas. Moderators and Clerks in Presbyteries where this is not happening are urged to include time during Presbytery meetings for members to hear about existing and discuss potential actions which might contribute to peace locally and beyond.

4. The Committee welcomes the expanding use of the Preparing Youth for Peace course and commends it to all congregations. It is worth noting that in some settings it has also been successfully used with members of Kirk Session and other adult groups. Contact David Smith in the Youth Office if you would like to explore using the course for either youth or adults in your setting.

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

DR BAKER, Convener

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly adopt the Marriage Guidelines as printed in paragraph 11.
3. That the General Assembly approve in principle the new Committee structure of the General Board.
4. That the following Panel be set up to consider the number and boundaries of Presbyteries and report through the General Board:

**Conciliation**

5. That a grant of up to £1,000 be made available from the Incidental Fund to the Conciliation Panel.

**Recognised Ministries**

6. That the General Assembly adopt the recommendations of the Recognised Ministries Committee on Ministers and Licentiates without Charge.

7. That the Rev Dr Ruth Patterson and the Rev Desmond Maxwell report in the interim to the General Board.

**Forces Committee**

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

9. That the General Assembly note the various openings becoming available for chaplaincy work in the Regular Forces and commend these opportunities for service to our younger ministers.

10. That the General Assembly commend the work done by our part time chaplains in the Territorial Army, the Army Cadet Force and by Officiating Chaplains to our Garrisons and Stations.

11. That the General Assembly express appreciation for those of our ministers who have recently returned from operational duties in Iraq, Bosnia and Afghanistan.

12. 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.

13. 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.

**Peace and Peacemaking Committee**

14. That a grant of up to £2,500 be made available from the Incidental Fund to the Peace and Peacemaking Committee.

**General**

15. That the resignation of the Rev Stephan van Os as Convener of the Forces Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and \_\_\_\_\_ appointed in his place.

16. That the resignation of Dr Robert Rodgers as Convener of the Chaplains Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and \_\_\_\_\_ appointed in his place.

17. That the resignation of the Rev Doug Baker as Convener of the Peace and Peacemaking Committee be accepted and that he be thanked for his services.

18. 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:

### **OVERTURE ON THE BOOKS**

#### **Anent Par 93(2) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 93(2) of the Code be deleted, and that Par 93(3) be renumbered as Par 93(2).

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

### **MEMORIAL TRANSMITTED**

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

#### **The Memorial of the Presbytery of Foyle Respectfully showeth:**

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

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

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

And report back to the General Assembly of June 2005

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

Adopted by the Presbytery of Foyle at its meeting in Drumachose on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2004 and transmitted to the Synod of Derry and Omagh.

NOEL WARD, Moderator  
STANLEY STEWART, Clerk

Licensed by the Synod of Derry and Omagh at its meeting in Sixmilecross on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 and transmitted with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

NW McAULEY, Moderator  
JL CASEMENT, Clerk



## DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

### Background

1. In 2000, the Doctrine committee presented to the Assembly a report 'on the theological foundations of ministry' in compliance with a remit of the 1997 Assembly. It argued for a broader view of 'ministry' than is often held and set forward the biblical basis for speaking of the ministries exercised by the members of the body of Christ, and not just its ordained leadership. On the basis of the report, whose content the committee believed would have significant implications for the life of the Church, a second report was presented 'On Ministry' at the Assembly in 2002. It was sent to Presbyteries for comment, in order to bring a final report to the Assembly in the following year.

Of the 21 Presbyteries, 17 responded. When these responses were collated at the beginning of 2003, it became obvious that there were a number of serious concerns about the 2002 report that could not be addressed in time for the 2003 Assembly. Accordingly, the Assembly gave the Committee an extra year to produce its report. In order to discuss the concerns raised in the various Presbytery responses (which contained much that was supportive and not just critical), meetings were arranged in autumn 2003 between a representative of the Doctrine committee and the various Presbytery sub-committees involved in drafting the initial responses. 11 out of 17 Presbyteries took up the invitation to meet. Of course, the Doctrine committee takes responsibility for the report now presented to the Assembly, but it has sought to garner the fruit of reasonably widespread consultation.

2. One of the crying needs in church life in Ireland today is for church members to be equipped to think in a Christian way about the spheres of life in which they are placed. They often adhere to doctrinal beliefs and basic moral principles, but receive little or no guidance about how to think of their vocations. Further, the impression is often given that the 'work of the Lord' is really ministry in the restricted sense of ordained ministry or missionary work, as traditionally conceived. While members are sometimes urged to evangelise, they are not instructed about how to bring a Christian mind to bear on their sphere of work or activity. In thinking about every-member ministry, as we do in this report, we wish to bear in mind this need and context. We understand 'every-member ministry' to be something a bit more restricted than what we often call 'vocation', as we spell out in what follows. But that ministry is closely connected with secular vocation or mission in its widest sense of being salt and light in our societies.

### The Primacy of a Teaching Ministry

3. Two general concerns were expressed in the Presbytery responses, and we incorporate our own response to these in the body of the present report. The first concern is that the previous two reports, to a greater or lesser degree, conveyed the impression that the ministry of preaching and teaching of the Word was relatively neglected and marginalised. The committee is glad to correct any such impression. The Church of Jesus Christ is built on the Word of God and it

follows that the preaching or teaching of this Word constitutes a fundamental, foundational ministry in the Church. All ministries are to be exercised in accordance with God's will and design for the Church, so that ministry which concentrates on communicating that will and design has a peculiarly important place. In this connection, however, we note four things:

- (a) Biblical references to proclamation and teaching of the Word do not sanction any one style or tradition of preaching and teaching. While proclamation and teaching naturally occur in the form of the familiar sermon, they are not biblically tied to any one form, though they clearly require an essentially verbal component. In saying this, we do not mean that the gospel or biblical teaching are communicated through word alone, with no room for any other media. This is an issue we leave aside. We simply mean that communication through words is essential to the teaching ministry exercised in the Church.
- (b) The fundamental nature of a teaching ministry does not entail a distinction of two strata: clergy and laity. Such a distinction is foreign to the New Testament, as we pointed out in our earlier report (2000: p 23.6). Within the one people of God, exercising various ministries given by the Spirit, there is leadership, but there is no clerical caste.
- (c) While we ordain men and women to the ministry of Word and sacrament, and preaching and teaching are integral to that role, there is no biblical or theological reason for confining the exercise of such a ministry to ordained leaders, as long as its exercise is subject to proper oversight. Although we have referred to the 'sacrament' above, we are not touching on this issue in this report and are concerned at this point solely with teaching of the Word. We touch on the question of ordination later.
- (d) It has been observed by a number, who emphasise the fundamental nature of the teaching ministry, that its primacy is no guarantee of a corresponding mobilisation in the congregations, of people and their gifts. In other words, where the teaching ministry is emphasised, this has often not resulted in the release of various ministries within the churches.

### **The Concept of Every-Member Ministry**

4. The second kind of concern expressed in Presbytery responses was that, while there was much sound talk in the reports of 'ministry' in the wider sense, little was said that gave any kind of concrete or detailed guidance or recommendation to the churches, despite our affirmations in earlier reports, that we regarded implementation as important. In submitting the present report to the Assembly, the committee aims to make good this deficiency, within limits. The limits, however, are severe. We believe that these limits are intrinsic to our remit as a *Doctrine* Committee. Quite apart from this, we are persuaded that, although a welter of detailed recommendations are possible in principle, we are better off at this stage if we give pointers to the road ahead than if we propose a number of particulars in prescriptive detail.

### What are we talking about?

5. Our previous reports suffered from a failure to spell out the exact nature of what we had in mind when speaking of various ministries in the body of Christ.

- (a) When we speak of 'every-member ministry', we are not addressing the question of leadership and participation in Sunday worship. We acknowledge that this is an important matter and that the idea of every-member ministry may have implications for worship. We wish to encourage widest possible participation by congregational members in leading worship. However, this is not our primary concern. Amongst the passages which have guided our thinking are Romans 12.3-8; 1 Corinthians 12.1-31; Ephesians 4.7-16. A number of the ministries mentioned in these passages are, indeed, exercised in the context of worship but some have reference to ongoing life in the believing community rather than to what happens when that community assembles for worship.
- (b) Every-member ministry is closely connected with the calling of individual members in their various (usually secular) spheres of daily life. But there is a distinction. If we take the passages above as our examples, we are looking at the life of the Christian community and the full and gifted participation of its members in that life. It is true that the line between ministries within the church and ministries in the world is often impossible to draw definitively. It is also true that, in reading Scripture, we must be attentive to the difference between the socio-political contexts in which the first century churches existed, and our own, so that distinctions between 'church' and 'world' do not operate in the same way in every context. Further, because we do not want to consider ministry within the bounds of the church in isolation from mission in the world, we want to emphasise the missionary context for our thinking about every-member ministry. That is why we stated this context in the description of the 'Background' to this report.
- (c) What, then, do we have in mind? The 'Church' is both a single, universal body and community of people and locally manifested in a multitude of particular communities, of 'churches'. It is meant to be salt and light. It is the spiritual and nourishing centre out of which the individuals who make it up, operate in their everyday spheres. If the churches do not make use of the range of ministries to which God has called her, they will be places where people attend as individuals on Sunday or mid-week, leave as individuals at the end of the time and proceed to live out their lives for the rest of the week with no sense of a vital connection with others in the church and no sense that they are equal members with their leaders of a body which is meant *corporately* to witness to the world. That is, if people are not being nurtured or nurturing others by the proper exercise of their gifts in the body of Christ, they go out into their various spheres thinking in isolation, feeling isolated, as people for whom 'church' is one compartment of life.

6. We are faced with a need for adjustment of attitudes on all sides. John Stott has recently published a volume on *Calling Christian Leaders: Biblical models of church, gospel and ministry* (Leicester: IVP, 2002). It is striking reading, when placed alongside books which give detailed proposals on leadership and management structures in churches. Such proposals certainly have their place, but John Stott concentrates almost exclusively on the cultivation of character. As long as 'ministers' love the sense of status and power of their roles, debate on the primacy of a teaching ministry or the nature of the gifts in the first century communities remains largely theoretical. There can be clerical insecurity: ordained ministers are sometimes worried that members will be gifted in ways that they are not and so do not create either the environment or the opportunity for the gifts to be exercised. Even when they wish to do these things, they are uncertain how to manage change and do not feel adequately equipped to think through the implications of the wider, biblically-based notion of every-member ministry.

There are balancing factors on the side of the 'members'. As far as they are concerned, many often think of 'ministers' as full-time professionals concerned with the church, while they themselves are just associated with it in specific and occasional ways. The former are paid to get on with things; the ordinary members, not being paid, may have not the same degree of commitment. Where they are willing to work, they are uncertain what competence they have in the exercise of any useful ministry in the church. As long as this attitude prevails, it is obvious that not much can be effectively implemented in the way of concrete proposals for invigorating church life by the encouragement of every-member ministry. The picture that we are painting here is deliberately one-sided: there are many 'ministers' and 'members' who set an example to all of us, in every way.

7. The vision that we want to pursue is this:
- (a) A church in which no one regards himself or herself as more or less important than anyone else on account of perceived status or lack of status. Then the truth of Christ and the gospel can be evidenced in the way that Scripture means it to be, that is, first and foremost, by the quality of relationships. A proper grasp of the meaning of 'church' as the body of Christ and of the biblically-indicated diversity of gifts within it, will help us in that direction. Nothing matters more than relationships, as Paul makes clear in chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians, located right in the middle of his discussion of the church as the body of Christ.
  - (b) A church where those who are members of it are encouraged to realise their ministries within it, as far as is possible. We put it in that way because there is a great danger of equating membership with vigorous activity. Many are physically, mentally or emotionally incapacitated, whether temporarily or permanently. In some ways, they are more at the receiving than the giving end of ministry. They are no less part of the body of Christ for that, nor are they inferior as members. They are also often in the position to minister in unexpected ways, but we must never value people according to the vigour of their activity.

- (c) A church whose members are equipped to think biblically about *All the Business of Life*, to borrow the title of a work by Robert Banks (Sutherland, Australia: Albatross, 1987). In this, the author points out that the things we spend most of our time doing in life are the things about which we give least theological, ie, Christian, thought. This is a church whose members are supported in their spheres of activity and empowered for action in the world outside the church, by a proper appreciation of their own ministries within the body of the church.

### **Eldership**

8. If we are to identify and release ministries in the churches, we believe that a key to doing so is a renewed understanding and changed structures of eldership. Ordained ministers often struggle to fulfil their calling to teach and pastor, frequently feeling weary, harassed and cynical under various pressures, to the point where they wonder what, as ministers, they are meant to be doing. If, on top of their existing responsibilities, they alone are to bear the burden of thinking pro-actively about the different gifts and ministries of their members, they will feel hopelessly overburdened. The elders, along with the ordained minister, are naturally well placed to identify ministries.

9. However, it is not just because of the burdens of ordained ministry that elders should have this role. In Scripture and the Reformed tradition, eldership is, first and foremost, a form of spiritual leadership. In practice, elders often play an executive and administrative role and some Kirk Sessions are so large that strategic thinking about the life and well-being of the congregation becomes a practical impossibility. Our recommendation is that eldership should be established or re-instated as a spiritual leadership and that congregations are led to understand that what we are looking for in elders are qualities consistent with that responsibility. We acknowledge, of course, that many elders already fulfil that role and that the burdens many carry are just as great as those carried by the ordained minister. But we believe that we need to put structures in place to achieve our aims.

10. There should be a reduction in the size of many Kirk Sessions, so that elders and ordained minister can have a viable opportunity of being united and of co-operating in spiritual leadership. We do not, of course, propose that any currently serving elder ceases to be an elder, but that we move towards a new goal where the number of those serving on Session is not dictated by the number of districts traditionally requiring an elder. Of course, appropriate measures would have to be taken to ensure that the pastoral care of people in those districts does not suffer as a result.

11. Those appointed or ordained to eldership should include people equipped to teach and pastor in congregations, alongside the ordained minister. We do not propose this as a requirement for all elders. There are some who will have gifts of strategic thinking and of administration, who will have no corresponding gifts of teaching and pastoring. It is widely recognised by biblical scholars that the teaching/ruling elder distinction is not a fixed one in the New Testament and, in Calvin's theology, pastors were not left to carry on the burden of teaching on their own, because he maintained that there was a distinct office

of 'teacher' in the church. The universal requirement of eldership, however, is the capacity for spiritual and strategic leadership.

12. We believe that some administrative tasks at present routinely carried out by elders should be remitted to others, outside the Kirk Session. Arguably, viewed in the perspective of the Reformed tradition, our elders in practice often function more like deacons than elders. PCI does not have a diaconate, consisting of both men and women. It is constitutionally possible, within PCI, for the Congregational committee to function as a diaconate. We are not recommending that, in fact, all Congregational committees proceed to do so. However, if they do, those committees can take on some of the administrative tasks that in practice presently devolve upon elders.

13. It is impossible to consider renewing our vision of eldership along these lines, unless appropriate training is provided beyond what is currently required. This could be done either on a Presbytery level or via the Magee Institute, for example, but a programme should certainly be put in place. At this stage, it is only the principle that we want to establish.

14. An obvious question arises in connection with this: even if what is outlined is regarded as theologically ideal, is it not practically impossible? At a time where it is getting increasingly difficult to get people to be committed to eldership, do these proposals not mean that there is even less likelihood of such a commitment? Our conviction is that this difficulty can be met if we considered appointing elders to serve on Session for a fixed, but renewable, term. Elders are presently ordained for life and we are, in this Report, accepting this position. But we have a mechanism whereby elders who no longer can or wish to be active, can withdraw from Session. We do not have a mechanism whereby elders can be appointed for fixed, but renewable periods. If the Assembly wishes us to incorporate into our Report a resolution requesting that legislation be put in place for this, we should be glad to do so. In the meantime, we encourage congregations to consider appointing some elders on the informal understanding that they presently want to serve on Kirk Session only for a limited (eg, seven or ten year) period. We are making this proposal in the conviction that (a) biblically, there is no basis for the requirement that those who are appointed to eldership should actively function in that role throughout their lives and (b) the practical option of a fixed, renewable terms of service has great advantages for the Church.

15. The logic of this suggestion moves us in the direction of considering our traditional theology and practice of ordination of ministers and elders for life. The whole matter of the biblical basis for ordination, whether to ministry (in the traditional usage of the word) or to eldership, is a contentious question. Many ordained Presbyterian leaders question whether the theology and practice of ordination adopted in many Presbyterian churches (including PCI) is, in fact, biblical. It has appeared to us, as a committee, that we should try to implement what we suggest within currently existing frameworks of practice, as far as that is possible. Disputes over ordination should not be allowed to get in the way of furthering every-member ministry. It is logically possible to take different views on the question of ordination, up to a significant point, without this affecting our conviction that every-member ministry is an imperative. However, our consultation with Presbytery sub-committees leads us to recommend that the

Assembly give specific attention to the theology of ordination in future. In failing to give it attention in this report, we acknowledge that we are reneging on a commitment made in our earlier report, to give due consideration to this question at this juncture (2000: p25, 11).

16. It may be thought that our proposal above about eldership is counter-productive and actually maintains an unwelcome sense of hierarchy in church leadership, discouraging the development of every-member ministry. Certainly, there is a real danger of this. Much depends on those exercising leadership. No structure is immune from abuse for the sake of status and power. But if our reason for implementing this change is in order to release congregational members into their relevant spheres of ministry, then we may hope that this aim will always be in sight when renewed arrangements are in place.

### **Authorised Ministries**

17. At the moment, there is no obligatory form for the recognition of the ministries of Additional Pastoral Personnel (APPs). We recommend that recognition for the specific term of appointment should be made at the level of the local congregation and that it should take the form of prayer. Moving on to the diversity of ministries exercised within the churches that involve clear leadership and organisational roles, we suggest that they might be 'recognised' (in the looser, less formal sense) more often, perhaps quarterly, with different kinds being recognised at different times. Those ministries which we want to encourage but do not fall into these categories, should be acknowledged by being made the subject of specific public intercessory prayer at regular intervals (we suggest, monthly) during the year. Most emphatically, we should wish to include here prayer for people in their vocations outside the church. We are less concerned to try to regularise these practices by a rigid recommendation than to recommend that congregations themselves regularise these practices in a way they judge appropriate.

18. Various practices are adopted in relation to deaconesses. Although subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the laying on of hands have been required or practised on particular occasions, the Code does not specify that either of these is necessary. We recommend that subscription be not required and that the laying on of hands be discretionary.

### **Implementation**

19. Despite significant differences in Ireland, not just between North and South, but within the North and South, the Christian churches face a common situation. Taken up, as we now are, into the wider currents in the Western world, we are facing, for the first time in history, not just a post-Christian society, but a social order devoid of any religious cohesion whatsoever. To oversimplify: if the Reformation introduced dramatic changes *within* Christendom, it would be strange if we should not be fundamentally rethinking a number of things in the *post-Christendom* situation. In connection with this, two things are occupying us in the background to this report. The first is the nature of Christian community; the second is the formation of a Christian mind.

- (a) Within the community of the church, we are calling for ministries to be exercised afresh. Previous reports, as this one, have drawn attention to the relevant biblical passages detailing those gifts. Many of these are the so-called 'charismatic' gifts, on which there are differences amongst us both about what is theologically right and what is confessionally permissible. As far as the present report is concerned, leaders and congregations must find their own way on this question, with due sensitivity to the differences that exist within PCI. But there are plenty of examples of gifts and ministries that are not contentious in this way. One example, a central one, is the ministry of intercessory prayer. The time allocated to intercessory prayer and the content of that prayer in Sunday worship often tell us as much about that particular church as does anything else. Within the congregation there should be those who devote not just time, but thought, to prayer, and who are able to guide the church in its prayer life by suggesting how mutually supportive prayer can be offered within the congregation and what intercessions for the world outside should be publicly offered. Parallel suggestions could be made for those with the gift of encouragement or contribution to the needs of others. These are ministries which are best considered and implemented first on a local and congregational level.
- (b) In contrast, the formation of the Christian mind is harder to achieve without wider co-operation. Protestantism has developed strong doctrinal traditions, because it was born of conflict with an alternative (Roman Catholic) doctrinal tradition, though also, of course, of an independent positive conviction about the nature of biblical truth. But, in Protestant circles the formation of the Christian mind on a host of public socio-ethical issues or detailed particulars of everyday life, has lagged far behind. Theological leaders have devoted much energy in the past to thinking about Christian doctrine; now we all, according to ability and circumstance, need to devote similar energy needs to issues of everyday life and the public square. As this can usually not be done so effectively on a local level, it must be largely in the hands of the Magee Institute. Integral to our report, then, is the encouragement of the Magee Institute in its work, in its connection with every-member ministry, and the encouragement to congregations to give priority to seeking required assistance through the Magee Institute.

20. The Latin American leader, Juan-Carlos Ortiz, approached congregational life by working through particular issues with the congregation systematically, in blocks. If what was needed was teaching on the proper use of money, six months or so of congregational life was set aside to concentrate on that. Then, if the fundamental lessons had been learned and people were pledged to follow them up, the congregation would move on to the next issue (eg, fellowship) and concentrate on that. The value of concentrated teaching is great, particularly when one builds on one thing after another. With due respect to the autonomy of congregations, we make bold to recommend in this report that Presbyterian churches set aside a common period of time to concentrate entirely on the question of ministries within the church. As many programmes for the



second half of this year will already be in place, we suggest setting aside the period roughly from January to June, 2005. It could be regarded as a time of internal audit, unless something similar has recently been done in a particular congregation. During this period, the aims should be to:

- (a) Instruct congregations specifically and in detail about what the New Testament says about the church, and gifts and ministries in the church.
- (b) Identify precisely the various aspects of the mission of a congregation, appropriate to its local area, and identify the ministries needed to fulfil that mission.
- (c) Identify the gifts of the various members of the congregation, so that out of these may flow ministries as identified in (b) above.

Suitable materials can be prepared and provided for the churches, if required, under the aegis of 'Resourcing Christians for Ministry'.

21. We are not under any illusion that these proposals, if accepted, will of themselves contribute to renewal in congregational life. Renewal is the prerogative of God the Holy Spirit and involves the openness of God's people. Nevertheless, the Doctrine committee submits to the Assembly its suggestions about the few channels that we might cut in the hope that the river of renewal might flow through them.

JP TAYLOR, Convener

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That overtures be prepared by the Clerk and presented to the General Assembly of 2005 to accommodate elders who may wish to give up the duties of eldership for a period of time.
3. That the General Assembly take steps to encourage every-member ministry, initially through a six month programme focussing on ministries in the church, where possible beginning in January 2005.
4. That the General Assembly encourage the Magee Institute in their provision of instruction and resources for those seeking to develop every-member ministry.

# CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

1. By the time the General Assembly meets the Church and Government Committee will have met on eight occasions. The report includes seven appendices and it is likely that there will be a supplementary report and additional resolutions in the Daily Minutes, since this report is being written at the beginning of April.

2. Much of the work of the Church and Government Committee is carried on outside the formal meetings of Committee through informal conversations with a wide variety of people and bodies, through attendance at consultations, seminars, receptions and other events, and through correspondence.

3. Conversations have continued throughout the year with representatives of political parties. Following the Northern Ireland Assembly election in November, it was hoped that new life would be injected into the political process, but it has seemed at times that there is little political activity, apart from in-fighting within unionism. Even the Review of the Belfast Agreement which began on 4 February has largely disappeared from public consciousness, and there appears to be little expectation that it will lead to a restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland. If anything, apathy has increased rather than decreased.

4. In such circumstances, it is more important than ever that the Church continues to articulate a vision of society as it can and ought to be, and which the Gospel makes possible - an inclusive, welcoming, tolerant society where people live together in mutual respect and trust, where difference is not disliked but appreciated, and where previously contending communities seek accommodation rather than dominance.

5. Simply to write this vision down shows how far it is from being realised. Respect, trust, appreciation, accommodation - these are not the words that spring to mind when describing relationships between the two communities. It is unrealistic, of course, to expect these values to appear overnight. Nonetheless it is disappointing, after all Northern Ireland has been through and after the optimism of more recent years, that opportunities to build trust and confidence have again been missed on all sides.

6. The Republican movement continues to prevaricate about "acts of completion", to re-interpret history and to foster the creation of a hierarchy of victims. It seems to have little perception of how much damage this has caused, and continues to cause, to trust and confidence. Loyalism continues to be more concerned with what is euphemistically referred to as "internal house-keeping" - otherwise known as intimidation and punishment beatings - and with maintaining its grip on a generation of young men than with leaving crime behind. It too seems to have little perception of the damage this inflicts on community trust and confidence, not to mention the damage to its own cause. The threat of violence, intimidation, disruption, and unrest can never be far from

the surface so long as any paramilitary organisation continues to exist. It cannot be stated often enough or strongly enough that there is no justification for the continued existence of any paramilitary organisation.

7. All is not black, of course. The Loyalist Commission has had a positive influence in the debate over flags, emblems and wall murals, in mediation and negotiation during turf wars, in de-fusing tensions, and in encouraging paramilitaries away from the drug culture. The Republican movement, for its part, seems keen to have better lines of communication with the churches and to better understand the Protestant community. While the jury is still out on whether this is simply a cosmetic exercise, at least it is an opportunity to listen and to talk.

8. At the end of the day, the issues come down to the need for hearts, minds and lives to be changed. The Gospel is not about any particular political philosophy. It is about the Kingdom of God, which has come in Jesus Christ, coming with grace and forgiveness into our lives and the lives of those who share this land with us, changing both us and them, and enabling new beginnings.

### **Inquiries**

9. Much time has been spent pondering the vexed issue of inquiries and how best to facilitate victims in finding healing and closure. This is a difficult and complex subject. The Committee remains convinced that, until now, there has been an imbalance in this debate, with attention focused narrowly on a few high-profile cases where there have been allegations of state collusion. Most victims have no access to such a profile. Indeed, most victims have quietly tried to put the past behind them and to get on with their lives. But their stories ought not to be dismissed or forgotten. They deserve to be heard, recorded and preserved. Attention is drawn to Appendix A (pars 13-14), Appendix C (pars 7-10), Appendix D (pars 4-17), Appendix E and Appendix G (pars 8-9), where the issues are discussed in some detail.

### **Policing**

10. Policing issues, including District Policing Partnerships, are referred to in Appendix A (par 10), Appendix B, and Appendix D (par 1-2).

### **Prison Matters**

11. Arising out of prison unrest in HMP Maghaberry, meetings were held with the Loyalist Commission and officials of the Northern Ireland Prison Service. The issues are referred to in Appendix C (pars 5-6). Rumour and false allegations can be exceedingly dangerous for prison officers and their families. At times they can be under enormous stress, so it is appropriate that all possible steps are taken to alleviate their concerns and to protect them. Prisoners and their families can also at times live with enormous stress. Unlike the Prison Service in England and Wales, there is currently no Prison Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. The creation of such a post would help to protect prison officers from false allegations, build confidence among prisoners, and contribute towards a more healthy relationship between both.

### **Human Rights, Equality Issues and Fair Employment Regulations**

12. The Conveners are indebted to the Clerk and to Mrs Heather McKinlay for their work on Human Rights and Equality Issues, and to Mrs Eileen McClenaghan for her work in the area of Fair Employment. There is reference to these matters in Appendix A (par 19) and Appendix C (pars 19-20), but much of the work is unseen. They have attended conferences, made submissions, and maintained a lively and meticulous interest on behalf of the Church.

### **Europe**

13. Thanks are also recorded to the Very Rev Dr Sam Hutchinson who has continued to monitor events in Europe and to keep the Committee up-to-date with developments. It has been an exceptionally busy and significant year in this regard, as a perusal of Appendix F will confirm. As it now seems possible that negotiations on a new Constitution for Europe may be finalised before the General Assembly meets, the following resolution was agreed at the General Board meeting on 1 April 2004: "That the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic be urged to work for the retention of Article 51 in the proposed Constitution for Europe".

### **National and International**

The fall-out over the Iraq War and its aftermath is referred to in Appendix A (par 12) and Appendix C (pars 11-12), with reference in Appendix D (pars 21-22) to race relations and the policy on asylum seekers.

### **Marriage Law Reform**

New marriage legislation in Northern Ireland came into force on 1 January 2004. A three month change-over period when either old or new regulations could be followed came to an end on 31 March. New marriage legislation in the Republic of Ireland has also come into force, although consultation is still taking place on certain matters, with the possibility of further changes to the regulations. A full report may be found in the report of the General Board.

### **Bank Charges**

13. Following unhappiness expressed by a number of congregations with the level of bank charges, the Co-Convenor wrote to both the Ulster and the Northern Banks, and met with one of the Directors of the Ulster Bank.

### **Co-Convenership**

*The Very Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop writes:*

14. Due to the resignation last year of the Very Rev Dr John Dunlop as Co-Convenor of the Church and Government Committee, Mr George McCullagh, who was also due to resign, agreed to serve an additional year as southern Convener in order to provide continuity. The Church is greatly indebted to him, not only for this extra year, but for the wealth of experience and

enthusiasm he brought to his convenership throughout his tenure. His breadth of contacts in the Republic proved invaluable time and again - is there anyone George doesn't know?! - and his monthly reports to the Committee on all things southern formed an analysis of southern politics, economics, societal trends and church matters which was both insightful and timely. He took a particular interest in Europe, participating in the Forum, and constantly lobbying civil servants, Government ministers, and anyone who would listen. He travelled many, many miles on behalf of the Church, and all with great good humour.

ALASTAIR DUNLOP, GEORGE McCULLAGH, Conveners

## APPENDIX A

### REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD: 16th OCTOBER 2003

1. The Committee has met on three occasions since the General Assembly.

2. Since the Committee has six new members as well as a new co-convenor, the first meeting, on 25 June, was largely routine to familiarise new members with the remit.

3. A meeting was held in Dublin on 20 August. In the morning the Committee met with Mr Dermot McCarthy and two officials. Mr McCarthy is the Secretary to the Department of the Taoiseach. A wide range of issues were raised during 1½ hours of open discussion, including

- Judge Cory's reports
- truth recovery processes
- the settlement by the Government for instances of child abuse suffered in Roman Catholic institutions
- the request for contributions towards costs of civil trials
- the request of the Omagh victims for access to the transcript of the McKeivitt trial
- lobbying by ex-prisoners' groups to expunge criminal records
- the need for pressure to be put on Sinn Fein to support policing
- equality and human rights issues
- the EU peace programme

4. In the afternoon the Committee met in the Institute of European Affairs with Mr Alan Dukes. Mr Dukes spoke on the proposed new constitution for Europe, seminars on market liberalisation to be held around Ireland throughout the autumn, and the ending of current high-level grant aid to Ireland in 2006.

5. At its meeting on 8 October the Committee reviewed the political situation and current issues. Despite some localised outbreaks of violence, the summer period was largely free from the communal unrest of recent years. This was due in no small measure to much hard work by elected representatives, community workers and church activists in both communities.

6. The Committee sent a written response to the government consultation document 'A Shared Future: community relations in Northern Ireland'.

### **The Political Situation**

7. The prolonged political stalemate has led to widespread apathy and a worrying disengagement from political life. For those involved in party politics it has led to frustrations, reinforcing a call by some for elections to the NI Assembly. Such elections would provide a fresh mandate for elected representatives and inject new life into the political process. Others argue that the basis for Assembly elections does not yet exist. What is it that representatives would be elected to do in the Assembly, given that the British and Irish Governments are unlikely to agree to a re-negotiation of the Belfast Agreement?

8. After recent negotiations between Mr Trimble and Mr Adams, the latter talked about 'the bar having been set too high'. The question for Mr Adams is, 'Should the bar not be set at the same level for all in a democracy?' The main obstacle in the way of full implementation of the Agreement is the continued existence of a private army. It cannot be stated often enough or strongly enough that private armies have no place in a democracy. The case for November or December Assembly elections would be greatly strengthened if Sinn Fein and the IRA could bring themselves to commit fully to democracy.

9. If elections are to go ahead in November/December it is vitally important that voters shake off their apathy and use their privilege of the right to vote.

### **District Policing Partnerships**

10. Threats against members of the Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships culminated in attacks against the homes and property of some members. In response, the Committee issued a statement, subsequently adopted by the General Board (see Appendix B).

### **Attacks on the Elderly**

11. Robberies of elderly people, often with associated violence, have caused distress and alarm, particularly to those living alone. Such attacks are deplorable and a serious abuse of their human rights. The elderly deserve the respect and protection of society as a whole, including the allocation of sufficient policing resources to enable them to be reassured.

### **The Hutton Inquiry**

12. The controversy over the Iraq War has continued, the more so since no weapons of mass destruction have yet been found, six months after the war officially ended. The Hutton Inquiry into the untimely death of weapons expert Dr David Kelly has concluded its public sittings, with its publication expected in late November or early December. Its findings will be closely studied, and are expected to have particular implications for the British Government and for the BBC.

### **The Cory Reports**

13. Following the Weston Park consultations of 2002, Judge Cory has submitted his recommendations to both Governments about possible inquiries

into allegations of collusion in the murders of Pat Finucane, Robert Hamill, Rosemary Nelson, Billy Wright, Lord Justice and Lady Gibson, and Chief Superintendent Harry Breen and Superintendent Bob Buchanan. Both Governments have said that they will implement the recommendations, which are not expected to be made public until December. If public inquiries are recommended, it is very much an open question whether they will help or hinder our community to move on from the past and to engage in building a new future. Public inquiries may well prove to be a double-edged sword of destructive power, when what is needed are space and time for mutual respect and tolerance to flourish. The 2003 General Assembly passed the following resolution: "That the General Assembly, in the service of shaping a new future, strongly resist the calls for additional enquiries, call upon paramilitary groups to desist from their illegal activities and encourage local congregations to understand and resist sectarianism and to be active in building bridges of co-operation, generosity and truthful understanding so that we lay good foundations for our shared future and that of succeeding generations."

### **Victims**

14. The needs of Victims and Survivors who have suffered during thirty years or more of conflict and violence require our listening, understanding and attention. Discussion continues at various levels about the appropriateness and effectiveness of truth recovery processes. A distressing example of the inability of some to understand the pain of victims is well illustrated by the high profile celebratory dinner held in a Letterkenny hotel to mark the 20th anniversary of the Maze escape. It was not a cause of celebration for Mrs Audrey Ferris, the widow of Prison Warder James Ferris who died as a result of injuries received during the escape.

### **Republic of Ireland**

15. The Irish Government has been busy dealing with questions and criticisms of the deal with the (Roman Catholic) Conference of Religious in Ireland (CORI) signed in June 2002. It now appears that the liability under this agreement will be much greater than originally announced, by perhaps as much as 0.5 billion Euro. Lack of information and the capping of the Roman Catholic Church liability at 128 million Euro has left room for much debate.

16. There is also criticism of the Government for the failure of significant health spending to improve hospital waiting lists, and questions about the proposed new constitution for the enlarged Europe - 25 countries from 1 May 2004. Meantime the Government also has to plan for the Presidency of Europe from January-June 2004.

17. Northern Ireland issues are always on the agenda.

### **Other Matters**

18. East Belfast Presbytery expressed concern regarding comments of the Chief Costable that the Belfast Marathon might be run on a Sunday in order to reduce policing costs. Following correspondence Belfast City Council

confirmed that the Marathon will continue to be held on the May Day Bank Holiday.

19. Following a reported English High Court case, Newry Presbytery raised the issue of the right of workers to opt out of Sunday work. Mrs Eileen McClenaghan reports: "In December 2003 Great Britain, for the first time, will be introducing legislation, by way of Regulations, under the European Framework Directive, to prohibit religious discrimination in employment. Religious/ Belief Regulations will also be introduced in Northern Ireland at the same time although the situation in Northern Ireland has been different, as the Fair Employment legislation has been in force here since 1976. Whether or not, under these Regulations, Christians could successfully claim exemption from compulsory Sunday working as discriminatory to their religious beliefs remains to be seen. A primary consideration will be how essential Sunday working is to the employer's business.

It is worth noting that throughout the United Kingdom legislation provides shop-workers with the right to opt out of Sunday working by giving their employer a signed and dated written notice saying that they object to Sunday working."

20. Maze Kirk Session asked about legislation being prepared with regard to race meetings. The Betting and Gaming (NI) Order 2003 will be dealt with by Order in Council following the current consultation period which ends on 1 December 2003. The Board of Social Witness is aware of the proposed legislation and will be making a submission.

21. Marriage Law reform continues to be monitored by the Clerk and by Dr Hutchinson. New regulations will apply in Northern Ireland from 1 January 2004 while in the Republic of Ireland the time-scale is less clear.

22. Responding to invitations to consultations continues to be part of the work-load of the Committee. Reports received include the following:

- NI Policing Board Annual Report, 2002-2003
- BBC Annual Reports and Accounts, 2002-2003
- BBC Review of Online Services
- NI Human Rights Commission Annual Report, 2003
- Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, 14th Report
- NI Human Rights Commission, Summary of Submissions on a Bill of Rights
- NI Human Rights Commission, Strategic Plan 2003-2006
- NI Human Rights Commission, Human Rights and Victims of Violence
- Equality Commission for NI, Corporate Plan 2003-2006
- Committee on the Administration of Justice, A Bill of Rights for NI - the views of the political parties
- Parades Commission for NI Annual Report 2002-2003



**APPENDIX B****STATEMENT ISSUED FOLLOWING THE MEETING OF THE  
GENERAL BOARD ON 16 OCTOBER 2003**

1. The continuing threats and acts of intimidation against members of District Policing Partnerships must stop immediately. It is unacceptable that intimidation should be practised against anyone, but particularly so against those whose role "is to consult with the community, establish local policing priorities in conjunction with the PSNI District Commander and monitor police performance against a local policing plan".

2. In its response to the Patten Commission the Church and Government Committee said: "The vision we have of Northern Ireland is of a community at peace with itself, with Roman Catholics and Protestants of both Unionist and Nationalist traditions working together in a political structure and culture which embraces and honours the obvious diversity of its citizens. 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."

3. For its part the PSNI is working hard to earn such support. It is time for both sides of our community to work together, responsibly and constructively, to deliver an ever-improving police service. It is high time for the republican movement to participate in the Policing Board and the District Policing Partnerships.

**APPENDIX C****REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD: 26 FEBRUARY 2004**

1. Since the October Board the Committee met twice, in November and January.

**The Political Situation**

2. The NI Assembly elections in November changed the balance of power between the political parties, and, some would say, altered the political landscape in Northern Ireland for the foreseeable future. The winners were the DUP and Sinn Fein. The losers were the UUP and the SDLP. The other parties were squeezed, with Alliance receiving only 4% of the vote, the smaller unionist parties struggling to survive, the Women's Coalition left without any representation, and only one independent candidate elected.

3. The expectations of republicanism and unionism seem further apart than ever, so the challenge facing the parties and the two Governments is whether the current Review of the Belfast Agreement, which began on 4 February, can produce an outcome which will bring those expectations closer together and receive cross-community support. There are those who take the view that initial prospects are not good, and that Northern Ireland may well be headed for a prolonged period of Direct Rule, resulting in Northern Ireland affairs slipping further down the Westminster agenda, and negative consequences for access to Ministers, inward investment, community

development and community stability. There are others, however, who take the view that since both the DUP and Sinn Fein are engaged in the Review process, albeit from very differing perspectives, there may yet be some sort of accommodation that could allow progress towards the restoration of devolution. A third view is that the Government will go back to the electorate again, either on the back of the European elections in June, or later in the summer, with or without any outcome from the Review. It remains to be seen which view is correct. Meanwhile, the continued absence of devolved government and local accountability are not in the interests of the community as a whole.

4. Members of the Committee have engaged in meetings with representatives of the Alliance Party, Sinn Fein and the DUP. These included an open discussion of 'Agenda for Democracy' (the Alliance Party proposals for the Review of the Agreement), frank conversations with Sinn Fein about the current situation, including the continuing issue of decommissioning, and a reception hosted by the DUP to introduce their proposals for the Review.

### **Prison Unrest**

5. Throughout the autumn and winter there has been unease about what is happening in HMP Maghaberry. Following both loyalist and republican concerns about prisoner safety, the Steele Report at the end of August recommended prisoner separation for those who applied for it. The Prison Service advised against this, fearing a return to the situation at the Maze Prison some years ago when both loyalist and republican prisoners were accorded political status. The Loyalist Commission stressed that, so far as loyalist prisoners were concerned, the sole concern was prisoner safety. The situation was complicated by a long-running dispute between the Prisoner Officers' Association and the Prison Service which focused on home security concerns.

6. Matters came to a head with a violent and destructive riot by loyalist prisoners at the beginning of January. The Committee invited Rev Mervyn Gibson, Chairman of the Loyalist Commission, to meet with it, and following this the Moderator and Co-Convener met in turn with the Loyalist Commission, officials of the Prison Service, and then visited the prison itself.

### **Inquiries**

7. The six reports of Judge Cory have now been completed, with four delivered to the British Government and two to the Irish Government. The Irish Government published the recommendations, which were that there should be an inquiry into the murders of Chief Superintendent Harry Breen and Superintendent Bob Buchanan, but not into the murders of Lord Justice and Lady Gibson. The British Government has delayed publication of the recommendations, citing security concerns. Not surprisingly, this has annoyed the families concerned, especially since the strong belief is that Cory has recommended inquiries into all four murders. The sooner the recommendations are made public the better. It serves no-one's interests to keep people in the dark.

8. The Committee has given some time to the consideration of the vexed issue of public inquiries into some of the murders over the past 30+ years. On the one hand there is growing pressure for more inquiries in the interests of truth,

justice and closure. On the other hand, there is intense exasperation and frustration at what is perceived to be a selective campaign and a waste of public money. The long-running Bloody Sunday Inquiry recently concluded its public sittings, with a cost to date of £70 million, expected to rise to £155 million by the time the Report is published sometime in 2005, and the likelihood of no-one being satisfied with the outcome. In addition, the Chief Constable is on record as saying that there are simply not the resources to open up investigations into all the unsolved murders during the Troubles.

9. A 2-day inter-church Consultation on this subject was held in December. There were inputs from various quarters including victims and trauma support groups, ex-combatants, both Governments, the police, academics and the churches. While no common answer emerged, it needs to be said that there is an increasingly urgent need to find a common understanding of how to deal with the past. It affects not just the immediate families, but the whole community.

10. Further comment will be made in the supplementary report.

### **The Hutton Report**

11. The Hutton Report into the death of weapons expert Dr David Kelly, was published on 28 January. To the surprise of almost all the pundits its findings largely exonerated the British Government and castigated the BBC, leading to the resignations of the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Gavin Davis, the Director-General, Greg Dyke, and the journalist Andrew Gilligan. There has been widespread criticism of the Report, mainly from journalists, concentrating on a perceived lack of balance, the premise being that blame should be shared. Lord Hutton, however, saw it differently. The remit of his inquiry was into the death of Dr Kelly, not into the causes of the Iraq War. The shock waves for standards of public broadcasting and journalism generally may be with us for some time, but eventually should lead to greater accuracy in reporting, less speculation, and closer editorial control within the BBC.

12. The Government, however, should not under-estimate the public level of distrust surrounding the Iraq War. An inquiry with a wider remit may well have resulted in a very different finding. The continuing level of violence in Iraq, combined with no discovery to date of weapons of mass destruction, contribute to an unease about whether the war was justified, and what the future holds for Iraq, for the Middle East and for Muslim relationships with the western world.

### **Europe**

13. Very Rev Dr Sam Hutchinson submitted a report (see Appendix F).

### **Other Matters**

14. A meeting took place with representatives of the Imperial Black Grand Chapter.

15. A submission from the Templepatrick Presbytery about the draft Betting and Gaming Order (NI) 2003 was forwarded to the Board of Social Witness for transmission along with the Board's own submission.

16. Correspondence was received from the Templepatrick Presbytery about the RUC GC Day and special collections. Since it is open to any Congregational Committee to sanction a special collection for a particular purpose if it so wishes, it was not thought that there should be another church-wide appeal, which would in any case require the approval of the General Assembly.

17. Representations were made on behalf of East Belfast Presbytery to the Ulster Branch (IRFU), Sky Sports and ERC about the playing of the Ulster/Leicester European Cup pool match on Sunday 11 January at 1.00pm. An assurance was given by Sky Sports that they would 'take every possible step to avoid this type of thing happening again', and by ERC that when scheduling future matches the representations made 'will be taken into account and careful consideration will be given when setting the times and dates.' The Ulster Branch was appreciative of support given on this issue, as it has a policy of no Sunday rugby at Ravenhill.

18. Very Rev Dr S Hutchinson, on behalf of the Committee, made a submission on the nullity of marriage to the Law Reform Advisory Committee. A response from the Derry and Strabane Presbytery to the discussion document 'Registration in the 21st century' was forwarded to the Registrar's office.

19. The attention of Northern Ireland MPs was drawn to the Gender Recognition Bill, currently before the House of Lords. The purpose of the Bill is to give legal recognition to transsexual persons in their acquired genders. The Government proposed this legislation in response to adverse findings of the European Court of Human Rights and the House of Lords.

20. Mrs Eileen McClenaghan reported that NI legislation in connection with Sexual Orientation Regulations in employment has now been brought into line with the equivalent GB regulation, and includes an exception for purposes of organised religion. The exception is as follows:

- (a) where employment is for the purposes of organised religion;
- (b) where the employer applies a requirement related to sexual orientation (i) to comply with the doctrines of the religion or (ii) because of the nature of the employment and the context in which it is carried out, so as to avoid conflicting with strongly held religious convictions of a significant number of the religion's followers.

21. Among reports received were the NIACRO corporate plan and the Criminal Justice Inspectorate prospectus.

## APPENDIX D

### SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD: 26 FEBRUARY 2004

1. The Committee met on 18 February, when Professor Desmond Rea, Chairman of the Policing Board, attended for part of the meeting. He spoke first about the work of the Board and policing, and then, in a personal capacity, about his call earlier that day for an amnesty and for some form of 'truth and reconciliation' process to allow victims to find closure. He referred to the

growing pressure for inquiries, perceived by many as politically-motivated, to the calls for fresh police investigations into the 1,882 unsolved murders, and he expressed serious concern about the implications for the whole community.

2. Discussion about the work of the Board and policing focused on the 50/50 recruitment policy, de-centralisation and the use of human resources. Professor Rea defended 50/50 recruitment as a necessary evil in the light of the importance of (i) PSNI serving the whole community (ii) PSNI attracting young people from the whole community and (iii) these young people being able to go back and live in the area from which they come. His view is that while the percentage of Roman Catholics within PSNI since its inception has risen from 9% to just over 13%, it will be required to rise much more before 50/50 recruitment can be abandoned.

3. The second part of the presentation led into what has been an ongoing discussion about inquiries and how to deal with the past.

### **Inquiries, Truth, Justice and Dealing with the Past**

4. Pressure for public inquiries into various tragic events of the past 30+ years continues to grow. The latest is the call for an inquiry into the deaths of 6 men, 3 of whom are acknowledged to have been members of the IRA, in the New Lodge Road area of Belfast in February 1973. Faced with such calls, PCI has consistently urged caution, balance and a different path. It is not that these and the other tragic deaths do not matter. They matter very much. As a Church that has tried, albeit imperfectly, to minister pastorally to hundreds of hurting families, we fully recognise the pain and loss suffered by the relatives of those who ought never to have been killed.

5. However, the question remains whether inquiries of one form or another will bring healing to society, or the closure victims and survivors seek. It is crucial for the community as a whole to come to a point where, while not forgetting the past, we can move on, make a fresh beginning and learn to live together.

6. 'Remembering' is an important theme in the Bible. While there are references to God remembering wicked deeds and evil intentions, there are numerous other references to God remembering his covenant of grace with his people. We are encouraged to remember what God has done as Creator, Law-Giver and Redeemer, to remember the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, to remember the poor, and to remember God himself. The Gospel imperative is seen in the burden of many prayers, that God would remember mercy.

7. 'Forgetting' is also an important theme in the Bible. Paul describes the Christian life as 'forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.' Forgetting is closely linked with forgiveness. It means remembering sins no more, throwing them into the depths of the sea, removing them as far as the east is from the west, blotting them out, covering them. The metaphors pile up as the biblical authors attempt to convey the enormity of what God has done in Jesus Christ through his death on the cross. He offers free and full forgiveness on the basis of what Jesus has done, and no matter what we have done.

8. Is this justice? 'He did this to demonstrate his justice ... so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.' (Romans 3:25-26)

9. This is not to say that God takes sin lightly. Justice demanded that atonement be made. The only way this could be achieved was for Jesus to sacrifice himself in our place because he was the only one who could offer a sufficient atonement for sin. Instead of the condemnation we deserve, we are offered pardon, acceptance, peace and fellowship. It is amazing, startling, radical. It is all about grace.

10. Is there no need for repentance? Grace is not dependent on anything. God's offer pre-dates any response. A persistent negative response or non-response will lead to condemnation, judgement and eternal loss. There must always be a call to repentance. But God's offer remains on the table.

11. Such gospel values lived out in the church are the hope for any society, and particularly for our own.

12. We need to learn how to hold both remembering and forgetting in constructive tension. On the one hand, we need to learn how to remember the victims and survivors, but in a way that doesn't hurt or damage each other any further. The search for 'truth' and 'justice' could all too easily become a weapon with which to inflict further damage on each other for the next 30+ years. The danger in continued calls for further public inquiries is that it resembles picking a scab off a wound with the result that the wound never gets a chance to heal.

13. On the other hand, we need to learn how to forget the hurts and the accumulated grievances of the past 30+ years, but in a way that doesn't repress a proper desire on the part of the victims and survivors to know what happened and why. In an age when 'truth' is subjective, selective, and devalued, and one person's truth becomes another person's lie, this becomes extremely difficult.

14. PCI has been consistently cautious about the idea of a South African style Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The two situations are not the same. The South African model benefited from being able to gain testimony from those responsible for crimes in return for amnesty. With the early release of prisoners, there is no incentive to give account of past deeds.

15. Perhaps what we ought to be looking for in this area is not so much 'truth' as 'meaning'. The goals of justice might, at least in part, be better approached through healing processes rather than judicial processes. A positive way forward may be simply to create the opportunity to 'tell the story', perhaps through the establishment of a dedicated forum where personal experiences can be placed on official public record. This would serve the purpose of remembering the victims, and might also, in time, enable most victims to find a measure of healing and closure.

16. At the end of the day it is more important that society learns to live at peace with itself than that one section, group or individual should be able to say to another, 'I told you so - it was your fault,' and so perpetuate the blame game. It is time to draw a line and make a fresh start.

17. The Gospel is all about new beginnings. It is about God remembering mercy, not wrath.

### **Republic of Ireland**

18. The Irish Presidency of the EU continues until June 30. The Presidency work is intense for the members of the government and brings the delegations of many other countries to Dublin and other

meeting points. The lack of agreement on a new constitution for Europe is causing the Taoiseach, as President, to engage in discussions over and above what might be the normal series of meetings by the Presidency.

19. On June 11 elections for the European Parliament will be held. Also, local government elections will be held throughout the Republic on the same day. For the first time, electronic voting is the intended method to be used for both elections. This should have the effect of producing a result for each area within an hour of the polls closing. Doubts have arisen about the accuracy of the system and perhaps the equipment. This may result in a more expensive backup procedure or the cancellation of the planned electronic voting for these elections.
20. The inquiries into the Monaghan and Omagh bombings have given rise to continued controversy and concern from the families of the victims.

### **Race Relations**

21. The Committee is concerned about the spate of recent racial attacks. The statement issued by the Race Relations Committee is to be welcomed.

22. It was agreed to forward to the NIO a copy of the report 'Policy on Asylum Seekers and Refugees', and in particular to draw the attention of the relevant Minister, Beverley Hughes, to paragraph 9, 'Some Practical Implications':

'f) Detention - "The churches remain absolutely opposed in principle to the detention of people who are not even suspected of committing any crime. (By the Geneva Convention) we maintain that those seeking asylum should not be detained, or held in prisons, unless they have been charged with a serious criminal offence - in which case their detention should be governed by criminal law procedures - or if there is evidence to support a suspicion that they are a threat to public safety" (CCRJ).

As a church we strongly endorse this view, recognising that it applies in Northern Ireland to the practice of detaining asylum-seekers in Maghaberry Prison - a situation generally regarded as unsatisfactory. We support bodies such as the Law Centre (NI) in urging that provision similar to Bail Hostels be made, enabling contact to be maintained with newly-arrived asylum-seekers, and services to be provided such as legal advice, welfare, translation services and assistance with form-filling.'

## **APPENDIX E**

### **RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL BOARD: 26 FEBRUARY 2004**

1. That the General Board draw attention to the policy of the General Assembly in strongly resisting the calls for additional inquiries (2003 Minutes, p47).

2. That the General Board believe that a South African style Truth and Reconciliation Commission would be an inappropriate means of dealing with the past in Northern Ireland, and support the Church and Government

Committee in exploring further the idea of creating official opportunities for victims to tell their stories.

## APPENDIX F

### EUROPE

#### Consultation on Draft Constitution

1. After 16 months work the European Convention published its draft Constitution for Europe on 18 July 2003. (For the background see Reports to Assembly 2003, pp 36 – 37, par 18 iv –ix; and pp 53 – 55, pars 1 – 6).

2. The Brussels-based Church and Society Commission (CSC), which had been monitoring and contributing to the drafting process, convened a Consultation in Brussels 23–25 October, 2003 to consider this document. Over 60 church leaders, expert advisers, etc attended, our Church and Government Committee being represented by the Very Rev Dr Samuel Hutchinson. Rev Matthew Ross, whose appointment to the CSC we support financially, and who took up duty in the CSC office on 20 October, was also in attendance.

3. This draft Constitution is of crucial importance; if enacted, it will govern 450 million people in the enlarged EU, and will have an authority superior to national courts and parliaments, who will all be subject to its provisions. It is also a very long and complex document (about 17 times the length of the US Constitution) so the Consultation had to be selective in its discussions. The primary attention of the participants was given to the analysis of the draft Constitution from the perspective of the churches and to a discussion concerning what role the churches can play in the developing process of its adaptation, ratification and implementation.

4. Mrs Anna Diamantopoulou, the EU Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, stressed the need to protect the social dimension of the EU, as opposed to economic competition, and acknowledged the role that the churches have to play in meeting challenges that now face Europe, such as poverty and social discrimination. “It is impossible to have an effective plan to face these challenges without the partnership of the political authorities with churches and civil society.”

5. Rev Rüdiger Noll, the CSC Director, stated, “We have advocated a Europe based on values such as justice, peace, solidarity and participation. Together with partner organisations, we have been engaged in ensuring that the specific identity and contribution of churches and religious communities will be recognised in the new Europe.”

6. As the Consultation proceeded, other distinguished speakers, including Wilhelm Schönfelder and Miroslav Adamis, the Ambassadors of Germany and Slovakia to the EU, took part. Some debate centred on **the Preamble to the Constitution**; despite lobbying by some countries such as Spain, Italy and the Irish Republic, the Preamble still lacks any reference to God, or to Christianity as a source of European values. However, an earlier draft praising the influence of ancient Greece and Rome, and the Enlightenment had been amended to remove those references, which left the final draft less biased towards secularism. The Preamble is not above criticism on other grounds, eg



the claim that “Europe is a continent that has brought forth civilisation” sounds a little arrogant: the Middle East could also make some claims in that regard! Legal advice was that the provisions of the Preamble would not be “operative”, ie they would have no legal effect or interpretative value, and would not affect the working of the Constitution. So even if an acknowledgement of Christianity is not inserted into the Preamble, all is not lost.

7. Of greater importance will be **Article I-51**, which deals with the status of churches and non-confessional organisations. Article I-51 (3) is of particular interest, “Recognising their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organisations.” The Consultation welcomed the fact that the churches, etc were not simply subsumed within the general rubric of “civil society” (Article I-46) but have been accorded separate and distinct recognition. That is a valuable provision, and participants in the Consultation gratefully acknowledged the expertise and perseverance of the various church representatives in Brussels who had secured its inclusion in the final draft. The Consultation appealed to the on-going Inter-Governmental Conference and their respective governments to retain Article I-51 (3) unchanged.

8. Two questions then arose about this Article.

(i) Which of Europe’s countless churches/denominations/religious organisations will be involved in this “open, transparent and regular dialogue?” In practice the answer will probably be, “Those who make submissions of substance and quality to the EU.”

(ii) What will be the mechanism for this dialogue? It was evident that the Convention that prepared the draft Constitution had not thought that matter out, so the Consultation took time to consider it. “The dialogue must ensure that the churches can contribute their perspectives and opinions on specific issues as decisions are prepared in the Institutions. Churches should resist being instrumentalised. There need to be several points of entry and contact between the European Institutions and the churches.” (Sabine von Zanthier, Director of the EKD (German Protestant Church) representation in Brussels.)

9. Despite the earlier assurance given in the UK Parliament by the then Minister for Europe, Mr. Keith Vaz, the Charter of Fundamental Rights was incorporated into the draft Constitution as Articles I-7 to 17 which, if enacted, will be legally binding. Of course, such charters of rights are well-intentioned, being designed to protect the weak and powerless against the powerful and ruthless, but this particular Charter is skewed in favour of personal and individual rights, as opposed to collective and corporate rights, and could well have unforeseeable consequences for bodies like the churches, especially if militant campaigners exploit its provisions for their own ends.

10. The Consultation was also of the view that the EU should aim to enact more general framework laws rather than so many detailed directives and regulations, which currently run to some 97,000 pages!

11. Some effort is being made in Brussels “to bring the EU closer to its citizens.” Increasing the powers of the Parliament would lessen the ‘democratic deficit’ but the effect of increasing the powers of the Commission and the European Court of Justice is less clear. The Consultation urged churches to be

proactive in constantly explaining to their members just what is happening in the EU.

12. As indicated earlier, the CSC Consultation took place in October but, as feared, negotiations about the Constitution at the **Inter-Governmental Conference** in December broke down, primarily over the vexed question of what voting rights certain member states should have, though there are also other “red line” issues on which various governments say they will not compromise, eg foreign policy, defence, taxation, social security, criminal procedures, etc. “Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.” At time of writing negotiations remain deadlocked and the future of the present draft Constitution is therefore uncertain. Of course, there will never be real unanimity on all its provisions; the most that can be hoped for is a series of political compromises that most people can live with. Till then the provisions of *Nice* and earlier Treaties, however unwieldy, remain in force.

13. **The Irish Republic** holds the Presidency of the EU from January to June 2004, but it would be optimistic to expect all the present difficulties to be resolved in that relatively short period of time. Quite apart from sharp disagreements over formal voting rights and the number of voting or non-voting Commissioners, and a certain difference of opinion on the other issues mentioned above, no system should permit a situation where the small countries are held to account for their actions while large countries can apparently disregard EU decisions when it suits them, as happened with *The Stability and Growth Pact*.

14. If and when a Constitution, as presently drafted or as may be amended, is finally agreed, there will be the further issue of a **Referendum** in some member states and candidate countries. The Irish Republic, Denmark, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and the Czech Republic seem to be committed to a referendum; many, like France, Italy, Austria and Slovenia were, at the date of the Consultation, uncertain, while the United Kingdom and Germany have governments opposed to the idea. In some jurisdictions the matter is mired in party politics, from which the churches should obviously keep a critical distance, but there are issues of principle involved on which a prophetic voice needs to be heard.

15. The arguments for and against a referendum in the United Kingdom are finely balanced. A Constitution of such length and complexity is hardly suitable for a simple yes/no vote by millions of citizens, some of whom may have only a superficial understanding of the issues involved. Such a referendum could prove to be an uncontrollable affair with an unpredictable outcome, and many would maintain that Parliament is elected to take major decisions for the nation. On the other hand it could be argued that a constitution is something fundamental given to a government by the people, rather than the reverse, and should not simply be imposed on the nation by whatever political party happens to be in power at the time, especially if a majority of the citizens seem to be opposed to such a step.

16. The issue of whether a UK referendum is needed turns on the question of how much constitutional change is actually involved. Obviously a mere “tidying up” exercise, as this project was originally described, would not merit a referendum; on the other hand the term “Constitution”, the election of an

EU President, the appointment of an EU Foreign Minister and the adoption of a “legal personality” are all symbols of statehood more significant than the flag and the anthem. The professed intention of the majority of states is to create a unique legal entity that will be neither a federal “United States of Europe” nor a loose association of independent countries like the United Nations, but a halfway house between the two. What will emerge in the end remains to be seen.

17. If a member state has not ratified the Constitution within two years of its being approved (if such approval should ever be forthcoming), that state will have the option of withdrawing from the EU. Had the draft of 18 July 2003 been approved last December, the Constitution could have come into force by 2006 or 2007. It is now doubtful whether that timetable can still be followed.

### **Financial Reform**

18. Despite some attempts at reform of the system, the EU continues to experience some serious financial irregularities, such as Eurostat’s alleged “secret double accounting system.” The European Parliament’s annual report on the EU’s £70 billion budget expressed “extreme alarm” over failures in the Commission’s accounting system, finding that the books did not add up and large sums of money could not be traced. Given the large amounts involved and the size of the bureaucracy, it can fairly be claimed that reform will be a process rather than an event; nevertheless improvements in financial accountability are essential. ‘Whistleblowers’ in the administration deserve to be taken seriously and to have their reputations and careers protected.

### **European Elections**

19. The elections for the European Parliament are due to take place on Thursday 10 June in Northern Ireland, and on Friday 11 June in the Republic. It is gratifying to see that the continental practice of Sunday elections is not being followed here.

20. With enlargement of the EU coming into effect on 1 May, present member states will suffer a slight reduction in their representation, down from 15 seats to 13 for the Irish Republic and from 87 seats to 78 for the United Kingdom. Should further enlargement take place in the future, with the accession of eg Turkey, Romania or Bulgaria, there may be another reduction of representation. In the meantime Northern Ireland has the privilege of retaining all 3 of its seats.

21. However, elections to the European Parliament have usually had a low turnout of voters; in 1999 it was 57.7% in Northern Ireland and 50.8% in the Republic, while the average for the whole of the UK was a mere 24%, the lowest in the EU. Whatever the reasons for this apathy, a better turnout is certainly desirable and a civic duty. Dermot Scott, Director of the UK office of the Parliament writes, “There is a gap between how much people care about issues and their knowledge about how the European Parliament affects them.” He has therefore launched a *Europe Counts 2004* Campaign “to bridge the ‘knowledge gap’ so that people can make up their own minds about how relevant and important ‘Europe’ and the European elections are to them.”

22. While the European Parliament has not had the same legislative powers as Westminster or the Dail, its status under the new Constitution will be enhanced. Furthermore, MEPs have very considerable influence in lobbying for particular causes, such as the encouragement of inward investment.

23. It may not be generally realised just how many human activities are now influenced, controlled or regulated from Brussels. The impact of employment directives has already been felt, while the suggested harmonisation of VAT throughout the EU could have implications for church repairs. Members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and indeed all citizens, are encouraged to prayerfully consider the issues arising, to turn out on the day and cast their vote. There are many matters on which the views of candidates might be sought, such as their stance on the place of Christianity and the Churches in the new Constitution. Some observers would not be surprised if Eurosceptic parties across Europe achieve a major breakthrough in this election, thereby slowing the drift of sovereignty from the nation states to Brussels.

### Implications of Enlargement

24. A vexed question arising after the accession of the East European countries will be the possibility of **former communists** taking influential positions in EU centres of power. *Fidesz*, a political party in Hungary, is asking whether the new Parliament should not veto the appointment of European commissioners who once had prominent roles in the communist regimes; those who suffered under such regimes are understandably sensitive about this issue. On the other hand it is argued that such a veto would be undemocratic. "The Copenhagen criteria state that the first thing a candidate country has to have to open negotiations [on joining the EU] is a functioning democracy. It would be a reverse action now if we, on our side, do not respect the rules." (Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler, Christian Democrat, Austria). It is also true that, on the other side, nothing has been said about former members of Franco's far-right party in Spain.

25. It therefore seems likely that some who once had prominent roles in communist regimes may now attain high office in the EU. Hans-Gert Pötering, leader of the centre-right group of MEPs, takes a moderate and balanced approach to this issue. "We have to look at individuals and see if there was any conversion on the road to Damascus on the part of ex-communist leaders." (An interesting choice of words in the context of the EU!) It would be helpful to know where candidate MEPs in Ireland, North or South, stand on this question.

26. European enlargement will bring both challenges and opportunities for **business and commerce**. The European Commission office in Belfast is spearheading a "Get Wise to the New Europe" campaign, which urges the local business community not to miss out on the opportunity presented by enlargement. There are certain threats, particularly in terms of low wage economies and the possible relocation of employment. Unless business here can create a sufficiently competitive environment there is a danger that jobs will migrate, which could have serious implications for the local economy, with knock-on effects for the whole community, including the churches.

27. On the other hand enlargement will create the largest single market for trade and investment in the world: with 500 million customers, an enlarged

EU will be bigger than the United States and Japan combined. Many people in the accession countries speak English, so all firms here should be encouraged to explore the opportunities and challenges that enlargement will bring.

28. However, enlargement will have a price. The EU Commission is asking for a 24% increase in the **EU budget** (ie an extra £20 billion) to pay for eastward expansion, apparently ignoring pleas by the main contributing states for a new culture of austerity in Brussels. "It would be wasteful and inefficient to increase spending on current Commission programmes which do not match the EU's economic reform priorities and in some cases - such as the CAP - work against them." (Gordon Brown).

### **Rules and Regulations**

29. Meantime, anxieties have been expressed about the ever-increasing rules and regulations that dictate what every business (including churches and charities) must do and how they should do it. Basic rules on eg health and safety are obviously important, but there are complaints that the level of petty regulation is now going beyond that. Every rule costs a business time and money, and many companies are moving jobs to the Far East and India because the cost of labour in over-regulated Europe soars, including the expense of ensuring that the workplace is always up to date with the ever-changing law. Not everyone accepts such arguments *in toto*, but a trend towards more and more bureaucracy is discernible. However, some radical proposals have recently been rejected, such as the suggestion that all products should in future be stamped *Made in the EU* rather than specifying the country of origin.

### **Common Agricultural Policy**

30. The reform of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) will create some uncertainty for our farmers, a community which has traditionally contributed much to the economy of Northern Ireland and the Republic, as well as being a foundation stone of many rural congregations. In the 2003 Luxembourg CAP Reform agreement Europe's Agriculture Ministers agreed to "decouple" CAP support payments from production in favour of "rural development", requiring compliance with certain requirements on the environment, public and animal health, etc. The model of decoupling adopted in the Republic is likely to drive up the price of agricultural land, though that will not apply in Northern Ireland, which is adopting a different model of decoupling. Our farming community deserves sympathy and support as it faces up to the uncertainties, challenges and opportunities that these changes will inevitably bring as from 1 January, 2005.

### **Structural Funds**

31. From 1989 Member States throughout the EU received significant allocations from the Structural Funds to carry out projects that would bring about economic and social regeneration in their regions. On a scale of 1 to 5b the least developed areas were accorded Objective 1 status, and from 1989 to 1999 Northern Ireland was included in that category, but is no longer eligible. However, for the period 2000 – 2006 the European Commission granted

“Objective 1 in Transition” status, which will still bring grants of 1633 million euro, mostly to the N.I. Community Support Framework “to achieve a transition to a more peaceful, stable, prosperous, fair and outward-looking society, sustained by a better physical environment.” From 2006 Northern Ireland will receive significantly less structural funding. The Peace II Programme (designed to address the legacy of “The Troubles” and to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society) comes to an end in 2004, but our communities, both North and South, have much for which to thank the European Union.

### **Multicultural Tolerance**

32. The cause of multicultural tolerance in the EU will not be helped by the decision of the French Government to introduce a law banning the wearing of religious symbols, Muslim, Christian or Jewish, in state-run schools. The reason given is that the French secular tradition demands that church and state should be kept separate. The intention may be to promote even-handedness, especially in a country that now has 5 million Muslims, but the effect may be different. The *European Voice* newspaper (5 February 2004) made three pertinent points: -

(i) The state will lose its essential humanity if it replaces divine dogma with secular Puritanism.

(ii) Banning people from wearing symbols of their faith raises some worrying questions about where the state ends and the individual begins ... France, and any other European country, has every right to keep the church, mosque and synagogue out of government, it cannot keep them out of a person – that would be a human rights violation.

(iii) Other European countries, including Belgium and Germany, are currently considering whether to follow suit.

This is an issue that clearly warrants careful monitoring, especially if there should be further developments.

### **Rev Matthew Ross**

33. Rev Matthew Ross has settled in well to his work in the CSC office and has already proved most helpful on a number of matters. He has had a useful introductory meeting with Mr Tony Canavan, head of the Northern Ireland Executive office in Brussels, and plans to have a similar meeting with the Irish Ambassador to the EU as soon as the intense pressures of the Irish Presidency of the EU are over. Mr Ross submits a detailed monthly report on his activities and current issues. Given the number and importance of matters arising, his assistance and support will be invaluable to our Church. He also plays an active part in St. Andrews Church of Scotland congregation and in the Presbytery of Europe.

34. Our Church’s aim in Brussels is not merely to be one more lobbyist among 3000 others, who energetically defend their own particular interests (though the importance of lobbying in the modern world should not be underestimated). In selective partnership with some other churches and organisations we aim to exert a wholesome Christian influence in every sphere of the European Union, whose citizens we are.

**APPENDIX G****REPORT TO THE GENERAL BOARD: 1 APRIL 2004**

The Committee met once since the last Board meeting, on 24 March.

**Irish Republic**

1. The day before the Committee meeting, 23 March, the Vice-President of Colombia visited the Republic of Ireland amidst speculation of a deal which might secure the release of 'the Colombian 3' in return for some concession from the IRA.

2. A report into the Dublin /Monaghan bombings was published yesterday. The report does not recommend a public inquiry in the south, but urges the British Government to set up an inquiry in the north.

3. In the context of asylum seekers and immigration, there has been some backtracking on the law on citizenship which up until now enabled anyone born in Ireland, and their parents, to claim Irish citizenship. The prospect is that this right will now be denied to such parents.

4. A ban on smoking in the workplace, including bars and restaurants, came into effect in the Republic of Ireland on Monday, 29 March, 2004.

**Europe**

5. Prospects for progress towards agreement on the new Constitution for Europe appear brighter than before and it is possible that work on the new Constitution may be completed by June. In view of this it would seem prudent to forward last month's General Board resolution to the British and Irish Governments rather than wait for the General Assembly.

**Northern Ireland**

6. A submission was made to the consultation on civil partnerships.

7. As part of a fresh round of talks with representatives of political parties, the Committee is seeking meetings with the DUP and with the Alliance Party.

8. The Cory Reports were delivered yesterday to the families concerned, and are due to be published today. The policy of our Church has been consistently clear in strongly resisting the call for additional inquiries (2003 GA Minutes, p 47, February 2004 General Board minutes, pp 3&9-11). Additional selective inquiries will result in the focus for the foreseeable future being on the police and their sins, failures and inadequacies in the past, rather than on the terrorists who held this community to ransom for over 30 years, and who are still doing it through their political representatives. The community will be in danger of forgetting, for example, those 270 police officers who were murdered (and many of those who carried out those murders are known within the republican movement). Those upon whom we should be focusing are those many victims who, with amazing self-effacement, enormous character and at great cost, have sought to put their lives together again, drawn a line and moved on, despite the nightmares some of them suffer and may continue to suffer for years to come.

9. In this connection, an announcement by the Government is expected today about a consultation process on how to deal with the 1800+ unsolved murders. We will, of course, make a submission to any consultation that is set up in this regard.

10. The Environmental Panel yesterday forwarded a resolution from the Route Presbytery in connection with the mining of lignite in north Antrim.

### RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the General Assembly, recognising the need for victims to find healing and closure, yet conscious of the debilitating effect on society of yet more inquiries, call for the establishment of a dedicated forum where victims can tell their stories and their personal experiences be placed on official public record.

3. That the General Assembly, believing that all people are made in the image of God and as such deserve respect, protection and care, deplore the level of violent crime against elderly people and members of minority communities, and call upon all citizens of both parts of Ireland to be good neighbours to all and to work towards a more tolerant and peaceful society.

4. That the General Assembly urge the Minister of Justice in the Republic of Ireland to grant the right to residency to parents of Irish citizens who in accordance with regulations pertaining at the time in good faith made application for the right to residency but who now, due to regulation changes after a High Court Ruling, are left with no decision on their application and without the right to free legal aid.

5. That the General Assembly congratulate the Government of the Irish Republic on the introduction of anti-smoking regulations, and urge that similar provisions be introduced in Northern Ireland.

6. That the General Assembly commend to the prayers of the Church all who work in the Prison Service in Northern Ireland, and their families, continue to call upon paramilitary groups to desist from all illegal activity, and support the creation of a post of Prison Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

7. That the General Assembly, noting that June 20th is Politics Sunday, encourage members of the Church, of whatever political persuasion, to be involved in politics, to cast their vote in elections, including the forthcoming European election, and to pray for politicians.

8. That the Rev Matthew Ross and his ministry in Brussels, and all the staff of the Church and Society Commission, be commended to the prayers of the Church.

9. That the General Assembly reaffirm its opposition to the mining of lignite in the Ballymoney area, and request the Government to bear this affirmation in mind when it considers any application for exploration or mining in the area.

10. That the resignation of Mr George McCullagh as Co-Convener of the Church and Government Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev DT Moore be appointed in his place.



# JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The Judicial Commission met once during the year to consider and amend overtures for submission to the General Assembly and to recommend a nomination for appointment to the Commission.

## RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Rev Mairisine Stanfield be appointed to the Judicial Commission.

# UNION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev TJ STOTHERS

Secretary: Rev SA MATTHEWS

## INTRODUCTION

1. The period covered by this Report is from March 2003 to February 2004.

2. Following Rev Dr DJ Watts taking up the position of Clerk, Rev JH Robinson as Deputy Clerk has become Secretary to the Allocation Committee. He has already shown a clear grasp of the various duties required of this position.

3. The number of deputations seeking Leave to Call at the monthly meetings of the Union Commission continues unabated and includes several seeking Leave to Call an Associate Minister. A rising number of long-term vacancies gives cause for concern. Some Presbyteries are struggling to cope with a large number of vacancies. Deputations from the Commission have travelled to meet with representatives of congregations and Presbyteries in various locations. The Union Commission is required to implement the will of the General Assembly as expressed in the Code and in various resolutions. This sometimes means difficult decisions have to be made. The Commission appreciates the prayers of the Church as it seeks to make these decisions with integrity, sensitivity and grace.

4. The great majority of offers of Stipend and Expenses at a time of vacancy are now very realistic, and some have, in fact, been trimmed back by the Commission. More congregations have worked through any issues needing decision on the Manse and this is beginning to lead to fewer instances where Leave to Call is held up because of uncertainty in this area.

5. Consultation has continued with the Presbytery of Monaghan concerning how best to provide ministry in the circumstances there and a deputation has met with representatives of several individual congregations to discover how best to match resources with needs, and to balance maintenance with outreach and development. A resolution is appended concerning the congregation of Corlea. It is hoped that in the near future arrangements can be made to allow new ministry to be developed in a particular area of the Presbytery.

6. The Commission has recommended to the Central Ministry Fund that there be a separate 'ministerial minimum' set for the Republic **including** a cost of living allowance.

7. The panel appointed to take an overview of the provision of ministry in Inner-City Belfast has produced a report which is included as an Appendix. The panel will continue its work on the basis of the response at the General Assembly. A resolution to test the mind of the house is appended.

8. In Special Arrangements in disability cases the level of payment will be set at the Appropriate Ministerial Minimum.

9. Discussion has taken place following the granting of the prayer of the Memorial from the Kirk Session of Macrory Memorial last year (Reports, pages 77f.). It is hoped to bring an appropriate resolution through the Daily Minutes.

10. In 1996 the concept of a 'seven-year review' was introduced to the Code, Par 236(2). Seven full financial years after the installation of a minister in a charge the Union Commission will review the settlement. The first of those reviews is to take place this year.

11. The Commission has examined its membership and structures. It is of the opinion that the Personnel and Planning Committee does not need to be a General Assembly Committee. In its place the Commission will appoint an Additional Appointments Committee and an Expenses and Fees Committee. These join the Allocation Committee, Manses Committee and Reviews Committee to report to the Commission as necessary on their work. The Commission is grateful for the careful consideration given to personnel issues by the Rev Colin McClure.

### LEAVE TO CALL MINISTERS

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses
Note: This is only a summary, not all of the conditions attached to the Leave to Call may be recorded. Expenses are initial expenses to be kept under review and do not include telephone expenses.		
McCracken Memorial	£31,000(2003)	£6,240
Drumbo	£26,000(2003)	£5,500
Second Limavady	£18,000(2003)	£3,828
Myroe	£11,000(2003)	£1,896
The Mall Armagh	£30,000(2003)	£6,000
First Magherafelt	£27,500(2003)	£6,500
Glastry	£16,500(2003)	£5,000
Dundrod	£20,500 (2003)	£5,750
Bellaghy	£10,400(2003)	£4,400
Knockloughrim	£7,700(2003)	£2,200
Grange (with Craigmore)	£15,750(2003)	£5,600
Hazelbank	£27,000(2003)	£6,650
Loughbrickland	£12,000(2003)	£3,900
Scarva	£7,000 (2003)	£2,400
Ramelton	€18,750(2003)	€5,800
Kilmacrennan	€5,650(2003)	€1,750
Elmwood	£26,500 (2003)	£6,250
Mourne,Kilkeel	£37,000 (2003)	£7,750
Kilkeel	£26,500 (2003)	£7,000
Greenwell Street, Newtownards	£30,000(2003)	£6,000
Gardenmore, Larne	£31,400(2003)	£6,600
Drumgooland	£12,300(2003)	£3,950
Kilkinamurry	£5,400(2003)	£1,970
Raffrey	£21,500(2003)	£6,400
1st Bailieborough (HM)	€6,880 (2003)	€3,100
Trinity Bailieborough	€7,840 (2003)	€3,100

Corranearry (HM)	€4,480 (2003)	€1,550
Clontarf	€12,500 (2003)	€7,200
Ballywillan	£30,000 (2003)	£7,000
Castlecaulfield	£12,600 (2003)	£4,000
English	£8,930 (2003)	£2,300
Newtowncunningham	€9,500(2004)	€2,500
Ray	€19,750(2004)	€5,000
First Portadown	£33,000(2004)	£6,100
Third Portglenone	£19,000 (2004)	£5,500
Finvoy	£20,100 (2004)	£6,400
Tullycarnet	£13,000 (2004)	£5,250
Gilford	£7,500(2004)	£2,000
Tullylish	£12,00 (2004)	£3,000

#### **LEAVE TO CALL A MINISTER ON THE RESTRICTED LIST**

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses
Kilmore	£13,650	6,000

#### **LEAVE TO CALL UNDER HOME MISSION DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses
Drum	€11,250(2003)	€3,600
Cootehill	€6,835(2003)	€1,800
Kilmount	€5,343 (2003)	€1,800

#### **ELIGIBILITY FOR CALL**

In two instances the Commission has been asked to determine eligibility for call under Paragraph 193(3) of the Code, which allows the Commission to declare an individual to be eligible in cases of 'serious difficulty'. The Commission has taken this to mean that there is a serious difficulty in filling the vacancy. Both individuals were otherwise ineligible through having served in the congregations concerned prior to the vacancy (Par 193(2)(a)). In neither case was there an apparent difficulty in filling the vacancy, and so the Commission did not declare either individual to be eligible.

#### **ASSOCIATE MINISTERS**

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
Bloomfield	Appropriate Ministerial Minimum	£4,500
First Carrickfergus	Appropriate Ministerial Minimum plus £500	£5,000
Wellington Street, Ballymena	£19,000	£4,000
Hillsborough	£18,000	£4,400
Orangefield	£18,000	£4,200

Bangor West	£20,000	£5,000
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It has been noted that in some large financially prosperous congregations where there is an Associate Minister, there can be a net inflow to the congregation's accounts from the Central Ministry Fund. The flexibility granted under the Associate Minister scheme allows the Union Commission to set a rate of assessment on the Associate's Salary higher than the usual 5% of the rate on Minister's Stipend, and in some cases a rate has been set that means there is no net inflow from CMF to the congregations concerned.

As a general principle the Union Commission has decided that, in view of the shortage of ministers, it will very carefully consider any application for an extension to an Associate Ministry beyond the initial three years plus one year routine extension.

Rev RJA Bell represented the Commission on a group authorised by the General Assembly in 2003 and brought together by the Board of Studies and Christian Training, but including representatives from Union Commission, CMF, Associates etc, to carry out a review of the current legislation relating to Licentiate Assistants, Ordained Assistants and Associate Ministers and to prepare a report for the 2004 Assembly.

#### **LEAVE TO CALL UNDER A SPECIAL SCHEME ASSOCIATED WITH URBAN MISSION**

Ballygomartin: Leave to Call {Stipend: £15,000(2002), Expenses: £5,500} under Reviewable Tenure was issued on the following terms :

- (a) The Tenure will be reviewed 5 years after the installation of a minister.
- (b) In granting Leave to Call it is understood by the Union Commission that the Presbytery and Kirk Session identify the Highfield area within the Parish as being in need of focused attention and resources.
- (c) The Minister called will normally devote a minimum of two days a week to working in the Highfield area and that the Kirk Session will encourage this.
- (d) The Board of Mission in Ireland will provide financial resources to employ an Outreach Worker to assist in developing work primarily in the Highfield area. This Outreach Worker will be responsible through the minister to a Committee appointed by the Presbytery, which will include the Minister and have representation from the Kirk Session of Ballygomartin (additional to the Minister) and from the Board of Mission in Ireland. The Presbytery Committee will also advise the Minister and Kirk Session, and monitor the situation. Two years after the appointment of an Outreach Worker Presbytery will report to the Union Commission on progress.

#### **LEAVE TO CALL SUSPENDED**

Leave to Call a minister, which had been granted to Clones, Newbliss, Ballyhobridge and Stonebridge on 15 May 2001, was suspended in the light of ongoing discussions with the Monaghan Presbytery.

## STATED SUPPLY

The Commission nominated Rev AMcM Kerr as stated supply in Gortnessey for twelve months from 1 April 2003 on terms agreed by the Commission.

The Commission nominated Rev C Irwin as Stated Supply of Clones, Newbliss, Ballyhobridge and Stonebridge for twelve months from 1 June, 2003.

The Commission nominated the Minister of Glastry as Stated Supply of Kircubbin from the date of installation in Glastry.

The Commission nominated Rev W Shaw as Stated Supply of Duncairn/St Enoch's for twelve months from 1 June, 2003.

## REVIEWS

The financial arrangements in many congregations continue to be kept under review by the Commission. This may be part of the terms of Leave to Call or because of the requirement to review after seven years of ministry , or because of special circumstances that have arisen where it is not appropriate simply to apply the Tyrone Memorial mechanism. This growing volume of work is co-ordinated by the Review Sub-Committee ,under its Conveners Mr JB Hutcheson and Rev TJ McCormick. There follows a summary of the main reviews agreed by the Commission:

Bangor West: Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2003. No further review.

Conlig: Stipend for 2003 £17,800 with further review 2005.

Greenwell Street: Stipend for 2003 to be £29,400 with further review in 2004.

Kilbride: Stipend for 2003 to be £27,500 with further review in 2004.

Glengormley: Stipend for 2003 £27,500 with further review in 2004.

Whitehouse: Stipend for 2003 £19,500 and Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2004. No further review.

Garnerville: Stipend for 2003 £15,000 with recommendation to Congregational Committee to review expenses and further review in 2004.

Gilnahirk: Tyrone Memorial applies from 1 January 2003, and Congregational Committee requested to review expenses. No further review.

Greenisland: Stipend for 2003 £24,250 and Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2004 with no further review.

2nd Castledearg: Stipend for 2003 £16,000 with further review in 2004.

Alt: Stipend for 2003 €3,100 with further review in 2004.

Magheramason: Stipend for 2003 £21,200 and Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2004. No further review.

1st Comber: Stipend for 2003 £27,500 and further review in 2004.

1st Saintfield: Stipend for 2003 £27,200 and Tyrone Memorial to apply from 1 January 2004 with no further review.

2nd Dromara: Stipend for 2003 £14,300 and further review in 2004.

Magheragall: Stipend for 2003 £15,750 with further review in 2004

Abbey: Tyrone Memorial applies from 1 January 2003. No further review.

Gilford: Stipend for 2003 £7,000 and further review in 2004.

First Ballymoney: Tyrone Memorial to apply from January 2003 on a base of £24,501.

Moira: Stipend for 2003, £22,500 and further review in 2004.

Orangefield: Stipend to be £28,400 for 2003 and that this become the base for calculation of stipend under the Tyrone Memorial in following years.

Whiteabbey: Stipend for 2004 to be £32,000 plus the appropriate Tyrone Memorial Increase (as if £32,000 had been the Stipend for 2003)and that thereafter the stipend be set under the Tyrone Memorial.

Bannside: Stipend to be £29,500 for 2004, thereafter stipend to be set under Tyrone Memorial.

### **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

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

### **RESTRICTED LIST**

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

- (A) The name of a minister shall be removed from the list of eligible ministers(Code Par 193(1)(e)) after two years, unless the minister concerned applies for and is granted an extension by the Union Commission.
- (B) When the Union Commission is not meeting on a monthly basis:
  - (i) The Convener may grant an extension of up to two months, in consultation with the Clerk of Assembly.
  - (ii) The Allocation Committee may place a new applicant on the restricted list.

The Commission granted the requests of three ministers to be added to the Restricted list.

### **CONGREGATIONS UNITED**

The following Congregations were united under the terms set out below.  
Strangford and Ardglass:

- (a) That the congregation of Strangford be amalgamated with the congregation of Ardglass, from 30th September, 2003, or other suitable date under the name 'Ardglass'.
- (b) That the two Kirk Sessions become one Kirk Session and the two Congregational Committees become one Committee until new Committee elections are held.
- (c) That all existing or future assets, including property or lands not disposed of, become the property of the amalgamated congregations.
- (d) That any expenses accruing through failure to dispose of the Strangford property, or through having to make the buildings secure and insured, be the responsibility of the amalgamated congregation.

Ormond Quay & Scots and Clontarf:

- (a) That the congregation of Ormond Quay & Scots be amalgamated with the congregation of Clontarf, from 31st July, 2003, or other suitable date under the name 'Clontarf'.
- (b) That the two Kirk Sessions become one Kirk Session and the two Congregational Committees become one Committee until new Committee elections are held.
- (c) That all existing or future assets, including property or lands not disposed of, become the property of the amalgamated congregation, unless directed in whole or in part to some other purpose agreed by the Presbytery and Union Commission
- (d) That any expenses accruing through failure to dispose of the Ormond Quay & Scots property, or through having to make the buildings secure and insured, be the responsibility of the amalgamated congregation.

## MANSES

Windsor, First Ballynahinch, Ray and Richview congregations were granted permission to sell their Manses and provide replacement Manses, any surplus funds being used in accordance with the General Assembly's Guidelines.

Wellington Street, Ballymena was given permission to sell the Manse and to provide a replacement Manse. In view of the considerable finance which may be generated by the sale the Congregation is to consult with the Commission about the use of any surplus funds.

Nelson Memorial was given permission to sell the Manse, and to use the proceeds under the supervision of the Presbytery. In view of the considerable expense involved for the congregation in making the property saleable, it is recognised that it is proper for the Congregation to recoup some of its expenditure from these funds. The Congregation is commended for its stated intention to establish a Manse fund to meet any future obligations.

Howth and Malahide: The Commission consulted with the Congregation regarding the possibility of the Minister moving from the present Manse at Howth to live at Malahide.

The Minister of Drumachose and Derramore was given permission to vacate the Manse during renovation.

The Minister of Ballylinney was given permission to vacate the Manse on health and safety grounds. The Commission noted with approval that a Minister of the Presbytery had been appointed to chair meetings in Ballylinney that dealt with the Manse issue.

The Commission gave permission for Kilmore to let the Manse during the vacancy in accordance with the General Assembly Guidelines.

The Commission gave permission for the sale of the Duncairn and St Enoch's Manse, the capital to be held in a Manse Fund pending the establishment of an Urban Mission Fund.

Trinity, Ahoghill was given permission to sell approx 3.37 acres of Glebe for residential development on the understanding that:

- (i) £20,000 from the proceeds of the sale is invested;



- (ii) the minister receives 50% of the investment income generated by the £20,000, annually;
- (iii) the remaining 50% of this investment income is used in its entirety to increase the original £20,000 capital investment and
- (iv) that the remainder of the proceeds from the sale are to be used for congregational purposes subject to Presbytery approval.

Dunluce was given permission to sell approx  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre of Glebe for residential development and to use a further approx  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of Glebe on which to build a new Church Hall on the understanding that:

- (i) £6,000 is invested
- (ii) the minister receives 50% of the investment income generated by the £6,000, annually,
- (iii) the remaining 50% of this investment income is used in its entirety to increase the original capital investment,
- (iv) the remainder of the proceeds from the sale are used for congregational purposes subject to Presbytery approval.

Ballyreagh was given permission to use £10,000 from its Manse fund towards improvements to Ballygawley Manse. Guidance was given about the difference between “maintenance” and “improvement” and about the use of the remaining capital in the Manse Fund.

Tassagh was given permission to use £3,000-£5,000 from its Manse fund towards improvements to Cladymore Manse, income from the remaining capital to be used in accordance with the General Assembly guidelines.

The Commission initiated a debate about the status of Manses, land associated with them and Manse Funds, and has sought advice from the General Assembly’s Solicitor.

## APPENDIX

### **Urban Mission Panel:**

1. The Panel was constituted following the Union Commission Report to the General Assembly 2002 (see Par 8, page 68), with the following membership: WJ Orr (Convener), DJ Watts, JH Robinson, TJ Stothers, RFS Poots and N Hamilton.

2. Work began by giving some consideration to population movements in and from the city. It was recognised that while numbers of Protestants in Belfast have reduced over the past 20 years, the decline has halted to a large extent and there remain many who live in areas of economic and social deprivation, changing housing and at least some level of para-military influence. The most recent census lists 17% of the population of Belfast as Presbyterian (this includes suburbs in which the proportion would be higher). The same census declares that almost the same number of residents declare “no religion or religion not stated.” It is likely that there are more of a “Protestant” background in the latter group than Roman Catholic. Clearly there are significant mission fields!

3. While acknowledging challenge, the Panel resolved that the emphasis of its work should be positive. The task identified was neither propping up traditional congregations and ministry, nor setting about a rationalising closure

of churches/congregations. The results, however, of a questionnaire sent out by the panel, indicated that many of our urban congregations comprise of ageing people, of a different social class from residents around the church, who lived to a marked degree outside the parish area, and who came in to offer services to a community which was ignoring them. The end result of the latter in 5 to 10 years is obvious to anyone with the courage to admit it. The positive approach is to identify urban communities in need and ask, how can the Church live and work with them to discover Christ in the midst? How best can the resources of the Church be employed? To what extent can local congregations be helped to embrace a new mission?

4. The Panel make the following practical suggestions:

- (a) The formation of a committee/panel (under the strategic planning committee of the Board of Mission Ireland) - cf Church of Scotland's "New Charge Development Committee" to
  - (i) Monitor continually opportunities for change/new mission in urban areas.
  - (ii) Offer advice/guidance to congregations/Presbyteries.
  - (iii) Designate congregations, if appropriate, urban mission areas.  
(A question might be added to the Union Commission's form which is forwarded to Presbytery Vacancy Commissions asking: "Should this congregation become an Urban Mission Congregation?")
- (b) Ordained Ministry:
  - (i) Ministers might be called to urban mission work/congregations through an Assembly Agency, not a congregation.
  - (ii) A minister already experienced in an urban context, might act as a mentor for a minister new to an urban mission situation.
  - (iii) Training for a minister before installation in an urban mission congregation.
  - (iv) A small number of professional 'Interim Moderators', one of whom, on vacancy, would go into a congregation in an urban mission area for 3 to 5 years and prepare for/guide into change.
  - (v) It was recognised that, in order really to be effective, ministers (or 'staff') should live in close proximity to their area of service. This would entail sacrifice - similar to overseas missionary service - and a marked relaxation of manse guidelines in these circumstances.
- (c) Once urban mission congregations/enterprises were under way, it might be helpful to have students/students for the ministry reside and serve in them as a limited 'internship'.
- (d) As a general principle, the resources of the Assembly should be directed towards Congregations demonstrating the greatest vision/flexibility.

The Commission agreed that the Panel should continue to explore the issues involved, in consultation with the Board of Mission in Ireland, and carry on its work taking into account the response at the 2004 General Assembly.

**ASSESSMENTS ON FULLY CONSTITUTED CHURCH EXTENSION  
CHARGES — 2004**

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

	<i>Fully Constituted</i>	<i>Families (†)</i>	<i>Assess 2004 £</i>	<i>Spec. Sources £</i>	<i>Income £</i>
Tullycarnet	1990	215 (150)	225	36,623	62,525
Downshire	1993	258 (189)	283	52,873	73,706
Lisnabreen	1993	258 (156)	234	40,716	69,531
Scrabo	1994	253 (159)	238	53,228	81,508
Burnside	1995	175 (158)	237	59,417	103,805
Movilla	2001	230 (191)	286	48,130	120,978

† Families contributing at least £5.00 per annum

**ASSESSMENTS ON CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES — 2004**

<i>Church</i>	<i>Spec.</i>		<i>Stip. £</i>	<i>C.M.F. £</i>	<i>Ch. Ext £</i>	<i>H.M. £</i>	<i>Total £</i>
	<i>Building £</i>	<i>Srs. £</i>					
New Mossley*	1,985	16,312	4,078	1,957	1,305	815	8,155
Ballysally*	6,574	27,272	6,818	3,273	2,182	1,364	13,637
Strathfoyle*	—	2,506	301	150	100	60	611
Taughmonagh	1,587	17,829	5,349	2,674	1,783	1,070	10,876

\* Special Arrangement

## LICENTIATES — 2004

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £13,875 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, 2004

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Ballyclare	W. J. Hayes*	22.06.03	29,581 (30%)	9,375	5,502
Dungannon	D. J. Irvine*	15.06.03	29,875 (25%)	s/a 7,970	6,907
2nd Comber	P. Jamieson*	20.06.03	34,696 (30%)	10,910	3,967
Ebrington	D. B. McCorrison*	08.06.03	27,170 (30%)	8,652	6,225
Regent Street	S. Newell*	13.06.03	28,932 (30%)	9,181	5,696

\* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance s/a Special Arrangement

**LICENTIATES — 2004**

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £13,875 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, 2004**

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Hamilton Road, Bangor	N. S. R. Lockhart†	09.06.02	36,606 (30%)	11,333	3,244
Harmony Hill	B. McCroskery*	02.06.02	30,688 (30%)	9,707	5,170
Glengormley	P. Linkens*	07.06.02	27,500 (30%)	8,751	6,126

\* Married House Allowance ‡ No House Allowance s/a Special Arrangement

## LICENTIATES — 2004

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £13,875 plus House Allowance p.a. (single — £702; married — £1,002) if applicable. House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

## FOURTH YEAR — From 1st January, 2004

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Malone	Dr. M. Jones†	18.06.00	31,080 (30%)	9,675	4,902

\* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance ‡ No House Allowance s/a Special Arrangement

## ORDAINED ASSISTANTS — 2004

## From 1st January, 2004

<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Date of Ord.</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>% Min.</i>	<i>Salary</i> £	<i>House Allow.</i> £	<i>Total</i> £	<i>Cong. Cont.</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Marlene Taylor	Cooke Centenary	11.01.85	23,000	100	18,500	1,002	19,502	10,267	9,226
Christina Bradley	Rosemary	23.02.86	27,959	100	18,500	1,002	19,502	12,383	7,119

## ASSOCIATE MINISTERS 2004

Name	Congregation	Salary		House Allowance Paid	Annual Assessment Recovery
		Paid	Recovery		
S. Calder	Hamilton Road, Bangor	£ 18,962.00	£ 15,104.40	£ 2,000.00	£ 893.81
G. Kennedy	First Bangor	18,500.00	12,753.60	1,500.00	585.76
M. Henderson	Shore Street	18,500.00	12,025.00	2,000.00	571.19
L. H. Eagleson	Carmoney	18,500.00	13,778.00	2,000.00	606.25
A. Gibson					
	from 11.01.04	19,425.00	12,950.00	2,000.00	1,112.31
J. Peacock	Newtownbreda	18,500.00	12,025.00	2,499.00	571.19
C. Glover	Stormont	21,630.00	17,818.00	0.00	3,447.56
D. Montgomery	Knock	22,880.00	22,824.00	0.00	3,261.87
M. Gibson	Westbourne	18,500.00	s/a 9,368.00	2,000.00	518.05
D. N. Gray	Belmont	20,350.00	13,950.00	2,000.00	1,654.94
C. A. Reid	Gilnahirk	18,500.00	12,025.00	2,000.00	571.19
M. N. Davidson	First Antrim	18,500.00	12,079.60	1,500.00	572.28
		€	€	€	€
K. McCrory	Lucan-Liffey Valley	30,347.00	20,188.25	0.00	0.00
s/a Special Arrangement					



## PERSONNEL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

### EXTRA-PAROCHIAL WORK

1. Eight ministers, having obtained prior Presbytery approval, were given permission for extra-parochial work of no more than six hours per week. To assist ministers and Presbyteries with compliance of Par 73(d) the Extra-Parochial Work pro-forma issued through Presbytery Clerks should be returned annually to the Committee Convener at the earliest opportunity and normally prior to the commencement of such work.

### TRAVEL EXPENSES

2. The 2004 recommendations for travel expenses were set according to an established formula for a car of 1400cc and average “business” mileage of 13,000 miles (NI) and 14,400 miles (RI). The standing costs attributable to private motoring have also been factored in.

NI £4,800 (2003: £4,740)      RI €7,260 (2003: €7,200)

These figures are average figures issued for the guidance of Congregational Committees. They cover motoring costs only, and should not be automatically and universally applied as the appropriate amount for each minister.

### INADEQUATE EXPENSES GRANT SCHEME

3. Applications for grants towards inadequate expenses in the year 2002 were approved for 18 ministers. The total grants paid amounted to just over £50,000 compared to almost £37,000 for 2001. From 2003 a cost of living allowance has been paid to ministers working within the euro zone. This will be considered as relevant income when calculations for inadequate expenses grants are made.

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

4. The recommended limits for 2004 claims under this scheme are as follows:

N Ireland £5,100 (2003: £5,000)      RI € 7,650 (2003: €7,500)

### SUPPLY FEES

5. In pursuance of *Par 238(3)*, as amended in 2000, the supply fee for the year 2004 will be NI £74 or RI €118, with NI £50 or RI €78 for a single service supply. Travelling expenses should be paid in “accordance with the rates for travel by car fixed for attendance at Assembly Boards, or be based on second class rail or bus fares.” *Par 238(4)*. Currently this rate is 12p or 20cents per mile.

Particularly in vacancies Presbyteries should ensure that atypical circumstances do not give rise to unfair anomalies in these matters. There may be circumstances where Presbytery will consider an additional payment appropriate.

### **ADDITIONAL PASTORAL PERSONNEL**

6. Applications for a variety of Additional Pastoral Personnel (APP) roles were considered and approval given for 18. Such staffing arrangements must be undertaken in full recognition of the wide-ranging legal and personnel issues involved. Congregations employing APPs should always obtain relevant legal and personnel expertise to ensure that their procedures and documentation are satisfactory and competent. Presbyteries may wish to “contract in” such professional services for their congregations.

7. It must be stressed that Presbyteries have an integral role to play throughout the process, beginning with initial assent to the post and including the endorsement of such personnel before appointment. The 1997 Guidelines (*p57 1997 Annual Reports*) still provide the applicable principles and continue as the appropriate reference. Through its new Additional Appointments Committee, Union Commission approval of the post and appointment process must still be obtained.

8. A preponderance of APPs operate among our young people. Such work requires dedicated and skilled practitioners who must be recognised and resourced for this specialist area of ministry. To avoid theological and ecclesiological ambiguity the Commission urge caution when labelling such posts. In particular the Commission would strongly advocate that in the meantime when proposals for APP are made, and pending ongoing developments, the title “pastor” should be avoided. There are, of course, several creative and distinctive titles which could be usefully applied to convey the status and function of such a staff member eg Director of Youth Ministry, Christian Youth Worker, Church Youth Worker.

COLIN McCLURE, Convener

### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the CMF be authorised to pay grants towards expenses incurred by ministers in congregations, up to a limit of NI £5,100 or RI €7,650 for ministers residing in the Republic of Ireland, within the terms of resolution 3, p70 General Assembly Minutes 1988.
3. That the General Assembly accept in outline the suggestions made in part 4 of the report from the Panel on Urban Mission (Appendix), and directs the panel to consult with the Board of Mission in Ireland with a view to their implementation.
4. That the congregation of Corlea be dissolved by the Union Commission on 1 January, 2005, or other suitable date, subject to suitable arrangements being made for the distribution of its assets.
5. That the Personnel and Planning Committee be thanked for its services and discharged (see Par 11 above) and that the Rev Colin McClure be thanked for his work as its Convener.
6. That the Union Commission be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 128 of the Code as follows:

**OVERTURES TRANSMITTED****Anent Par 128(1) of the Code**

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

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

**Anent Par 193(2)(a) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 193(2)(a) of the Code the words “or at any time during” be inserted after the words “prior to”.

TJ STOTHERS

**MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED**

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

**The Memorial of the Kirk Session of Adelaide Road Donore Respectfully Showeth:**

That following the redevelopment of Adelaide Road Donore, Dublin, it would be advantageous for general convenience and understanding for the congregation to revert to its former name of Adelaide Road.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Assembly that the name of the congregation be changed to Adelaide Road with immediate effect.

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

Adopted by the Kirk Session of Adelaide Road, Donore, at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2004.

FP SELLAR, Moderator  
KEN GILLANDERS, Clerk of Session

Licensed by the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2004 and transmitted to the Synod of Dublin with the recommendation that its prayer be granted.

SAMUEL G ANKETELL, Acting Moderator  
JOHN FARIS, Clerk

Transmitted by the Synod of Dublin, meeting at Cavan on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.

NANCY CUBITT, Moderator  
ALAN MITCHELL, Clerk

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

**The Memorial of the Kirk Session of Clontarf Church Dublin (Clontarf and Ormond Quay & Scots) Respectfully Showeth:**

That a successful amalgamation of Clontarf and Ormond Quay & Scots has taken place and the Session has had an opportunity of considering carefully the appropriate name of the amalgamated Congregation.

The Kirk Session considers the appropriate name should now be Clontarf & Scots.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Assembly to approve the change of name from Clontarf Presbyterian Church, Dublin to that of Clontarf & Scots Presbyterian Church, Dublin.

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

Adopted by the Kirk Session at its meeting in Clontarf Presbyterian Church, Dublin, on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2004.

ALAN BOAL, Moderator  
ALAN FINLAY & JOHN SIMPSON, Clerks of Session

Licensed by the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2004, and transmitted to the Synod of Dublin.

ALAN MITCHELL, Moderator  
JOHN FARIS, Clerk

Transmitted by the Synod of Dublin, meeting at Cavan, on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.

NANCY CUBITT, Moderator  
ALAN MITCHELL, Clerk

# REPORTS OF SYNODS AND PRESBYTERIES

## SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN

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

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that Rev DR Purce, BA, BD, DMin is their Moderator; that Rev John Edward Glenfield, BA, MTh, DMin, died on 3 November 2003; that Rev AA Stevenson, BD, retired on 30 June 2003; that Rev LWH Hilditch demitted his charge as Minister of Greenwell Street on 11 September 2003, having received a call to the Congregations of First Castledearg and Killeter, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane; that Rev I Carton, BA, BD, resigned as Associate Minister of Bangor West, having received a call to the Congregation of First Monaghan and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Monaghan; that Rev A. Gibson, BSc, BD, MTh, received a call as Associate Minister of Bloomfield Congregation and received credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that Rev JM Wade, BA, MDiv, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Newry was installed as Minister of Portavogie on 29 August 2003; that Rev WG Cameron CertEd, DipTh, BD, having presented credentials from the Armagh Presbytery, was installed as Minister of Glastry, and stated supply for Kircubbin on 16 December 2003; that Mr Paul Jamieson was licenced on 20 June 2003 and furnished with credentials to the Down Presbytery; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge Rev D McKee, BD, Rev CD Mawhinney, BD, Rev DM Spratt ALCM, BEd, DipTh; as Licentiate, Mr N Lockhart and Mr S Newell; that during the year they held Consultations with the congregation of Ballyholme; that the financial reports of the congregations are being printed separately; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 55 for and none against.

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev AJ Thompson, BA, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr J Thompson, BA, BD, MTh, PhD, DD, minister of The Mall, Armagh, retired on 30 April, 2003; that the Rev D Knowles, BSc, BD, minister of 1<sup>st</sup> Portadown, resigned his charge on 13 November, 2003, having accepted a call to the congregation of Grange and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that the Rev WG Cameron, Cert Ed, Dip Th, BD, minister of 1<sup>st</sup> Keady and Armaghbreague, resigned his

Died  
Resigned  
Installed  
Licensed  
Under care  
Consulted  
Retired  
Resigned

charge on 16 December, 2003, having accepted a call to the congregation of Glasstry and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that the Rev JA Curry, MEng, BD, minister of 2<sup>nd</sup> Keady and Drumhillery, resigned his charge on 8 January, 2004, having accepted a call to the congregation of 1<sup>st</sup> Magherafelt and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that they have under their care as students for the ministry, Messrs M Lindsay, J Montgomery and K Nelson; that during the year they consulted the congregations of Benburb and Knappagh; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 25 for and 1 against.

Under care  
Consulted

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Robert James Hyndman, BSc, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev W D McBride, BA, senior minister of Second Saintfield, died on the 10 April, 2003; that the Rev SR Conkey, BA, minister of Raffrey retired on the 30 June, 2003; that the Rev WA Abernethy, BD, minister of Kilmore, demitted his charge on 8 May, 2003, having received a call from Sinclair Seamen's, was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that Samuel Newell was licensed as a probationer for the Christian ministry on the 13 June, 2003 and furnished with credentials to the Ards Presbytery; that they have under their care as ministers without charge the Revs RN Stewart, BA, BD and D Stanfield, BA, BD; that they have under their care as a Licentiate Paul Jamieson, BA; that they have under their care as a student Leslie Patterson; that during the year they undertook Consultations with Boardmills and Ballygowan; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 22 for and none against.

Died  
Retired  
Resigned  
  
Licensed  
  
Under care  
  
Consulted

The **DROMORE PRESBYTERY** report that Rev. GWM Glasgow, BA, MAR, is their Moderator; that Very Rev W Boyd, MA, DD, senior minister of First Lisburn, died on 8 July 2003; that Rev AP McComb, BA, BD, senior minister of First Dromara, died on 10 October 2003; that Rev R Lockhart, BA, minister of Elmwood, retired on 30 April 2003; that Very Rev Dr S Hutchinson, BA, BD, MTh, DD, Clerk of Assembly, retired on 31 August 2003; that Rev RA McLernon, BSc, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone, was installed to the pastoral oversight of Drumbo congregation on 15 September 2003; that Mr BJ McCroskery was received as a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards; that they have under their care as students for the ministry, Mr Michael Anderson and Mr Colin McKibbin; that under the Barrier Act 35 members voted in favour of the Overture Anent Par 93(2) of the Code and 0 voted against; that during the year they held a Consultation with the congregation of 2<sup>nd</sup> Dromara; and that Financial Statements are being published separately by each congregation.

Died  
  
Retired  
  
Installed  
  
Credentials  
Under Care  
  
Consulted

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev A Cole, BEd, BTh, is their Moderator; that the Rev WC Lockhart, BA, died on 16 November 2003; that the Rev J Holmes, BA, resigned as minister of Drumgooland and Kilkinamurry on 29 May, 2003 having received a Call from the congregations of First Randalstown and Duneane and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that the Rev CD McClure, BSc, BD, MSSc, resigned as minister of Loughbrickland and Scarva on 19 June, 2003 having received a Call from the congregation of First Larne and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that the Rev DM Rodgers, BA, BD, MTh, resigned as minister of Magherally on 31 December, 2003 having been appointed as a Hospital Chaplain, Aberdeen; that the Rev ATF Johnston, BEd, BD, resigned as minister of Gilford and Tullylish on 9 January, 2004 having received a Call from the congregation of Hazelbank, Coleraine, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine; that Mr DB Murphy, BSSc, BD, resigned as Licentiate Assistant in Newcastle on 13 November, 2003 having received a Call from the congregations of Brookvale and Ryans; that they have under their care as a minister without charge (retired) the Rev EG McAuley, BA, BD, MSc, and as a student Mr TN Bingham; that during the year they consulted with the congregations of Hilltown, Clonduff, Glascar and Donaghmore; and that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 31 for and 2 against.

Died  
Resigned

Under Care

Consulted

The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev SJ Hanna, BSc, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev DJ McGaughey, BA, DD, retired from the active duties of the ministry on 30 September, 2003; that the Rev AL Kirk, BSc, BD, resigned as minister of Kilkeel on 28 August, 2003, having received a Call from the congregation of 1<sup>st</sup> Ahoghill and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that the Rev JM Wade, BD, MDiv, resigned as minister of 2<sup>nd</sup> Newtownhamilton and Creggan on 28 August, 2003, having received a Call from the congregation of Portavogie and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that the Rev BD Colvin, BA, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus was installed as minister of Downshire Road on 2 May, 2003; that Mr DS Henry, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh was ordained and installed as minister of Warrenpoint and Rostrevor on 12 September, 2003; that Mr DB Murphy, BSSc, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh was ordained and installed in Ryans and Brookvale on 14 November, 2003; that Mr CWA Martin, BSc, MDiv, a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, having received a Call from Ringsend and 2<sup>nd</sup> Dunboe, was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine on 4 March, 2003; that they have under their care as a Student for the Ministry Mr RC Kerr; that during the year they held consultations with the congregations of Clarkesbridge, Garmany's Grove and McKelvey's

Retired

Resigned

Installed

Ordained

Credentials  
Under Care

Consulted

Grove; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; and that the voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 18 for and none against.

## SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE

The **SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE** report that the Rev WD Weir, BA, BD, DipEd, is their Moderator and that the next Stated Meeting will be held in Church House, Belfast, on Thursday 10 June, 2004.

The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev NA. Brown, BSc, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev GA Preston, BA, retired from the duties of the Active Ministry in Connor, on 4 January 2004; that the Rev. C Ebbinghaus, BSc, resigned his appointment as Assistant Minister in High Kirk on 24 September 2003, having received and accepted a call from Kirkpatrick Memorial and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that the Rev KA Drury, BSc, BD, resigned his charge as minister of Third Portglenone on 18 November 2003, having received and accepted a call from the Board of Mission in Ireland to May Street, Belfast and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that the Rev AL Kirk, BSc, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Newry, was installed as Minister of First Ahoghill on 29 August 2003; that the Rev D Knowles, BSc, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh, was installed as Minister of Grange on 14 November 2003; that CA Grant, MA, LL.M, MDiv, PhD., a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery, having received and accepted a call to Mosside and Toberdoney, was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Route on 24 June 2003; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry, Messrs: ME Donald, BEd, MA(Ed), RA Mulholland, BTh, HND, and JE Sloan, BA; that the congregations of Cloughwater, Glenwherry and Rasharkin were consulted; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately and that voting on the Overture anent Par 93 (2) sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: For: 13, Against: 17.

Retired  
Resigned

Installed

Credentials

Under Care

Consulted

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that their Moderator is Rev AE Tolland, BSc, BD, MTh, PGCE; that Rev BD Colvin, BA, BD, Associate Minister of Ballyclare, resigned his charge on 1 May, 2003, having received a call to the congregation of Downshire Road, Newry, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Newry; that Very Rev JW Lockington, BA, BD, MTh, PhD, DD, resigned his charge as minister of Gardenmore, Larne, on 22 May, 2003 having received a call to the congregation of Clogherney and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Omagh; that Rev CD McClure, BSc, MSSc, was installed as minister of First Larne on 20

Resigned

Installed



June, 2003, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh; that they have under their care as Minister without Charge Rev DR Byers, BA, Dip Th; and Rev RJ Montgomery, BA, BD, MA demitted his charge as Associate Minister of First Carrickfergus on 31 July, 2003, was received as Minister without Charge and placed under the care of Presbytery; that they have under their care as a Licentiate Mr W Hayes, MA, Dip Min; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry, Miss HM Rendell and Mr RSJ McIlhatton; that during the year they conducted a consultation in the congregation of Woodburn and that the Financial Statements of congregations; and that voting on the Overture anent Par 93 (2) sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: For: 20, Against: none.

Under Care

Consulted

The **COLERAINE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev T Peter Fleming is their Moderator; that, on 1 September, 2003, the Rev William J Morrison, Minister-without-charge under the care of the Presbytery died; that on 11 December, 2003, the Rev Reuben Dinsmore, Senior Minister of Ringsend Congregation died; that on 30 April, 2003, the Rev Samuel J Millar, Minister of Hazelbank Congregation, Coleraine retired from the duties of the active ministry; that, on 12 September, 2003, the Rev John D Woodside, Minister of Ballywillan Congregation, demitted his charge having accepted a Call to become Minister of Drogheda Congregation and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that, on 8 January, 2004, the Rev Dr Robert A Kane, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane, was installed as Minister of Aghadowey and Crossgar Congregations; that on 10 January, 2004, the Rev Alan TF Johnston, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh, was installed as Minister of Hazelbank Congregation, Coleraine; that on 11 April, 2003, the Rev Colin WA Martin, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Newry, was ordained and installed as Minister of Ringsend and Second Dunboe Congregations; that on 8 June, 2003, Mr Darran B McCorriston was licensed as a Probationer for the Ministerial Office and furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane; that the Presbytery has under its care as a Minister without Charge the Rev J Douglas Mark; that the Presbytery has under its care as students for the ministry David S Brownlow, J Emerson McDowell and Philip B Wilson; that during the year they consulted with Ballywatt Congregation and that Congregations print their Financial Reports separately; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 30 for and none against.

Died

Retired

Resigned

Installed

Ordained

Licensed

Under Care

Consulted

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** report that Rev I McClean, BA, BD, ACII, is their Moderator; that Rev RMcC Bell, BA, died on 24 October, 2003; that Rev GE Lockhart died on 15 February, 2004; that Rev WRB Martin, BEd, MCS, demitted his charge of Finvoy on 26 March, 2003, having received a Call to McCracken Memorial, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that on 25

Died

Resigned

Ordained

Under Care July, 2003, Rev CA Grant, MA, LL.M, MDiv, PhD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena, was ordained and installed at Mosside and Toberdoney; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge, Rev V Dobbin, CB, MBE, MA, MTh, PhD, DD; and as a student for the ministry, Mr G Chestnutt; that during the year they consulted the congregations of Bushmills and Garryduff; and that they Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 23 for and none against.

Installed The **TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev WD Patton, BSSc, BD, PhD, is their Moderator; that on 11 April, 2003, Rev S Simpson, BSc, BTh, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster was installed as Minister of First Donegore; that on 30 May, 2003, Rev J Holmes, BA, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh, was installed as Minister of Duneane and First Randalstown; that on 12 September, 2003, Rev AV Stewart, MA, MDiv, DipMin, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast, was installed as Minister in Dundrod; that during the year they held consultations with High Street, Antrim and Crumlin; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 24 for and none against.

## SYNOD OF BELFAST

The **SYNOD OF BELFAST** report that the Rev Dr JR Savage, BA, BD, ThM, is their Moderator; that their next meeting is appointed to be held in Church House on Wednesday 9 June 2004.

Died The **NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Trevor David Gribben BSc, DipTh, is their Moderator; that the Rev Cecil Robert John Brown BA, minister under the care of the Presbytery died on 20 July 2003; that the Rev. John Samuel Beattie Drennan BD, CertEd., was installed in Crumlin Road on 5 April 2003, credentials having been received from the Presbytery of Monaghan; that the Rev. William Andrew Abernethy BD was installed in Sinclair Seamen's on 9 May 2003, credentials having been received from the Presbytery of Down; that Mr. William James Hayes was licensed as a Probationer for the Ministry on 22 June 2003; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs JS Carson, CI McKnight, WA Shaw, WM Smyth, MP, WG Stewart and FW Vincent; that they have under their care as a Licentiate Mr N Patrick; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry, Mr. WG Hamilton and Mr. D Laney; that consultations were held with the congregations of Immanuel and New Mossley Church Extension Charge; that congregational Financial

Reports are being printed separately; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 39 for and none against.

The **BELFAST SOUTH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev John Braithwaite, BSc, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev George Grindle, MBE, Minister Superintendent of the Kinghan Church retired on 26 April 2003; that the Rev Keith Drury BSSc, BD, having presented Credentials from the Ballymena Presbytery was installed as minister of May Street and inducted as Director of Inner City Mission Belfast on 19 November 2003; that the Rev Brian Martin BEd, MCS, having presented Credentials from the Route Presbytery was installed as Minister of McCracken Memorial on 23 November 2003; that Consultation was held in the Congregation of Fitzroy; and Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 40 for and none against.

Retired  
Installed

Consulted

The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev R David Maxwell, BA, BD, is their Moderator; that the Rev Howard Lewis, BD, DipEd, Associate Minister in the congregation of Bloomfield, died on 8 March 2003; that the Rev Herbert Courtney, BA, Senior Minister of the congregation of St Andrews and the Clerk Emeritus of the Presbytery of East Belfast, died on 12 September 2003; that the Rev J L Heaney, BA, BD, Senior Minister of Mountpottinger died on 30 October 2003 that the Rev George Moffett, BTh, DipAth, retired from the active duties of the Ministry in the congregation of Tullycarnett on 16 November 2003; that the Rev RD Drysdale, BA, BD, retired from the active duties of the Ministry in the congregation of Belmont on 6 March 2004; that the Rev Peter G McDowell, BEng, previously a missionary in Nepal, received and accepted a Call from the congregation of Limerick in the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster, and was furnished with credentials; that the Rev Angus Stewart, MA, MDiv, DipMin, resigned as Associate Minister in McQuiston Memorial on 12 September 2003 having received and accepted a Call to the congregation of Dundrod and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that the Rev Hugh Robert Quinn, BSc, BD, DipEd, demitted his charge in the congregation of Christchurch, Dundonald, on 3 January 2004, having received and accepted a Call from the Overseas Board, and was inducted, on 4 January 2004, to missionary service in Malawi; that the Rev Christoph Ebbinghaus, BSc, having presented credentials from the Ballymena Presbytery, was installed as Minister of Kirkpatrick Memorial on 25 September, 2003; that the Rev Andrew Gibson, BSc, BD, MTh, having presented credentials from the Ards Presbytery, was inducted as Associate Minister of Bloomfield on 11 January, 2004; that they have under their care as Ministers Without Charge the Revs RA Crooks, MA, LR Pedlow, MA, WJ Harshaw, BEd, BD, Dr E Jamison, BA, MEd, MTh, PhD; that Mark Welsh, Richard Johnston, Martin McNeilly and Scott Woodburn are Students for the Ministry under the care of the

Died

Retired

Resigned

Inducted  
Installed

Under Care

Consulted Presbytery; that a Consultation was held in the congregation of Carryduff during the year; and that Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

## SYNOD OF DERRY AND OMAGH

The **SYNOD OF DERRY AND OMAGH** report that the Rev NW McAuley, BSc, BD, is their Moderator; that their next stated meeting is appointed to be held in Union Road, Magherafelt on Wednesday 9 March, 2005 at 2.30 pm.

The **DERRY AND STRABANE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev David John Hutchinson BA, BTh, is their Moderator; that the Rev Robert John Young BA, Senior Minister of Carndonagh and Malin died on 1 July 2003; that the Rev Dr Robert Andrew Kane BA, BD, demitted his Charge as Minister of Badoney, Corrick and Glenelly on the 7 January 2004 having received and accepted a Call from the Congregations of Aghadowey and Crossgar, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine; that the Rev Lawrence William Hawthorne Hilditch, BEd, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards was installed to the pastoral oversight of 1<sup>st</sup> Castlederg and Killeter Congregations on 11 September 2003; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge Rev John Craig Teeney BSc, BTh; that they have under their care as a Licentiate, Mr Darran Basil McCorriston BA, DipMin, having presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry Mr Robert Alexander Campbell BA, MDiv and Mr Nigel John Edward Reid; that the Congregation of Leckpatrick was visited by way of the Presbytery Consultation Process during the year and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being published separately, that the voting for the Overture Anent Par 93(2) sent down to Presbyteries by the General Assembly was as follows:- 33 in favour of the Overture, and 0 against the Overture.

Died

Resigned

Installed

Under care

Consulted

The **FOYLE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Noel Ward, BA, is their Moderator; that the Rev John McWhirter, BA, DipTh, MTh, Senior Minister of Glendermott with Strathfoyle, died on the 11 February, 2004; that the Rev Thomas Veitch Mawhinney, MA, MTh, retired from the duties of the active Ministry in the congregations of Second Limavady and Myroe on the 31 March, 2003; that having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Falkirk in the Church of Scotland the Rev Eric George McKimmon, BA, BD, MTh, was installed as Minister of Cumber and Upper Cumber Congregations on the 5 September, 2003; that having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Omagh the Rev James Lindsay Blair, BSc, was installed as Minister of Faughanvale Congregation on the 9 January, 2004; that having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Donegal the Rev.

Died

Retired

Credentials

Installed

James Geoffrey Jones, BA, BD, was installed as Minister of Second Limavady and Myroe Congregations on the 6 February, 2004; that during the year a consultation was held in the Congregation of Bovevagh and the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; The voting for the overture sent down to Presbyteries by the General Assembly was as follows: Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code: for 24, against none.

Consulted

The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev G Aitcheson, BEng, BD, minister of Dromore and Drumquin, is their Moderator; that the Rev JL Blair, BSc, minister of Clogher and Glenhoy, having received a Call from the congregation of Faughanvale, demitted his charge on 8 January, 2004 and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Foyle; that the Rev CFD Clements, BA, BD, was inducted under the Home Mission and installed as minister of Irvinestown, Pettigo and Tempo on 21 March, 2003; that the Very Rev Dr JW Lockington, BA, BD, MTh, PhD, was installed as minister of Clogherney on 23 May, 2003; that Mr David James Irvine, BSc, MDiv, was licensed in Cavanaleck on 15 June, 2003 as a Probationer for the ministry and issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that the Consultation Process was completed in the congregations of Cavanaleck and Aughtentaine and Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler; and that Financial Statements are being printed in booklet form; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 19 for and none against.

Resigned

Inducted

Installed

Licensed

Consulted

The **PRESBYTERY OF TYRONE** report that the Rev John Flaherty BA, BD is their Moderator; that Rev Selwoode Graham BA, DipEd, BD, MA retired on 9 April 2003; that Rev Adrian McLernon BSc resigned from his charge as minister of Castlecaulfield and Eglish on 14 September 2003 having received and accepted a call from Drumbo and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Rev Jonathan Curry MEng, BD, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh, was installed in 1<sup>st</sup> Magherafelt on Friday, 9 January 2004; that, having been transferred to them from the Presbytery of Omagh, they have under their care as Licentiate: Mr David Irvine; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry: Mr Adrian TS McAlister BSc, MSc; Mr David Brown; and Mr Knox Jones; that they are currently consulting with the congregations of Claggan and Orritor, and Upper and Lower Clonaneese; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being published separately; that voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 38 for and 1 against.

Retired

Resigned

Installed

Under Care

Consulted

## SYNOD OF DUBLIN

The **SYNOD OF DUBLIN** report that the Rev Nancy Cubitt, BA, is their Moderator and that the Synod will meet by Commission in Castleblayney in the spring of 2005.

**Resigned** The **DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev James Lamont, BD, MTh, is their Moderator; that the Rev CFD Clements, having received a Call to the congregations of Irvinestown, Pettigo and Tempo under the Board of Mission in Ireland, resigned his charge as minister of Ramelton and Kilmacrennan congregations on 20 March 2003, and was furnished with credentials to the Omagh Presbytery; that the Rev JG Jones, BA, BD, having received a Call to the congregations of Second Limavady and Myroe, resigned his charge as minister of Ballylennon and St. Johnston congregations on 5 February 2004, and was furnished with credentials to the Foyle Presbytery; that the **Consulted** congregations of Letterkenny and Stranorlar were consulted during the year; that the Financial Statements of the congregations are being published in a year Book; and that the vote regarding the overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code under the Barrier Act was : 21 for and 0 against.

**Resigned** The **DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** report the Rev Alan Mitchell is their Moderator; that on 10 April 2003 Rev Stephen Simpson resigned his charge at Tullamore and Mountmellick having received a Call to the Congregation of First Donegore in the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that on 8 March 2003 Rev David Thomas Moore was **Inducted** as Minister of Kilkenny under the Home Mission; that on 26 July Rev Peter McDowell was inducted as Minister in Limerick with Shannon under the Home Mission; that on 13 September 2003 Rev John Duncan Woodside was inducted as Minister in Drogheda under the Home Mission; that on 14 September 2003 Rev Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie was inducted as Assistant to the Convener of the Vacancy of Kells and Ervey under the Home Mission; that the Presbytery has **Under Care** its care as a Minister without Charge, Rev Ruth Gregg and as Students for the Ministry, Mrs Karen Campbell and Mr Gareth McFadden; that a Consultation took place with the Congregation of Carlow; that the **Consulted** Financial Statements of all Congregations are being published separately; that the voting on the Overture anent Par 93(2) of the Code was 19 for and none against.

**Resigned** The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev D Nesbitt, BA, BD, MTh, is their Moderator; that the Rev JSB Drennan having received a call from the congregation of Crumlin Road, Belfast, resigned his charge on 4 April, 2003 and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev RI Carton, having **Installed** presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards, was installed as minister of 1<sup>st</sup> Monaghan on the 20 September, 2003; that they do not have any students for the ministry under their care; that during the year

the consultation with 2<sup>nd</sup> Ballybay and Rockcorry was completed; that the financial reports for each congregation are being printed separately; and that voting on the Overture anent Par 93 (2) sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act was as follows: For: 23, Against: none.

Consulted

### **RESOLUTION**

1. That the Report be received.

# BUSINESS BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. In reviewing arrangements for the previous Assembly the Business Board noted that two developments seemed to prove helpful. One was the increased use of specific times to begin debates. The other was permission given to some Boards for the proposer and seconder both to speak before questions. It has been agreed that both innovations should be used again at this Assembly, with some freedom given as to how the 17 minutes should be used to propose and second a report.

2. While some progress has been made to ensure that opportunity for informed debate is provided during the Assembly, the Business Board considered that further thought should be given to the effective use of Assembly time. It is therefore intended that a more thorough review of Assembly business be undertaken during the incoming year.

3. Attention is being given to the desire expressed last year to widen the circle of guests officially invited to the Opening Service of the Assembly. A small group is considering how invitations may be shared more widely by organisations representative of various aspects of life on our island. At the request of the Moderator-Designate, it was agreed to invite to the Opening night Mrs Mary McAleese, President of Ireland, as well as the Lord Lieutenant of Belfast who represents her Majesty, the Queen. In so doing it is felt that recognition is being given to both jurisdictions in which our Church bears witness.

4. Changes to the structures and membership of Boards and Committees has given additional responsibility to the small group appointed by the Board to confirm Board and Committee membership. It was agreed that in this transitional year some degree of flexibility would be allowed where appropriate.

5. It has been recognised that many Boards have been working hard to review their remit and structures. While for some it has been possible to provide appropriate overtures, which are printed with the reports, the process is on-going and for others it seems more appropriate to leave the overtures until next Assembly. This will give the Boards time to settle into their new formats. Any changes agreed in resolutions will, however, be implemented immediately.

6. To encourage Boards to plan their year's work in advance, the Business Board has agreed to designate a new Board and Committee week from 21-25 June, should Conveners wish to avail of it.

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

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



### **Board Membership**

9. 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 2004-2005, together with the associated Arrangements Committee is as follows:-

THE CLERK, Convener

- (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 WA Kennedy; W Graham — Rev C Harris; WH Scott — Rev Dr J Harper; W Pentland — Rev SWW Neilly; J McDowell — Rev GE Best; L Ryan — Rev Dr MA Barry; W Grills.
- (c) Rev JJ Andrews; WG McDowell — Rev Anne Tolland; N Carmichael — Rev TJ McCormick; P McGonigle — Rev Ian McClean; RD Freeman — Rev D Bannerman; B Simpson.
- (d) Rev JR Dickinson; G Crooks— Rev Dr Ruth Patterson; V Elliott — Rev JR Lambe; Miss VJ Wilson.
- (e) Rev Dr WJH McKee; J Lamberton — Rev K Patterson; T Allen — Rev R Herron; J Cochrane — Rev H Ross; S McKinney.
- (f) Rev J Lamont; Mrs E Montgomery — Rev A Mitchell; W McIlreavy — Rev D Nesbitt; A McAdoo.

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

- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, the Moderator-Designate, Deputy Clerk, Information Officer, Hospitality Secretary, J Kelly; Rev TC Morrison.
- (x) Revs Alan S Thompson, PT Dalzell; D Crowe, M Fisher
- (y) Revs JR Lambe, GE Best, TJ McCormick, R Herron, D Bannerman; Miss VJ Wilson, GY Crooks, WG McDowell.

### **Other Churches**

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

Presbyterian Church of Wales:

Church of Ireland General Synod 2004: Very Rev Dr IA McKay, Mr Ronnie Gamble

Methodist Conference 2004: Very Rev Dr IA McKay,

### **The URC Assembly 2003**

*Rev Colin McClure reports:*

1. This year's Assembly was hosted by the Wessex Synod in the naval town of Portsmouth. Early timidity is soon overcome by a profusion of familiar accents eager to swap notes about family and acquaintances "back home". It helped that we were welcomed to the city by the Lord Mayor, Tom Blair - an

Ulsterman who concluded his naval career aboard the HMS Londonderry, having originally left Kilkeel.

2. Being a residential and delegate Assembly ensures good attendance throughout. The forum is perhaps less intimidating than our own. Some reports have no accompanying resolutions. This can mean less focus but wider range to the delegate input – an environment which brings joys and frustrations!

### **SIGNS OF “DIVINE RESTLESSNESS”**

3. A standard feature of the agenda is an introductory input by the General Secretary entitled “The Agenda Before Us”. This is more than a “Business Committee” report and gives the General Secretary space to reflect and overview on strategic issues. The current General Secretary, Dr David Cornick, has a background as an academic theologian (a Church Historian to be precise) – and it shows! A denomination’s realisation of the inadequacy of the “meagre buffet” presented to people compared with the sumptuous feast which God offers is not necessarily a cause for depression. As long as this “divine restlessness” is acted upon, such disturbance may even be a strong sign that God is around! We must never let dutiful activity be a substitute for kingdom life. This is said within a denominational context where painful financial decisions have been taken, and, in particular, disproportionately generous ecumenical funding has been curtailed.

### **ELECTION OF MODERATOR 2004/5**

4. After a single transferable vote Sheila Maxey was elected. Over ten years ago Sheila began as Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and has continued as a staunch and supportive friend and confidante to several PCI representatives.

### **BIG NAMES – BIG CHALLENGES**

5. Monday’s business was interspersed with significant input from key figures – ecclesiastically and politically i.e. Dr Desmond van der Water (Council for World Mission – formerly The London Missionary Society), Joel Edwards (Evangelical Alliance) and Clare Short M.P. (former Secretary of State for International Development).

### **ANGLICAN-METHODIST COVENANT**

6. The convener of the Ecumenical Committee in presenting his report contended that ecumenism was not a distraction from mission, neither was it a “dumbing down” of the Gospel. Support was expressed for the Anglican-Methodist Covenant relationship with the hope that a trilateral arrangement including the URC may also emerge. As part of ongoing discussions the URC continued to probe issues such as the recognition of women’s ministry and establishment.

7. Later in the day the Scottish Synod made clear its disappointment that the SCIFU (Scottish Churches Initiative for Union) had been rejected by the Church of Scotland. They also moved a resolution of intent to proceed with those denominations who may be willing to do so i.e. Methodists and Episcopal

Church. The fact that the Scottish Episcopal Church had expressed a definite willingness to have women bishops seemed to clear the way for this.

### **COUNCIL FOR WORLD MISSION**

8. The first of the “external” speakers was the Rev Dr van der Water. He gave an overview of CWM, which is the URC’s main way of relating to the world church. The URC does not have a separate overseas board and therefore any relating to other churches is processed via the Ecumenical Committee. Amongst his historical reflection and updating on various initiatives Dr van der Water reminded delegates that no church is too poor to give, and no church too rich to receive.

### **EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE**

9. Joel Edwards gave a stirring and measured address which was warmly received. He critiqued our tendency to denominationalism as like being on board Noah’s Ark – not always very comfortable and rather smelly on the inside, but a lot safer than being on the outside!

10. Drawing on the incident where Peter was called on to explain and justify the healing of the congenitally lame man Edwards asked us about the concept of mission to our society we have. Why do we do it? On whose authority do we do it? These questions were posed to Peter and we too must address them. When Peter healed it was an act of kindness. Mission should therefore be tangible. It should seek to make a difference. Hence Edwards justified joining with other faith leaders after 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 to sign a pledge regarding tolerance.

11. However he reaffirmed the exclusivity and distinctiveness of the claims of and for Jesus, and the humility and clarity necessary to hold on to such essentials. Frankly, in an Assembly which is meticulously politically correct and operates in a multi-faith context I was surprised at the rapturous applause he received!

### **CHURCH OF ENGLAND “GAY” BISHOP CONTROVERSY**

12. The URC has an ongoing moratorium on issues of human sexuality. Thus an emergency resolution regarding the situation pertaining to Canon Jeffrey John and his apparent withdrawal from the process to appoint him as Bishop of Reading was carefully introduced by the General Secretary. The news of this “withdrawal” was hot off the press! After a relatively short debate (which included a response from the Church of England Bishop who is a member of the URC Ecumenical Committee) a motion was passed sympathising with all those hurt by the situation. This was passed for transmission to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Oxford.

### **FAITH SCHOOLS**

13. The Church and Society Committee introduced a debate concerning the increase in faith schools. Their resolution expressed a concern at this phenomenon, and cited the situation in Northern Ireland to back up their case. The picture they painted of the education system in N.I. and its results was highly

caricatured. Had not the motion that the “question be now put” been introduced I would have felt compelled to correct the simplistic and inaccurate analysis. However I was saved by procedure! An alternative motion (not an amendment) was also presented which in my view gave a more balanced analysis of faith schools and also encouraged those entrusted with religious education in schools. The alternative resolution was passed.

14. Whilst a bit irked by the negative insinuations about our education system it was yet another salutary reminder that our witness to the world is more often than not perceived in negative terms. It is thus important to maintain a presence in such forums in order to help meaningful discussion.

### **CLARE SHORT – REACHING MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT TARGETS?**

15. There was a buzz of anticipation on entering the hall on the Monday evening. Clare Short was to address the Assembly. She had appeared on BBC Radio 4 on Sunday morning and the dust had hardly settled after her high-profile resignation from government. In a plethora of carefully marshalled facts and figures she asserted that because poverty eradication was now actually achievable it was our duty.

16. Her comments were not merely a parade of statistics. She urged the Assembly to recognise the place of faith in making the future. She pointed to our prosperity but accompanying lack of meaning and purpose, evidenced by rising criminality, alcohol abuse and “the degradation of sexuality”. She ventured to suggest that when our forbearers were poorer the very struggle to survive or to make ends meet gave them a purpose. She decried the politicians’ promise to get us even more prosperity. Indeed the purpose has become to become more and more wealthy! But that never satisfies. There is always a need for more!

17. Citing several examples, Clare Short contended that either we get real about a world of more justice and fairness or we will end up with a more disease-ridden, divided, environmentally degraded and dangerous world.

18. She received a standing ovation from the Assembly and the title of prophet from the Moderator!

### **GLOBAL CONCERNS – Lobbying Partnership with American Churches**

19. The Ecumenical Committee moved a resolution about the world situation that, in particular, involved a commitment to work with their American partner churches (mainly PCUSA). This would be for information exchange but also for lobbying of government on both sides of the Atlantic. It seems to me that this is an initiative we could usefully “plug in” to.

### **CONCLUSION**

20. This Assembly (like this denomination) continues to fascinate me. It also warmly embraces its guests – not least those from Ireland! In this my last visit as the PCI delegate I have been confirmed in my affection for our brothers and sisters in the URC and the importance of the mutually beneficial bonds which must be maintained – through thick and thin!

### **The Methodist Conference 2003**

*Mr W Henry reports:*

1. The 234<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland was held in West Presbyterian Church, Ballymena, from Friday 6 June until Tuesday 10 June 2003. This was the first occasion for the Conference to be held in the North East District.

2. The corresponding members from our Church were The Very Rev Dr RI Birney and Mr W Henry. Representatives from other denominations were also warmly welcomed and the greetings of the Presbyterian Church were expressed by Dr Birney.

3. The opening service was held in West Presbyterian Church on Friday 6 June when the Rev WJ Rea, MBE, MTh, was installed as President of the Methodist Church in Ireland. The theme of the President's inaugural address was "Come, Holy Spirit, Revive your Church again." In his address Mr Rea said that his prayer was that spiritual revival would sweep over all of the people of God on this island.

4. On Sunday evening an Ordination Service was held in West Church conducted by the Rev Ian White, President of the British Methodist Conference, when four candidates for the Methodist ministry were ordained. An inspiring and challenging address was given by the President to the newly ordained ministers and to the large congregation drawn from all over Ireland.

5. In some respects the Conference was much more informal than our General Assembly. The order of business proceeded at a brisk pace and there was little that lapsed during the Conference. Much of the business went through without debate save in a few cases. There was little of the cut and thrust that we have come to expect in Assembly debates.

6. Mid-day services of Worship and Bible Study were held each day.

7. The business sessions covered a wide spectrum of issues showing the Church's deep involvement in the problems facing people in their daily lives.

8. The conference was concerned with Social Responsibilities, Mission and Outreach, Church Administration and Finance – all were included on the Agenda.

9. The Inter Church Relationship Committee reported on the good developing relationships between the Methodist Church and the Church of Ireland facilitated by the Covenant which was signed last year.

10. Several important key appointments were approved to take effect from 2004:

- Rev Winston Graham was designated as Secretary of the Conference and of the Methodist Church for the year 2004-2005.
- Conference also adopted the recommendation of the Board of Governors of Edgehill Theological College to appoint Rev Dr Richard Clutterbuck to the post of Principal of the College and the appointment of Rev Dr Heather Morris to the post of Director of Ministry.
- Rev Dr Brian Fletcher, BD, minister of Cregagh Circuit was elected President Designate, to be installed as the new President of the Methodist Church when the Conference meets in Dublin in 2004.

11. A regular feature of the Methodist Conference programme is the session entitled 'District Reports of the Work of God'. In this, members rise to speak about the things they see God doing in their districts, both by way of encouragement and challenge. Several speakers testified to the numbers of unchurched people who had come to personal faith in Jesus Christ as a result of attending Alpha Courses and other evangelistic efforts.

12. Throughout the Conference we were made to feel very welcome and we appreciated the warmth of friendship extended to us. It was a privilege to attend as representatives of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

### **The Welsh Assembly 2003**

*The Very Rev Dr AWG Brown reports:*

1. My wife, Margaret, and I had the great privilege of attending the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, which was held again this year at the University College of Lampeter from Monday 14 until Thursday 17 July. Some of those who had previously attended had assured us of what a delightful experience this would be, and we were not disappointed. It was a particular pleasure for me in that the retiring Moderator, who presides over the first half of the Assembly, was The Rev Merion Lloyd Davies, whom I have known for many years.

2. The new Moderator, who was installed on the Tuesday evening is the Rev Dafydd Owen, and we look forward to welcoming him and his wife as guests at our Assembly this year. Last year's Assembly appointed the Rev Ifan Rh Roberts as General Secretary. This was therefore his first Assembly, and he quickly demonstrated his competence in managing business, and in keeping a sense of vision in the debates. It was interesting to note some considerable differences in procedure compared with our own Assembly, and most notably that the text of resolutions was not printed in advance, but simply the subject area listed. The resolutions arose more directly out of the presentation of the report and whatever debate may have taken place. They also have fewer Boards, but with much wider remits.

3. The Welsh Church is bi-lingual. Most of the proceedings of the Assembly take place in Welsh, but with an excellent simultaneous translation in English, available through headphones. One quickly became used to this. The zeal of the Church to promote Welsh language and culture is at once apparent to the visitor. While this is important, it does also lead to some tension between the Welsh speaking majority, and the English speaking minority. Add to this the fact that the real power in the constitution of the Welsh Church lies not in General Assembly but in the three 'Associations.' Each of these has the power of veto, and since two of them are Welsh, and one of them is English in language and culture, it is not hard to see how problems can easily arise.

4. The Welsh Church has some strong congregations, and one senses much that is vibrant and imaginative in its life. Nevertheless in common with other denominations in Wales, it is battling with serious problems of decline. Many of its congregations are very small, and there are many redundant

buildings. There is also a shortage of candidates for full-time ministry, and considerable use of part-time ministry.

5. One event of particular sadness this year was the closing of the Church's Theological College in Aberystwyth. In future ministry students will be cared for by a Training Officer, and will be taught by means of University courses in theology, through ecumenical courses, and by means of distance learning.

6. Following the discussion of last year's Report *Moving Forward*, a new Report called *A Strategy for the Future* was presented to the Assembly. Among other things this envisaged considerable constitutional changes, giving more power to General Assembly, and reducing substantially the number of Presbyteries. The report envisaged the disposal of a sizeable number of chapels, and the upgrading and modernisation of others. The greater use of central bodies for strategy and finance was also proposed. With little debate all this was accepted, but will undoubtedly engender a great deal of discussion in the Associations in the year ahead, and when it comes up for final debate at next year's Assembly.

7. The Church is experiencing some difficulty with its Pensions fund, and it looks as if no more ministers will be able to retire at 65, but will have to work until they are 67.

8. Next year marks the centenary of the Welsh Revival of 1904, and this will generate a great deal of interest and prayer in the months ahead. It will also be marked at the Assembly itself.

9. Over the last few years a 'Youth Assembly' has met a few days before the General Assembly to examine the Reports and prepare a set of questions and responses which are printed with the Assembly's additional papers and are presented at the rostrum by one or other of the Youth delegates. This year they had the benefit of a visit from the new General Secretary who gave them a much-appreciated overview of main issues coming before the Assembly. The thoughtfulness of their comments, and the mature participation of the young people was one of the most memorable and encouraging features of the Assembly.

10. The fact that the Assembly is relatively small, and residential, meant that there is a warm sense of fellowship, which embraces the visitors as well as Assembly members. Informal supper parties in the evenings, little outings for those wives present, and an excellent Moderator's Reception all contributed to this. As well as the formal Opening and Closing of Assembly, and the Installation of the new Moderator, there was a preaching service, the annual Davies Lecture and a Historical Lecture, as well as a well-attended Prayer Meeting in the College Chapel. The unforgettable singing in English and in Welsh will be an abiding memory!

11. I came away from the Assembly feeling I had learned a great deal about Wales, its land, its culture and language, and above all its faith. Our links with the Presbyterian Church of Wales tend to be fairly formal ones based around visits to one another's General Assemblies. I hope that we can strengthen those links in the years ahead as I believe it would be to the mutual benefit of both our Churches.

## Église Réformée de France: National Synod (2003)

*Mrs Maureen Patterson reports:*

1. This year the National Synod of the French Reformed Church took place in Bordeaux from 29 May–1 June 2003. The Synod last met in Bordeaux in 1939, one year after the re-establishment of the French Reformed Church, which brought together almost all churches of the Reformed and Methodist traditions.

2. The Moderator of Synod, Pastor Corinne Akli from the Paris region, welcomed all present. Then Monsieur Marcel Manoel, President of the National Council, who is the leader of the denomination during the rest of the year, with the assistance of the General Secretary M Bertrand de Cazenove, gave the opening address. He reminded Synod of the Church's mission – to proclaim the Gospel to the world – and suggested it was time to look again at the objectives to be set, the shape to be given and the means to be deployed if this mission was to be fulfilled. He then sketched three types of improvement which needed to happen in the Reformed Church of France:

- (i) Hearing God's Word more clearly and translating it more adequately for their contemporaries;
- (ii) Assuming more fully the task of bringing a Christian perspective to bear in society, concerning the problems of our day; and
- (iii) Responding more resolutely to the need for reform in the life and witness of the Church in order to better fulfil her mission.

3. The rest of the agenda included many items of business similar to that of our own General Assembly. Of particular concern this year was the number of pastors leaving the ERF. There are currently 86 vacancies, 30 for more than two years. It was also pointed out that 71 pastors are currently working in non-parish situations. The changing face of ministry was highlighted and it was suggested that this is something synod should address in the future.

4. This Synod was taking place at a time of strikes and protests in France against Pension Reform and projected figures were given for the extra number of years pastors in the ERF will have to work to receive varying percentages of their pension. Concern was also expressed about cuts in the budget from the State, which will not only curtail the social work of the Church but also means that many jobs are in jeopardy.

5. In addition to routine business each Synod majors on one particular topic, this year's being 'What does it mean to be part of the Universal Church?' The Synod spent three sessions debating the topic and the subject was also addressed through worship and a public lecture. The title given to the lecture was 'The Church's contribution to the construction of society'. Taking part were Professor Andre Karamaga of WEC Africa Region and Vice-President of WARC; Professor Olivier Abel, from the Institute of Protestant Theology and Mr Jerome Vignon, civil servant in Brussels engaged in the interface between Church and Society.

6. The resolutions sent by Synod to National Council, among other things, stress the need to appoint another person to the responsibility for international relations; reaffirm ERF's commitment to its membership of



international bodies like WARC and WCC; and identify areas of thinking and training so as to put inter-cultural and international issues more firmly on the agenda of ministers and members.

7. The Synod's message to local churches, to be read at Pentecost, invited them to live out the reality of the church universal as something adventurous and demanding which lies at the heart of Christian faith. They were encouraged to let the Wind of the Spirit empower them for bringing their witness to the world and towards justice and reconciliation. The letter affirmed that the Church universal is the gift of God's spirit, that no single Church can claim to cover the universe and that God's Word comes to each of us in our own singular situations.

8. All who attended the Synod were grateful to Rev Gordon Campbell who once again acted as official interpreter and as a most useful resource person for the international guests.

9. It was a privilege to represent the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at the Synod and to have the opportunity not only to learn more about the ERF, but also other sister Churches through informal discussions.

## ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

### Transport

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

### Communion Service

2. The Communion Service this year will once again be held in Church House commencing at **12 noon** on Tuesday.

### Catering Arrangements

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

### Voting Cards

4. These should be obtained as soon as possible from the desk at the Carrickfergus Window where they are available on Monday evening, Tuesday morning, after which Members should contact the Financial Secretary's Office. *Ministers please note that when obtaining your voting cards this year, you are asked to produce the Registration Card which is enclosed with these reports.*

**Admission**

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

**Expenses**

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

COLIN MORRISON, Convener

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommended Order of Business be adopted.
3. That the professional amplification controller and the visual display operator be admitted to the private session.
4. That a grant of £16,000 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Committee.
5. That the Business Board, with its associated working committee, for the ensuing year beginning 15 March 2005, be appointed in accordance with Par 275 of the Code.

# BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Convener: Rev WA KENNEDY  
Secretary: Mr STEPHEN LYNAS

1. The Members of the Board of Communications remain convinced not only that we have good news to proclaim to the world but that we must communicate using the media to which today's people pay attention. We must be creative in an era of great change. The truth is that we have means of communication available to us today which were unthinkable to our forebears and which are enormously more powerful than anything available to them. However, every tool which he has continued to manage has the potential either to do great evil or to be a means of great good. The Board has a vision to put the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in the forefront of good communication both with the outside world and within the Presbyterian family.

2. During the past year the Board has continued to support and encourage its various committees and the Communications Department in their various areas of work. We owe a great debt to Stephen Lynas for the extremely effective way in which he has continued to manage our media presence and to head up the work of the Department. We are also indebted to Anne McCully and Edward Connolly for carrying so much of the workload in a year when hopes to expand the staff permanently came to nothing.

3. We are grateful also to the conveners of the various Board Committees who quietly and efficiently do the week by week work that fulfils our mandate. Their reports tell the story of most of the Board's activities through the year.

4. We note with regret the resignation of Rev Lawrence Hilditch as convener of the Church Architecture Committee and express our thanks for his years of service on this busy Committee.

5. We also note that this is the last year a report of the Public Worship Committee will appear here and we encourage the Board of Mission in Ireland to pursue with vision and urgency the remit transferred to its members to give leadership and encouragement to the Church in this central area of Church life. Progress towards the publication of the new hymn book has been substantial but we believe that there will be ongoing work for the Hymnal Committee in connection with it for at least another year and are therefore asking the Assembly to maintain it in existence as an ad hoc Committee for another year.

6. We express our thanks to Rev Jack Richardson and those who have worked long hours on this project over the past months. We also ask the Assembly to express its appreciation of Mr Richardson's convenerhip of the Committee over the past 8 years and to those who have served with him.

7. Rev Dr John McKee deserves our thanks as he completes his term as Convener of the Historical Society Committee. His personal enthusiasm has transferred to the Board members as they have been told of the Committee's work in maintaining our links with the past and helping us to learn from our history.

8. Thanks are also due to the Historical Society Committee and its membership. As part of the Board's restructuring, the Assembly will be asked to approve plans to refer business formerly transacted by the Historical Society Committee to a Co-Convenor of the Communications Administration Committee who will have responsibility for bringing matters relating to our history to the attention of this Committee and to the Board.

9. The Board is grateful to the Rev John Murdoch for the eloquent and diligent way he has prepared the Memorial Record and read the Memorial Roll. This time-consuming task has been appreciated by many, especially those bereaved.

10. At Board level much of our energy during the past year has been devoted to responding to the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities. We were assured of an important role in promoting the communication strategy of the Church and accordingly have sought to redesign the structure of our Committees to fulfil that exciting vision. (Appendix I)

11. Our proposals to the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities aim to create a more efficient and effective platform from which to assess, guide and resource the Church in its many departments. (Appendix II)

12. We look forward with anticipation to moving in new directions in the next year, after a year which has been one of reflection and reconsideration.

### **Minister in Recognised Service**

*Rev Dr Bert Tosh reports:*

1. Another year, another report to the General Assembly! Much of what I have to say is not too dissimilar from previous years. The small religious broadcasting unit continues to produce a large number of hours of, particularly, radio broadcasting, both on BBC Radio Ulster and on Radios 2 and 4.

2. On Radio Ulster, *Sunday Sequence* is generally considered an excellent programme, covering a wide range of material, with William Crawley displaying the qualities of a good radio presenter. *Morning Service* continues to be broadcast each Sunday. I have lost count of the number of these services which I have produced over the years, but am becoming increasingly conscious of the challenge facing ministers and congregations in addressing audiences to whom religious words and ideas and Biblical references and allusions are becoming increasingly unfamiliar. There is a need to beware that those addressed do not feel excluded.

3. And yet the fact that the Radio 4 *Sunday Worship*, of which six come from Northern Ireland each year, has an audience of over one million people, would indicate there is a desire for many to share in worship. It may well be that, for some, the primary attraction is not the spoken word but the music!

4. This past year has been quite a difficult period for the BBC with the Campbell/Gilligan controversy followed by the publication of the Hutton Report – and all this at a time when the process of review for the BBC's Royal Charter is proceeding apace. The charter is due for renewal in 2006. Since its last renewal in 1996, the world of broadcasting has changed immensely, with methods of delivery and new technologies unheard of even eight years ago. If

public service broadcasting – as exemplified by the BBC – is to continue, then its value has to be stressed by all who appreciate it and not least by those who consider religious broadcasting important.

5. Each year I thank the many people who contribute to programmes for which I have some responsibility. My repetition of that gratitude is still heartfelt!

## COMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

### Department

1. In common with many of the committees of the Assembly there is an extent to which we have been in a state of hiatus as we wait for the final outcome of the restructuring of Boards and Committees and a good proportion of our time has been spent in making our own suggestions for change.

2. Stephen Lynas still continues to lead his hard working staff in maintaining an excellent service for our Church and we are hoping that one of the results of reorganisation will be an even more effective use of his department throughout the various Boards and agencies of our Church.

### Presbyterian Herald

3. Once more we express our appreciation of the good work of Rev. Arthur Clarke and his staff while we continue to look at how our Church's magazine can be developed to maintain and increase its circulation.

### Email

4. Spam email is a continuing problem across the whole Internet. Following discussions with our Internet service provider, users of the presbyterianireland.org email domain were advised of ways to reduce spam email. This is constantly under review.

R ALAN RUSSELL, Convener

## MEDIA COMMITTEE

1. The committee has sought to fulfil the remit of the Assembly in a number of ways.

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

3. The BBC Charter is due for renewal in 2006. This presents the Church with an opportunity to provide constructive comment on the nature of public broadcasting. In particular the future of religious broadcasting is of concern, given the potential changes to public service broadcasting funding. Members of the committee also took part in several of the BBC's accountability discussions.

4. In light of the Assembly's decision for all Boards to "undertake a review of the arrangements within their Board... and forward the outcome to the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities by 31 December 2003" (2003 Reports p315 res. 17) a proposed overall strategy for understanding the Media Committee's work was drawn up and submitted to the Board. (Appendix 1)

5. UTV hosted a debate on 21 January 2004 looking at the relationship between the Church and the media, focusing on current affairs and religious broadcasting. The Information Officer presented a talk on particular events which highlighted the potential for positive news coverage.

6. The Information Office continues to advise on and deal with the Church's relationship to the media, circulating over 150 stories per year on Church related issues. A high level of positive coverage in the media should be noted.

7. Media Watch articles continue in the *Herald* to inform the wider church of current media issues.

C GLOVER, Convener

## CHURCH ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met on nine occasions since the last report.

2. Approval is given to the majority of submissions. Sometimes suggestions are made and in a few situations more information or clearer plans are requested.

3. Submissions have ranged from minor alterations to major renovations.

4. Congregations receive written confirmation or otherwise within a few days of our monthly meeting.

5. A large amount of time was spent dealing with queries regarding disability access. A number of visits were made to individual congregations and also to one Presbytery.

6. The Disability Discrimination Act will come into force in October this year. Congregational Committees need to ensure that their church and hall properties comply with this Act.

7. The committee is always interested to see the finished project and this year visited Adelaide Road, Dublin, where major work transformed this building into a multi-purpose area reaching out to the community. This was impressive and the committee would commend the congregation on this vision. A visit was then made to Greystones where the committee viewed a new hall built entirely with wood. Again the committee was impressed with this building and commend the congregation for the work put into seeing this project completed.

8. Congregations are reminded that it is important to use the following sequence of procedures:

- (a) Congregational approval is given;
- (b) Presbytery approval received;
- (c) Plans are then sent to our committee for approval.

9. On a personal level I would like to record my sincere thanks to all the members of the committee for their support during this year.

10. A special thanks to our experts who so willingly give their time and knowledge to help this committee.

GEORGE D SIMPSON, Acting Convener

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1. The Society, through its library, publications and events seeks to encourage interest in the history of Irish Presbyterianism.

2. We invite all who are interested to visit our room on the second floor of Church House (Room 2.20), which is open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10.00 am – 12.30 pm and Wednesday 10.00 am – 12.30 pm and 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm. Our Assistant Secretary will be pleased to assist members and visitors in whatever way he can. You can visit our web site at [www.presbyterianireland.org/phsi](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/phsi) - our web site includes very interesting material concerning the work of the Society.

3. We are presently making the work of the Society more widely known and hope to increase our membership, particularly among younger people.

4. We thank all who support the Society. The Incidental Fund is a vital source of income. Therefore, we express our gratitude to the General Assembly for its generosity.

W J H McKEE, Convener

## PUBLIC WORSHIP COMMITTEE

1. Of necessity, much of the work of the Public Worship Committee for the past year has been focused on the preparation of the new hymnbook, to be called *The Irish Presbyterian Hymn Book*. Several special meetings have been held and most of the spadework has been in the hands of the sub-committee comprising of the conveners of the four sub-committees, the General Assembly Press Officer and the Committee convener. As we go to press approximately one half of the proof reading has been completed - words and music. Some difficulties regarding copyright have arisen, which we hope will not jeopardise our rather tight time schedule. It had been the hope of the Committee that the CD ROM would be launched simultaneously with the hymnbook. Unfortunately this proved impossible. However the publisher – SCM Canterbury Press Ltd – has assured us that it will become available within a year of the official launch of the hymnbook.

2. The date for the official launch has been set for Saturday 18th September at 7.30 p.m. in the Assembly Hall, Belfast. The programme for this event will be largely in the hands of the conveners of the four sections of the hymnbook i.e. existing materials, contemporary materials, children's materials, and psalms/liturgical materials. The act of dedication and epilogue is to be performed by the Moderator, Right Rev Dr Ken Newell. In addition to this official launch it is the hope of the Hymnal Committee that there will be other launches throughout the island of Ireland in strategic centres. A taster/sampler is

currently being prepared which will be issued to all ministers/organists/worship leaders and it is hoped that these will be available at the meetings of the General Assembly and Special 'Get a Life' Assembly. It is also planned that the official launch service will be adapted and go out as Radio Ulster *Morning Service* on the Sunday after the launch i.e. 26th September. There is also a strong possibility that praises used at the official launch will be transmitted on the airwaves through the medium of *Sunday Half Hour*.

3. The work that has gone into the compilation of this new hymnbook has been enormous!! It is the opinion of all of us who have been involved that it will be well suited to the needs of our Church and congregations and our hope and prayer is that it will be welcomed enthusiastically by congregations and usefully used as a vehicle of offering praise to, and ultimately glorifying Almighty God.

4. Regarding the proposed Resource Centre, it had been the opinion of the Public Worship Committee that it should be sited at Union College. However, when representatives of the Committee visited the College and saw the accommodation allocated for this purpose, it quickly became their opinion that this was entirely unsuitable. This was communicated to the Committee and indeed to the Board of Communications and the conclusion reached was that, rather than a Resource Centre, a Resource Directory produced and updated annually by whatever body takes over from the Public Worship Committee in the restructuring proposals, would be much preferable.

5. Work on the Experimental Revision Materials regarding Baptism and the Lord's Supper has now been completed and is in the hands of the publishers. It is hoped that these will be available by the June General Assembly and that ministers will find them useful in the conduct of these sacramental services. It should be noted that these and other materials within the Experimental Revision folder are issued in the name of the Public Worship Committee and at no time have, or ever claimed to have, General Assembly status. These are mere suggestions, meant to be helpful to ministers in the conduct of particular services, which they are free to use, revise, alter or ignore.

6. While the work of the Public Worship Committee will be taken over by the Board of Mission in Ireland, the considerable sum of money accrued from coming out of the Church Hymnary Trust will still be used for the purposes agreed by resolution of the General Assembly in 2002. This stated that when the origination cost of the new hymnal is paid for from the sum accruing from the Church Hymnary Trust that the General Assembly retain the balance of the amount accruing from the Church Hymnary Trust for the following purposes:

- (i) The production of the new hymnary in electronic format.
- (ii) Cost incurred in the launch of the new hymnary.
- (iii) Costs incurred in the provision of the proposed Resource Centre.
- (iv) Likely revision of the Psalter.
- (v) Possible supplements to the new hymnary.
- (vi) Such other purposes in connection with public worship as the Assembly may approve.

W T J RICHARDSON, Convener



## MEMORIAL RECORD

**Rev Robert John Young, BA**, senior minister of Carndonagh and Malin, died on 1 July 2003, in the 87th year of his age and the 60th of his ministry.

A County Antrim man, he was born on 8 November 1916 at Ballymoney, where his father was in business. He was educated locally, and from Ballymena Academy he became a student at Magee University College, graduating in Arts from Trinity College, Dublin. Intended by his family for medicine, he felt called by God to Christian ministry. He pursued his theological education in Assembly's College, was licensed by the Presbytery of Route on 26 May 1941, and served as assistant in the congregation of Woodvale. It was to his own county and to his own Presbytery that he returned on receiving a call to his first charge, Ramoan, where he was ordained and installed on 5 April 1944. A move to Belfast came seven years later, when he became minister of Belmont on 23 May 1951, and it was in this large city congregation that he was to exercise an influential ministry for exactly 28 years. Its demands and pressures took their toll and, rather than give less than the best which he had always expected of himself, he accepted a call to the congregations of Carndonagh and Malin in a part of the world in which he had previously sought retreat and refreshment, where he served with great acceptance from 24 May 1979 until his retirement on 30 November 1982.

His interests, shaped to some extent by the experience of illness in his teens, his intellect sharpened by the debate and discussion in which he delighted to engage, his quest for knowledge and understanding fed by his lifelong commitment as a voracious reader, he emerged even in his student years as someone who was different and throughout his life original thought made him no stranger to controversy. In the Belmont years he seized the opportunity to be a governor of Campbell College and to serve as Presbyterian chaplain, and he found fulfilment in contact there with the young people he sought to equip for life with an adequate faith and a Christian morality. In the years of the Troubles he was in the forefront of peacemakers as he confronted politicians, prelates and the paramilitaries with courage and conviction. His community awareness led him to become a founder member of Belmont and District Council of Churches in days when such organisations were innovative and likely to be viewed with suspicion.

War service was another influential factor in shaping his determination to fulfil his calling as a servant of God. His love for the people in his care in successive congregations found further expression in his pastoral concern for fellow ministers, for whose sake, as convener of the Ministerial Income Committee from 1976-1978 he pioneered a more equitable system of remuneration. His identification with organisations which promoted marriage counselling and mental health and with the YMCA in Iceland, which encouraged him to become familiar with the Icelandic language, shows something more of the breadth of sympathy in one who believed in Christ rather than the Church, in the Word rather than in words, and in being like Christ rather than in his own importance.

He was a man who knew he was loved by God and who came to know the love and respect of other human beings. Within the family he knew the love and

support of his wife Mabel, whose death has taken place since his. The loss of their only son was a most painful experience; Aureol and Rosemary, their daughters, are commended to the sympathy and prayers of the Church.

**Very Rev William Boyd, MA,DD**, senior minister of First Lisburn, died on 8 July 2003, in the 96th year of his age and the 72nd of his ministry.

Born on 14 January 1908, he grew up in the congregation of First Bailieborough, and from Trinity College, Dublin, where he gained a degree in Arts, he proceeded to Assembly's College, Belfast to train for the ministry. He was licensed by the Bailieborough Presbytery on 22 April 1931 and served his assistantship in Richview congregation, Belfast. Ordained in his first charge in Burt, Co Donegal on 24 May 1932, he soon displayed those qualities which were to make of his a memorable ministry. He remained there for seven years, and it was there that he met Meta, who was to be his wife for more than sixty years.

In 1939 a call came to The Mall, Armagh, and he was installed there on 31 May; from 1941 to 1946 he served in Northern Ireland and in the Far East as a chaplain to the Forces. It was on 27 April 1950 that he was installed in the congregation of First Lisburn, where he exercised a distinguished and influential ministry until his retirement on 31 December 1972. During his time there the congregation, and indeed the wider community, benefited hugely from the deployment of his many gifts in public worship and pastoral concern. A man of God, he was seen also as a man of vision and of wisdom; he was known as a man of great humility, with a warm sense of humour. On joining Fisherwick congregation after retirement, he assisted there for some years with pastoral visitation. Everywhere he went he brought an abundant supply of friendliness and goodwill to those within the Church and beyond, and though it was by virtue of his accumulated years that he became Father of the General Assembly, it was also by his impact upon their lives that many regarded him as such.

For some 15 years Dr Boyd convened the Assembly's Committee on work among Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen, as the Forces Committee was then known. He was convener also of the Retirements and the Retired Ministers' Fund Committees, and was instrumental in introducing an Endowment Insurance Scheme for ministers. In 1967 the Church honoured him by electing him Moderator of the General Assembly.

He took a particular interest in education, was chairman for many years of the Boards of Governors of Wallace High School and Forthill School in Lisburn, and served as chairman also of the South Eastern Education and Library Board. A keen supporter of the work of the Girls' Brigade, he became chairman of the Northern Ireland Board.

A rugby player in earlier years who could claim to have shared in the City of Derry's victory in the Towns' Cup in the 1930s, he continued to play golf regularly until just a few years before his death.

He is survived by his wife, Meta, his daughters Rosemary, Sheila and Jennifer, and his sons John and Roger.

**Rev Cecil Robert John Brown, BA**, minister without charge (retired), died on 20 July 2003, in the 78th year of his age and the 52nd of his ministry. A farmer's son, he was born near Donaghmore in Co Tyrone and from the local

primary school won a scholarship to Dungannon Royal School. Castlecaulfield was the congregation in which he taught a Sunday School class, was active in Christian Endeavour and sang in the choir. A growing love for the Church, the Bible and the Saviour led him to study for the ministry, first through Magee University College and Trinity College, Dublin, and then at Assembly's College, Belfast.

He was licensed by the Presbytery of Dungannon on 5 July 1949 and became assistant in the congregation of Megain Memorial, Belfast. A call came to Fermanagh and he served as minister of the linked congregations of Maguiresbridge, Newtownbutler and Lisnaskea from 12 September 1951 until 4 May 1955, when he moved to Donemana, promoting work among young people and forming a drama group during a ministry which lasted until 30 March 1967. He had accepted a call of the Mission Board to serve as an ordained missionary in service with the Presbyterian Church in Canada, under the Commonwealth Mission. Initially he went to Newfoundland, to St Paul's Church, Corner Brook, and then moved on the Leasdale, Ontario.

Returning to Northern Ireland, he obtained a post as a teacher of Religious Education in Rathcoole Secondary School, a ministry which was recognised by the Presbytery of North Belfast on 4 February 1975. Colleagues and pupils have testified to his hard work, enthusiasm and inspirational teaching. He continued to preach regularly and found further outlet for ministerial service in Ballina, Killala and Ballymote, and then in Donegal Town, before his retirement in 1990.

Cecil Brown was a preacher, a teacher, a pastor and a friend, a man of many parts and many places, a man of passion and of compassion, whose primary interest outside his work was his garden.

Much loved and respected by his family, he never married and is survived by his sisters Violet, Myrtle and Margaret, wife of Rev. William Chestnutt.

**Rev William James Morrison, BA**, minister without charge (retired), died on 1 September 2003, in the 83rd year of his age and the 45th of his ministry. A native of Coleraine, he attended Coleraine Academical Institution and embarked upon a career in banking. After some eleven years he commenced a course of study which led him via Magee University College, Trinity College, Dublin, New College, Edinburgh and Assembly's College, Belfast to licensing by the Presbytery of Coleraine on 30 May 1958.

Ordination followed on 22 October in that year, and his first congregation in Grange, in the Presbytery of Ballymena. He demitted his charge on 19 February 1961, having accepted a call from the Presbyterian Church of Canada to Brussels, Ontario. Thereafter he served in a number of congregations in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and other parts of Ontario. In 1978 he transferred to the United Church of Canada and served in Sarnia, Ontario and in Saskatchewan, before returning to Ireland in the early 1980s.

In 1984 he was appointed Stated Supply in Kells, Corboy and Mullingar and he remained there until 31 May 1986. He then returned to Canada for a time. Of a quiet disposition, his conscientious approach to his work left little time for recreational interests, and tennis, golf and bowls provided what was a vicarious pleasure rather than any active involvement.

His wife, Frances, survives him and maintains a family link with the congregation of Terrace Row. There are four children, George and David, the eldest and the youngest, in Ireland; and Rosemary and Heather, who reside in Canada.

**Rev Herbert Courtney, BA**, senior minister of St Andrew's, Rosetta, died on 7 September 2003, in the 91st year of his age and the 53rd of his ministry.

Although born at Milford, Co Armagh, he was brought up in the congregation of Woodvale, Belfast, and on leaving school he took employment as a painter and decorator. During the Second World War he served in the RAF. When the war ended he began studies for the Christian ministry, following the route of many of his contemporaries from Magee College, Londonderry to Trinity College, Dublin, where he gained a degree in Arts, and then to Assembly's College, Belfast.

Licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 10 January 1951, he was ordained in Stranorlar on 28 November that same year. He served in Co Donegal for just over three years before responding to the call of the relatively new congregation of St Andrew's, where he was installed on 24 February 1955 and where he spent 24 years until retirement from the active ministry on 30 November 1979.

It was his leadership which made of a Church Extension project a thriving, active congregation. One who could handle a trowel as effectively as the Word of Life, his was a formative influence in a growing cause and in the lives of many individuals to whom, as caring pastor and faithful preacher, he brought Christ near. Even in retirement he continued to take a keen interest in the place which had come to mean so much to him, where he himself had come to mean so much, as he proved himself a man of God. The congregation was not the only sphere in which he gave sterling service. He will be remembered by ministerial colleagues, elders and members of other churches in the area as Clerk of Presbytery of East Belfast, a position he occupied with distinction for a remarkable period of 32 years, from 1963-1995. He was elected Moderator of the Synod of Belfast in 1983.

The death of his wife Margaret in 1995 affected him deeply and precipitated a move to Scotland to be near his daughter, Anne. She and her brother Robin are left to mourn his passing after a period of declining health, and their sense of loss will be shared by many who know they have cause to thank God for every remembrance of him.

**Rev Andrew Peden McComb, BA,BD**, senior minister of First Dromara, died on 10 October 2003 in the 88th year of his age and the 62nd of his ministry.

Of farming stock, he was born at Carmavey, Muckamore, on 17 July 1916, and the family were members of Loanends congregation. He attended Belfast Royal Academy and followed a course which took him to Queen's University and Assembly's College. A degree in Arts in 1939 was followed by one in Divinity in 1950.

Licensing was by the Templepatrick Presbytery on 27 May 1941. He spent a short time as assistant to Rev. William Boyd in The Mall, Armagh before ordination in the charge of Redrock and Druminnis on 16 September 1942. In 1954 he received a call to Church Extension work in Belfast, and he enjoyed a

fruitful ministry in Dunlop Memorial, where he was installed on 30 December 1954, and where he remained until 4 January 1968. During his ministry there he was appointed lecturer in Religious Education at Jordanstown Physical Education College. A move to Craigavon proved very difficult; that the cause there retained a place in his heart was evident when, with great sadness, he accepted an invitation to preach at a final service in 1996; but after just ten months he accepted the call of First Dromara, where he was to remain for the rest of his active ministry, retiring on 30 September 1981.

Under his leadership there a new hall was opened in 1974, and as a devoted pastor he expressed his own love of Christ and the love of Christ for His people. He became well-known in the wider Church through his involvement with the ministry of Divine Healing, to which he was deeply committed, and which prompted a series of publications for which he was responsible. He was convener of the Church's Divine Healing Committee from 1979-1985. He found an interest also in education and a hobby in photography.

A willing worker, kindly and caring, who endeared himself to a grateful people and who will be remembered as a man of God and as a faithful and devoted servant of Christ, he brought help and encouragement to those whom he encountered within his congregation and among his fellow ministers. He counted himself blessed in his family; he enjoyed almost sixty years of married life with his wife Queenie, who survives him, together with their daughters Heather and Carol.

**Rev Robert (Robin) McCausland Bell, BA**, senior minister of First Kilraughts, died on 24 October 2003 in the 73rd year of his age and the 43rd of his ministry.

Born in Belfast on 6 April 1931, he was brought up in the congregation of May Street, where his grandfather, Rev Dr Wylie Blue, had been minister. Educated at Sedburgh School in Yorkshire, he returned to his native city and to Queen's University in 1949, from where he graduated in Arts. His theological education was undertaken first at Assembly's College and then at New College, Edinburgh.

Licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 25 May 1956, he assisted in the congregations of McQuiston Memorial and Fortwilliam Park, and was called to be minister of Raphoe, where he was ordained on 31 May 1961. His responsibilities increased when on 1 July 1965 he became also Stated Supply in Ballindrait. He remained in Donegal for ten years, responding to the call of First Kilraughts in 1971, and was installed on 16 November in that year in the charge which would see him remain until retirement on 30 June 1996.

He arrived in the aftermath of the fire which had destroyed the old church building but embarked, undeterred, upon a long period of faithful service which enabled him to express for the benefit of many his outstanding pastoral gifts, with that gentlemanly courtesy which characterised the man and his ministry. A useful and respected member of Presbytery, forceful in debate, yet humble, he served on the Finance and Architectural Committees. Committed not only to his congregation but to the community in which it was set, he championed the cause and pledged himself to maintain the heritage of those who sprang from the countryside in which he himself found delight. He was associated with the

Friends of the Way, a cross-community ministerial group, as well as the Clerical Club of his fellow Presbyterians. He enjoyed music, played the piano and was an active member of Ballymoney Male Voice Choir. He was widely read, interested in current affairs and an avid devotee of crossword puzzles. A serious decline in his own health was complicated by awareness of the illness of Rosanne, his wife of more than forty years. She survives him, together with their three daughters, Patricia, Caroline and Alexandra.

**Rev James Leonard Heaney, BA, BD**, senior minister of Mountpottinger, died on 30 October 2003, in the 78th year of his age and the 48th of his ministry.

He was born on 4 April 1926 in Belfast and was brought up in Ballygomartin congregation. Educated at Methodist College, he went on to become a graduate of the Institute of Mechanical Engineering and found employment first as an aero engineering officer in the Royal Naval Air Service, and then with the Belfast firm of James Mackie and Sons. In these earlier days he indulged a love of sport and showed prowess on the Methody water polo team and the Queen's University soccer first eleven.

It was at Queen's that he began his preparation for the ministry in 1949, graduating three years later in Arts. He attended Edinburgh University for a year, completing his theological studies at Assembly's College. He had a particular interest in and aptitude for the Hebrew language and subsequently gained a BD degree.

He was licensed by the Belfast Presbytery on 2 June 1955. Assistantships in Nelson Memorial and Bethany prepared him for ordination in his first charge, Hill Street, Lurgan, on 28 June 1956. Six years later he became minister of Mountpottinger, in the next thirty years of active ministry and in the ten years of retirement which followed, leaving an indelible mark upon the life and work of that congregation. Faithful in the pulpit, in the place of prayer and among his people, he was a man of many parts, personally involved in the practical issues of Church property, in the annual BB camp, and in the fun and fellowship of congregational holidays which he instituted with the help of his wife, Mary. Able to relate alike to young and old, true to the principles with which he first set out yet accepting in other areas of the need for change, he influenced many for good and for the God who, to his constant surprise, had called him into His service.

Predeceased by his wife in 1992, he is survived by a daughter, Karis and a son, Stephen.

**Rev John Edward (Jack) Glenfield, BA, MTh, DMin**, senior minister of Shore Street, Donaghadee, died on 3 November 2003 in the 77th year of his age and the 53rd of his ministry.

He was born into the congregation of First Cookstown on 13 July 1927, and from Cookstown High School he enrolled as a student at Queen's University, Belfast, from where he graduated in Arts. Three subsequent years at Assembly's College brought licensing by the Tyrone Presbytery on 28 May 1950 and an assistantship in Agnes Street, Belfast.

He was ordained on 24 October 1951 and served for ten years as minister of Ramoan from 1951-1961. On 2 March 1961 he was installed in the

congregation of Shore Street, Donaghadee, where he was to minister for more than thirty years until his retirement on 30 September 1992.

A private, humble man, he was a gracious and thoughtful pastor to his people, a true friend to those who were in any kind of trouble, whose needs were always afforded top priority in a life of commitment and service. Church organisations knew the benefit of his support and counsel, and he had a special interest in Boys' Brigade, serving for many years and, indeed, until his retirement, as leader-in-charge of the Anchor Boys. His interest in young people was extended to include the work of youth clubs.

Study in later years resulted in the award of the degree of Master of Theology from Assembly's College and in a Doctorate in Ministry from Covington College, USA. He was appointed a Lecturer in Temperance by the General Assembly and fulfilled that role from 1956-1968. He served as Moderator of the Synod of Armagh and Down in 1980 and published a history of Ramoan, his first congregation. Music and hockey were recreational interests.

He married Miss Jewell Grace Blair on 30 July 1952 and, having already marked the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination, the couple celebrated a Golden Wedding in 2002. Mrs. Glenfield died soon afterwards, and in the last few years of his own deteriorating health he was cared for by their daughter Charis, who survives him, together with her brother Rodger.

**Rev William Campbell Lockhart, BA**, senior minister of Magherally, died on 16 November 2003, in the 86th year of his age and the 58th of his ministry.

A native of Donegal, he moved at an early age with his family to the city of Londonderry, and it was at Magee University College where he began his studies for the ministry, completing a degree in Arts at Trinity College, Dublin, and undertaking training in theology at Assembly's College, Belfast. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Derry on 25 May 1941, and there followed a period of assistantship, first in Ravenhill, then in Waringstown, and finally in Townsend Street, Belfast.

It was on 19 June 1946 that he was ordained and installed in the charge where he was to spend his entire ministry. By the time he retired on 30 September 1988 he had been minister of Magherally for 42 years.

The church itself was enhanced on more than one occasion and the church hall built under his leadership; but in such a long ministry among them it was the relationship he nurtured with his people which made of him an outstanding servant of Christ. Some will remember with fondness his ministry to the young; those who are older will remember with gratitude a pastor who became a friend, sharing with them joys and sorrows and the common, though often perplexing experiences of life. Approachable, courteous, kindly, true and supportive, this was a man who even in retirement stood by those whom he loved in the Lord, and who came to love in return one who shared with them his own living faith, but whose concern for spiritual issues did not preclude interest in matters practical and mundane.

A helpful, diligent and popular member of the Iveagh Presbytery, he had become its senior member. For twenty years he served as chaplain to Banbridge Hospital, and for 26 years he found expression for an enthusiasm of his own by

encouraging others as chairman of Banbridge Speech and Drama Festival. He was known also for his interest in bee-keeping.

He married comparatively late in life, but in his wife Helen he found one who shared his life and his life's work devotedly for almost forty years. She survives him, along with their two children, John and Mary.

**Rev Reuben Dinsmore, BA**, senior minister of Ringsend, died on 11 December 2003, in the 90th year of his age and the 62nd of his ministry.

It was in Donegal that he was born on 4 November 1914, and it was to Donegal that he would return to end his days. A farmer's son from Muff, whose home congregation was Knowhead, he was educated at Foyle College, Londonderry, Magee University College, Trinity College, Dublin, where he gained his degree in Arts. Three years followed at Assembly's College, Belfast, and he was licensed by the Presbytery of Derry on 2 June 1940.

A period of assistantship under Rev Norman Maxwell in Woodvale Park, Belfast in wartime exposed him to the effects upon the city of the Easter air raids of 1941, when the church hall was used as a first aid and relief centre and the church itself became a temporary mortuary, and such experiences left a deep and lasting impression.

Ordination in Newbliss on 13 August 1942 marked the beginning of a ministry in the congregations of Newbliss, Stonebridge and Drumkeen which lasted for fifteen years. Towards the end of that time he met and married Mrs. Olive Kettle, a widow whose husband and two sons had been tragically killed in a car accident, leaving her with one daughter, Hilary.

In 1957 he responded to a call from Park Terrace, a congregation of the English Presbyterian Church in Gateshead, where he remained until 1961. Returning to Ireland, he became minister of Ringsend on 6 July in that year, serving until retirement on 5 November 1979. He and Mrs Dinsmore retired to Portrush and were associated for some thirteen years with Ballywillan congregation, until in 1992 they moved to Donegal to be near the family.

A quiet manner and a tranquil spirit characterised the man and his ministry. It was his aim and his achievement to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with his God. He showed consideration always in his dealings with others, and his sympathy brought strength and blessing. His was a self-forgetfulness and a deep communion with Jesus Christ, fuelled by the private devotions which were more than a regular habit, rather a way of life.

His wife and co-worker survives him, together with Hilary, her husband and family.

**Rev John McWhirter, BA, DipTh, MTh**, senior minister of Glendermott with Strathfoyle, died on 11 February 2004 in the 78th year of his age and the 39th of his ministry.

A native of Ballymena, born on 10 September 1926 and brought up in the congregation of Wellington Street, he became interested in the work of the Boys' Brigade and at one time was the youngest captain in the Province. After leaving school he entered the world of business and then embarked on full-time Christian service, initially with Belfast City Mission. While Lay Assistant in the congregation of St Enoch's he undertook study at Queen's University,



graduating in Arts in 1962. He completed his preparation for the ministry at Assembly's College and was licensed by the Presbytery of North Belfast on 30 May 1965.

The congregations of Orritor and Claggan called him to be their minister and he was installed there on 1 September 1965. After nine years he became minister of Glendermott on 19 September 1974 and it was there that he was to spend the remainder of his active ministry, assuming responsibility also for Strathfoyle in 1978. He retired on 31 December 1991, but continued to find fulfilment in what he enjoyed doing most of all, the preaching and proclamation of the word of God. It was in another setting that he became well-known outside the boundaries of his own parish, in a conscientious ministry as chaplain which brought blessing to colleagues, medical staff, patients and relatives alike in Altnagelvin's growing hospital. Here the gentleness and sincerity which were the hallmarks of his approach found full and effective expression. He was a humble man, dependable, one who could be entrusted with a confidence, one whose words of wisdom were born of careful thought, a readiness to sit himself where others sat, an innate grace and the desire to bring encouragement. He put into practice in everyday life what he preached from the pulpit and cared for his flock with diligence and devotion. In later life he undertook further study, gaining first a diploma, then a Master's degree in Theology.

He was a natural choice when the Presbytery of Foyle sought to appoint a Pastor Pastorum; he served on various school committees, was convener of the Students' Bursary Fund from 1973-1980 and was elected Moderator of the Synod of Derry and Omagh in 1979.

His death after a short illness interrupted a work in which he was still usefully and enthusiastically engaged. He leaves behind his wife, Betty, their three children, Anne, David and Alan, and ten grandchildren.

**Rev Gordon Elliot Lockhart**, senior minister of Garryduff, died on 15 February 2004 in the 89th year of his age and the 43rd of his ministry.

Born and educated in Dublin and brought up in connection with the Adelaide Road congregation, he first entered the world of business in that city before embarking on a course of study for the Christian ministry which he completed at Assembly's College, Belfast.

His early experience was gained as an assistant in Trinity, Cork, and he was licensed by the Presbytery of Armagh on 20 June 1961. Ordained and installed in Tassagh and Armaghbrague on 27 September 1961, he remained there as minister for almost two years, until called to the congregations of First and Second Ray. Installed there on 25 July 1963, he spent a further two years until becoming minister of Garryduff in the Presbytery of Route on 10 August 1965. A period of 21 years established him among his people there as one who was approachable, who practised the art of encouragement and possessed the gift which can defuse awkward situations. A faithful pastor, he came to be regarded by many as a father-figure. He became known as a humorist and raconteur far beyond the bounds of his own parish, captivating audiences with a fund of stories. Sadness had touched him very personally soon after his arrival in Garryduff, in the loss of his first wife Edna, a native of County Cork. He found companionship and happiness again in a second marriage to Margaret Patterson,

and theirs was a partnership which lasted almost 35 years. Retirement on 30 September 1986 did not mean redundancy, and he occupied pulpits in the Route Presbytery for many years afterwards, becoming also a regular worshipper in St James's, Ballymoney. To the end he maintained an interest in the life and work of the Presbyterian Church in both jurisdictions in Ireland.

He is survived by his wife, Margaret.

**Rev Samuel Bell Moles, BTh**, senior minister of Union Road, Magherafelt and Lecumpher, died on 3 March 2004 in the 85th year of his age and the 52nd of his ministry.

Born in Belfast on 21 February 1920, he was brought up in the congregation of Crumlin Road, came to faith as a teenager, and felt the call to missionary work overseas. After some years in employment he took charge of religious activities in the Sandes Home at Ballykinlar. He became an evangelist and then, in response to those early promptings, went to Edinburgh to train at the Faith Mission Bible College there. It was his desire to go to Africa, but in the providence of God it was to India that he offered himself, through the Jungle Tribes Mission of the Presbyterian Church, and in 1946, within six months of his marriage to Anna, he left for Gujarat. Six years later, on 5 November 1952, he was ordained by the United Church of North India.

The twelve years he spent in India were to make an indelible impression on his life. He never lost interest in missionary work. He became fluent in the Gujarati language and found ways of using it long after he returned home. Received as a minister of the Irish Presbyterian Church on 4 June 1957, he was called soon afterwards to the congregation of Second Randalstown. There he remained from 18 February 1960 until 9 November 1971, when he was installed in Union Road and Lecumpher. He completed his active ministry on 30 September 1987, but then undertook, for a period of nine years, a new role as pastoral Assistant in the congregation of First Coleraine.

A missionary and a minister of the gospel, his passion was for God, and he had little time for recreational interests, although he enjoyed sport, gardening, painting, stamp collecting and the music of male voice choirs. His views were held with conviction, but not with rancour; there was a twinkle in the eye and a mischievous sense of humour.

The death of his wife some seven years ago left him truly bereft. In the ensuing period of his own illness he was cared for by the family to whom he was so deeply committed and by whom he was so much loved. A son, Ivor, died in infancy. Kenneth, Helen, Doreen, Muriel and Joanne survive him.

As I come to the end of my term of office may I record my thanks to the staff of the General Secretary's Office and of the Communications Office in Church House; Clerks of Presbytery in particular, and other ministers also, without whose supply of additional information it would have been a case of making bricks without straw; all who have expressed appreciation of the Memorial Roll as included in the Opening Night of the General Assembly, and of the Memorial Record as printed in the Annual Reports.

**APPENDIX I****RESTRUCTURING OF THE BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS****Present Structure of Board of Communications****5 Assembly Committees**

Communications Administration

Media

Public Worship

Church Architecture

Historical Society

**1 Convener with no committee**

Memorial Record

**Changes agreed by General Assembly****Public Worship**

Becomes responsibility of Board of Mission in Ireland

**Changes agreed by Board****Communications Administration**

Becomes the Board's standing committee and takes over responsibility for Historical Society.

**Media**

Renamed Communications Development with revised responsibilities.

**Church Architecture**

No change

**Historical Society**

Decommissioned as a committee but the convener becomes a joint convener of Communications Administration Committee.

**Memorial Record**

Becomes the responsibility of the Business Board

**Communications Co-ordination Panel**

A Board panel to co-ordinate communications across the church.

**Revised Structure of Board of Communications****3 Assembly Committees**

Communications Administration

Communications Development (formerly Media)

Church Architecture

**1 Board Panel**

Communications Co-ordination

**Revised Responsibilities of Committees and Panel****Communications Administration**

General Assembly Committee with joint conveners - one of whom will be responsible for the affairs of the old Historical Society and called the Historical Society Convener.

Ex-officio membership - Moderator, Clerk, Board Convener, Information Officer, Editor of Presbyterian Herald, Board of Communications Committee Conveners.

Business Board Nominations - six

Board appointments - six

Responsibilities:

Board Standing Committee.

Administration of the Communications Department including Points for Prayer account, Herald account and Communications Development account.

Joint Convener to bring to the Committee's attention items of business formerly transacted by the Historical Committee which may be dealt with by the Committee or referred by it to another Panel or Committee.

Response to media matters.

### **Communications Development (formerly Media)**

Assembly Committee

Ex-officio membership - Moderator, Clerk, Board Convener, Committee Convener, Information Officer, Editors of Church Magazines, Magee Director, Prof of Practical Theology, Dr RS Tosh, Religious Advisors to BBC, Downtown Radio, RTE and UTV.

Business Board nominations - six

Board members - six

The Committee may establish sub-groups to undertake specific tasks.

Responsibilities:

To undertake creative audits of all the denomination's communication activities and be proactive in assisting the church in all areas of communication, commissioning work as necessary, and including:

**media training** - to provide media training for ministers, congregations and other church officials, where appropriate in conjunction with other church agencies.

**media development** - to champion all the resources of modern media, including the internet, for use in church life and to take responsibility for the development of the Presbyterian website.

**media consultancy** - to advise church Boards, agencies and congregations in the development of their print, audio-visual and new media materials and resources.

**media relationships** - to develop relations with media professionals and organisations to encourage mutual understanding and communication.

### **Church Architecture Committee**

No changes proposed other than Business Board nominations and Board membership would be six each.

### **Communication Coordination**

Panel appointed by the Board of Communications and reporting to it.

Membership to include decision makers directly involved in communications matters on behalf of their Board or agency. Chaired by the Clerk of Assembly, it will meet probably twice a year.

Responsibilities:

Its function is to co-ordinate all the communications of the Presbyterian Church. Reports may be made to it by, for example, the Communications Development Committee on the effectiveness of communications programmes undertaken by the Church.

## APPENDIX II

In order to fulfil the instructions and resolutions of the General Assembly following the 2003 report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities and the importance placed on internal communications, the Board has recognised the need to produce a series of additional communications items. These include:

Presbyterian news CD Rom/video to support United Appeal Briefing - no longer than 5mins and produced initially two times per year

Posters - to highlight work of Boards

Points for Prayer - development of home Prayerline, probably distributed by email and web

Resources catalogue - a companion to Points for Prayer listing all resources available to congregations from the Boards

Annual Report - popular version running to 24 pages of pictures and portage of what the Presbyterian Church is doing

Web site - further design and development

Electronic versions of Reports, Minutes, Directory and Code, in consultation with the Clerk's Office.

Development of Ministers/Church House News sheet

Still and video footage library

Board Leaflets:

Overseas

Board of Mission in Ireland

Finance

Communications

Youth and Children

Social Witness

Education

Studies and Christian Training

Students' Bursary

and others

A revised media strategy is also under consideration to take account of the changing agenda of news and current affairs and the technology used to facilitate this.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the report be received.

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

3. That the General Assembly approve the changes to the internal structures of the Board of Communications as described in Appendix 1 of their report.

4. That the General Assembly note with encouragement the plans by the Board of Communications to develop communication within the church as described in Appendix II of their report.

5. That the General Assembly welcome the production of the new Irish Presbyterian Hymnbook and encourage its use in all congregations.

6. That the General Assembly urge a good attendance at the launch of the new hymnbook on Saturday 18 September at 7.30pm in the Assembly Hall and at the regional launches.

7. That the Hymnal Committee be thanked for its work and appointed as an ad hoc committee of the General Assembly for one further year as follows:

8. That the Public Worship Committee be thanked for its services and discharged and that the Rev Jack Richardson be thanked for his work as its convener.

9. That the resignation of the Rev John Murdoch as convener of the Memorial Record be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev Jack Richardson be appointed in his place.

10. That the Historical Society Committee be thanked for its services and discharged; that the Rev Dr John McKee be thanked for his work as its convener and the Rev Ivor Smith be appointed as convener as described in Appendix I of the Board of Communications Report.

11. That the resignation of the Rev Lawrence Hilditch as Convener of the Church Architecture Committee be accepted; that he be thanked for his services and the Rev George Simpson be appointed in his place.

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

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

14. That the Board of Communications, together with its associated working committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 277 of the Code as follows:

### **OVERTURE TRANSMITTED**

#### **Anent Par 277(2)(c) and (d) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 277 (2)(c) and (d) of the Code be deleted.

DONALD J WATTS

# NOMINATION BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The Nomination Board undertook two main tasks during the year:
  - (i) the nomination of a Director of Ministerial Studies
  - (ii) a review of the “membership, training, period of office and other relevant matters” relating to the Board.

## **Nomination of the Director of Ministerial Studies**

2. The General Board having accepted a re-defined Job Description for the Director of Ministerial Studies, the Nomination Board was authorised to bring a nomination or nominations to the General Assembly. When the Board met in November, it was agreed to recommend the alternative “panel” method of interviewing, with one agreed name being brought to the Assembly (see Reports 2000, p 139; Reports 2001, p 115). The General Board accepted this recommendation and agreed that the ten persons on the panel should be made up as follows: Moderator, Clerk, 5 appointed by the Nomination Board, 3 from the Board of Studies and Christian Training.

3. The following panel was thus appointed: Moderator, Clerk, Very Rev Dr AWG Brown, Revs Prof LS Kirkpatrick, G Connor, NAL Cameron, D Knowles; Mrs M Patterson, Messrs N Chambers, H McRoberts. Mrs E McClenaghan (Head of Personnel) was in attendance. The external assessor was the Rev Dr Martin Scott (Church of Scotland). The Rev Prof WP Addley acted as contact person.

4. Applicants were invited to submit an Application Form and Applicant’s Specification. Seven people did so, of whom five were short-listed for interview. Following interview it was agreed to recommend the name of the Rev RS Hetherington for appointment (see Appendix I). This recommendation was then ratified by the Board.

## **Review of the Nomination Board**

5. The Nomination Board was asked by the 2003 General Assembly to “present a report to the 2004 General Assembly on its membership, training, period of office and other relevant matters”. It also took note of the request in the Report of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Priorities for all Boards to review their structures in the light of the agreed priorities.

6. The Board began its review by noting again the opinion given by Mr Nicholas Hanna, QC, as reported to the General Assembly in 2000.

As well as giving an opinion on relevant Fair Employment and Sex Discrimination Legislation, he makes two comments on the interview procedure:

- (i) “I note that the Nomination Board consists of 42 members. This is an extremely high number ... The normal number would be between 3 and 5, though I have encountered 7 on occasions ... While there is nothing unlawful about having 42 members sitting on such a panel it

does give rise to some fairly serious potential difficulties in the event of a complaint of unlawful discrimination being made.”

- (ii) “The other criticism is that, in some cases two names are recommended to the General Assembly. This is extremely undesirable, though not per se unlawful ... None of these people will have been present at the interviews and will be in a far worse position to make any objective assessment of the relative merits of the two remaining candidates.”

7. In reviewing the nomination process the following general principles were identified:

- (i) The General Assembly itself is responsible for making all appointments to work under the Assembly. In making those appointments the General Assembly may at times delegate the responsibility to the relevant Board or Boards.
- (ii) All procedures should be consistent with the general principles enshrined in public law, with regard to fairness, objectivity, and non-discriminatory practice.
- (iii) Where there is a requirement that the applicant should be a minister this must be objectively validated in terms of the essential nature of the post. Similarly the “spiritual nature” of a post must be objectively defined in terms of the job description.
- (iv) The advertising of vacant positions should be undertaken as widely as appropriate, to demonstrate fairness and to attract a wide range of relevant interest.
- (v) Selection panels should be limited in size to an appropriate number, with members having relevant training.

8. In devising an adequate process three main principles were identified:

- (i) The people making the selection have to understand the nature of the work and be competent at assessing an applicant’s potential.
- (ii) The procedures used in the selection process must be clear and transparent, with adequate training provided for those who are involved.
- (iii) The selection panel must be appointed in such a way as to enjoy the confidence of the Church.

9. It is recognised that executive appointments are made by the General Assembly, although some are through delegation to a relevant Board (see General Assembly Reports 1997, pp 244-250). In future it is recommended that only the Clerk of Assembly, Deputy Clerk and Theological Professors should be directly appointed by the Assembly. In these appointments it is further recommended that a selection panel is used and only one name, supported by  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the members, brought to the General Assembly. The panel should be appointed by the General Board, as required. If the person selected is not confirmed by the Assembly the process should begin again. Where possible, the nomination should be agreed by the Assembly a year in advance.

10. Other executive appointments by the General Assembly should be made through the relevant Board, who should similarly appoint a selection panel in each case. The panel will make a recommendation to the Board on a simple majority. If a reserve candidate is selected, the Board may only consider that



candidate if the recommended candidate has withdrawn, or is unable to take up the position. The members of any selection panel should be appropriately trained, with the Chairman being given particular training.

11. A selection panel should normally be made up of 7-10 people, including the Moderator and Clerk of Assembly. A personnel representative will attend but not vote. So far as possible members of panels should participate in all stages of the procedure. The use of an external assessor is recommended for all senior appointments, with careful briefing as to his/her function.

12. If these recommendations are accepted there would seem to be little need for an on-going Nomination Board. The individual Boards in consultation with the Head of Personnel would draw up Job Descriptions and Personnel Specifications and appoint interviewing panels. The General Board would decide on any issues which do not lie fully within the remit of one particular Board.

## APPENDIX

### APPLICATION FORM

#### For Director of Ministerial Studies

Full Name                      Rev Ronald Samuel Hetherington  
Address                         47 Dalewood, Newtownabbey  
   Co Antrim, BT36 5WR

#### Personal and Family Background

Date & Place of Birth:     14 November 1947 - Belfast  
Marital Status:             Married  
Family Details:             Wife: Elizabeth (Betty)  
   Son: Neil; Daughter: Kathryn

#### Education

Post Primary Education:   Boys' Model School, Belfast: 1958 - 64  
  
Tertiary Level Education   Queen's University, Belfast: 1973 – 76...Bachelor of Arts Degree awarded in July 1976 (with High Commendation in Ancient History and Commendation in Philosophy); Queen's University, Belfast: 1976 – 79...Bachelor of Divinity Degree awarded in July 1979

#### Training for Ministry:

Places and dates of theological training  
  
Union Theological College, Belfast: 1976-79  
Date of Licensing:           12 June 1979  
Date of Ordination:         4 January 1980

## **Career**

### **Spheres of Ministry**

Assistant Minister (Licensed and Ordained) in First Larne 1979–1981; Minister of First Rathfriland 1981–1987; Minister of First Ballymena 1987–1999; Minister of Glengormley 1999–present. (I also served as a ruling elder in Rathcoole prior to 1979).

### **Responsibilities in Church Courts, Boards and Committees**

During my ministry I have served on the following Boards: Overseas, Education, Mission in Ireland, Studies & Christian Training, General Board; and on a number of related Committees, including: Irish Mission; Evangelism; Home Mission; Ministerial Studies; Students' Bursary Fund; Reception of Ministers & Licentiates. I have acted as Moderator of Presbytery and served in various Presbytery Convenerships. I was a Moderator's Chaplain in 2002–3.

### **Inter-Church Involvement**

As my ministry has so far been exercised within local congregations, such involvement has usually taken place in that context eg Ballymena Church Council; Glengormley Convention Steering Committee; Newtownabbey Clergy Fellowship. I am also a member of ECONI.

## **Development**

### **Use of Information Technology**

I use a computer to prepare sermon notes, write correspondence and record congregational visits. My daily programme is organised using a PDA. I have basic Power Point skills and would hope to further my knowledge of that medium. Much of my routine correspondence is now handled via email and I am comfortable using the internet to access information. We use Power Point in every service of worship in Glengormley – to display lyrics; illustrate themes; highlight missionary information; underline sermon points and references etc.

## **Community Interests, Hobbies etc**

### **Level of involvement in non-church organisations**

I am a governor in Glengormley Integrated Primary School and Ballygolan Primary School.

### **Interests, hobbies, sports, social activities**

Listening to a wide range of music; current affairs; reading; and, most importantly, spending time with my wife and family.

## **Additional Information**

Prior to my theological studies, I was employed in the insurance industry for eight years: first with the Guardian Royal Exchange and then with the Eagle Star. I became a Section Head (the modern equivalent would probably be Team Leader) and then a New Business Inspector. I had almost completed my ACII examination when I pursued God's call to the ministry. Those years in the business world provided valuable experience and training, which have stood me in good stead – especially in larger congregations such as First Ballymena and Glengormley. I have never had the "luxury" of a congregational administrator or

personal secretary; yet have been able to cope with and even enjoy that aspect of the work. I believe in being well organised and seek to plan ahead, insofar as that is possible.

My interest in and enthusiasm for this post has been stimulated by two aspects of my experience in ministry:

(1) For some years I have been a regular participant in the Residential Interview, latterly acting as chairman of various panels. This is a task that I have always approached with a high sense of responsibility and also some enthusiasm, for I believe that there is nothing more important for our Church than the selection, encouragement and training of suitable candidates. (2) I have had the privilege of working alongside five assistant ministers, all of whom have been very different. Yet I learned from each one of them and I hope that they learned something from me! I have thoroughly enjoyed the mentoring aspect of such relationships and believe that I could make a worthwhile contribution in this area – offering pastoral care, vocational guidance and even practical wisdom to candidates or students. I have invited a former assistant to act as one of my referees in the hope that he will validate such a claim.

For some years I was Students' Convener in the Ballymena Presbytery; and am now a member of the same committee here in North Belfast. .

### **Referees**

Rev Dr John Ross	Senior Minister of High Street, Hollywood
Rev Adrian McLernon	Minister of Drumbo (former Assistant in First Ballymena and Missionary with PCI)
Mr Gareth Lenaghan	Elder in Glengormley (Head of the English Department in Ballyclare High School).

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### **APPLICANT'S SPECIFICATION**

A summary of the "Applicant's Specification" is provided below.

#### **1. Qualifications and Knowledge:**

I became a Presbyterian by conviction at the age of 22 and, before training for the ministry, had experience of a congregational committee, a Kirk session and a Presbytery – as well as exercising other forms of leadership in the local church. Since then, of course, I have been an active minister in PCI and trust that I have accumulated sufficient knowledge of our history and structures. I remain a committed Presbyterian in terms of ethos and theology, while believing that a living Church must embrace positive change.

I have a deep interest in current affairs, both at a local and a global level. I have served as minister in three different social contexts: a rural area; a provincial town; and Belfast / Newtownabbey. I am more convinced than ever

of our need to contextualise the gospel, always remaining faithful to the Word but seeking to relate it creatively to the real world.

## **2. Relevant Experience:**

I had 8 years experience in the insurance world prior to training for the ministry. My last two congregations have been larger charges (500-600 families). The records for First Ballymena were computerised during my time there; an in-house congregational magazine was initiated; a tape ministry was introduced as were printed Sunday bulletins. In Ballymena and Glengormley I have been privileged to work alongside others, with as many as four of us in the team (eg myself; an assistant; a youth pastor; and a church visitor). I have been responsible for managing such teams and allocating their workload.

Numerous changes have been initiated with minimum resistance, in my last two congregations especially, eg introduction of Power Point in worship; inclusion of more contemporary music, while seeking to use “the best of the old and the best of the new”; exploration of different styles of worship, encouraging more participation; formation of house groups and/or prayer cells; use of Alpha Courses or similar ventures; creation of congregational libraries; introduction of missionary information spots etc.

For the past 17 years I have ministered within a team structure, sharing responsibility with others. But then, I have always regarded church leadership as a team venture, with the elders especially as the “key players”.

While I believe that team ministry is the ideal approach, I am also convinced that leaders must lead! Where necessary I have sought to give firm and clear leadership – but always recognising “the servant dimension” of such a task.

As a parish minister I have sought to promote the work of PCI in its broadest context. I take a particular interest in Thompson House, as its director is an elder in Glengormley. I have encouraged our congregation to develop a link with the Belfast Bible College, and we have sponsored overseas students there for the past four years. I have a longstanding association with Tear Fund; and seek to promote missionary support, both for PCI and other societies with links to the local congregation. Since moving to Belfast, I have been involved in more contact with non-Church bodies and agencies eg political representatives; White City Community Centre; PSNI; local community forums.

## **3. Personal Attributes**

Enthusiasm and commitment to the recruitment and formation of the ordained ministry within PCI is my sole reason for pursuing this application. My experience at the annual interviews, and in working alongside student assistants, has given me some insight into the task of the DMS. While the prospect of filling that role is in some ways intimidating, it also both excites and challenges me in a very real sense.

Although I am all too conscious of personal frailty, I believe that a personal relationship with God must be the priority for any servant of Christ. Hence I seek to nurture this through prayer, Bible study and wider reading. I also cherish opportunities for corporate worship and, even when I am in the pulpit, see my

role not as a performance but in the context of the whole congregation as a worshipping body. We do not exist in a vacuum: therefore fellowship and friendships are all important. And it is good to “sit at the feet of others”, whenever that is possible. I am convinced that a balanced theological education must give adequate attention to spiritual development.

While holding firmly to my own convictions, as shaped (and sometimes corrected) by the Word of God, I seek to model my relationship with other Christians according to the dictum: *In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.*

### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Rev RS Hetherington be appointed Director of Ministerial Studies.
3. That the General Assembly adopt the recommendations contained in the Review, pars 5-12.
4. That the General Assembly ask the Board of Finance and Personnel in the light of this Report, to review all aspects of the recruitment and employment of executive staff and report to the General Assembly in 2005.
5. 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 AD Davidson

1. The Board met 3 times during the last year. The main items of business are included in the committee reports. This is the final year of the Inter Church relations Board. There was some discussion with the Overseas Board and General Board about arrangements for next year.

## **Mrs Hazel McCall**

2. Hazel McCall has been Convener of the World Development Committee for the past five years. As a former member of the Committee, Hazel demonstrated passion for and dedication to the work of world development and this continued during the years of her convenership. She developed relationships with people at home and overseas which made her commitment to world development deeply personal. She was not afraid to work long hours planning and organising the annual appeal. During her time as Convener the appeal passed £500,000 for the first time and she was pleased to see more than £1 million raised for the AIDS Appeal. The Board records its grateful appreciation to Hazel for her work and achievements during her convenership.

## **Rev Gabrielle Farquhar**

3. The Board expresses its thanks to Gabrielle Farquhar for work as Convener of the World Church Relations Committee. Gabrielle Farquhar has completed three and a half years as Convener of World Church Relations and has long experience of relating to other churches. She was a member of the Ecumenical Committee of the United Reformed Church. She will continue to represent the Church on the European Area Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Gabrielle was able to use her well honed relational skills to network effectively with other churches. Anyone who has represented PCI will appreciate Gabrielle's meticulous preparation for overseas visits.

## **Rev Lesley Carroll**

4. Lesley Carroll has been Convener of the Irish Church Relations Committee for two years. During that time she has represented the Church at meetings of the Irish Council of Churches, its Executive Committee and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. She has enthusiastically brought her intellectual and relational gifts to her convenership. The Board expresses its thanks to her for her contribution to the work of the Church. She will continue to serve the Church in other positions.

**Rev Tony Davidson**

*Rev Dr DJ Watts writes:*

5. The Rev Tony Davidson has made a notable contribution to the Inter-Church relations work of our Church while Convener first of Irish Church Relations and more recently of the Board. His dedication to a work which at times was sensitive and demanding has been outstanding. His clear thought and easy manner has helped the Church to see relationships in the best sense and the Board is glad that he will continue in this area of work under the General Board.

**Ministers in Recognised Service**

*Rev Andrew Gibson reports:*

6. This has been another year of fulfilling teaching with supportive colleagues and students who have stimulated and challenged me to think of how we as the Church and as individual Christians go about doing mission in God's world in general and on this island in particular. However, during the year an opportunity arose for me to leave teaching and return to pastoral ministry. This opportunity could not be ignored as it offered me the chance to incarnate some of what I have been talking about for the past ten years and to do so in a congregation that has already started developing contemporary ways of doing Church.

While I am sad to have left the employment of Belfast Bible College at the end of 2003, I hope to continue to do a little teaching there in the immediate future.

*Rev Desi Maxwell reports:*

7. This has been a very full and exciting year at Belfast Bible College. With students from over thirty different countries it is a strikingly cross cultural community. While the college continues to be the major focus of my ministry, opportunities arose that took me to a colloquium in Texas to explore with others the rediscovery of the Hebraic roots of our faith. Furthermore I was able to speak at conferences in Canada, North Wales and do some teaching in Burkina Faso. The year was also punctuated by a variety of preaching engagements and teaching series in local churches.

*Rev Dr Ruth Patterson reports:*

8. 'Border Crossings' has been our theme for this year. The purpose has been to encourage people to cross over and find new friends, new ways of seeing and doing, new horizons, all prompted by our border crossing God.

9. A retreat for our volunteers and friends led directly to a series of difficult conversation evenings where people from all traditions move beyond their comfort zones to touch new depths of understanding.

10. It has been a privilege to accompany some of the families of the disappeared in their painful journey of waiting and searching.

11. One of the highlights of the year was a visit by Jean Vanier founder of L'Arche and Faith & Light.

12. Speaking in Ireland and abroad, facilitating retreats occupies an increasing amount of my time.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PANEL**

*Rev Sam Miller reports:*

1. This year has been one of consolidation of the Panel's impact and extension of the range of its interests. As in previous years, there has been a balance between field visits and meetings in Church House. One excursion was to the Organic Centre at Rossinver, County Leitrim, where many aspects of organic farming and gardening were demonstrated. While convinced that there is a place for organically-produced materials forming at least part of our diet, the panel is not convinced that all aspects of organic production have been fully assessed, either by developers or governments.

2. Still on this theme, there was a fascinating visit to the dairy farm of Messrs Huey at Castlederg, where milk from cattle which are fed only organically-produced feeds is produced profitably. The Panel is aware of just how fine is the line between financial success and failure in the farming sector generally, and continues to keep abreast of the many problems facing this large section of our population. The Panel would urge the General Assembly to support moves to lobby governments on behalf of both the farming and fishing industries, the former of which at least could be facing lean years with the extension of the membership of the European Community.

3. The Panel continues to produce articles for the Green Page in the Presbyterian Herald; these cover a range of issues of concern to PCI in general and the Panel in particular. One such article dealt with the crisis facing the world regarding water supplies. This was based on knowledge gained by two members of the Panel (Rev SJ Miller and Mr JS Furphy), who attended the conference of the European Christian Environmental Network in Greece, where this was one of the two main conference themes. Coming from Ireland, with its more than adequate rainfall, it was a shock to discover that even in Europe there are countries which experience permanent water shortages, and even more critically, have few or no pure water supplies. The conference demonstrated that many such environmental issues are truly world-wide in their impact, and we, as Christians, must be prepared to make sacrifices in order to improve the lifestyles of the majority of the world's population.

4. An increasing number of PWA's and mens' groups have invited members of the Panel to speak on the role of the Christian in the environment. The Panel has also been involved in a few of the new Presbytery Consultations, providing assistance in the completion of environmental audits.

## **IRISH CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

### **Irish Council of Churches**

1. The AGM 2004 of the ICC was held on 24 March. Dr David Stevens reflected on the present state of Ecumenical relations in Ireland with responses from Dr Cecilia Clegg, Rev Brendan Leahy and Rt Rev Peter Barrett.



2. In December 2003 Dr David Stevens left the post of General Secretary to the ICC to take up a new position at Corrymeela. The Irish Church Relations Committee records their gratitude to Dr Stevens for his dedicated and untiring work with and between the churches in Ireland and wishes him well in his new post. The ICC executive committee has been engaged in seeking a suitable person to take up the position of General Secretary. At the time of writing Michael Earle, formerly General Secretary of New Zealand Council of Churches, has been offered the post.

3. Major Rik Pears, Salvation Army, has taken up the post of President of the ICC and Bishop Peter Barrett the position of Vice-President.

4. The Romanian Orthodox Church has been received into membership of the Council.

5. One matter of ongoing discussion is the building of honest, meaningful relationships with other denominations and how the present structures of ICC and IICM facilitate those relationships. There was a special meeting of the Executive in September 2003 to discuss the resolution passed at 2003 AGM. 'This Council instructs the Executive Committee to engage in discussions with the member churches with a view to exploring ways forward in our ecumenical relations in Ireland and report back.' To that end a conversation between Presbyterians and members of the Church of Ireland is due to take place with a focus on mission.

6. Rev Dr Jim Campbell became Moderator of the Board of Overseas Affairs. The Board provides a forum for the exchange of information on various international situations and issues of church interest. During the year these have included: Sri Lanka, Sudan and the Middle East.

7. The theme of the Annual fellowship Day for Woman's Link was 'Called to reconcile'. Rev Dr Ruth Patterson was the speaker. Mrs Denise Wright spoke about her time in Vietnam. Mrs Joan Kirk became President of Woman's Link in succession to Mrs Denise Wright.

### **Irish Inter-Church Meeting**

8. At its meeting on November 21-22 2004, the Irish Inter-Church Meeting considered matters related to the position of refugees and asylum seekers on both sides of the border. Overviews were given by Frank Salmon and Sharon Dillon and contributors to the discussion included Fr George Zavinshinsky (Russian Orthodox), Pastor Anthony Joseph (Ethnic Minority Churches) Fr. Calin Popovici (Romanian presence) and Rev Alan Martin.

9. The working party on spirituality came to an end of its deliberations. People in Ireland are searching for spirituality but the search is increasingly disassociated from clearly defined belief systems or corporate loyalties. There is a profound suspicion of institutions and ready made answers.

### **Ongoing Work of the Committee**

10. The Committee discussed the new marriage law and expressed concern about the venue for marriages in the light of inter-church relations and the view of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Marriage that ceremonies should normally take place in church buildings.

11. The new structures within PCI have been a matter for debate and the Committee has contributed to consideration of how best its work can be carried on following the move to the General Board and the combining of World and Irish Church Relations.

LESLEY CARROLL, Convener

## APPENDIX I

### INTER-CHURCH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

*Rev JH Robinson reports:*

1. The Committee met in October 2003 and February 2004. Its members are:

<b>Church of Ireland</b>	<b>Methodist</b>	<b>Presbyterian</b>
Rev Wm Ritchie	Rev Dr E T I Mawhinney	Rev Dr D J Watts
Rev I J E Knox	Rev Des Bain	Rev A D Davidson
Rev Canon John Mayes	Rev T M Kingston	Rev A V Martin
Rev Canon G A McCamley	Mrs H O'Neill	Rev J H Robinson
		Mrs C Poynton

#### Reviews

2. **Strathfoyle:** 40-50 families, a few of whom are Presbyterian, continue to worship in a building requiring considerable renovation. It was agreed that while no major decisions should be taken at present the situation should continue to be monitored.

**Shannon:** This charge continues to struggle with isolation, an inappropriate site and a transitory population. It was agreed to review the situation in late 2004/early 2005, since the Rev Peter McDowell had only recently been inducted.

#### Chairmanship of Committee

3. The resignation of Rev Des Bain after his stated 3 year term was noted. He was warmly thanked for his services, and is to be succeeded by a Presbyterian nominee (Rev A V Martin).

#### Future Roles of ICC: C

4. A discussion paper drafted by the Rev Tom Kingston generated considerable discussion regarding possible future roles for the Committee. Some suggestions included a co-ordinating and strategic planning function embracing the Covenant Council and Alternating Ministries Committee and the defining and developing of relationships with new churches.

#### Membership

5. Rev William Ritchie, Rev Dr Edmund Mawhinney and Mrs Heather O'Neill tendered their resignations, with regret. The Rev Winston Graham has been appointed to replace Dr Mawhinney, while the names of other nominees will be forwarded in due course.

**APPENDIX II****REPORT ON THE INTER-CHURCH STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIXED MARRIAGES 2002 - 2003**

*Rev John Brackenridge reports:*

The Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages met in Mount Oliver, Dundalk on Friday 14th November 2003. Most Rev Anthony Farquhar acted as Chairman for the meeting.

Apologies were received from Mgr Patrick Devine and The Rev Aidan O'Boyle.

**1. Changes to the Committee Membership**

It was noted that the House of Bishops of the Church of Ireland had appointed The Rev Benny Neil to the Committee in succession to Archdeacon Patrick Lawrence.

**2. Report on the Meeting of the Inter- Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages 2002 - 2003**

There was a brief discussion of last year's Report. It was noted that the Report had been distributed and approved by each of the Churches.

**3. Joint Preparation for Inter-Church Marriage**

It was noted that marriage preparation courses facilitating inter-Church couples in Dublin had been well supported during the past twelve months. Courses run by Embrace had further prepared some 140 inter-Church couples for marriage, reflecting the continuing need for such courses. Among the engaged couples who benefited from the courses, were some who indicated that they had only very tenuous church connections.

Ken Dunn and The Rev Liz Hughes reported on the pre-marriage courses organised in north Belfast by ACCORD. It was noted that whilst representatives of NIMMA had not participated at the recent courses, their literature had been made available to all the engaged couples. It was noted that 2 further courses have been planned for the near future.

It was felt that every effort should be made by each Church to support and commend preparation courses for all engaged inter-Church couples. The Committee again stressed the need for trained counsellors to be made available for marriage preparation work and commends those who give of their time and talents to facilitate the courses for inter- Church couples.

The Committee considers that any time set aside in preparation work to enable engaged couples to explore the family context of their marriage and in particular the expectations of parents and grandparents is useful and is to be encouraged.

#### **4. Recent Trends in Inter-Church Marriage**

Recent trends in the preparation for inter-Church marriage and the celebration of inter-Church marriage services continue to be, in the main, positive.

Many couples now take time to consult the Churches' web-sites. Ken Dunn reported that the NIMMA site has an average of 160 hits per day. From visits to the site many folk are accessing leaflets on marriage preparation.

The Committee noted the new *Religious Marriage Procedures in Northern Ireland* which come into operation on 1st Jan 2004. Concern was expressed that the changes to the position of Officiants may create difficulty for some visiting Officiants to weddings. It was also of some concern to the Committee that the culture change of choosing to marry outside recognised Places of Worship may escalate, particularly where inter-Church couples may seek perceived neutral venues for their wedding day.

#### **5. Pastoral Care of Inter-Church Families**

The Committee discussed the pastoral care of inter-Church families and commended the special role of Clergy as they minister to inter-church couples where bereavement has occurred.

#### **6. Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that next year's meeting of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages take place in Mount Oliver, Dundalk, on Friday, 12 November, 2003 at 2 pm.

#### **Members of the Committee**

Rev John Brackenridge  
Most Rev Gerard Clifford  
Rt Rev Mons Patrick Devine  
Mr Kenneth Dunn  
Most Rev Anthony Farquhar  
Rev Elizabeth Hughes  
Very Rev Brendan Murray  
The Rev Benny Neil  
Rev Aidan O'Boyle  
Rev David Turtle

## **WORLD CHURCH RELATIONS**

1. In this final year of the Board operating with its present structures the Committee continued to maintain and develop links with other churches and inter-church bodies. It may even be said that our links are stronger than ever and our contribution valued and respected.

## **WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES (WARC)**

2a. 24th GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING, ACCRA, GHANA, 31 July – 13 August 2004

Four delegates of our Church will be travelling to Accra for the Council meeting in July. The theme '**That all may have life in fullness**' considers the contemporary threats and challenges to life which rob us of life in all its fullness as God meant it to be. Preparation for the council has been ongoing over the past 2-3 years culminating in particular with a Covenanting for justice programme which identified neo liberalism as a threat to the integrity of our faith. Some of the themes for Worship during the council meeting are Mission, Peace, Healing, Creation and Covenant.

2b. EUROPEAN AREA COMMITTEE: The Rev Gabrielle Farquhar attended a meeting of the European Area Committee held in January at the John A Lasco Library, Emden, Germany. The Committee is working on creating a Web site for WARC Europe and this site will be available in November. It will include a list of member Churches, a map and details of the partnership relationship between the Reformed Churches in Europe. It will have a section on Reformed Theological studies by theologians from the Reformed tradition - that section will have a chat room where you can comment, question and discuss theology.

The role of WARC Europe after Accra is exercising the minds of some member churches - some central European Churches feel that the work of WARC has become too diverse and lost its importance and relevance for the local churches. With this question in mind and to get a response from the member churches, a meeting of all European member Church leaders was held on the 1st April in Utrecht. The outcome of this meeting and the resolutions from the General Council will set the agenda for the work of the European Area Committee for 2004.

## **CONSULTATION OF REFORMED CHURCHES IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

3. The consultation was held on the 27 – 29 April in Corrymeela. The theme '**Being the Church in Today's World**' opened up issues for discussion such as: The Spirituality of the Age; Seeking to be a faithful visionary presence but lacking only in finance to carry it through, eg Urban Mission, new housing developments; Working for Reconciliation in the midst of Sectarianism, Racism, Multi-cultural diversity. The consultation comprised delegates from the Church of Scotland, United Reformed Church, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, (each with 7 delegates), the United Free Church of Scotland (2 delegates) and the Presbyterian Church in Wales.

## **CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC)**

4. Rev Dr Donald Watts, Rev Prof Cecil McCullough and Miss Heather Morrow attended the 12th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches, June 2003. The theme for the assembly was 'Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles – Our Witness in Europe'. It was felt that the strength of the conference was in

meeting with people from across Europe and experiencing worship in different forms and settings.

The issues raised by the churches were mainly social and ethical rather than theological: HIV Aids, Bioethics, Human rights, Asylum seekers and Human Trafficking. In the first decade of the 21st century, these are the issues also challenging our own church, and us as individuals, to make appropriate responses in the name of Christ. The continuing work of the Church and Society Commission of CEC was affirmed as having special importance at this time of expansion in Europe. Rev Dr Donald Watts is at present representing the Irish Council of Churches as an observer on the Commission.

At the end of the Assembly Miss Heather Morrow was nominated to the Central Committee of CEC for the next five years. This is the first time our church has held such an office in CEC.

### **UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (URC)**

5. Rev Colin McClure has faithfully represented our church for the last two and a half years at the URC Ecumenical Committee. He attended the Assembly in 2003 as a voting member and a committee meeting in September 2003. The relationship with the URC has been one of prayerful support and interest over many years and one that is greatly appreciated.

**GABRIELLE FARQUHAR, Convener**

## **RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

### **Racism on our Doorstep**

The story of this Committee is a commentary on the changing challenges being faced by the Irish Churches with regard to issues of race. In its origins in 1979 the focus was on apartheid in South Africa and the oppression of Jews in Russia. Much more recently - roughly within the last five years - the new challenge of asylum seekers and refugees coming to Ireland, particularly to the Republic, came on to the agenda; and this culminated in the issue in 2003 of the *Policy on Asylum Seekers and Refugees*. It seemed however that both parts of Ireland remained relative free of racial prejudice. Despite certain voices seeking to raise the alarm, where incidents of racial abuse occurred these were felt to be exceptional and not to represent a significant trend. Were we not a generous-hearted and welcoming people? Sadly in our 2004 report we have to recognise that racism – and racism of a vicious kind – has emerged as an issue which demands a response from civil society, and not least from the Churches. It seems that racism, particularly in Northern Ireland, has ridden in on the back of sectarianism - and the fact that the stranger is increasingly our next-door neighbour. The issues of asylum and racism are intertwined.

### **Why Now?**

President Mary McAleese's words at a Seminar in 1999 surely apply to Northern Ireland as to the Republic of Ireland.

“The idea of inclusiveness, of welcoming and speaking with the stranger, is a vital part of who we have been as a people, of how we have perceived ourselves. It is why we have an international reputation for warmth, for friendliness, for caring – and we cherish that reputation.

Yet the truth of the matter is that we have found it easy to welcome the stranger, because so often he or she did not pose a challenge to our selves of ourselves, our culture, our social structure, our economy. We have a long and proud history of providing money, missionaries, aid-workers to parts of the world afflicted by war, famine and human misery. We have also welcomed warmly and generously refugees from countries such as Vietnam, and in more recent times, Bosnia and Kosovo. We are capable of such generosity – why then is there now such apparent or alleged fear of recent inflows of refugees?

Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that, until now, we have been able to choose the extent and nature of that generosity. It has not impacted on the everyday lives of most of our people, on our cities, our streets, our schools, our policies, our culture. We have remained cocooned from the challenges and opportunities of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-racial society – until now” (1).

The now moment has simply arrived a little later in Northern Ireland. The challenge is the same. And it is a challenge not just to our generosity of spirit. It is a challenge to who we are as a society owning a Christian heritage and professing Christian standards.

### **What is Racism?**

Definitions are dangerous. They may be either too limited and simplistic, or too complex and diffuse. On the other hand we can use terms like *racism* without really thinking about their meaning. Just as we have already noted essential distinctions in terminology related to asylum seekers, refugees, guest workers and immigrants, so the time has come to focus on racism as such.

For the present we relay the following definition, from an article by Thomas R Whelan in an Appendix in the afore-mentioned publication, *The Stranger in our Midst*:

“Racism refers to the belief that a particular grouping of people is by nature superior to others, and that this superiority is based on the racial purity of one group and the inherent biological or genetic inferiority of the other group. There are a number of mistaken assumptions inherent in racism as a concept:

- (i) the idea that human society can be categorically divided into races. This assumption becomes difficult to accept when one considers:
  - that biologists state that race, as a category, cannot be supported by science;
  - that anthropologists consider race to be a cultural construct, and one which cannot be easily or adequately defined;
  - and that sociologists consider it a fluid category, useful for analytical purposes, but arbitrary and greatly conditioned by the society which employs the concept.
- (ii) that some races are morally, intellectually or physically superior to others;
- (iii) and that this superiority is due to inherited biological differences”. (2)

Further study on what exactly is meant by racism and what lies behind it in the context of both parts of this island will form part of the forthcoming agenda of the Committee (due to become a Panel).

#### **4. Recent Activities**

##### **a. Policy on Asylum Seekers and Refugees**

Our report, received by the General Assembly 2003, having been specially published by our Publications Department, was officially launched by the Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Ivan McKay, in Church House on Tuesday 24 February. This event was attended by a large number of representatives of Presbyteries, other Churches, voluntary organisations active in the asylum field, representatives of ethnic minority communities, political parties, civic authorities and the media. The Rev Arlington Trotman, Director of the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice, CTBJ, London, was guest speaker. Plans are under way for conferences and a programme of study throughout the Church, in co-operation with the Committee on Peace and Peacemaking.

##### **b. Conferences and Events**

Since last General Assembly the Committee had been represented at the following significant events:

the launch of EMBRACE, in October - a Belfast-based group of Christians acting against racism and for asylum seekers and refugees, representative of all the main churches and some new churches. Richard Kerr, who is deeply involved with Embrace, gave further details;

the Irish Inter-Church Meeting in November, on asylum and refugee issues: an impressive Friday evening/Saturday morning conference at which much useful and challenging information on a range of church involvement with immigrants, from Churches new to Ireland, such as the Russian Orthodox and Coptic Churches and Black Majority Churches, to specialist organisations such as SPIRASI and their professional programme of therapy for victims of torture. Graphic and harrowing pictures brought home the reality of this continuing obscenity. Of particular note was a report by the Rev Alan Martin on his Irish School of Ecumenics MPhil research into the impact on twenty congregations in the Republic of Ireland where at least 25% of the membership is now drawn from ethnic or non-Irish backgrounds (See Appendix 1 );

the UK Holocaust Memorial event in the Waterfront Hall, Belfast, 27 January 2004;

a Refugee Action Group day-conference, Tuesday 10 February, on the detention of asylum seekers in Maghaberry Prison, at which the Convener represented the Moderator. The Moderator's personal interest in this issue has been noted and welcomed in circles beyond the churches. A resolution, based on Section 9, para (f) of our *Policy*, and calling for the provision of more suitable accommodation, was transmitted to the NIO through the Church and Government Committee;

the All-Ireland Churches' Consultative Committee (on race and asylum) – an emergent body sponsored and promoted by the CCRJ, through its Irish Churches' Commissioner, Ms Fee Ching Leong. A process of consultations with



ethnic minority communities is planned to culminate in a major Churches' Conference, November 19/20, in Dromantine, Newry. It is important that we listen to the voices of ethnic minority persons themselves;

a major Dublin-based conference, *Immigration: Ireland's Future*, attended by the Rev Katherine Meyer ( See Appendix II).

#### **c. Racial Attacks**

Under the Committee's auspices meetings have taken place of representatives mainly of the Presbyterian congregations of the Donegall Road, Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and Lower Ormeau areas of Belfast, in light of recent incidents of racist intimidation and attacks in those areas. The complexity of the problem has become clearer and a five-step strategy has been outlined. Proposals include actions both at local and PCI level. These will expand the Church's response beyond Belfast to other areas where racial attacks appear to be on the increase. A statement was issued through the Press Officer when these attacks were at their height.

#### **d. South Africa**

For quite some years now the General Assembly has helped fund the Diakonia Council of Churches in Durban, for the building of a Centre, which has now been completed. Consultation is under way as to projects and programmes which we may continue to support. An invitation has been received for the Convener to visit Diakonia as soon as a mutually suitable date can be found, in order to discuss the future relationship.

### **4. Current Issues**

#### **(i) Multi-culturalism, integration, assimilation**

This report is being finalised on the day after the first ever Citizenship ceremony to be held in Britain has taken place. As stated in our *Policy* we as a Church recognise the need for proper controls to be exercised with regard to immigration. We have however presented the arrival of new immigrants as a potential strength for our society, as is already the case in many areas of Great Britain. Continued immigration is reckoned to be necessary for the maintenance of many services, structures and commercial enterprises, both north and south. We support cultural diversity; but we also recognise the need for integrating principles and practices, which can encourage the growth of common bonds essential to the creating of community. As a church we rejoice that there already exists what for us is a fundamental bond with many who have come to our shores from abroad, namely a shared faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, in whatever form of church this may be manifested. Beyond this, we welcome the development of Citizenship ceremonies, with the proviso that these take into account certain sensitivities, about flags, anthems, and personal security, all of which can have connotations in this part of the world which they do not have in Great Britain.

We are also aware of the current and growing debate about multi-culturalism, ever conscious of the danger that integration can become

assimilation, by which is meant the suppression of minority cultures in favour of a stultifying sameness, where historic identities are lost or denied.

**(ii) Anti-semitism**

The Mel Gibson film, *The Passion of the Christ*, has just been released and a furious debate about its claimed anti-semitism has erupted. Already the Race Relations Committee have begun addressing our relations with the Jewish community, especially since, as already noted, concern for Jews in Russia was part of our original agenda. At the Holocaust Memorial event the Chief Rabbi, Dr Sachs, stated:

*“May the world never forget that the people who are not like us are people like us”*

**(iii) Community**

Behind the recent attacks in South Belfast there are undoubtedly elements of naked racism, paramilitary gangsterism – even if not officially sanctioned! – and, it appears, of political extremism. However we have learned that one additional, and in some ways fundamental, factor is an understandable concern on the part of ordinary decent residents about the rapid erosion of hitherto close-knit local communities. Long-time residents find themselves increasingly squeezed between the inner city expanding outwards and the suburbs moving inwards. Inner city businesses buy up residential property for offices, and suburban landlords buy up and converting houses into flats. These are then let to a transient population of students, young workers and immigrant families. Many decent people deplore the extremist actions of a few, which get into the press and lead to the whole area being described as racist. What is the Church’s response to be?

Again, we draw attention to our *Policy* where we encourage local congregations to become centres of welcome and hospitality, as a number are indeed doing. However the churches need to listen to the confusion, anxiety and grief of those who see their community eroding around them and feel powerless to resist.

Put positively, our concern must be to join with others – other churches and community organisations – not in resisting changes which are, in any case, inevitable, but in working constructively for the creation of new, multi-cultural and even multi-faith communities where all, both long-term resident and newcomer, can feel included and valued and all see their neighbour as a gift. Our mission is the building of community; the fostering of communities which have the exciting, variegated texture of the Kingdom of God.

(1) From the Foreword to *The Stranger in our Midst, Refugees in Ireland, Experiences, Responses*, Kimmage Mission Institute of Theology and Cultures, Whitehall Road, Dublin 12, published 2001, p.vii.

(2) Bernard R.Boxill, “Racism and Related Issues, *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, Lawrence C.Becker, et al.,eds., vol 2, (Chicago/London: St James Press, 1992) 1056.

RJG GRAY, Convener

## APPENDIX I

### The Ephesian Moment

*A summary of a survey by the Rev Alan Martin*

The following is a brief summary of what I found happening in multi-cultural congregations in the Republic of Ireland. There are about 20 such congregations spread across all the main denominations but with more Methodist, Presbyterian and joint Methodist/Presbyterian congregations. My working definition of a multi-cultural congregation is one in which there is a significant number of new members (25% and over) from other ethnic and cultural groups. I use as headings four elements regarded by most sociologists as essential in the creation of any multi-cultural community.

### Proximity

Members of multi-cultural congregations meet frequently together. This happens in the multi-cultural congregations through common worship, shared meals often to celebrate an event such as a naming ceremony, a baptism, or in Bible study and prayer meetings, excursions and conversations over tea/coffee. The depth of the interaction varies from congregation to congregation and between individuals but usually develops after initial awkwardness in speaking to people who are different has been overcome.

The depth of the interaction is greatly curtailed if it only happens once a week for one hour. Tony, a leader in a Dublin Methodist Church, a multi-cultural congregation, says, "*It is very important to spend time in conversation, sharing experiences, getting to know each other.*"

Those who join some mainline Irish churches are surprised at the short length of time spent together at worship. They find that Irish people are accustomed to one hour of worship at the most and then off to have a nuclear family dinner. Many immigrants find this a disappointing level of belonging together. Matching these two traditions is a major challenge facing multi-cultural congregations.

One of the most important means of creating this sense of belonging to one family is **to experience frequent sharing of meals**. This is what a natural family does. It is necessary for the Christian family also. Narcisse expresses its importance,

*"The first Christmas we were invited to a Christmas Party by the local congregation. The next Christmas we invited them to an African Christmas Party when we ate and sang together. These two meals were very important in sealing the commitment of the newcomers and traditional congregation to each other. We also had an excursion to Glendalough when we spent about 5 or 6 hours together and had a great time. It was very nice, very nice."*

### Equality

Christians from various cultural backgrounds who decide to worship together will certainly face many difficulties but most who do so say that although the challenges are great the fruits are very precious. They see the

importance and significance of becoming part of a multi-cultural congregation in Ireland. Some maintain a membership of both a multi-cultural congregation and a migrant congregation.

One of the challenges to be faced is how to provide a fair balance between the various cultures and sometimes languages of those represented. There is a need to find a balance of both styles of worship and culture in the common worship. Participation and input needs to be encouraged from all. Whether it be through informal or more formal styles of worship there is need for careful planning to ensure that one cultural group does not get privileges or become dominant. In the Catholic Parish Church in the centre of Tralee, Co Kerry, a plan operates whereby the congregation become accustomed to having a reader of the Scripture lessons from Nigeria, a cantor from the Philippines and a minister of the Eucharist from Zimbabwe.

In churches where the style of worship is less formal members are encouraged to take part but in order to ensure that this results in a balanced representation some planning is necessary. Tony, a leader in a Dublin Methodist Church where the style of worship is informal says,

*“The worship is both informal and participative but strangely both these aspects have to be well planned in order to work properly. The planning needs to involve leaders from all the cultural groups who therefore have to respect and recognize the leadership of each other. This recognition is at a lower level than official recognition of ministries between two or more churches but it is nevertheless very important. Open times of prayer are a feature at our weekly worship. People feel free to pray aloud in 4 or 5 different languages - English, French, Portuguese and Lingala.”*

Narcisse, a leader in a Dublin Methodist Church from Congo says, *“God has no special language. God understands all languages. It is good that our Irish brothers and sisters hear us praying to God in our own language.”*

In another congregation in **Galway** an African musical group regularly lead the praise for a period of 15 minutes. The decibels from the drumbeats have been reduced by agreement so as to be acceptable to European ears. People if they so wish can pray aloud simultaneously in any language during the prayers of intercession under the guidance of a leader. This is all very different to the style of worship practised in that congregation in Galway before the influx of new residents yet a fair balance of cultures and style seems to have been reached and is acceptable to all. This does not happen without patient discussion and willingness to give and take.

Music is a means of sharing together. Many multi-cultural congregations have formed musical groups complete with drums and instruments from many parts of the world. They try to learn and sometimes mix different types of music for use in public worship. The actual experience of producing music together helps to promote a sense of belonging.

Sometimes in such congregations there can be considerable differences in the financial position between an established Irish member and a new immigrant. There is evidence of generosity on the part of many so that people feel that an attempt is being made to share financial resources.

Helen Richmond writes from an experience of multi-cultural ministry in Sydney, Australia: *“Hospitality is a helpful concept but it needs to be used*

*carefully as it sometimes carries with it the notion of 'host and guest.' If by 'hospitality' we mean us welcoming others into our house then this is a metaphor of limited value. But if we understand the house to belong to God, then together with God we work to build a house where all belong, open to giving and receiving from each other."*

### **Authority**

In multi-cultural congregations it is evident that all accept the authority of Jesus Christ. In the survey I asked if there was serious disagreement on points of doctrine. The answers revealed that there was little and that all accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. More specifically they acknowledged that in committing themselves to membership of a multi-cultural congregation they were following the teaching of Jesus and the example of the early church.

Many also acknowledged the leading of the Holy Spirit. Narcisse, a leader in a Dublin Methodist Church said, "*There was no meeting to decide to set up a multi-cultural church. It was the work of the Spirit that brought us together.*" Tony added, "*Yes. The work of the Spirit is a process of development, change, growth and challenge.*"

Best results are found in congregations where authoritative leadership is found in two or more of the cultural groups represented and a partnership formed with local leadership. Sometimes this is a pastor who has had to leave his/her own country, sometimes it is lay leadership.

### **A Common Goal**

Pursuing common tasks together also increases a sense of belonging. In Killarney Methodist Church the new members have formed a rota to clean the church building instead of leaving that task to one or two of the original Irish members. In the congregation in Galway, joining together in running a Friendship Club for the benefit of other new immigrants who are not members of the congregation is a common endeavour. Performing acts of charity was a common goal for the early church and probably is not emphasised enough in our congregational life today. In the case of multi-cultural congregations it certainly helps to create a bond between those who engage in it.

When all these elements are experienced in multi-cultural congregations in Ireland the result is a vibrant and exciting congregational life that can also be a *show-house* for the rest of society.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Immigration: Ireland's Future**

*Why Ireland needs a positive, integrated and rights-based policy for immigrants.*

#### **Conference held 11 December 2003**

The main speakers at the conference were Mary Robinson (Immigrants: Valuing Diversity), Piaras Mac Einri (Overview of International and National

Migration), Bruce A. Morrison (Immigration to Ireland – Learning from America’s Experience), and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, (Beyond Multiculturalism – Rebuilding the Nation). There were also workshops on a variety of topics.

Mary Robinson set the tone of the conversations by underlining one of the most critical aspects of all human rights work: the inclusion of diverse gender perspectives, and of the perspectives of those most affected by the issues, in any discussion. Piaras Mac Einri concentrated on the ways in which migration shapes the identities of both immigrants and non-immigrants, as both are caught up in the transition from past worlds to new ones.

Bruce Morrison emphasized the importance not only of policies governing immigration (“who gets in”), but also of those which address the lives of immigrants (“how they are treated once they are here”). He stressed that when the human rights of some are undermined, those of all are threatened, and also underlined the revitalizing potential and positive value of immigration in any society.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown spoke directly to one of the issues most relevant in an Irish context, the need for a renewed concept of citizenship focused on civic belonging. She pointed out that all too often European countries suffered from a particular form of delusion, in which belonging was a matter of bloodlines rather than citizenship, and traced this to an inability to tell truthful narratives about ourselves and our own immigrant histories. Finally, she cautioned that multiculturalism in the UK had too often meant dealing with a group en masse, which in effect meant engaging only with the most vocal men in that culture, to the exclusion of other voices.

There were well over 125 participants at the conference, from the voluntary sector, education, women’s groups, the churches, the health boards, refugee support groups, the legal profession, human rights groups, and so on. The conference provided an excellent opportunity for reflection on the wider issues which provide the framework for our more specific areas of work, and I am grateful to the Inter-Church Relations Board for sponsoring my participation.

## WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The World Development Committee was established twenty-four years ago as a part of the Inter Church Relations Board. Its aims were twofold:

- (i) to raise awareness among Irish Presbyterians of the desperate poverty in which many millions of people live and to consider the reasons for that poverty
- (ii) to raise money to enable funding of self help projects throughout the developing world.

Latterly the Committee has focused on one particular aspect of development work each year, usually linking two, three or four years together under one campaign title such as ‘Building Communities’; ‘Let my people go’ and ‘AIDS MATTERS.’ The Committee has always urged PCI members to speak up for those, of every colour, class and creed, who have no voice and it has campaigned for ‘Drop the Debt’ and ‘Trade for Justice’.

The money that has been raised has always been channelled through either Christian Aid or Tearfund, with a 5% share at the disposal of the Overseas Board for relief work. Over the years a total of £7.2 million has been raised, over £1 million of that in the last 2 years.

As travel has become easier an increasing number of overseas visits have been undertaken by members of committee and a shared knowledge-bank built up. In recent years, these visits have been deliberately linked to projects which PCI has then supported through the annual appeal. The Committee expresses sincere appreciation to Christian Aid and Tearfund not only for planning and co-ordinating these trips but for their professionalism at all times.

The Committee is deeply indebted to the Board of Communications, Stephen Lynas and his staff, for the most excellent presentation of each annual appeal and also thanks most sincerely the staff of the General Secretary's Office and the staff of the Financial Secretary's Office for cheerful and willing assistance with administration.

HAZEL McCALL, Convener

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

### **Irish Church Relations**

2. That the following appointments be made:

To the Irish Council of Churches – Revs J Brackenridge, Dr. SJ Campbell; L Conway, OBE; Rev LE Carroll; Mrs Pat Crossley; Revs AD Davidson, GAJ Farquhar; Miss D Gilmour; Revs Dr RJG Gray, Dr MCA Gray, R Herron, Dr S Hutchinson; Mrs M Irwin; Revs L Kennedy-Ritchie, D Knox, C McClure, D Nesbitt; JA Patterson, Ms Valerie Steele; Rev Dr DJ Watts.

To the Irish Council of Churches Executive – Revs J Brackenridge, AD Davidson, L Kennedy-Ritchie and Dr DJ Watts.

To the Irish Inter Church Committee – Revs AD Davidson and Dr DJ Watts.

### **Race Relations**

3. That the General Assembly welcome and support initiatives being taken at local and at General Assembly level in response to recent racial attacks, particularly in Northern Ireland.

4. That every Presbytery be urged to appoint a Race Relations Agent.
5. That Presbyteries be urged:
  - to study the published report Policy on Asylum Seekers and Refugees;
  - to seek contact with new immigrants and guest workers within their boundaries
  - to monitor incidents of racial intimidation or tension locally and to report on the above to the Race Relations Panel.

6. That 12 September 2004 be observed as Racial Justice Sunday.
7. That a visit by the Convener of the Race Relations Panel to the Diakonia Council of Churches, Durban, South Africa be approved.

8. That the following grants be made from the Incidental Fund:

Irish Council of Churches	£16,400
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	£8,000
Conference of European Churches	£3,500
Leuenberg Consultation	£1,000
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	£10,100
World Alliance of Reformed Churches General Council Fund	£1,000
Race Relations Grants	£3,850
Environmental Panel	£300
General Work of the Board	£5,500

Race Relations Grants:

(i) Diakonia Council of Churches	£1,000
(ii) Holocaust Memorial Day Committee	£100
(iii) All-Ireland Consultative Committee (towards the projected November Conference with ethnic minorities)	£1,500
(iv) Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities	£250
(v) Irish Refugee Council (Dublin)	£250
(vi) General work of the Race Relations Committee	£750

9. That the Convener of the Inter-Church Relations Board, Rev AD Davidson and the Conveners of its working committees – Revs Gabrielle Farquhar, Lesley Carroll, Dr Gordon Gray and Mrs Hazel McCall – be thanked for their years of dedicated service.

10. That the Inter-Church Relations Board, with its associated working committees, be thanked and discharged.

### **OVERTURE TRANSMITTED**

#### **Anent Par 278 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 278 of the Code be deleted.

DONALD J WATTS



# OVERSEAS BOARD

Convener: Very Rev Dr SJ DIXON

Secretaries: Rev WS MARRS

Mrs MARGARET MYERS

## **Global Mission – The Richest of Tapestries**

1. There are nearly two billion people professing Christian faith world-wide, that is around one third of the world's population, making Christianity by far the largest religion on the planet. Most dynamic growth is among evangelical and Pentecostal movements. There is an overall growth rate of 1.5% but this masks shrinking membership in the West and dynamic growth in the Southern Hemisphere. In 1960 64% of professing Christians were in America, Europe and the Pacific. By 2000 59% were in Africa, Asia and Latin America, so the centre of gravity in the Christian world in numerical terms has shifted from west to south.

2. In some places the church is growing despite being a persecuted minority that worships 'underground' in family homes, in others it is rapidly becoming the majority religion with cinemas, hotel function rooms and conference centres being turned into places of worship on the Lord's Day. In many locations in the Southern hemisphere there is a tremendous vitality and enthusiasm for evangelism, which means there is not the same need for western missionaries in their traditional role of proclaiming the gospel and discipleship training, because these roles are being filled by indigenous Christians.

3. Here in the West signs of renewal are much less obvious, indeed we have grown accustomed to seeing church buildings being converted into mosques, up-market apartments, health clubs and libraries. We are constantly reminded of declining church attendance, and when the media do pay any attention to us, it is usually to be critical. Long gone are the days when the Christian faith was heralded to the ends of the earth on the back of British colonial expansion.

4. So how are we to respond to this situation? Are we in the West exporting a failing version of Christianity? We in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland through the ongoing review process being conducted by the Overseas Board (See Appendix B), are examining afresh our current position within the global church, and, together with the wider church in the western world, seeking afresh God's place for us in global mission.

5. It is important that we do this because we have much to learn and gain from the global church coming out of its giftedness and richness. Many of our brothers and sisters around the world, despite, or perhaps because of, their material poverty or experience of persecution, often display an evangelistic zeal that challenges us. They display a sense of community and priority is given to relationships. They show commitment to the spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting. What's more, there is potential for them to share with us here as we seek

to reach out in the name of Christ to the growing number of immigrants with whom they may share the same or a similar background.

6. At the same time we should remain convinced that, despite being a diminishing church, out of our history and experience in mission we still have a great deal to share with the Church worldwide. There is widespread poverty and suffering to be relieved in a world with over 150 million street children, 13 million AIDS orphans in the continent of Africa alone, and something like a billion people living on fifty pence or less per day. In some African countries life expectancy has dropped to levels they were at over a hundred years ago. This means that in some places there is a new generation of people every 15 to 20 years. It is not surprising therefore, it is estimated that around a quarter of the world's population has not yet heard the gospel. According to one missiologist, 91 per cent of Christian outreach takes place in countries where people are perceived to be predominantly Christian. The task of discipleship and leadership training is vital in places where the Church is growing rapidly but much could be said about the need to pray for and encourage the Church where it finds itself suffering as a minority religion under an oppressive political or religious regime.

7. So much of what we will do in global mission in the future will require us to be diligent in relating to and working together in new ways with the global Christian family, not duplicating what someone else may be able to do better than us, but by identifying our strengths and unique contribution so that we compliment the efforts of others. More than ever before it is possible to do this because of the ease of communication, travel and information gathering. Surely we must continue to lift our horizons as we celebrate with Christians worldwide, both the things we hold in common and our diversity when it comes to missionary endeavour.

## ASIA

8. The great nations of Asia represent a sizeable proportion of the world's population. Many of the countries PCI has involvement with have again been touched by natural disaster, political instability, economic uncertainty and communal tension. Christian witness is often borne in situations of great hardship and the challenge to faith and faithful service is met with remarkable humility and strength by local Christian people.

9. We continue to be thankful for opportunities to stand and serve alongside Christians in many parts of Asia, as they face ongoing trials and in many cases persecution. While the number of PCI personnel in Asia has dropped significantly we remain open to the possibilities of partnership and service the Lord may lead us into in the future.

10. The Board's review will help us clarify the role and responsibility that may be ours in our long-standing partnerships with Asian Christian communities as well as seeking and seeing new paths in obedience to Christ.

11. This year has seen a number of our missionaries return on completion of periods of service in Asia. As a church we warmly acknowledge their service and look forward to the positive contribution these former missionaries will now make to the life and mission of PCI at home.

12. Last year's Assembly report spoke of the political tensions faced by many countries, with the consequent challenges heaped on minority Christian communities. This past year has seen a similar picture emerge.

13. In **India** we have received reports of tension and persecution faced in the Bhopal Diocese of CNI. **Nepal** faces the ongoing struggle between the three power bases in the country - the King, the Government, and the Maoists. Accommodations between them are still proving difficult to find.

14. Christians in **Pakistan** continue to suffer with reports received of forced conversions, beatings and bomb attacks. Pakistan's support for the USA's stance on Afghanistan and the international war on terrorism has made Christians feel very vulnerable to attack from opposing forces.

15. While **Indonesia** moves slowly along the road towards democracy, corruption and human rights abuses still affect life at many levels and the military are still in effective control of many aspects of life for ordinary Indonesians. Separatist movements disturb the national consensus; and recent political changes in Papua which should have brought greater autonomy and prosperity to indigenous peoples are being resisted by outside vested interests.

16. PCI continues to offer support to our partner churches in these areas and seeks through the work of our missionaries, the visits of Executive Staff of the Board, and the giving and prayers of our people, to see God's blessings poured out on Asia again.

17. **China** faced the SARS epidemic last year, bringing a premature end to the Amity Teaching Programme for 2003, and decimating their Summer Language Programmes. SARS also had a profound effect on life in China. Perceived mishandling of the situation caused many to distrust the government and forced them into making a very public apology, quite something in a formerly strictly controlled social environment.

18. The Amity Foundation's commitment to serve the poorer and less well developed regions in Western China remains strong, though teacher numbers for their Programme have been reduced this last year. Many opportunities are still open on this scheme, and for 'tent-making' ministry as the government of China welcomes workers who come to share in educational and economic development. PCI is responding to these opportunities positively.

19. John Hanna also continues to visit the China Forum as an observer. The Forum draws our attention to the many Chinese who have come to study in the UK recently (at present some 30,000 have study visas) and to the needs of the increasingly large Chinese ethnic community all around us. The tragedy in early 2004 at Morecambe Bay and the racist problems faced by many in our towns and cities deserve our close attention.

20. The **United Mission to Nepal** (UMN) continues to work towards the implementation of its five-year plan (beginning 2005) focussing on addressing the root causes of poverty, addressing injustice, and continuing in relief work, advocacy and peace-making. A new operating structure has been put in place whereby key workers with varying skills are located in 'clusters', living and working together in close proximity to each other.

21. Jennie Collins, UMN's Executive Director, visited Belfast in July 2003 to brief PCI on the UMN change process. Members of Board staff hope to visit Nepal in 2004 to further conversations with UMN about our partnership.

Now that Helen Johnston has returned from Nepal in October 2003 to join the staff of the Board, PCI has no missionaries in Nepal.

22. Our partner churches in East Indonesia, **Gereja Masehi Injili di Halmahera** (GMIH); **Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor** (GMIT); and **Gereja Kristen Sumba** (GKS) report new changes in leadership in the past year and look forward to growth as these new teams come with renewed vision and enthusiasm for their ministry.

23. GMIT, like PCI, is committed to programmes ensuring the 'congregation is the basis of mission'. A recent restructuring of their Boards and Committees will hopefully further their ministry. Elyse Niap, our Bursar from Timor, will complete her studies this year, and hopes to return to GMIT's service along with Elyse and Barry McCroskery's first child, Rebecca, born in March 2004.

24. GKS received funds allocated for their work and hopes to see programmes running in training for Lay-workers, Women's Work and Youth Ministry. Mervyn McCullagh, from Adelaide Road, Dublin congregation, was commissioned as a missionary to Indonesia in February 2004, and returned to Sumba early in 2004 to work in the Economic Institute (STIE) and to get involved in the development of Youth Ministry.

25. The situation for Christians in Halmahera has improved a little with reports that many have returned to the island, though not yet to villages and homes. Sadly it remains a divided island with Muslims in the south and Christians in the north around Tobelo.

26. **Eukumindo** (an umbrella organisation of European churches and missions involved in Indonesia) is changing its relationship with the PGI (Communion of Churches in Indonesia), becoming more of a forum for discussion on matters of common concern. Eukumindo will no longer be a source of funding for PGI projects.

27. The **Lamp of Thailand** has a new Director, Rev Pornpak Juanchaipoom and we commend him and his staff to the Lord as they continue to work among Thailand's needy millions.

## EUROPE

28. This year the European Union (EU) will grow by 10 member states, many of which are in Eastern Europe. What the presence of these new nations will mean economically, politically and spiritually is hard to say but it is hoped that their entry will benefit the poorer nations and that existing freedoms will be strengthened. Spiritually, it is hoped that the increased freedom of movement will enhance the spread of the gospel across the continent.

29. Europe is the only continent where the Church continues to decline and, it has been said, is spiritually one of the most impoverished areas in the world today. This raises a huge challenge for the Church but also gives us a fantastic opportunity, along with our partner churches, to discern and respond to new God-given opportunities.

30. The President of the National Council of our partner church in France, the **Eglise Réformée de France** (ERF), reminded Synod of the Church's mission to proclaim the gospel to the world and suggested it was time to look again at how this mission is to be fulfilled. He then sketched three types

of improvement which needed to happen in the Reformed Church of France: i) Hearing God's Word more clearly and translating it more adequately for their contemporaries; ii) Assuming more fully the task of bringing a Christian perspective to bear in society, concerning the problems of our day; and iii) Responding more resolutely to the need for reform in the life and witness of the Church in order to better fulfil her mission.

31. The Synod of the ERF took place in Bordeaux from the 29 May – 1 June 2003 and Maureen Patterson, Convener of the Europe & Middle East Committee, represented PCI. A matter of concern for the church was the number of pastors leaving the ERF and the high number (71) working in non-parish situations. Currently, there are 86 vacancies, and 30 of these are of more than two years duration. The changing face of ministry was highlighted and this is something Synod will address in the future. Ministers from PCI have served in parishes in the ERF since 1989.

32. The work in Paris of Jews for Jesus, which our church supports, has continued to develop over the past year and they have plans to visit and meet with some 2000 Jewish people. There is now a strong team of workers including a Franco-Israeli woman, who came to Christ four years ago after receiving one of their tracts on the street.

33. At the time of writing, people across Europe have joined **Spain** in a three-minute silence for the victims of the Madrid train bombings. This was one of the worst terrorist atrocities to take place on European soil for some considerable time and there is a real fear that Europe may face more terrorism. The Moderator conveyed the sympathy of our church to our partners in the **Spanish Evangelical Church**.

34. The future of the **Jerusalem Church in Hamburg**, as an independent entity, remains uncertain. This year the Church's finances have been helped by income, in the form of rent, from the hospital sited on its land.

35. The **Church of the Brethren** in the **Czech and Slovak Republics** continues to expand by establishing, on average, two new congregations every year. Alongside these, many other 'preaching stations' are developing. There has been a steady increase in the number of congregational 'twinings' with churches in the Czech and Slovak Republics. In response to several enquiries regarding 'twinings' it is hoped that a visit will be arranged so that more congregations may be linked up. The Board is actively trying to promote more of this type of contact.

36. The leaders of the **Hungarian Reformed Church**, speaking at their Synod, meeting in Budapest, spoke of Hungary's future entry into the EU. They pointed out "our church has always been in contact with other European Reformed Churches throughout the past centuries. These ties have united us in the Spirit, in the service of Biblical, confessional, genuine testimonies about the Lord Jesus; mutual relationship in which each participant enriches the community with what God, the Lord of history has given". They expressed the hope that the leaders of the Hungarian Republic would utilise these opportunities, rooted in our partner church relationships, in the enlarged EU.

37. Rev Dr Bill Addley, when participating at the Deacon Training Conference at Nagykoros, Hungary, took the opportunity to visit the church colleges at Budapest and Debrecen in Hungary and Cluj in Transylvania. He had

useful discussions on how best to facilitate the studies of their students who come to UTC and explore ways of closer inter college co-operation in the future.

38. Today over 70% of Europeans are urban dwellers. Talks are ongoing between PCI, Westminster Theological Seminary and Eastern European Churches to provide suitable courses to train theological students for urban ministry. We hope to offer strategic help to churches in Central and Eastern Europe through sharing in the sponsorship of students to come to Britain to study.

39. **Poland** is another of the new member nations of the enlarged EU. Contact between our church and the **Evangelical Reformed Church in Poland** was first made in 1983 when the church's Christian Education Director, Miss Ingeborg Niewieczyca, visited Ireland. Renewed contact was established in 2001 when representatives of both churches met at the Synod of the Eglise Réformée de France. An invitation was extended to PCI to their Synod in March 2004 and we were represented by Maureen Patterson. It is hoped that the Bishop, Rev Marek Izdebski, will be able to attend our General Assembly (2004).

40. The Europe and Middle East Committee has organised a small group visit to the two districts of the Reformed Church in **Romania**. This will provide an opportunity for mutual encouragement and to see first hand the challenges and opportunities facing our partner church and personnel there.

41. Two successful visits were made by outreach teams to Romania during the summer of 2003 and it is planned that two more will go in 2004, one to Szilagysceh and the other to Cluj. A small number of members from the Cluj team will stay on and join with Hungarian Christians to form a team going to Ukraine. The Rev Uel Marrs and Rev John Kirkpatrick plan to travel to **Ukraine** in May 2004. In addition to preparing for this outreach, they aim to build up our relationship with the small **Hungarian Reformed Church District in Trans-Carpathia** in the western part of Ukraine, and also to meet with leaders of the **Evangelical Reformed Church of Ukraine**.

## MIDDLE EAST

42. The Israeli-Palestinian situation continues with no solution in sight. Behind the politics and the events that grab the attention of the media, there is to be found not only real human suffering but also an increasing loss of hope. Whatever the particular linkage between the crisis in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on the one hand, and the current world situation on the other, the state of the world cannot be clearly understood without reference to Middle Eastern tensions.

43. The Middle East Forum met on 12 December 2003. The meeting was addressed by Rev Colin Chapman who spoke on the subject of "What future for Western Mission in the Middle East?" He highlighted three key issues: i) Islam – what teaching is there among Christians?; ii) the Israeli/Palestinian conflict – what explanation do we receive? iii) the polarisation between mission agencies and traditional churches. He pointed out that mission agencies are perceived as fundamentalist and traditional churches as being spiritually dead.

44. There are many issues and questions to be faced as our church continues to seek a way forward in mission in the Middle East. The Europe &

Middle East Committee has set up a working group to do this and their work will feed into the Board's Review Process.

45. Our church's links with **Syria** and **Lebanon** stretch back to the General Assembly of 1841 when it was decided to reach out to Syria. Our last missionary in Syria moved to Lebanon in 1951 and since then we have had continued links with the Near East School of Theology (NEST) and have supported students there over the years. Last year, Colin Dickson, a student at UTC, studied for a semester at NEST. He enjoyed studying subjects set in the context of the Middle East and interacting with students from Iran, Syria, Sudan and Lebanon.

46. Middle Eastern churches feel unrecognised and misunderstood outside their region. To increase our awareness and to encourage the local churches there, Professor Cecil McCullough and Rev John Mann attended a consultation in Beirut in February 2003 with the **National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon**, the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church. A follow-up consultation is to take place in Edinburgh from 31 October to 3 November 2004 and PCI will again be represented. It is envisaged that prior to the consultation, representatives of the Church in Lebanon and Syria would visit Ireland to gain an exposure to the life and witness of PCI.

47. In December 2003 Dr Bishara Awad, Principal of Bethlehem Bible College, visited Church House and met with representatives of the Board. The Bethlehem Bible College (BBC) is an interdenominational Christian centre with off-shoots in Nazareth and Gaza. At the present time Bethlehem, as a result of the security fence, is becoming a ghetto and there is a fear of ethnic cleansing. There has been no tourism for three years and 60% of the population is unemployed. The college is surrounded by three refugee camps and delivers humanitarian aid to both Christian and Muslim. An invitation has been extended to PCI to be represented at the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the College on 18 June 2004. It is planned that the Board will be represented and there will be opportunity also to explore how we might best relate to the College in the future.

## **AFRICA**

48. Many of the communities of Sub-Saharan Africa continue to face up to deepening poverty, political instability, and the threat of hunger and disease. The unrelenting scourge of HIV/AIDS is further compounded by an ongoing exodus of health care workers to the West. Nevertheless, in the midst of many challenges, the growing church continues to be a witness to the world of what it means to persevere with thanksgiving in what appear at times to be truly desperate circumstances.

49. In **Kenya** The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) which gained a landslide victory in the December 2002 presidential elections took dramatic measures to overcome corruption and implemented policies to tackle economic decline in a country where the majority of the population still live below the poverty line of \$1 per day. One year on from the election victory, the early euphoria had worn off as President Mwai Kibaki led Kenya in celebrating forty years of independence. There is also growing concern over the writing of a new

constitution, high unemployment and rising crime, with the threat of ethnic tensions never far away.

50. We continue to engage in partnership with the **Presbyterian Church of East Africa**, a church which is to be found mainly in Kenya but also has some congregations in Tanzania and Uganda. We extend our congratulations to Rev David Gathanju who has been nominated as Deputy General Secretary elect of the PCEA and will be installed at the PCEA's General Assembly Committee in Kihumbu-ini in April 2004. Over the past two years PCEA have welcomed a new Moderator, General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary into office. It is a time of transition for the church, especially in the operation of its central administration which is in the process of being decentralised to regional centres. We are looking at the possibility of a Kenyan pastor coming to London to serve amongst East African expatriates there.

51. Through funds from the World Development Committee, we have been able to support two students at St. Paul's United Theological College, Limuru on an MA degree course in Pastoral Care with a specialisation in HIV/AIDS. We continue to support the Training of Trainers for AIDS awareness in the Boys' and Girls' Brigades in Kenya.

52. PCI personnel continue to be involved in the spread of the gospel through development work, church planting, and Christian literature distribution.

53. **Malawi** continues to experience deepening levels of poverty, and is the third worst country in the world for income inequality. Some 65% of the population are unable to afford two square meals a day all year round. The single major resource of agricultural land is under severe pressure from rapid population growth and its usage is deeply affected by structural problems which leave local producers with little or no incentive. The country is a frequent victim of natural disasters, both drought and flooding, leading to crop failures and dependency on receiving thousands of tonnes of food aid in recent years. The food shortage in the 2002/2003 season left approximately three million people requiring food aid, but thanks to a good recovery in this past year, the figure dropped to around 400,000.

54. The Malawian people will go to the polls on 18 May for presidential elections. President Bakili Muluzi of the ruling United Democratic Front is retiring after failing to amend the constitution to allow for a third term in office. At the time of writing there was a growing fear that the election campaign might be marred by violence. The Malawian Economic Justice Network has released a manifesto to prepare people so that they will not simply vote along the lines of political personalities but be more focused on issues.

55. Malawi has a large population of Muslim nationals and there have been a number of occasions in the past year when Malawi Security authorities have arrested people of foreign Arab origin on suspicion of membership of the outlawed Al Qaeda terrorist group. There are fears that Malawi could be used as a launching pad for terrorism in the southern Africa region.

56. The AIDS epidemic continues to place a great strain upon every aspect of life in Malawi. In 2004 an official programme was launched to tackle HIV/AIDS from which tens of thousands die every year. At present there is an estimated prevalence of 30% among women in Urban areas.



57. PCI personnel in Malawi continue to be involved in the spread of the Gospel through theological training, medical and development work and education. Through chaplaincy work, they continue to make a significant contribution to ministry in the student world, and we continue to support the work of the Student Christian Organisation in Malawi (SCOM) by an annual grant and through the regular support of our missionary teachers. It has been noted with concern that a number of our missionaries in Malawi have been unwell in recent months, and in particular we were deeply saddened by the passing away on 3 March 2004 of Miss Freda Algie, one of our church's longest serving missionaries.

58. **The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian** (CCAP) continues to provide for the theological training of its ministers through the services of the United Theological College in Zomba and their new Intensive Theological Programme at Ekwendeni where the second year of studies commenced in April. At present PCI has personnel teaching in both of these centres, where every effort is being made to develop the curriculum, staffing, and upgrade academic standards as resources allow. Based in Zomba, the Theological Education by Extension in Malawi (TEEM) programme, continues to strive to equip elders and deacons for service in their local congregations.

59. The Christian Literature Association In Malawi (CLAIM) has struggled to publish new books in recent years not least because of the buying power of the people having been reduced. However it is seeking to revitalise its work at the present time, and the PWA, through funds from their Birthday Thank Offering for 2003/04, are assisting with the re-launch. As funds are sent at regular intervals, printing has already begun on some of nine manuscripts that are now ready.

60. Hopes are higher than they have been in twenty years that the war will come to an end in Southern **Sudan**. After a major breakthrough in 2003, the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army have agreed to sign a peace treaty. It has been agreed that Southern Sudan should be granted autonomous status for six years after which there would be a referendum to decide whether or not it would become an independent state. There remain, however, a number of areas of disagreement over which progress has been slow. Nevertheless, with a fresh optimism that peace is on its way, our partners, the **Presbyterian Church of Sudan** (PCOS), are making preparations to be involved in the rehabilitation and reconciliation process that must follow.

61. In January 2004 Rev Uel Marrs represented PCI at a meeting in Edinburgh involving international partner church representatives and office bearers of the PCOS. He reported that it remains unclear whether the two administrations of PCOS – Malakal, and PCOS – Akobo will eventually reunite or further divide to become two separate churches rather like the Synods of the CCAP in Malawi. PCOS Malakal experienced a major setback in June of last year when its office compound in Lokichoggio was raided and looted by local Samburu tribesmen. Some \$70,000 was required to repair damaged equipment and replace stolen items. PCOS Malakal held its 31<sup>st</sup> General Assembly in February of this year. Together, the international partners are focusing at present on capacity building amongst the leadership in Malakal. PCI continues to sponsor the theological training of ministers in the PCOS.

62. Our partnership with the **Eglise Evangelique Presbyterienne du Togo** (EEPT) is being reconsidered under the Overseas Board's strategic review currently being undertaken.

63. The **Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil** (IPIB) held its centennial celebrations in August 2003, having elected new general assembly officials earlier in the year, with Rev Correia de Lacerda being installed as Executive Secretary and Assir Pereira as President.

64. There remains vision among the leadership of the **Presbyterian Church of Brazil** (IPB) that we send a youth team to engage in student evangelism in 2005.

65. PCI personnel are involved in the mission work of IPB and IPIB in the remote North East of Brazil and amongst the Caiuá people in the west.

66. We continue to be committed to work with the **United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands**, although we now only have one missionary serving in Jamaica. The United Church remains open to receiving ministers from our church to work in parish situations. In the past year the United Church have offered to send a couple to serve as missionaries in Ireland and we are currently investigating this possibility. We have strong historical links with the United Church, and both churches see our relationship in the future developing along the lines of mutuality in missionary endeavour, both in Ireland and in Jamaica.

#### MISSION EDUCATION

67. The 'Mission in the Melting Pot' Review Process with which the Board has been engaged over the past year has served to remind us yet again that we live in an ever changing and constantly developing world. This has significant implications for how we in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland relate to and engage in the mission of Jesus Christ. It not only affects our approach to mission overseas but also here at home, particularly amongst the increasing numbers of people from other cultures and faiths who are now living in towns and cities throughout the island of Ireland. More specifically, we see that the changes in the world around us must inevitably impact on how we as a Board engage in the task of mission education, and particularly how we facilitate and encourage members of our church to continue to be (or to become) actively engaged in global mission.

68. In recent years, there has been a marked paradigm shift in people's thinking on mission, whereby an increasing number of congregations and individuals are bypassing their denominational mission board or established missionary societies, and engaging in what is being called 'Mission Direct'. That is, relationships and activities are being developed directly between congregations or individuals here at home and churches or mission agencies overseas; previously the local congregation would probably have been content to work through a mission board or home-based missionary society. Today's church leaders who see the need to take positive steps to stimulate and facilitate active involvement in the mission of Jesus Christ are increasingly finding that their members want to be 'in charge', preferring to work 'direct'.

69. The challenge is to find appropriate ways by which the Overseas Board can encourage, facilitate and assist the development of this growing desire at congregational level for a more 'hands on' approach to global mission;

and to do so in such a way that brings glory to God, whilst also seeking to ensure there are equal benefits for both the home congregation and their overseas partners. It is anticipated that the Board's Review Process will identify a number of strategic priorities that will help give direction and focus to our denomination's involvement in global mission for the next decade. It will also seek to identify how our church should balance its 'centralised' mission activities with those that are 'decentralised'. This in turn will help define our future priorities in regard to mission education.

70. It continues to be important that presbytery and congregational mission agents, together with other church leaders, understand the key role they have in stimulating and developing an ongoing interest and involvement in global mission; to emphasise that mission is for all, and not just the preserve of women and the PWA. It is encouraging to see that a number of presbyteries have been organising their own global mission events, either to complement the mission tour or as a 'special event' in years when no tour is planned. It has been good too to observe a greater awareness in some presbyteries of the need to organise appropriate training for congregational leaders; encouragingly, a number have organised some very useful training events in the past 12 months.

71. During the year, missionaries, mission volunteers, members of overseas teams, overseas visitors and bursars, Board members, and relatives and friends of overseas personnel have shared enthusiastically in deputation speaking on behalf of the Board. We extend sincere thanks to them all, acknowledging that their stimulating, challenging and informative presentations make a significant contribution to the understanding and commitment of PCI members to the work of global mission.

72. Missionaries on home assignment have appreciated and benefited from two days of deputation training, one month apart, at the beginning of each deputation period, and a review day held at the end. The arrangement whereby a missionary on home assignment is guaranteed one weekend each month free of all deputation responsibilities continues and has improved the level of spiritual refreshment amongst missionaries while they are at home.

73. The use of PowerPoint® in Sunday services and other weekly meetings is now commonplace in an increasing number of congregations. As part of their preparation for deputation, we have continued to provide our missionaries with training in the use of PowerPoint® so that, when appropriate, they are able to avail of this useful communication tool. In doing so, we endeavour to make sure that they do not become overly dependent on computer technology, emphasising the need to strive for effective communication whatever methodology is used.

74. We are grateful to the members of staff in both the Overseas and PWA offices who handle the administration of deputation bookings with efficiency and diligence. This past year, in addition to the normal deputation administration workload, they have had to deal with a significant number of re-arrangements or cancellations, mainly due to the unexpected illness of a number of missionary speakers. We acknowledge with gratitude the understanding of those who were on the receiving end of altered or cancelled bookings and apologise for any inconvenience caused. Despite obvious disappointment, the resultant changes were graciously accepted.

75. There can be disappointment too when our missionary personnel are unable to fulfil deputation engagements because they are already booked. This can be a cause of frustration and discouragement for those whose request for a speaker is turned down; it may even encourage them to look outside of PCI for an alternative missionary speaker. While this reaction is understandable, we would ask for patience and an understanding that it may well be impossible for the missionaries who are on deputation at any one time to take up every speaking request, particularly if demand is high and those on deputation are few in number. Furthermore, because of the nature of their overseas commitments, some of our missionaries are only able to come home for short periods, or at times that are less than ideal for our congregations, so their 'availability for deputation' is limited from the outset. Congregations and their organisations therefore need to accept that it may not always be possible to have the speaker they want, or to have them on the date that suits them best.

76. Variations in the number of missionaries on home assignment at any one time, coupled with what appears to be a continuing, albeit gradual, reduction in the overall number serving under the Overseas Board, means the increasing inevitability of 'difficulties' at some time or another in fully satisfying the demand for deputation speakers. Looking to the future, we anticipate needing to consider 'other ways of doing deputation'. In fact, we can see the increasing likelihood that, on occasions, it will be necessary for missionary speakers to be 'shared with others'; possibly by joining with neighbouring congregations, or by organising a presbytery or church-wide mission event, so that as many as possible may benefit from hearing them.

77. The evaluation of presbytery mission tours undertaken in May 2002 concluded that we should continue these events without any significant change in approach or frequency. However, more recent experience suggests that mission tours are perhaps no longer as useful as they once were and that a rethink is required. Furthermore, we have identified that there will be a particular difficulty regarding deputation (mission tours included) in the spring of 2005, when we are not expecting to have any missionary personnel on home assignment. Other options are therefore being considered for this period, including the use of invitation speakers from partner churches and the possibility of piloting a number of joint deputation events with other mission boards of our church.

78. During 2004 we will be undertaking a comprehensive review of our mission education resources. Regardless of the outcome of the Board's review process, which undoubtedly will have something to say about our future strategy and priorities in mission education, there is an urgent need to look critically at current resources to see what is still relevant, what needs to be changed and what's missing. Our review will therefore look at all printed materials (including the 'overseas focus' in the Herald, Wider World and our own World News), audio-visual resources, web site development, and exhibition and display materials.

79. Work is progressing well with the development of an entirely new Overseas Section for the PCI web site. The aim is to provide useful, varied, interesting and regularly updated information that will enable our members (and others) to be better informed about the nature and scope of our global mission

involvement, and of current news, needs and opportunities for service. No date has been set for the launch of the enhanced web site but it is anticipated it will be on line before the end of this summer.

80. The weekly Overseas Prayerline service, designed for use with the annual Points for Prayer handbook, continues to be an extremely effective aid to regular, focused prayer support for the work and needs of our missionaries and overseas mission partners. It is now being sent to almost 1,200 e-mail addresses each week. In addition, around 50 callers each week avail of a shortened 'recorded' version, which they 'pick up' by phoning the dedicated Prayerline phone number. We commend this key resource to all in our church and thank those who use it faithfully week by week.

81. The Moderator's theme for the year, 'Proclaiming the Gospel of God', was the theme for the United Missionary Rally, which took place on Tuesday, 28th October 2003. A small working group is being set up to plan and organise this year's Rally, which is scheduled to take place in the Assembly Hall, Church House on Tuesday, 26th October 2004.

### **PERSONNEL, VISITS AND VISITORS**

82. During the year the following missionaries passed to higher service: Miss Mena Williamson who served in India from 1952 to 1968, passed away on 29 August 2003; Miss Freda Algie who served in Malawi from 1969 passed away while still in service on 3 March 2004; Rev Samuel B Moles who served in India from 1947-1960 passed away on 3 March 2004; Mr Samuel J Kennedy who served in India from 1945-1956 passed away on 15 March 2004.

83. We give thanks to God and record our appreciation for the faithful witness and service of Joy Gowdy (Nepal 1992 – 2003); James and Pat Cameron (Jamaica 1990 – 2002); Leonora Wasson (Jamaica 1994 – 2003); Christine McMahon (Jamaica 1998 – 2002); David and Claire Kennedy (Malawi 2001 – 2003); Helen Johnston (Nepal 1995 – 2004); Maurice and Sheila McNicholl (Malawi 1999 - 2004); James and Willi Barton (India 1966 - 2003); Tracey Lamont (Malawi 2000 – 2004).

84. We give praise and thanks to God for the faithful witness and service of all of our missionaries during the past year. As they continue to serve in many and varied settings, we rejoice with them for the times when they see fruitfulness for their labours for the sake Christ and his Kingdom. We make every effort to stand alongside those who persevere in the face of difficulties, frustrations, insecurity and opposition to the proclamation of the gospel. We thank them all for their commitment to their calling to serve in cross-cultural contexts overseas.

85. Rev David and Mrs Violet Kiarie concluded two years of service in Second Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church in September 2003, and returned to parish ministry with the PCEA in Kenya.

86. We have been delighted to have the following bursars studying in Belfast over the past academic year: Rev Joseph Wakaba (Kenya); Rev Elsy McCroskery - Niap (Indonesia); Mr Mirek Tichy (Czech Republic); Mr Balint Zabin (Transylvania); Rev Etta Gorgey (Hungary); and Rev Binnie Mwakungungula (Malawi). We have also supported bursars in Scotland and England, including Rev Gabriel Riam (Sudan); Mr Robertson Gondwe (Malawi); and Mr Titus Gacheche (Malawi).

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

Rev Bill Addley to Hungary and Romania in June 2003

Mrs Maureen Patterson to France in June 2003

Mr Barry and Mrs Anthea Harrison to Spain in June 2003

Mrs Margaret Myers accompanied Mrs Zoe Vallely, PWA Central President and Rev Roy Vallely to Malawi in August 2003

Mr Nigel Eves and Mr Mervyn McCullagh attended the Eukumindo Assembly in Basel in September 2003

Rev John Hanna to China on behalf of the British and Irish Amity Teachers' Group (BIATG) in January 2004

Rev Uel Marrs to Edinburgh to attend a consultation of the PCOS partners in January 2004

Mrs Maureen Patterson to Poland in March 2004

Miss Helen Johnston and Rev John Kirkpatrick to Czech Republic in April 2004

Rev Uel Marrs and Rev John Kirkpatrick to Ukraine in May 2004

Mr Nigel Eves and Miss Helen Johnston to Nepal in May 2004

Miss Helen Johnston and Mrs Margaret Myers to Hungary and Romania in June 2004

88. During the year four new missionaries were appointed to serve long or short term overseas, in Malawi (2), Indonesia (1) China (1) - See Appendix A. We thank God for these new missionaries and would encourage people to pray for and support them as they and their families settle into their new locations.

89. In the past year two couples have been serving as volunteers in mission, one in Malawi and one in India. In April one person went out as a volunteer to Romania. During the year the Board organised two teams to visit Romania, one to Szilagyecseh, and one to Cluj. A growing number of all-age congregational teams make overseas visits each year, mainly to East African and European countries.

90. During the year we were delighted to receive the following visitors from our partner churches:

Rt Rev Geza Pap, Bishop of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Transylvania

Dr Bishara Awad, President of the Bethlehem Bible College

Rev Joseph Wakaba, minister of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, together with his wife, Mary, and their two children

## **THE HOME BASE**

91. We convey our thanks to our dedicated administrative staff who have fulfilled their responsibilities efficiently and courteously throughout the year, and who have been more than willing to go the extra mile during a lengthy period when we were short staffed. Presently the administrative staff is comprised of a Senior Administrative Officer, two Senior Secretaries, one with special responsibilities for financial affairs and the other for mission education.

There is also a part-time Secretary, and a new Junior Secretary/Receptionist was appointed in March.

92. In October we welcomed Miss Helen Johnston to the executive staff team. She joined us as Executive Officer with special responsibilities for personnel.

93. Rev Robin Quinn returned home with his family from missionary service in Malawi in 1991 where he spent nine years serving as a minister of the CCAP at Zomba Theological College. Since that time Robin has served as minister of Christ Church Congregation, Dundonald. He became a member of the Overseas Board shortly after his return from Malawi and in 1999 became Convener of the Africa, Caribbean and Latin America Committee. He brought to this convenership his many gifts and considerable experience of mission and church life in Malawi. On several occasions he represented our church at meetings and consultations with partner churches, and was very much appreciated for his pastoral support of our missionaries. We appreciate all that Mr Quinn has contributed to the overseas work of our church as a Board member and Assembly Committee Convener and would express our appreciation to the congregation of Christ Church, Dundonald for releasing him from preaching and pastoral duties in order to represent our church overseas. We ask God's blessing on Robin and Helen as they have recently returned to missionary service in Ekwendeni, Malawi with the CCAP, Livingstonia Synod.

94. The Overseas Board is sustaining its focus on the development of its fundamental framework for caring pastorally for missionaries. Our approaches to selection, training, orientation and internal debriefing are constantly under review. We are indebted to the Board's Pastoral Advisers, Dr John Ross and Dr Moreen Gordon, for their dedication, wisdom and experience that they bring to their time-consuming roles. In the past year we have offered all our missionaries an opportunity to receive a debriefing and counselling assessment, external to the Overseas Board, at the Edinburgh International Health Centre. Psychological assessment has been introduced for all applicants for missionary service. There have been two spiritual retreats for missionaries held in August 2003 and February 2004.

95. Dr Jean Shannon, missionary to Gujarat, India from 1965-1990, has submitted her resignation as Honorary Medical Officer of the Overseas Board after nine years of dedicated service in this role. We are indebted to Jean for the much valued medical expertise, diligence and sensitivity that she brought to this post and trust God will richly bless and guide her as she moves on to new spheres of service.

96. Just as we see the developing of global culture there is an opposite reaction of localisation now growing. While so much around the world seems increasingly the same, people are also seeking to re-establish their ethnic identity. So as the intensity of both globalisation and localisation grows, as people move around the globe more and more freely and as we continue to make advancements in technical know-how, the result has been the growing incidence of terrorist bombings, with the possibility of chemical and biological attacks. The bombings in Madrid in March 2004 have served as a stark reminder of this. While acknowledging that ultimately God is the one whom we trust and pray will watch over and protect our mission personnel wherever He has called them

to serve, the Overseas Board is currently taking steps to provide personal security training for all missionaries, as well as providing a risk assessment for each location in which PCI personnel are serving overseas, and updating evacuation procedures.

97. The Overseas Board is very grateful for the ongoing support of the Presbyterian Women's Association whose office bearers and Executive Committee members continue to contribute faithfully to the work of the Overseas Board. In 2003 the Annual Grant made by PWA to the work of the Board was £245,000. We commend the PWA for their enthusiastic and creative commitment to the work of our church in global mission. In particular, we very much appreciate the current initiative to refurbish our missionary residences.

98. Aside from the full-time staff in the Overseas Office, many members of the Board willingly sacrifice of their time, energy and gifts to serve on the Board's three Assembly Committees or four Board Committees. We are grateful to all who on behalf of the Board over the past year, have attended consultations with partner churches, visited missionaries in their country of service, and spoken about the work overseas in the congregations of our church.

99. As we encourage the wider church to remember that mission is part of the very essence of who we are, as individuals and as a church, we continue to be encouraged by the ongoing commitment by our members to support the work of mission in ways old and new. We are very grateful to individuals, congregations and PWA branches who have provided financial support so faithfully through the United Appeal, and we appreciate all the United Appeal Board does to ensure that the target of honour for the total appeal is reached each year.

100. The Overseas Board counts it not only a responsibility but also a privilege to be able to channel funds from the extra mile giving of individuals, congregations, and PWA Branches who, having met their United Appeal targets, committed themselves to a wide range of overseas projects. Not least, we express our thanks to those who organised and contributed to:

The Presbyterian Women's Association's Birthday Thank Offering 2002/2003 which raised a total of £44,200 for 'Women in the Church in India and Pakistan'. The Birthday Thank Offering Project for 2003/2004 is supporting the publication programme of CLAIM, The Christian Literature Association of Malawi and MEGAVoice, the small computer device that allows people to listen to the Word of God in their own language.

The Young Women's Group's 2002/2003 project entitled 'Leadership Training – Brazil' which raised £12,000. In 2003/2004 funds are being raised in support of deacon and deaconess students studying at the Karoli Gaspar Reformed University Teacher Training College, Hungary.

The Sunday School and Youth's 'Moving On' Project which raised a record total of £109,000, has contributed funds for the provision of transport for ministers in India, Pakistan, Malawi and Kenya. The theme of the current year's project is 'Lookin' Up' and it aims to support strategic outreach work among children and young people, and in the overseas context will be focusing on a literacy programme in the Zombe region of Kenya.

The Junior Boys' Brigade Appeal 2002/2003 which raised £15,000 for the provision of a suitable vehicle for the Theological Education by Extension



programme of the PCEA, and a further £7,500 for the international extension of the BB. The Junior Boys' Brigade Appeal launched this year is to improve schools and provide scholarships for the Discovery Bay area of Jamaica.

The World Development Committee which gave £10,000 to the Overseas Board for relief work and rehabilitation among flood victims in the State of Orissa, India.

101. The Overseas Board ended 2003 with a surplus of £106,630 on its current account, compared with the accumulated surplus of £114,463 at the end of 2002. We are indebted to the Board's Honorary Treasurer, Mr Mervyn Whittle, for his ongoing commitment to monitoring income and expenditure and preparing the accounts for 2003. We also express our thanks to the staff of the Finance Office for all their support and guidance.

102. Our membership of Global Connections (formerly the Evangelical Missionary Alliance) affords us the opportunity to keep abreast of new thinking and initiatives in world mission. In the past year we have been represented at their forums on health, personnel and development, and at Conferences that have examined the future of the Church and mission agencies in world mission. Additionally we continue to attend as observers, forums of the Churches' Commission On Mission (CCOM). As members of the British and Irish Association of Mission Studies (BIAMS) we are provided with further opportunities to reflect upon mission in our ever changing world.

103. In conclusion, we give thanks and praise to God for his guiding and strengthening hand upon the Board over this past year as we have sought to chart the way forward in a manner that brings glory to His Name.

## APPENDIX A

In the report most of the names of missionaries have not been mentioned but their names and spheres of service are listed below and are to be taken together with this report.

### BRAZIL

Mabel Colson	1990	Caiuá Indian Mission, Dourados
James & Heather Cochrane	1996	Independent Presbyterian Church National Mission in Cruzeta and Natal – on Home Assignment

### INDIA

Linda Jackson	1996	Woodstock School, Mussoorie
Brian Wilson	1996	Woodstock School and CNI, Mussoorie – on Home Assignment
Elizabeth Matthews	1998	Diocese of Agra, CNI – on Home Assignment

### INDONESIA

*Mervyn McCullagh	2004/1998	Educational and Community Development, GKS/STIE Sumba
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**JAMAICA**

Joan & Malcolm Scott 2000 Discovery Bay Charge of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Island – on Home Assignment

**KENYA**

Stephen & Angelina Cowan 1985/9 Outreach & Development Work, PCEA Tuum

Deborah Ford 1996 Teaching at Presbyterian College, Kikuyu - on Home Assignment

Naomi Martin 1991 PCEA Teachers' College, Rubate – on Home Assignment

Derek & Linda Roulston 1998 Development work, PCEA, Galana District

Paul & Anne Bailie 1998 Presbyterian College, TEE and teaching at Alliance Boys' High School – on Home Assignment

Andrew & Clerah Clenaghan 1999 Development work, PCEA at Zombe in Kitui District

Gary & Mary Reid 2000 Honi Farm, PCEA, Nyeri – on Home Assignment

**MALAWI**

Margaret Young 1995 Midwife, Ekwendeni Hospital

Diane Cusick 1995 Wives' School, Zomba Theological College – on study leave in South Africa

Clare McIntyre 1997 Karonga Girls' Secondary School

Stephen & Ruth McCracken 1999 Teaching at, Zomba Theological College

John & Rosemary Hanson 1999 Chaplain, Blantyre Synod

Shirley Stronge 2002 Nurse Tutor, Ekwendeni Hospital

David & Maggie Steele 2002 Associate Parish Minister in St. Andrew's Church and Chaplain to Mzuzu Secondary Schools/secretarial work at Synod Offices

Maureen Stevenson 2002 Medical Officer in Charge, David Gordon Memorial Hospital, Livingstonia

Michelle Evans 2003 Teaching at Bandawe Secondary School

\*Andrew & Debbie Soye 2003 Deputy Director, Blantyre Synod Projects Office

**NEPAL**

Pauline Orr 1993 Nurse/Tutor, UMN - on unpaid leave

**ROMANIA**

Csaba & Ilona Veres 2001/1993 Youth work and ministry to street children, Cluj

Richard Lynas 2002 Working with addicts in the Bonus Pastor Foundation, under the Transylvanian Reformed Church District of the Reformed Church in Romania.

**FRANCE**

Gordon & Sandra Campbell 1989 Professor in New Testament in Free Faculty of Reformed Theology in Aix en Provence

Rodney & Denise Cameron 1998 Eglise Réformée de France: Parish of Privas and Flaviac

**GREAT BRITAIN**

Christopher & Nivedita 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 -

**BRAZIL**

Naomi Keefe 2000 Valley of the Lord Orphanage, Recife – on study leave, now a candidate for long-term service

**CHINA**

**\*One new missionary**

**INDIA**

David & Cheryl Adair 2000 Woodstock School, Mussoorie – on Home Assignment

**JAMAICA**

Heather Lennox 2002 Associate Regional Director in the Cornwall Area Council of the United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands

**KENYA**

Norman & Pauline Kennedy 2000 Christian Literature, in co-operation with Africa Inland Mission

Alison Lesingiran 2001 Diagnostic Laboratory work - PCEA Tuum

### **MALAWI**

Donald & Una Brownlie 1999 David Gordon Memorial Hospital, Livingstonia – on Home Assignment

Dibbie McCaughan 2000 Teaching at William Murray Secondary School, Nkhoma – on Home Assignment

Rosalind White 2002 Teaching at Bandawe Girls' Secondary School – on sick leave

### **CZECH REPUBLIC**

Susan Clarke 1999 Church work and hospitality, Prague

### **SPAIN**

Derek & Jane French 2000 Evangelism & Christian Training, Spanish Evangelical Church, Valencia

Volunteers in Mission serve for a minimum of six months and for up to two years. Their names and spheres of service are as follows -

### **MALAWI**

Maurice & Helen Kennedy 2002 Church Roofing project/HHI School, Blantyre Synod

### **INDIA**

James & Willi Barton 2004 Education Consultants, Goa  
Candidate for short-term service:

### **MALAWI**

**To teach at HHI School, Blantyre, from July 2004**

\*Appointed 2003/2004

## **APPENDIX B**

### **'Mission in the Melting Pot'**

#### **Interim Report of the Overseas Board's Mission Review Team to the General Assembly 2004.**

The Overseas Board is charged under the Code to 'directly or indirectly supervise the Overseas Mission of the General Assembly,...' ( Para 279 (2)a).

The Code states further, 'the Missionary enterprise is to be regarded as an integral part of the life and nature of the Church. The policy of the PCI is to fulfil

this purpose by working in association with Churches around the world, as mutually agreed from time to time' (Par 289(1)).

At the General Assembly in Belfast in June 2003 it was agreed under resolution 2 of the Overseas Board Report (page 166):

“That the General Assembly request the Overseas Board to conduct a review of its vision, mission and strategy, reporting to the General Assembly of 2004 with a strategic plan to the year 2010.”

The Overseas Board set up a Review Team to carry forward this review process under the theme of “Mission in the Melting Pot” and the Review Team reports as follows:

## **I THE PROCESS**

### **The Team**

The Review Team consists of Executive Officers and members of the Overseas Board experienced in mission and the theology of mission, together with representatives of the PWA and World Development Committee. This working group of some ten members has met for prayer regularly during the past year, and monthly for its business meetings, with a core group of three team members meeting fortnightly in 2004.

### **Consultation**

However, the Team has been aware of the need to ensure widespread participation and engagement within this review process. The Team identified the need to keep a number of key groups apprised of the whole process and to give them opportunity when and where appropriate to be included in reflection and discussion. The hope has been that with as many as possible involved as the process has unfolded, the wider church would own the outcome and be ready to carry forward the work of global mission by the conclusion of the Review.

#### **Consultation within PCI:**

The Overseas Board understands its on-going responsibility, acting in the name of the General Assembly, to advance our thinking, planning, working and reviewing in mission. The Review Team thus understands that the wider church is ‘looking for a lead’ from the Board as we continue to reflect on our calling to be a ‘missionary church’, under the terms of Para 289 of the Code.

However, especially in light of recent decisions of the General Assembly under the prompting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities, we understand the need for the Overseas Board not only to engage centrally in mission on behalf of our church but to be a ‘servant board’ facilitating greater ownership of and involvement in world mission by the wider church. Not least, this will mean enabling the congregation to function as the primary agent or ‘engine-room’ in mission, both at home and in wider spheres.

A number of steps were then taken to garner the views of the church on our work in mission, and to ensure our members were aware of the process and its progress.

1. On two occasions questionnaires were circulated to seek the response of congregations and PCI members on specific matters, namely our vision under

God of our future in global mission; and our values or guiding principles as a church in mission (who we think we are and how we sense we should be doing mission today). Some 1300 contacts were made. These included presbytery and congregational mission committees, ministers, missionaries, PWA members, and other recipients of Prayerline. While the number of responses received was disappointing, it did provide helpful material for the consideration of the Review Team.

2. The Overseas Board at its Autumn Conference considered papers on 'Mission and the world today'.

3. The Board, through the Presbytery Mission Tours organised during the past autumn and winter session, met on five occasions with groups of ministers, mission agents and mission enthusiasts in local areas to consider the main issues of the Review thus far.

4. Items of news and items for prayer were carried in Prayerline and the other information channels of our church.

5. The Overseas Board held an extraordinary meeting in April to consider the Review in preparation for this year's General Assembly.

6. Contact was maintained with the Ad-Hoc Committee on Priorities to ensure the Review accords with the strategic thinking of the Assembly.

7. Two working groups have been set up to progress our thinking on major areas for discussion.

Meetings with other boards and committees of PCI whose work relates closely to that which falls, or may in the future fall, within the remit of the Overseas Board will take place as the process goes on. The Team see this as essential to provide the necessary scope, transparency and accountability to its work in review.

#### Consultation beyond PCI:

1. Members of the Review Team met with a Christian Management Consultant, Mr John Truscott, to reflect on the main areas we would consider and the process we envisaged following. Out of our initial meeting with Mr Truscott we drew up a document entitled, "Ten questions to be addressed". Mr Truscott has been used on further occasions to help us 'keep our eyes on the ball'.

2. We are aware that the work we carry out in mission is shared with the wider Church in the world and is also being done by many missionary societies and agencies within which PCI members serve. These relationships are valued greatly and the Review Team sees the need to continue to dialogue and discuss with our partner churches and corresponding societies and agencies as the process unfolds.

#### **The Review's timeline**

With the review up and running the Team sought to put in place a schedule of meetings which would allow them to prepare the report the 2003 General Assembly had asked for, as well as allowing for the consultation and thorough review we all seek. The pressures of time and the importance of the task have obliged the Team to bring this Interim Report and ask the General Assembly to receive the full report at its meeting in 2005.

## II THE SUBSTANCE OF THE REVIEW

### The Overseas Board and the Church

We are aware that mission properly understood is carried out by the Church. As the Code (as quoted above) so clearly puts it, ‘the missionary enterprise is to be regarded as an integral part of the life and nature of the Church’. It is thus of our essence to be involved in mission.

The mandate of the Code and the implication of resolution 2 (as quoted above) is that the Overseas Board is mandated to examine and set out a vision, purpose and strategy for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a missionary church overseas. Further to this, the role of the Overseas Board as a servant board of our church will need to be highlighted.

By working through the document entitled, “Ten questions to address”, the Team have been seeking to understand more clearly where we have come from as a church in mission; where we are placed today in the world from the point of view of mission; and where we sense the Lord would have us be in the future in mission in His service.

These questions enable the Team to consider:

1. The vision for our church in overseas mission
2. The purpose of our church in overseas mission
3. What is distinctive about the way PCI does mission (our values or guiding principles)
4. The distinctive contribution of PCI in world mission thus far (internal analysis) and the challenges provided by the world today (external analysis).
5. What then might God do through us?
6. How are we going to achieve what we sense God is calling us to?  
What is our strategic plan for our church towards 2010?
7. What resources do we have and need? What can we anticipate in faith as we move to see this plan worked out?
8. Where do we plan to be in one year from the end of the review process? (aims)
9. What are the stepping stones towards these points in order to keep on track in our out-working of the plan? (goals and objectives)
10. Where may we get it wrong? On-going and honest evaluation are an integral part of the process.

## III THE PROGRESS TO DATE

With the foregoing remarks on the substance of the Review in mind, we are able to provide a report on progress to date by way of the following statements about who we are, what we hope to be doing, and how we will go about it in the next years:

### Question 1. ‘Vision’

**The Overseas Board’s vision statement for our church in global mission is that:**

*We will be a missionary church increasingly used by God.*

Explanatory Notes:

our Church: Our primary focus is on our own church, PCI, as it sends and receives in mission. Recognising that PCI is also a particular church of the visible universal Church of Jesus Christ, we seek also, indirectly and directly, to encourage the Church worldwide in mission.

a missionary church: Since the Church originates according to the Father's plan in the mission of the Son and Spirit, missionary activity flows from the very nature of the Church. The Church's essential nature is as a community sent out into the world. It is by going outside itself that the Church is itself and comes to itself. Missionary work is not just one of its activities, but the criterion for all its activities.

global mission: Particularly in this globalised world, we recognise that the mission of the church has to go beyond 'the people down the street'. The Church's mission is not simply local, but also global. Since 'God so loved the world', a mission which stops 'at the end of the street' and doesn't also encompass 'the ends of the earth' is not as God-like as it might be.

The term 'global mission' is deliberately chosen to encompass both the local and the global responsibility of our church in mission. It seeks to avoid the paternalism sometimes associated with the term "overseas mission", and to be true to the reality of God's Church today, in which Western Europe, including the whole island of Ireland, has become an increasingly needy mission-field in its own right, and in which mission is 'from' and 'to' all peoples. We seek to assist our partners as they engage in mission within and beyond their own borders, to learn from them, and in conjunction with the other Boards and agencies of our Church, to invite them to serve in the work of mission here, and also to minister to and with those ethnic minorities whom God has graciously brought amongst us.

increasingly used by God: we recognise that this is God's mission, in which He graciously invites us to participate, and that our mission is of no value unless it is in submission to His leading and control. Our vision is that God will use the whole of our Church, at personal, congregational, presbyterial, board, and denominational level. In line with emerging new perspectives on the congregation as God's missionary people in a local context, as reflected by our own Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities, we emphasise the local congregation as the primary agent of mission, but affirm the missionary calling and responsibility at every level of our Church's life.

## **Question 2. 'Purpose'**

The Overseas Board's Purpose statement for our church in global mission:

The clear missionary purpose of our church is:

***to proclaim Christ and His universal reign.***

Explanatory Notes:

to proclaim Christ: we are convicted by the urgent need for evangelism, especially in view of the millions who have never heard the Gospel, or who need to hear it again. We affirm the importance of evangelism and discipleship as the one task within mission which the Church alone is qualified and authorised to do.



Yet while evangelism is at the heart of mission, it is not all we are called to in Christ's name. We recognise that Biblical mission is holistic; that witness to Christ is a unity of word and deed.

His universal reign: God's rule and authority at work in this world. Again we use this term to acknowledge that this is God's mission, for His sole glory. While people are our primary focus, God's reign must also be declared and demonstrated in every aspect of our world and to all principalities and powers. We long for His sovereignty to be willingly acknowledged amongst all peoples and all societies, and to be seen in the whole of life and creation. Recognising that God's reign extends beyond the Church, we do not simply look for the building of a particular denomination or the establishment of a presence geographically.

### **Question 3. 'Values'**

When we ask in what distinctive ways do we go about our purpose, we are asking about the values or guiding principles of our church that govern its life and mission. These values answer the question "how?", focusing not on the outcomes or the activities but on the methods. We have sought to identify these values and we detail them as follows:

#### **Statement of Values for the PCI as she engages in Global Mission:**

Our Church will reflect the following beliefs, behaviours and characteristics:

#### **God-glorifying**

We humbly recognise that the mission we participate in is God's mission, and not 'ours': it is not the 'property' of any one individual, group, or even of our denomination. We engage in global mission solely in response to, and as a result of, God's grace.

Our first priorities in mission, therefore, are worship and prayer. In accordance with our Confession of Faith, we seek at all times to submit to the authority of Scripture as mediated through the Spirit. In everything, we seek to be God-glorifying, Christ-centred and Spirit-led.

#### **People-focused**

If the Greatest Commandment is to love God, the second is like it: to love our neighbours as ourselves. Jesus called on individuals everywhere to "Come, follow me". His last commission to His friends was "Go and make disciples of all nations". The mission of God in which we share is a mission focused on people.

From the example of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, it is also our conviction that God reaches people (mostly) through people. We consider direct, personal missional encounter to be crucial, and prioritise the development of personal contacts, friendships and partnerships across cultures.

Recognising that it is 'people' who do mission, we also seek to provide the highest standards of training, support and care for all who engage in global mission. We affirm that God has placed the treasure of His Gospel in clay jars

and acknowledge the risks and limitations of human vulnerability as well as the potential for spiritual transformation.

### **Holistic**

Recognising that the mission of Jesus was to seek and save the lost, we affirm the importance of evangelism as the one mission activity which the Church alone has the right and ability to do. Our desire is that all people should know of the redeeming love of God lavished upon us through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus, and have an opportunity to respond to that love in repentance and faith.

In a world of competing truth-claims, we uphold Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Saviour. Recognising that the saving work of Christ is an ongoing process in the life of the believer, we emphasise the importance of teaching and discipleship and costly commitment.

We recognise further that a people-focused mission entails serving **the whole person** – physical, emotional, intellectual as well as spiritual needs. We also recognise that individuals live within **communities** and **environments** which are in need of the transforming power of the Gospel.

Following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, we therefore affirm the importance of a **holistic** approach to mission. All that we are and all that we do reflects our love of Christ and humankind and our desire to bear witness to Him, that others may be led to love and serve Him.

### **Church-based**

Mission is not just one task among many that the Church does, but the very reason for the Church's existence. We affirm that global mission is the calling and responsibility **of the whole Church**, and that **the local congregation** is the primary unit for the Church's mission in that place.

The Board therefore seeks to share the vision, skills and resources to enable the wider church to participate in mission at all levels. In line with PCI's historical practice, we place a special emphasis on establishing and encouraging church-to-church partnerships. At home, we aim to see every member of PCI enlightened, enthused and enabled to fulfil the role in global mission which is appropriate to their circumstances, calling and gifting.

### **Interdependent**

We remember also that the PCI is one small part of the universal Church, with gifts to give and receive within the global Body of Christ. In a rapidly changing world, we need to join together to discern opportunities and pool resources. We recognise that partnership is in itself an effective witness to a fragmented world.

We therefore commit ourselves to building up missionary partnerships for mutual encouragement, challenge, witness and ministry. We particularly acknowledge the mission needs of our own land and the need to learn from others, especially from the churches of the Southern Hemisphere which now play a strategic role in world mission. We consider receiving and learning in this way to be as important to us as sending.

In all our partnerships we seek to foster mutual respect, accountability and trust through shared resources and shared decision-making.

### **Forward-Thinking**

Recognising that God takes the initiative in His mission, we also acknowledge our own responsibility for proactive planning. We seek the discernment to recognise and creatively respond to new God-given opportunities, developing, as necessary, new spheres and methods of service. Conscious of the contextual nature of mission, we seek in every situation to proclaim and demonstrate the good news in a relevant and transforming manner.

At the time of writing in March 2004 the team was continuing to work on the remaining questions, but it is important to report at this stage on one strand of the review that relates to strategies dealt with under question 6.

### **Question 6. 'Strategies'**

One of the strategies the General Assembly used in being a church active and effective under God in mission, 'a missionary church', was the setting up of the Overseas Board and the testing and changing of its remit, and supervision of its activities down through the years.

In the course of the review to date the Team has also embarked upon reviewing a **vision, purpose and strategy for the Overseas Board** as it relates to the wider church at every level:

**Our vision is that:**

**The Overseas Board will engage in increasingly versatile service of our church in global mission**

**Our purpose is:**

**to champion global mission by:**

- **enthusing our church to proclaim Christ world-wide**
- **enabling our members to share their gifts and lives across cultures**

Explanatory Notes:

Increasingly versatile service: Traditionally the Overseas Board has been viewed as the 'sending and receiving agency' of our church, with the wider church engaged in a support role which has focused on financial giving and prayer. However, nowadays more and more congregations take an active involvement in mission, through twinings, sending and receiving individuals and all-age congregational teams, and engaging in a broad range of projects. As a result the Overseas Board sees the need not only to be engaged in 'sending and receiving' but also in a broader support role that provides consultancy and partnership for congregations with a developing sense of ownership of global mission.

In this new model of service, the Board affirms interdependence as a core working principle and value. Following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Board will seek at all times to serve, rather than control, and to listen, rather than dictate. We do not simply engage in mission on behalf of the Church; we also seek to serve with the Church as we engage in mission together. Affirming the importance of communal discernment and shared ownership, we aim to consult and cooperate at every level.

to champion: To defend, promote, and uphold the vital responsibility, calling and privilege of global mission within and beyond the PCI. To serve, guide and facilitate the wider Church in its missionary witness to the world, and to represent and act on behalf of the PCI in those areas of responsibility which a central Board is best able to manage and oversee.

Enthusing and enabling: through prayer, education, sending, receiving and supporting; and through the Board's guiding, advising, and facilitating our congregations as they engage directly in global mission and as they support PCI members serving in the global context with our own denomination and with other Christian believers.

lives and gifts: We affirm that mission is not just a matter of a specific job to be done; it is a sharing of what we are in Christ, as much as what we do for Christ. At the same time, we recognise that both churches and individuals have specific gifts, insights and experiences to contribute to the world-wide missionary task. 'Gifts' include people, ideas, and experience as well as finance.

across cultures: In today's increasingly diverse yet interconnected world, we recognise the need for Christians to bridge social, generational, and economic gaps as well as crossing racial and geographical boundaries in mission. We recognise that our Christian witness and service is more effective when believers unite together across cultures, learning from one another's insights, emphases and experiences within the global Body of Christ.

### **Working Groups**

Of the two working groups set up, one addresses the History of Mission in PCI and the World of Mission today. A better understanding of where we have been and where we are today leaves us better able to face the future that God calls us into.

The second group is looking at the Theology of Mission, how a Reformed Church understands its call and responsibility in God's world and work today, as well as some of the key mission issues facing us at the beginning of the 21st century.

The findings of these groups will facilitate further discussions about our renewed strategy for Mission towards 2010.

### **Conclusion**

As the Overseas Board seeks the approval of the General Assembly to continue with this review process, it is good to note the enthusiasm and commitment of the Review Team. It is said that the process of a review is as important as its outcome, and we would wish to affirm how much we believe the participants of the Team have benefited already, and how much we believe our church will benefit in time. Some crucial questions, in relation to strategy and structures in particular, remain outstanding and we look forward to wrestling with these challenges in the coming months.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the General Assembly receive the Interim Report on the review of vision, purpose and strategy and direct the Overseas Board to continue with this process, bringing a final report to the General Assembly in 2005.

3. That the General Assembly note that approximately 90% of mission is carried out by the Church world-wide in countries that are generally perceived to be predominantly Christian, and urge the Overseas Board to consider this in its strategic review.

4. That the General Assembly instruct the Overseas Board to look into how our church should best respond to the rise of Islam in the overseas context.

5. That given the ongoing political tensions and religious conflicts in Asia, and the consequent challenges heaped on minority Christian communities, the General Assembly call upon all our people to be committed to prayerful and practical support for Christians in China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar.

6. That the General Assembly urge prayer for a peaceful solution to the ongoing political turmoil and conflict in Nepal, and for the United Mission to Nepal as they further implement their strategic plan and not least as they relate to the Nepali Christian Community.

7. That the General Assembly recommend the Overseas Board, at this time of European Union expansion and numerical decline in many of the Churches of Europe, to work together with European partners to discern and respond to new God-given opportunities for the effective proclamation of the gospel.

8. That the General Assembly give thanks for our renewed contact with the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, and ask the Overseas Board to continue its investigation into the place of Western mission in the Middle East, with particular reference to the role of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

9. That the General Assembly, recognizing the high degree of involvement in recent years with our partners in mission in Malawi, Kenya and Sudan, call upon our people to pray earnestly for these African Churches as they continue to share the good news of Jesus Christ in the context of deepening poverty and political uncertainty, and where an effective response to HIV/AIDS is diminished by the exodus of many healthcare workers to the West.

10. That the General Assembly give thanks that we have the privilege of contributing to and learning from the missionary endeavours of the Presbyterian churches in Brazil, and the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, as these churches seek to reach out effectively with the gospel in isolated rural locations and growing urban centres.

11. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for the faithful service and witness of our missionary personnel in their varied and sometimes dangerous situations, and commend them and their families to the whole-hearted support of our church.

12. That the General Assembly give thanks for the widespread interest in prayer and support for our missionaries and overseas mission partners, and rejoice at the evidence of an increasing desire on the part of some individuals and congregations for a more direct, 'hands on' involvement in global mission.

13. That the General Assembly encourage the Overseas Board, where appropriate, to work closely with other boards, presbyteries and congregations of our church in identifying and implementing strategies by which to encourage and enable all of our people to be active in their support for and involvement in the mission of Jesus Christ to the world.

14. That the resignation of the Rev Robin Quinn as Convener of the Africa, Latin America and Caribbean Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev Stephen Richmond be appointed in his place.

15. That the Rev Dr Mark Gray be appointed as Convener of the World Development Committee.

16. 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:

### **OVERTURE TRANSMITTED**

#### **Anent Par 279(2) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 279(2) of the Code an additional sub-section (b) be added as follows:

“(b) encourage study of, and response to, the issues of aid, relief and world development;”

and that the present sub-sections (b)-(d) be renumbered as (c)-(e)

DONALD J WATTS

# BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Very Rev Dr DH ALLEN

Secretary: Rev JH ROBINSON

1. Political instability seems to have become an almost constant way of life throughout Ireland, both North and South. Criminality of every kind is the order of the day, mirroring Paul's list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5. Yet in the midst of such a situation, there are signs of change, which give encouragement and hope for the future.

2. A multiplicity of religious ideas are being offered and considered and even being accepted by many in every part of this island. However, there is also a genuine hunger for reality and purpose in life that is opening people up to a readiness to consider the Good News of the Christian Gospel.

3. The continuing inflow of asylum seekers, refugees and foreign workers is adding a dimension and fervour of faith in many areas that have been spiritually static or moribund for years. While there are opportunities to reach out to those coming to our communities, there is also the challenge to be willing to learn from them.

4. The past two years have seen the Board of Mission in Ireland (BMI) struggling prayerfully with the areas of change needed to enable our witness to be effective in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The new committees and staffing arrangements presented to this Assembly should provide effective means for witness in the foreseeable future.

5. Appendices I and II give an outline of the work undertaken, and conclusions reached, by the Board's Review Group during the last year. Its main conclusions address the issues of, (1) the much-needed promotion of the necessity and urgency of mission in Ireland by means of a Committee, and a short-term, full-time appointment, dedicated to that end, (2) the complete integration of the work of Home Mission and Irish Mission by means of a new combined 'Home and Irish Mission Committee', whose chief function will be that of strategic planning, and (3) the recognition of local congregations as the essential units of mission, and the need therefore to encourage and resource these by means of a Committee and a full-time Director, dedicated to this purpose. The Board is fully persuaded that this structure and staffing is essential if its Vision, as outlined in Appendix A to last year's Assembly, is going to be fulfilled.

6. This restructuring means that a number of previously free-standing Committees are now integrated into the new framework without the emphasis of any being lost. So that, for example, the necessity of Evangelism will be outworked within a number of the Panels of the Committee on Congregational Life, as Divine Healing will within the Panel on Ministry, Public Worship within the Panel on Worship, and Church Extension within the Board's Committee on Property.

7. To facilitate this integration a number of excellent Conveners have willingly concluded their term of service before the normal seven years, namely,

Mr Brian Knox (Church Extension), Rev John Parkes (Evangelism), Rev Dr Stephen Williamson (Divine Healing), Rev Rob Craig (Home Mission) and Rev Roy Patton (Irish Mission). Also, Rev George Moffett's full term as an effective Co-Convener of Church Extension has concluded. Without exception, they brought to their respective convenerships energy and enthusiasm, commitment and vision. The Board is genuinely grateful for the significant contribution they have each made to its work and to the work of The Kingdom in Ireland. It is our intention within our new structures to utilise the gifts and wisdom of these faithful servants of our Board and Church.

8. By various means, and through the work of the Director of Evangelism, Rev Harold Boyce, the Evangelism Committee has sought to keep congregations and Kirk Sessions aware of their privileges and responsibilities for outreach in every area and district.

9. The Irish Mission is increasing the number of its Workers on the field with the addition of Mr Jim Laverty and Mr Robert Wilson, who have been accepted and hope with their wives to serve in the Republic. Others are being interviewed and requests have come from different places for Workers.

10. The proposed new joint Home Mission / Irish Mission Committee will enable greater flexibility in the placement of Workers and Ministers in team ministry scenarios, which have been proving more effective than the old concept of isolated Workers.

11. The Home Mission also continues to serve by supporting different areas of ministry. "Nightlight", small linked congregations, inner city ventures, Church Extension charges and the renovation and upkeep of buildings are some of these areas.

12. There has been an increase in the number of serving Deaconesses and in the number of congregations requesting their help. Such ministry still proves to be a vital addition to the witness in congregations, hospitals and friendship houses. Please pray for blessing and guidance for every aspect of this ministry.

13. The Church Extension Committee will soon hand over its work to a new Board Committee, but the Church should not forget the value, scope and success of the past. The Board gives thanks for the wisdom, vision and courage of its present and previous Conveners and committee members.

14. The Divine Healing Committee has been encouraged by the evidences that this ministry is still strong in congregations and presbyteries, and continues to offer hope and comfort to so many in need.

15. It is the prayer of the Board that the General Assembly will agree the new structures now proposed, so that the Committees can begin to effectively service the various outreaches in this land. The need has never been greater, the apathy and ignorance never so tangible, and for many years, the doors of opportunity which God has set before us, never so open. The Board would ask the whole Church to support its work in a prayerful, practical and financial way that will enable advancement to take place.

16. Please remember the new Board Convener, the Board Secretary, the Committee Conveners, the Superintendent, Office Staff, Ministers and Workers and their families and Deaconesses. None of us can live unto ourselves and really feel happiness and satisfaction to be ours. The great Commission still calls



us forth in His great Name in every community throughout the whole country, to “Go and make disciples!”

**The Harvest is nigh. Let us be up and doing for the Master.**

*Rev R C Craig writes:*

17. As a Board we sincerely thank Rev Dr DH Allen for his years of service, first as Convener of the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training, then as Co-Convener of the Board of Mission in Ireland, and in this past year as sole Convener of the Board. His years of retirement have meant extra service for him, and Dr Allen as Convener has brought experience and vigour to the task. Behind the scenes of the Board he has been busy travelling throughout Ireland to encourage, advise and help wherever possible. His insights and enthusiasm have been appreciated by all who have worked alongside him.

Dr Allen has shown a keen understanding of and a warm support for all areas of the work of the Board. In his tireless commitment to the Irish Mission and Home Mission Dr Allen’s devotion to the Lord Jesus and his desire to see the Kingdom of Christ extended in Ireland have been much in evidence; they have been the driving forces which have shaped his service as Convener.

## IRISH MISSION COMMITTEE

1. The Irish Mission Committee gives thanks to God for evidence of answered prayer during the course of this last year. There are many openings and opportunities to “speak the truth in love” in an ever changing situation and in an ever needy society. The task is an urgent one and so we welcome the developments within the Board of Mission in Ireland, trusting that they will lead to increased focus and greater effectiveness. Our field workers already work closely with local ministers and we are thankful for our partnership in the gospel with leaders and congregations, as well as local Presbyteries. Such relationships provide real opportunities for mutual encouragement and support, as well as for making for greater impact in the community. We need to make the most of the opportunities and the best use of the resources that God has given us.

2. We have eight full time Workers, who are based in Arklow, Dublin, Drogheda, Carlow, Athy/Naas, Clonmel/Cahir, Cork, Fermoy and Dungannon. Through the Tentmaking Scheme we also support the work of two young women in Westport. We thank God for men and women who serve him with passion and commitment as well as with a real desire to see the Kingdom grow. The openness in Irish Society provides the Workers with a range of opportunities, working with all ages and in many varied and differing situations. Our Workers consider it a great privilege to be used by God, whether it is in a children’s meeting, a school, an adult bible study, a prayer group or in a personal one-to-one situation. There are significant encouragements, and a sense of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit as people respond. As a Committee, in giving thanks to God, we pay tribute to our Workers for their faithfulness and dedication in that the work can also be very demanding, and sometimes can

appear unrewarding. We ask for prayer support for our Workers, their wives and families.

3. During the year, after consultation with the local congregation and Presbytery, the Committee appointed Mr Billy Patterson to work in Drogheda. We give thanks for the faithful service of Billy Patterson and his wife, Pat, in Kilkenny during the last 20 years. The work in Kilkenny has been much blessed of God and both of them have been much used in reaching men and women for Christ, as well as in building up the local church. We wish Billy and Pat God's blessing as they move to Drogheda and continue to serve the Lord in this area of great need and much opportunity.

4. We give thanks for answered prayer in the recruitment of new personnel. We welcome Jim Laverty (High Kirk) and Robert Wilson (Ballyalbany) along with their wives into the Irish Mission family. We are also in the process of interviewing another two applicants. We pray that they will know God's blessing as they serve Him wherever they are placed. We commend them and the new areas of work in which they will be involved to the prayers of the whole church. We are also encouraged by others who are seeking God's will in serving Him through the work of the Mission. We look for those who are spiritually mature, with gifts for evangelism, along with the ability and flexibility to work as part of a team in a cross-cultural context. We ask ministers and elders to be proactive in making the need for new Workers known in all congregations.

#### **Housing for Irish Mission Workers**

5. Over recent years the increasing costs of housing have made it difficult to find suitable accommodation. It is not always possible for a Worker to be able to finance housing, and increasingly the shortfall between a house being sold in Northern Ireland and one purchased in the Republic has made it impossible for a Worker to purchase a house without the help of the church.

6. We now find ourselves in a situation where, with new Workers coming in, suitable accommodation has to be provided. In order to assist in this the United Appeal has given consent for the Irish Mission to borrow finances from the Presbyterian Mutual Society, subject to the agreement of the General Assembly. We therefore seek such approval, believing it to be a better option than renting or purchasing through a Mortgage company. It means we do not have to be involved in large capital expenditure and the housing purchased should be an increasing long-term investment.

7. The Irish Mission Committee particularly wants to thank our Superintendent, Rev David Temple, for his work of supporting and encouraging our Workers, undertaking many deputation engagements, and editing the Christian Irishman magazine. We ask prayer for David as his role undergoes change within the overall work of the Board of Mission in Ireland. We also thank our office staff for all the work that they undertake for our Workers and Mission. We also pay tribute to Dr Harry Allen and thank him for the encouragement that he has given to all those involved with the work of the Irish Mission. We wish to commend our Mission, and in particular our Workers and their families, to the prayers and support of the General Assembly.

ROY PATTON, Convener

## CHRISTIAN IRISHMAN

The Christian Irishman continues to bring a missionary interest to the members of the Church. This year we produced three full colour editions, which enabled us to present some of the work of our Church in a more vivid and attractive way. We thank all who contributed to articles in the magazine during the past year.

DAVID TEMPLE, Editor

## DIVINE HEALING COMMITTEE

1. During the year, the Committee has continued with its work of encouraging the healing ministry throughout the church. We thank God for those who quietly exercise this ministry in their congregations and in the wider community. We rejoice too with those who have experienced God's healing power at work in their own lives.

## ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE AND THERAPIES

2. The subject of alternative medicine and the Christian response to it is one of increasing concern to many people. The Committee has attempted to produce some brief guidelines to help with the assessment of these therapies. The number of therapies available and their diversity means that this can in no way be considered an exhaustive survey of the topic.

3. Even a brief scan through popular magazines gives a clear indication that there is an increasing interest in the whole area of health and healing. Much of this interest is involved with the whole area of 'alternative' medicine. There is a plethora of 'new' therapies and treatments available. Some of these have been around for a long time, others, although practised for a long time in the East, are new-comers to our Western medical world.

4. The terms 'alternative', 'complementary' and 'holistic' (and more recently 'integrative') are all used to describe therapies. Alternative therapies are those used instead of orthodox medicine. Complementary therapies are used alongside orthodox treatment. The terms holistic and integrative are used to describe approaches which take the whole person into account. All of these terms are frequently used interchangeably. A precise definition is difficult. The British Medical Association has suggested that alternative therapies are those 'which are not widely used by orthodox medical professionals nor widely taught at undergraduate level in medical and paramedical courses' (BMA Board of Science and Education Working Party. 'Complementary Medicine, new approaches to good practice'. London BMA, 1993). However this definition is problematical as there is an increasing variety of therapies being used in GP surgeries, hospital wards and outpatients clinics.

5. How do we assess these therapies? As Christians our questions should be more than simply asking, 'does it work'. We do not accept the 'means to an end' philosophy in other areas of our lives. Why should we accept it in the area of health and healing?

We should also be asking 'are these therapies compatible with Christian beliefs as found in Scripture?'

6. These therapies fall into different groups:
  - (i) **Herbal remedies** – there are generally no spiritual overtones with these. The only warning is that you need to be sure that you know what you are taking. Chinese herbal medicines in particular do not always list all the ingredients. They may well contain harmful ingredients, especially if taken along with other drugs. It is important if you are attending your doctor to tell him all the treatments you are on, including herbal medicines. Just because a treatment is seen as being 'natural' does not mean that it is harmless. Side effects of herbal preparations and interactions with other treatments can occur. Herbal medicine has been the source of our medicines for most of our history and it is unlikely that we have discovered all the potential of the plant kingdom. So continuing research is essential. Herbal remedies used to be seen as based in folk-lore and were often passed on from one generation to the next. That is no longer the case. They can be part of a huge industry which in some cases may be more interested in making a profit than healing.
  - (ii) **Manipulative therapies**, eg chiropractic, osteopathy and massage – these involve learned skills in manipulating bones, joints and muscles. Again, there is no underlying 'spiritual' philosophy here which might concern the Christian. However one problem might be exploitation – unnecessary and repeated and expensive treatments.
  - (iii) A number of commonly practised alternative therapies have their roots in either **Eastern religion** (Taoism or Hinduism) or in the concept of **vital life force or energy**. Eastern religions believe not in a personal God but in some sort of 'cosmic energy' which pervades the whole universe. This notion of pervasive universal energy, which can be channelled and manipulated for healing, is in essence an impersonal god – not the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Life force' or 'vital energy' within the body is a popular concept in many branches of alternative medicine. Ancient Chinese beliefs suggest that good health depends upon a balance of two energy components, 'yin' and 'yang'. Many practitioners believe that healing energy can be transferred from one person to another. Therapies such as reflexology and acupuncture are based on a belief in this cosmic energy flow. Practitioners say that the flow can be blocked or that an imbalance of energies can occur, causing discomfort and disease. Therapies aim at clearing the channels for this energy flow and regaining the energy balance.

#### **Assessment of some of the most common therapies**

7. **Reflexology** divides the body into 10 vertical zones (5 to each foot). The massage of a particular area of the foot affects everything in that zone – energy flows and balances are restored. There seems to be no proven efficacy (see University of Exeter study) and, given the potential for life-energy

involvement, Christians should be careful. Why not simply enjoy a foot massage which can be both relaxing and stress relieving?

8. **Acupuncture** is based on 12 pathways called meridians along which energy, chi, is said to flow. Inserting fine needles affects the flow of energy and restores energy balance to bring healing. Acupuncture has been shown to work in some cases such as the treatment of nausea after surgery or chemotherapy. Western medical scientists, not convinced of the existence of either meridians or chi, have suggested theories as to how acupuncture might work. If such rational scientific explanations are shown to be correct, then no belief in 'chi' is needed and acupuncture may be acceptable.

9. Other practises which some use for relaxation are **Yoga** and **transcendental meditation**. Hindu teachers of yoga believe that its purpose is to unite the spirit with the Hindu gods. The various positions used are acts of worship to these gods, and they do not believe that you can separate the physical exercises from the spiritual involvement.

10. **Reiki** is based on the understanding that life energy pervades each person and is unconditional, divine, loving and healing. Illnesses arise when this energy flow is blocked. The practitioner is a channel allowing Reiki energy to flow toward the patient. This channelling is controlled by spirit guides. As communication with spirits is an integral part of Reiki it is clearly wrong in the eyes of Scripture. In the Bible, contacting spirits is denounced as sorcery, mediumship and spiritism (Lev 19:26,31; 20:6; Deut 18:9-14; Acts 19:19; Gal 5:20; Rev 21:8)

11. **Aromatherapy** can be divided into two parts. Firstly, the use of aromatic oils such as perfumes, antiseptics and respiratory tract decongestants and those which provide a pleasant means of relaxation. Secondly, aromatherapy can also be used as a relaxing beauty treatment or a sophisticated form of herbal medicine. In the latter, various techniques of diagnosis such as divination and astrology may be used. There are obvious cases of aromatic oils being used in the Bible: frankincense, myrrh and hyssop. However, there are also strict warnings against divination and occult activities (eg Hosea 4:12) and astrology (eg Isaiah 47:13). We need to be able to distinguish between the use of aromatic oils and holistic aromatherapy.

12. **Homeopathy** – very dilute medicines are used. They are vigorously shaken during their production thus releasing a 'spiritual vital force'. What is this vital force and where does it come from? Because of the extreme dilutions used homeopathic remedies are unlikely to have any harmful side-effects. However if this is a method of manipulating life energy it is incompatible with Christian belief.

13. **Charms and cures** – in these spells are cast - 'let no one be found among you who practices divination, or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells.' (Deut 18:9-13)

### **Dangers of Alternative Therapies**

14. We need to be careful before, as Christians, we take part in any of these therapies and their belief in 'other gods'. 'You shall have no other gods before me'. This was the repeated sin of the children of Israel – they either left God to worship other non-gods, or they took on board beliefs and practices

linked with the worship of these other non-gods. By accepting these therapies wholesale and not asking any questions we may be guilty of the same sin.

15. All alternatives can be dangerous if they prevent or delay proper diagnosis of a condition. Herbal remedies are frequently dispensed on the basis of self-diagnosis or on the basis of diagnosis made by staff in health food stores. The Journal of Royal College of Physicians published the results of a survey carried out in 1998. A researcher visited 24 health food shops and described symptoms that health care professionals would recognise as possibly suggesting a brain tumour or similar serious condition. The diagnoses given included 'flu, low blood sugar, tension, weather or too much use of the brain! In total 42 different therapies were recommended and only 7 health food store staff suggested seeing a doctor. Failure to diagnose correctly or delay in that diagnosis may have serious consequences.

### **How should we respond to the challenge of Alternative therapies?**

16. One challenge is to the health service; because of time pressure (GP average is 6mins), increasing use of technology and also financial considerations, any compassion being shown risks being diluted.

In contrast alternative therapists offer treatment sessions often lasting 30 minutes to 1 hour. This is one to one time spent with the therapist. The treatment is not high-tech and therefore appears to be natural and 'safe'. As the patient pays for the treatment there are no financial constraints for the therapists.

17. Has pursuit of good health become our god? Have we changed the first question of the catechism to read 'Man's chief end is to glorify good health and enjoy it for ever'? What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? (Mt 16:26) If health is the single most important thing to us then we may be free to use whatever therapies we wish irrespective of their consequences whether physical or spiritual. Are we willing to accept healing at any cost?

18. Not all healing is good healing, so in Exodus (7;10-12, 20-22; 8:6-7,18) Pharaoh's magicians imitate the signs and wonders demonstrated by Moses. Jesus was clear that signs and miracles would be produced by false christs and prophets before He comes again. Paul (2 Thess 2:9-10) stated that counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders will be produced by the man of lawlessness in accordance with the work of Satan.

### **The Challenge to the Church**

19. There is clearly a search for a deeper spiritual reality going on in society. However we need to be clear that not all spirituality is good. So in the Church we need clearly to present Jesus and the wholeness and freedom which are ours in Him.

20. We need to be careful about terms such as 'faith healing'. In whom or what do we place our faith? For the Christian it is in Christ and Him alone. So, depth of faith is not as important as who that faith is in – Jesus. This is in direct contrast with the current popular view that it doesn't matter what your faith is in, just as long as you have faith.

Divine Healing looks to God, through faith in Jesus Christ – His Son who died for us and our forgiveness and rose again victorious over the grave. When we consider God the Creator and Sustainer of all things, who in Jesus Christ has redeemed us, where should we place our trust, in God or in the supposed healing power of crystals and energy supposed to flow through us?

21. The Church has a contribution to health and healing that no other agency can provide, namely the gospel of redemption and forgiveness through the grace of God without which we cannot be made truly whole.

Every service of worship in which prayer is offered to God, in which His praise is sung, His Word read and expounded, and the Sacraments celebrated, is a healing service in which people may experience the healing and redeeming grace of God. Other special services of intercession for the sick or for the laying on of hands may be held, but they should not disguise the fact that the normal Sunday service may equally be a source of healing in which people may find wholeness and forgiveness.

STEPHEN WILLIAMSON, Convener

## EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

1. The Director of Evangelism, Rev Harold Boyce, is now into the final year of his contract. The Committee has been impressed with the work he has done and place on record its gratitude to him. His work with ministers, Kirk Sessions and congregational evangelism committees has been greatly appreciated throughout the Church. There has been a good response to the seminars and rallies organised on a presbytery basis for ministers and elders. The fruit of the *Personal Evangelism for Presbyterians* course is yet to be fully seen, but early indications are very encouraging. His experience and enthusiasm have been of great benefit, and he has made an important contribution not only to the work of the Committee, but to the whole Church.

2. The Committee had for some time considered the possibility of inviting Mark Greene from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity to lead a seminar on Christian witness in the workplace. With the approval of the Board, the Committee joined with Evangelical Alliance, The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and TBF Thompson Ministries to co-host a visit of Mark Greene in January 2004. An open seminar, attended by about 600, was held in the Assembly Hall and over 100 registered for a day conference at the Culloden Hotel. Feed-back from both Events was extremely positive and it is hoped that similar joint ventures will be held in the future.

3. Following a suggestion from one of our ministers, the Committee looked at the possibility of publishing an evangelistic booklet to be used with the more elderly members of congregations. Other possible publications were also considered and the Committee would be keen to encourage leaflets or booklets for couples intending to be married and leaflets to be available at weddings and funerals. It is hoped that these suggestions will be developed during the next year.

4. Harold Boyce has been involved in the early negotiations for a *School of Evangelism* in January 2006. This would be another joint venture with

Evangelical Alliance, The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and TBF Thompson Ministries. Running throughout a week, it would involve lectures and seminars and would be led by speakers well-known throughout the world for their insights and ability to communicate.

5. The following grants have been made:
- |                               |      |
|-------------------------------|------|
| The Bible Society             | £250 |
| The Bible Society for Ireland | £250 |
| The Scripture Gift Mission    | £250 |

JOHN PARKES, Convener

## **DIRECTOR OF EVANGELISM**

*The Director of Evangelism, Rev Harold Boyce, reports:*

1. The year 2003-2004 has been one of continuing opportunity to fulfil my personal mission statement: "To help the church share the gospel with the people of Ireland". I am grateful to all those ministers who have given me much-appreciated opportunities to address their Sunday congregations or mid-week meetings. I enjoy these opportunities very much though they are probably not the *most* effective ways for me to help further the work of evangelism in a congregation.

2. It is in those situations where people can listen to what I have to say but then discuss it together that the most effective work is done. For this reason I continue to feel that the ministers' seminars, elders' rallies, session conferences, leaders' conferences and personal consultations are the most fruitful ways in which I have used my time.

3. The other area of the work that has been a focus for me has been that of personal evangelism. There is still a very slow uptake in congregations of the "Eleven:1 Fellowship" approach to this important aspect of Christian discipleship. I encourage ministers to promote it within their congregations, especially as it is simplicity itself to set up a group. The members can run it themselves without any need for the busy minister to be involved. I have had many opportunities to promote the "PEP Course" (Personal Evangelism for Presbyterians) and have been gratified by the very positive response to it where it has been used. Again there is still great scope for its wider use in our church.

4. Throughout the year I have been involved in the work of the organising committee of the "Get A Life" Special Assembly. I have also been involved, with representatives of other denominations, in planning a School of Evangelism to be held in Ireland (probably Belfast) in the early part of 2006.

5. I have also been pleased to be a part of a working group of the Board tasked with charting the way forward for us in the area of evangelism and related ministries. This has been part of the important business of setting priorities and goals for the future. The proposed "disappearance" of the post of Director of Evangelism is something that has my full support since, should the Assembly approve, evangelism will be taken under the remit of a proposed new Director of Congregational Life. It has been my experience over the years, and my increasing emphasis, that the best way to encourage evangelism is not by giving



a congregation ideas for special events that can be “bolted on” to their programme. Rather, the need is to make the whole life of the congregation gospel-centred and outward-looking. The best approach to evangelism today is well captured in the slogan “A Healthy Church is a Growing Church”.

## HOME MISSION COMMITTEE

### PWA HOME DEPARTMENT

*Mrs Margaret Myers reports:*

1. PWA works in association with the Board of Mission in Ireland to “provide for the recruitment, training, organisation and support of deaconesses in the various areas of the Church’s life and interest”. Twenty-two deaconesses currently serve within PCI together with five students in training at Union College.

#### **Personnel**

2. Miss Roberta Irvine was Commissioned as a deaconess by the Presbytery of Down on 31 August 2003 in First Comber and inducted to serve in that congregation.

3. Mrs Sadie McCullough was Commissioned by North Belfast Presbytery on 28 September 2003 in Whiteabbey and inducted to serve in that congregation.

4. Miss Doreen Draffin was inducted by North Belfast Presbytery on 14 March 2004 to serve as deaconess in the congregation of Whitehouse.

5. Mrs Ruth Henry will be inducted by East Belfast Presbytery on 25 April 2004 to serve as deaconess in the congregation of Belvoir.

6. The Presbytery of South Belfast conducted a service of Induction on Tuesday 6 January 2004 for Miss Jean Gwyn, Deaconess Chaplain to the Royal Group of Hospitals.

7. Mrs Christine Kyle has been granted permission to work in a part-time capacity (20 hours per week) as Deaconess Chaplain in the Ulster Hospital.

#### **Deaconesses in Training**

8. Second year students, Mrs Amanda Cooper and Miss Michelle McCauley, have been placed for their Probationary Year of training in Portrush and Legacurry respectively.

9. Miss Margaret Robertson, studying for one year at Union College, has been placed for her Probationary Year of training in the congregation of Ballylinney.

10. Summer placements for first year students, Mrs Julie Peake and Miss Jo Martin, will be in Bannside and Second Comber respectively.

11. We praise God for answered prayer and thank him for those who have been called to train for deaconess work.

12. We continue to invite prayer that God will call new students to study for deaconess work and that more resources for training will become available.

### **Finance**

13. We are grateful to God for those who give generously through PWA and the Deaconess Training Fund to meet the ongoing costs of training and support for deaconesses. We continue to invite prayer that the necessary funds will be available.

### **In-house Training Seminars**

14. Two seminars were held in the autumn for serving deaconesses. A Finance seminar on 30 October 2003 and a seminar on Special Needs on 28 November 2003.

15. A series of three seminars is planned for May 2004.

### **Hungarian Deacon/Deaconess Placement Scheme**

16. The Board is pleased to continue its partnership with the Teacher Training College of Karoli Gaspar Reformed University and to receive some of its students for training in congregational work.

17. Mr Daniel Gal was placed in the congregation of Whiteabbey from 17 September - 17 December 2003.

18. Miss Lillia Cseke was placed in the congregation of Kells from 15 January - 20 April 2004.

19. Ms Judit Agocs, a teacher from the Teacher Training College of Karoli Gaspar Reformed University, made a visit to Northern Ireland from 24 February - 2 March 2004.

20. The Board of Mission welcomed Miss Cseke and Ms Agocs to the Board Meeting on 25 February 2004.

21. We record our thanks to the congregations of Whiteabbey and Kells for providing training opportunities for the students.

22. The Board wishes to thank the members of the congregations who hosted the students during their placements.

23. Mrs Myers attended the Institute of Diaconate Conference in Hungary from 10-11 June 2003 and spoke on "Organizing Diaconal work in congregations".

## **PRESBYTERIAN MUTUAL SOCIETY LIMITED**

*Rev Sidlow McFarland (Chairman) reports:*

1. The Directors are pleased to report another very satisfactory year's progress in the work of the Society. The number of new members has increased to over five thousand and new investment totalled £38 million during this financial year bringing the total assets to £85 million.

2. An increase in the volume of lending together with a strong rental income from our commercial property investments enabled the Society to produce a gross profit in excess of £3.6 million. This enabled a dividend of 5.25% to have been declared on all shareholdings for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004.

3. Congregations and individuals continue to make use of the very competitive borrowing facilities available for a wide range of purposes from car, house and land purchase to business expansion and bridging finance.

4. We conclude with our thanks to God for all that He has enabled us to achieve over the past year and pray for His continued blessing in the future.

### HOME MISSION GENERAL

1. When, through deputation, the opportunity is presented to tell something of the current story of the Home Mission the response is always immediate and similar. So many are encouraged and excited to hear of the steady and faithful work which is being discharged by both ministers and congregations across Ireland. Here is a flavour of such work:

#### Secretary

2. Within the family of the Home Mission we have been pleased to welcome Rev Harry Robinson as our new Secretary. Within the first year he has been on a steep learning curve as he seeks to grasp both the big picture and the many individual scenes which make up the work of the Mission. He has proved himself to be more than able and we pray God's wisdom and grace upon him as much of the day to day running of Home Mission falls upon him.

#### Personnel

1. The story of the Home Mission is best told by those who are actively engaged in the mission throughout Ireland. Here are a few snapshots:

*Rev Dr Keith McCrory reports from the Liffey Valley:*

2. It has been a very encouraging twelve months for those of us involved in establishing a new Presbyterian congregation here in Maynooth. Having begun in April last year with monthly services, we started to meet weekly for the first time in September and have been doing so ever since. Our services take place in what is known as the resource area of Maynooth Post Primary school, near to the centre of Maynooth. Whilst a little grim at first sight, the addition of curtains at the front, cloths to cover the students' lockers to the side and some equipment to provide sound and projection transforms the space into a wonderful setting for worship.

3. The heavy work of setting up and taking down each week was greatly helped by the provision of some large metal cupboards in the school in which to store our equipment. Prior to that, everything had to be transported into the school and then out again every time we had a practice or service. With two of our elders having been off work with back injuries, it was such a thrill to be able to leave everything in the school premises! Many thanks to the Home Mission for that!

4. Outside of Sunday, we initially met together during the week in one home group but in January were able to grow into two groups locally, with another monthly group now established in Edenderry, some forty minutes away from Maynooth. It has been wonderful to see our little fellowship grow and

deepen together in community and to see God at work in people's lives as his Word comes alive to them. As our numbers have grown a little (from 28, including kids, to just over 50 on average) we have been able to add further ministries such as Sunday School and a Women's Bible Study, which have had a great impact.

5. Perhaps our boldest step has been to lease an office on the Main Street in Maynooth which we are currently fitting out as a resource centre. Our first step will be to open a small Christian bookstore and administration facility as an identifiable centre for our church's life - somewhere for people to connect with us during the week. As resources become available we also hope to fit the office to run some adult education programmes such as literacy classes, introduction to computers for seniors and courses aimed at those trying to get back into the workplace. When this is done we will then be able to run after-school clubs for some of the local young people and use the office as a venue for such things as Alpha courses and student oriented events.

6. We are so grateful to our God for the many ways in which he has met our needs thus far and for the enormous privilege of sharing the gospel with those in our wider community. We are deeply grateful also for the vital prayer and practical support we have received from other churches. The work is without question difficult but our hearts remain light and God continues to bring us great encouragement. Please continue to pray that God will be glorified, that necessary resources will become available and that others will be led to follow Jesus through our small efforts.

*Rev John Mann reports from Ballina, Ballymote and Killala:*

7. Thirty to forty attend our services in Ballina, although the number can increase with visitors, or decrease on the first Sunday in the month when there is a service in Killala, eight miles away with an attendance of fifteen to twenty. Ballymote, thirty five miles away, has an average attendance of about eight. Local communities attend Harvest Thanksgiving services etc very well in all three churches.

8. Three new families have joined us in Ballina in the last two years - one from Kenya; and one makes a round trip of sixty miles to the service. Unfortunately young adults are poor attenders. Our few children and young people attend Sunday School and their meetings well. We have a few faithfuls at our monthly Bible Studies.

9. In 2003 we were asked to host an Alpha Course and had a constant attendance of over forty from the different churches. Our coffee evenings for overseas aid, our requests to sign petitions against injustice, our "teas" for local charities on "Heritage Day" etc are well supported by members of all churches.

*Rev Brian Savage reports on the Urban Mission Programme:*

10. Ballykeel congregation, on the eastern side of Ballymena, has benefited from the Urban Scheme. Although not strictly "inner city" the area has all the problems normally connected with that phrase and for two years the congregation has been able to employ an evangelist, David McIlwaine, as part of their mission to the parish. David works within the congregation, training and

equipping Christians to share their faith and outside it and on the fringes, presenting the Gospel directly to unbelievers. He has developed significant links, especially with men, which the church plans to exploit during his final year and beyond.

11. The last report serves to remind us of the spiritual needs North and South. In November of 2003, the Rev Keith Drury was called as minister of May Street - a partnership between the Presbytery of South Belfast, the congregation and the Home Mission. Our hope and prayer is that along the traditional pastoral ministry Keith will be able to forge a new ministry which seeks to reach out to the many people who come into the centre of Belfast on weekdays.

12. In the past year as a mission we have been pleased to welcome Rev Peter McDowell to Christ Church Limerick and also Rev John Woodside to Drogheda. In the summer of 2004 Rev Sam Anketell completes his term under the Alternating Ministry Scheme in the congregations of Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford. We are pleased that he will be staying within the Home Mission as he has received a call to the congregations of First Bailieborough, Corranearry and Trinity, Bailieborough.

### **Heritage Protection in the Republic of Ireland**

13. The Assembly reports of the past two years have had much to say on what has been a difficult issue for other churches as well as PCI. This year we are pleased to report that representations by Church of Ireland, Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches have been effective in persuading the powers that be that the liturgical needs of congregations do change and that therefore a degree of flexibility in the internal structure of church buildings must be allowed in order to accommodate such changes.

### **Alternating Ministry Scheme**

14. Regular meetings between representatives of both Methodist and Presbyterian Churches have taken place during the year. Within the past year discussions have been initiated as to the future shape and direction of the Alternating Scheme.

### **Office Staff**

15. The Home Mission congregations, ministers and Committee are faithfully helped by the Office Staff in Church House. Our good wishes go to Mrs Joyce Anderson and Mrs Jennifer McClure who have taken up other duties. As ever we are indebted to Mrs Rosemary Thompson, our honorary treasurer, and Mr Nehru Dass for their work in helping manage the Home Mission Accounts.

### **Nightlight**

*Mr John Luke, Director of Nightlight, reports:*

1. The street outreach work of NIGHTLIGHT is continuing in the entertainment areas of Belfast with Mr John Luke as Director. A team of 26 volunteers, working on rota, take Christ onto the streets on Thursday night from

8pm to 11pm and Friday and Saturday nights from 11pm through to 3 or 4 am. Two new "local" teams started in 2003, namely, Nightlight Ards under the direction of Mr Robert Melville (Greenwell St) and Nightlight Newcastle under the leadership of Mr Neil Bingham (Newcastle Pres). In 2004 exploratory work has commenced in The Cathedral Quarter and The Odyssey Complex and it is hoped that enough volunteers will come forward to make this a permanent presence.

2. The volunteer team are committed Christians of all ages and from a wide range of backgrounds who have a burden for the work of NIGHTLIGHT and who have experienced clear direction from God to become actively involved. New team members go through an application, vetting and interview process and then receive "on the job" training. The team is constantly changing as individual's personal circumstances alter, and it is always encouraging to welcome new people on board.

3. NIGHTLIGHT is based at the Kinghan Church in Botanic Avenue where team members can meet for prayer before and after the work on the streets. It also provides somewhere to bring anyone in need of help and counselling. A regular Saturday and Sunday morning (12 midnight to 3am) Tea Bar takes place on the footpath outside the church and this has become a great contact point.

4. Mr Luke continues to receive numerous invitations to speak to congregations and this reflects on the high level of support and interest shown by the church in general. Miss Linzie Stewart remains as Development Officer and concentrates on team development and contact follow-up with the volunteer team in the Golden Mile area. Mrs Catherine Dalzell continues as Part-time Resource Worker and in that role she has been able to produce Prayer Letters, Information Packs and Leaflets and other resource material as well as co-ordinating deputation.

5. The Nightlight Executive Committee in consultation with Mr Luke oversees the work of NIGHTLIGHT.

RL CRAIG, Convener

## CHURCH EXTENSION COMMITTEE

1. The following is a summary of the work of Church Extension since the 2003 General Assembly.

### **Belfast Area**

#### *New Mossley*

2. Under the guidance of the Rev Ian McDonald, the work of the Church continues to progress through positive leadership and Outreach.

3. New car parking provision has been completed at a cost of approximately £42,500 plus VAT and the congregation and Presbytery alike are pleased with the work. The repointing work to the brickwork also has been completed at a cost of £7,700 plus VAT and appropriate payment made to the

relevant contractors. New Mossley congregation have made donation towards the financing of these works.

#### *Taughmonagh*

4. The congregation are appreciative of the leadership of the Rev Robert Love.

5. Planning Permission has been issued in relation to proposals to provide a new meeting area, etc, to the front of the present building, but following examination of the existing premises to establish the essential maintenance/upgrading works which would need to be carried out in the foreseeable future, the view has been taken that the original proposals may not be the best way forward. Therefore discussions are continuing regarding the most advantageous format of these works, possibly by the provision of a more compact and manageable new building on the site.

### **Coleraine**

#### *Ballysally*

6. The work at Ballysally continues under the Rev John Coulter's leadership in a positive way with the congregation in good heart. Consideration is continuing regarding moving to full congregational status. The building structures remain in sound condition.

### **Londonderry**

#### *Strathfoyle*

7. The Rev Jim McGregor, as Stated Supply, has conducted Worship within the Church of Ireland building, albeit with a limited attendance. No offer has to date been made to acquire the site previously occupied by the Church building.

### **Sites**

#### *Carrickfergus*

8. When Land Registry mapping of the site has been resolved, it is proposed that the Marshallstown Road site be auctioned. The Committee has agreed that the finance raised from the Marshallstown Road site sale should be earmarked for future Church Extension work.

### **Dublin**

#### *Maynooth*

9. Church Extension provided finance for the purchase of a new Manse at Maynooth and it is pleasing to learn that through the Ministry of Rev Dr Keith McCrory, the Church work is progressing positively, and in future,

consideration may be required regarding the purchase of site for constructing a new Church building.

### **Ballymena**

#### *Wellington Street*

10. The Committee received a deputation on behalf of Wellington Street regarding their proposals to port from their existing site to a new location within a housing development area. The proposals for the new building structures were presented along with the financial implications thereof. The purchase of the site was indicated to be £1.1m, the building works approximately £3.4m, giving a total expenditure in excess of £4.5m. Figures for the sale of the present Church site and Manse, etc, were presented, and the anticipated outstanding loan at 31 December, 2006, to be over £800,000.

11. The Committee deliberated in terms of other financial applications made by other congregations, however, Wellington Street was noted to be in a different category, in that Presbytery had some years ago given approval to Wellington Street to move to the new development area under the category of "porting". It was agreed that as the proposed porting would appear to be obviating the need for construction of new Church complex by Church Extension at a cost of approximately £1.5m, it would be appropriate to make further grant to assist Wellington Street. The figure agreed was a further £60,000.

### **Finance**

12. Upon reviewing financial matters, it was agreed that it would be inappropriate to seek further finance from United Appeal Board at this time. The Committee agreed that decisions will be taken as and when appropriate regarding the use of bequests made for Church Extension work.

13. The Committee acknowledge with grateful thanks the generous bequests which were received during the last financial year.

### **Remit of Church Extension**

14. In view of the work of the BMI Review Committee, Church Extension understand that their remit could well change in due course in the light of decisions to be made.

### **Support**

15. Sincere thanks go to all who serve in Church Extension Charges, Ministers, Interim Sessions and Working Committees. May the Lord guide and encourage you in the Work.

16. The prayerful and financial support from many people and various organisations is much appreciated by the Committee.

#### *Mr Brian Knox writes:*

17. The commitment by the Rev George Moffett as Co-Convenor of the Church Extension Committee over many years should be recorded with grateful



thanks. His driving inspiration over the years has enabled many building projects to reach fruition and his guidance to Ministers and congregations alike has been greatly appreciated by all with whom he has come in contact.

GEORGE MOFFETT, BRIAN KNOX, Conveners

## APPENDIX I

### BMI REVIEW 2003-2004

The Board's report to last year's Assembly (p168f) summarised the aim of the review as "a fresh look at every avenue of its witness in Ireland" in order to "enable it to identify, evaluate and address the most urgent areas of need in the most efficient manner". In an Appendix to that Report (pp 182-183) the Board's overall vision and role were also summarised as:

#### (A) THE VISION OF THE BOARD:

**To glorify Christ and by his Spirit to work for the building of his Church throughout Ireland.**

- To make disciples.
- To develop the life of existing congregations through worship, teaching, fellowship and evangelism.
- To challenge our whole church to faithful prayer.
- To explore new areas where churches could be planted.

#### (B) THE ROLE OF THE BOARD:

**To stimulate congregations and presbyteries to mission within their bounds.**

- To work in partnership with other Boards of our own Church, and where appropriate other churches and Christian organisations, to advance Christ's Kingdom in Ireland.
- To provide appropriate training for mission.

Since last year's Assembly, the Review Group has been discussing the structures and staffing necessary to fulfil the above Vision and Role. In regard to structures, it recommended to the Board, the following:

#### (C) STRUCTURES

##### 1. Four Assembly Committees, namely:

- (a) Education and Promotion
- (b) Home and Irish Mission – principally for strategic planning
- (c) Congregational Life (with working Panels on Worship, Discipleship, Fellowship, Ministry and Mission)
- (d) Shankill Road Mission

##### 2. Three Board Committees servicing the above, namely:

- (a) Property
- (b) Personnel (with a sub-committee on Training & Resources)
- (c) Finance

The Review Group was conscious of the sensitivities engendered by amalgamation and/or change of status and so envisaged a process of integration rather than the immediate replacement of the old by the new. Principally, it recommended that the new Home and Irish Mission Committee and the Shankill Road Mission Committee (formerly, Commission) should be constituted as follows:

### **HOME AND IRISH MISSION**

\_\_\_\_\_, Convener  
Executive Director, BMI, Secretary

- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, Convener and Executive Director of BMI, Convener, PWA Central President, PWA Home Vice-President, PWA Executive Secretary, BMI Director for Personnel, BMI Executive Secretary for Education & Promotion, Conveners of Personnel, Finance and Property Committees, Mrs C Poynton.
- (x) 5 members of former Home Mission Committee \* plus 5 members of former Irish Mission Committee \*
- (y) 5 representatives from membership of Board

\* these to be nominated by a sub-committee of the Board, comprising Moderator, Clerk, Convener, Secretary, Conveners of Committees. Retiring members on this (x) line would not be replaced until its membership dropped to five.

### **SHANKILL ROAD MISSION**

Rev J S Dallas, Convener  
Shankill Road Mission Superintendent, Secretary

- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, Convener and Executive Director of BMI, Convener, Shankill Road Mission Superintendent, Clerk of Session of Shankill Road Mission Congregation, BMI Executive Secretary for Education and Promotion, Conveners of Personnel, Finance and Property Committees.
- (x) 4 members of former Shankill Road Mission Commission
- (y) 4 representatives from membership of Board

[That is, the total representative membership would remain unchanged at 8 persons.]

The Review Group has also tabled suggestions to the Board as to the composition of its Committees on Personnel, Finance and Property.

This structure of four Assembly Committees resourced by three Board Committees has, in the opinion of the Review Group, the potential to deliver effectively the Vision and Role of the Board as outlined above, while maintaining some continuity with agencies whose names and remits are

hallowed by history. However, it was quickly realised that the Board's Vision would not be realised if there were not also some staffing adjustments, outlined as follows:

#### **(D) STAFFING**

In summary, it was recommended (a) that the post of Secretary remain unchanged (apart from renaming the post, Executive Director, to reflect better the remit and responsibilities), (b) that the pastoral dimensions of the current post of Superintendent of the Irish Mission be expanded significantly, with some current responsibilities correspondingly removed, and that the post be renamed 'Director for Personnel' in order to reflect this wider remit (see Appendix II below for a list of main responsibilities), (c) that the necessary permissions be obtained for a post in succession to (though with a wider remit than) the Director of Evangelism, namely, a Director for Congregational Life (see Appendix II below for a list of main responsibilities), and (d) that a new short-term post be created in Education and Promotion in order to raise the profile, throughout PCI, of the necessity and urgency of mission in Ireland (see Appendix II below for a list of main responsibilities). Approval for the posts of Director of Congregational Life and Executive Secretary for Education and Promotion has been gained from the Panel on the Overview of Funding and from the General Board, and it is anticipated these will be filled from 1 February 2005 and Autumn 2004 respectively.

### **APPENDIX II**

#### **BMI Director for Personnel**

This permanent post is a development of certain aspects of the current permanent post of Superintendent of Irish Mission.

#### **PROPOSED MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Provision of ongoing pastoral care to Home Mission Ministers, Irish Mission Workers, Urban Mission Workers and Tentmakers in their ministry situations throughout Ireland.
- Arranging regular events for the inspiration, training and mutual encouragement of the above.
- Arranging and contributing to area meetings of BMI field staff for fellowship and prayer.
- Recruitment and oversight of the programme of training of Irish Mission Workers.
- Implementing and updating an Induction Programme for Irish Mission Workers, as appropriate.
- Promoting, among ministers and students for the ministry, the vision and opportunities of Home Mission ministry.
- Liaising with the Director of Ministerial Studies regarding the placement of ministerial students in BMI field settings

- Implementing and updating the Induction Programme for Home Mission Ministers, as appropriate.
- Implementing and overseeing the proposed Induction Programme for ministers (and BMI personnel) in Urban Mission congregations.
- Implementing and updating an Induction Programme for Urban Mission Workers, as appropriate.
- Providing information and resources for strategic planning through papers and personal reports
- On going involvement in deputation responsibilities.

### **BMI Director for Congregation Life with effect from 1 Feb 2005**

This permanent post is a development of certain aspects of the current Fixed Term post of Director of Evangelism. An in-depth review of the duties of this post will be carried out after 5 years, with changes anticipated to meet the priorities and strategies of BMI at that time.

### **PROPOSED MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Panels:**

- Resourcing the Panels on Worship, Discipleship, Fellowship, Ministry and Mission with up-to-date materials in their respective fields
- Co-ordinating the work of the Panels, ensuring necessary cross-fertilization without duplication

#### **Congregations:**

- Encouraging and assisting local congregations in assessing their vibrancy in the 5 designated areas and setting achievable goals for their development
- Providing relevant resources and training to achieve same.

#### **Presbyteries:**

- Assisting Presbytery Panels on Congregational Life to develop a vision and strategy for taking forward congregational life in the 5 designated areas

#### **Church-Wide:**

- Maintaining up to date knowledge of developments and experiments in the world church, especially its Presbyterian and Reformed branches, in the 5 designated areas
- Facilitating visits of specialists in any of the 5 areas from outside Ireland
- Developing strategies to assist the PCI as a whole to move forward in the 5 areas
- Organising inspirational and training events in co-operation with other PCI training agencies
- Involvement in the BMI deputation programme.

**BMI Executive Secretary for Education and Promotion**

A New 2 Year Fixed Term Post Effective From Autumn 2004

**PROPOSED MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Developing and implementing a strategy for raising the profile of BMI, throughout PCI, in order to encourage prayer, financial support, etc.
- Developing written educational and promotional materials on BMI.
- Editing “The Christian Irishman” or its successor, reflecting all current and new BMI interests and activities
- Creating, maintaining and developing a BMI web-site
- Production of short DVDs to highlight at congregational level the work of BMI
- Issuing of regular (on alternate weeks with Overseas Board?) e-mailed Prayer Links, covering all aspects of work of BMI
- Co-ordination of deputation programmes on behalf of BMI
- Significant involvement in the BMI deputation programme at both Presbytery and congregation level.

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.

**Evangelism Committee**

2. That the General Assembly, in commending Bible Sunday (5 December), encourage congregations to make fuller use of the available resources and to highlight the importance of the Scriptures in our life and witness.

3. That the General Assembly in encouraging members of the Church to see the privilege and responsibility of being ‘salt’ and ‘light’ in everyday life, commend to ministers the booklet, “Supporting Christians at Work” by Mark Greene.

4. That the General Assembly thank Rev Harold Boyce for his energetic and effective service as Director of Evangelism, and pray that God will continue to use him up to and beyond his retirement on 31 January 2005.

**Irish Mission Committee**

5. That the General Assembly grant permission to the Irish Mission to borrow finances from the Presbyterian Mutual Society to enable the provision of accommodation for Irish Mission Workers

**Presbyterian Mutual Society**

6. That the General Assembly congratulate the Directors of the Society on its continuing success and encourage congregations and individuals to avail of its lending facilities.

**Historic Churches Advisory Committee**

7. That the General Assembly note with satisfaction the agreed Guidelines, which recognise “that churches may wish to adapt places of public worship in the light of contemporary revisions of their worship and mission”.

**Alternating Ministries Committee**

8. That the following be appointed to the Alternating Ministries Committee: Conveners of the Board of Mission in Ireland and Home & Irish Mission Committee, Deputy Clerk, Mrs C Poynton, Rev SG Anketell.

**General**

9. That the resignation of the Very Rev Dr DH Allen as Convener of the Board be accepted, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev Graham Connor be appointed in his place.

10. That the General Assembly approve the new structure of the Board of Mission in Ireland, as outlined in Appendix I.

11. That the General Assembly approve the revised Job Descriptions, as outlined in Appendix II.

12. That the resignations of Rev George Moffett & Mr Brian Knox (Church Extension), Rev John Parkes (Evangelism), Rev Dr Stephen Williamson (Divine Healing), Rev Rob Craig (Home Mission) and Rev Roy Patton (Irish Mission) be accepted, and that they be thanked for their services.

13. That Mrs Cherry Poynton be appointed as Convener of the Committee for Education and Promotion.

14. That Rev R A Patton be appointed as Convener of the Home and Irish Mission Committee.

15. That Rev Harold Boyce be appointed as Convener of the Committee on Congregational Life.

16. That the Board of Mission in Ireland, with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 280 of the Code as follows:

**OVERTURE TRANSMITTED****Anent Par 300(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 300(1) of the Code the words “Home Board” be deleted and the words “Board of Mission in Ireland” be substituted in their place.

DONALD J WATTS

# PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Executive Secretary: Mrs MARGARET MYERS

## Theme 2003/04: "On the Move... with God"

(This report should be read in conjunction with the reports of the Overseas Board and the Board of Mission in Ireland.)

1. The people of God are always on the move. In the Old and New Testaments we see God's servants constantly on the move with Him. Physically this meant moving from place to place in obedience to the call of God. More importantly, God calls his people to be on the move with him spiritually. "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation ...." I Peter 2 : 2. It is our desire that as we serve the Lord together in PWA. We do so with a spiritual hunger for maturity in Christ, knowing that only in eternity will we reach the goal of our salvation; becoming like Christ and thereby fully mature in him.

2. The Executive Committee, which is responsible for progressing the work of the Association, met on nine occasions throughout the year.

3. PWA Executive Committee record sincere thanks to the office staff, Miss Margaret Young, Miss Naomi Campbell and Mrs Eleanor Thompson, for fulfilling their responsibilities with dedication and enthusiasm.

4. Mrs Rita Maguire left the employment of PCI on 16 May 2003. PWA Executive Committee express their sincere thanks to her for her years of service.

5. We welcome Mrs Eleanor Thompson who joined the office staff on 1 September 2003.

## 6. Executive Committee 2003/04

### Office Bearers:

Central President:	Mrs Zoe Vallely (Carrickfergus)
Overseas Vice-President:	Mrs Rosemary Cowan (East Belfast)
Home Vice-President:	Mrs Helen Murdock (North Belfast)
Overseas Treasurer:	Mrs Doreen McMullen (South Belfast)
Home Treasurer:	Mrs Marbeth Russell (Ards)

### Committee Members:

Mrs Eileen Greenlee (Armagh)	Mrs Pat Colvin (Dublin & Munster)
Mrs Lorna Brown (Ballymena)	Mrs Valerie Stewart (Foyle)
Miss Elizabeth Smyth (Coleraine)	Mrs Jane McClure (Iveagh)
Mrs Sheila Fell (Derry & Strabane)	Mrs Gillian Drennan (Monaghan)
Mrs Pearl Johnston (Donegal)	Mrs Jenny Kirk (Newry)
Miss Zena McAllister (Down)	Mrs Amanda Blair (Omagh)
Mrs Hilary Jess (Dromore)	Mrs Barbara Thompson (Route)
Mrs Marleen McKay (ex officio)	Mrs Maureen Weir (Templepatrick)

Mrs Edith Neale (YWG ex officio)      Mrs Sandra Fleck (Tyrone)  
 Mrs Margaret Myers (ex officio)      Mrs Anthea Harrison (Editor, ex officio)  
 Mrs Maureen Patterson (President 2001/03)

#### **7. New members of Executive Committee 2004/05**

Mrs Marie Catherine (Ards)              Mrs Nan Bradford (Monaghan)  
 Mrs Georgina Hunter (Donegal)        Mrs Joan Hanna (Newry)  
 Mrs Lynn Murray (Iveagh)              Mrs Jean Donald (Omagh)

8. Office Bearers to be installed at the Annual Meeting on 6 May 2004 are as follows:

Overseas Vice-President:              Mrs Sheila Fell (Derry & Strabane)  
 Home Vice-President:                  Mrs Maureen Weir (Templepatrick)

#### **South Belfast Friendship House**

9. Mrs Roberta Jordan, part-time helper in SBFH left on 27 February 2004. PWA Executive Committee express their sincere thanks to her for her years of service.

10. PWA Executive Committee record their grateful thanks to Mrs Eunice Moore for her continued faithful service and commitment to the work of SBFH.

#### **Events 2003/04**

11. The Annual Prayer Meeting was held on 10 April 2003 in the Chapel, Church House. Prayers were led by Mrs Helen Murdock.

12. The Annual Meetings were held on 8 May 2003, in the Assembly Hall, Church House. The Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr R I Birney, was the guest speaker.

13. Rev S McFarland, prior to the Executive Committee meeting on 4 September 2003, conducted a Communion Service in the Chapel, Church House.

14. The Executive Committee met on two occasions, 22 May 2003 and 17 January 2004, to consider the "Way Ahead" for PWA. The Committee will meet again on 3 June 2004.

15. A conference was held on 13 September 2003 in Hillhall Presbyterian Church. The speaker was Mrs Anthea Harrison, Editor, Wider World.

16. General Committee met on 5 February 2004 in the Minor Hall, Church House. Members received information from three student deaconesses, Mrs Julie Peake, Miss Jo Martin and Miss Margaret Robertson together with deaconess Mrs Gillian Martin (Woodvale). Miss Helen Johnston, Personnel Officer with the Overseas Board and former PCI missionary to Nepal, gave a report on Nepal. The Central President, the Executive Secretary and Office Bearers took part in a profitable "Question and Answer" session.

17. General Committee, at its meeting on 5 February 2004, agreed that in future there would be no replacement on Executive Committee for Office Bearers.



18. General Committee, at its meeting on 5 February 2004, agreed that in future only one treasurer was necessary to carry out the work of PWA Overseas and Home finance.

### **Home Personnel**

19. The Executive Committee wish to thank most sincerely the Very Rev Dr Samuel Hutchinson, Rev Dr Donald Watts and Rev Harry Robinson for their willing support and invaluable advice given during the year.

### **Overseas Personnel and Visits**

20. PWA continues to be closely involved in the overseas work of the Church; we record our sincere thanks to Rev Uel Marrs, Secretary to the Overseas Board, for the contribution of his time and for his willing support and advice.

21. The Central President, Mrs Zoe Valley, her husband, Rev Roy Valley and Mrs Margaret Myers, PWA Executive Secretary and Associate Secretary to the Overseas Board, visited Malawi from 2-18 August 2004. Mrs Valley and Mrs Myers addressed the Women's Guild Synodical Conference and 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations in Mzuzu from 5-10 August. The visit provided an opportunity to meet PCI personnel working in the Synod of Livingstonia, to visit hospitals and schools and to see the work of various projects.

### **Finance**

22. PWA continues to receive the generous financial support of the branches. The Executive Committee acknowledges, with a deep sense of gratitude, the faithfulness on the part of individual members that enables PWA to meet its financial commitments.

23. PWA supports, in part, 22 deaconesses serving in congregational, community and hospital work.

24. PWA supports fully 5 deaconesses in training at Union College.

25. PWA seeks the prayerful and financial support of its members to enable more deaconesses to be trained for congregational work.

26. PWA was pleased to give a grant to the Overseas Board of £245,000 to provide financial support in part to all missionary personnel.

27. PWA has appointed Mrs Marbeth Russell as a Trustee of the Overseas/PWA/Irish Mission Pension Scheme.

### **Birthday Thank Offering Fund**

28. The total amount allocated to India/Pakistan (2002/03) was £44,274.65.

29. To date, 29 March 2004, the Birthday Fund (2003/04) for CLAIM/Megavoice/Corkey amounts to £15,283.36. This account closes in December 2004.

30. The Executive Committee records its sincere thanks to members for their generosity to projects at home and overseas.

**31. Bequests**

PWA acknowledges with thanks the following bequests:

Dr M D Faulkner	£9,103.83
Gladys Mary Jones	£ 400.00
Nellie Fitzsimons Est.	£ 121.65

**Wider World**

32. Wider World has had another very successful year and has included articles about our Church's work in Ireland and overseas and news of personnel, together with articles which seek to inspire and challenge.

33. PWA Executive Committee welcomes Mrs Anthea Harrison as the new editor of Wider World and asks members to uphold Mrs Harrison in prayer as she carries out this important job.

34. The children's page, compiled by Mrs Valerie Stewart, a member of Executive Committee, is of great benefit to our younger readers, and we thank her for her work.

35. Sincere thanks are due to the editor and all who have contributed to the magazine and its wide promotion.

36. Printed quarterly copies of the magazine are sent to partner churches on all five Continents.

37. Selected extracts from Wider World continue to be available on audio-tape for those who are blind, partially sighted or have difficulty holding a magazine.

**Young Women's Groups**

38. The 2003/04 theme "On the move .... with God" was shared by YWG and PWA.

39. The YWG annual rally was held on 10 April 2003 in Harmony Hill Presbyterian Church. The guest speaker was Miss Naomi Keefe, a missionary home on study leave from Brazil.

40. Cheques were handed over to Rev Dr D Watts, Clerk Designate and Secretary to the Board of Mission in Ireland, for equipment and facilities for young people. Mrs Margaret Myers, PWA Executive Secretary and Associate Secretary to the Overseas Board, received a cheque to help train Brazilian ministers and promote the welfare of needy children in Brazil.

**41. Office Bearers 2003/04:**

Chairman:	Mrs Edith Neale
Secretary:	Mrs Linda Thompson
Treasurer:	Mrs Gwen Wakefield
Newsletter Editor:	Mrs Olive Hanna

42. The Home Project for 2004/05, in partnership with PWA, will provide financial support for the refurbishment of missionary accommodation in Belfast.

43. The Overseas Project for 2004/05 will support diaconate training at the Teacher Training College of Karoli Gaspar Reformed University, Hungary.

Two projects will also be supported at Ekwendeni Hospital in Malawi: (a) A safe motherhood programme and (b) student nurse training.

44. In conclusion, we give thanks for wisdom, joy and strength, given by the Holy Spirit, to enable us to fulfil the tasks assigned to us to the Glory of God.

### **RESOLUTION**

1. That the Report be received.

### **OVERTURES TRANSMITTED**

#### **Anent Par 308(7)(a) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 308(7)(a) of the Code the words, "the Home Treasurer, the Overseas Treasurer" be deleted and that the words, "the Treasurer", be substituted in their place.

#### **Anent Par 308(7)(b) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 308(7)(b) of the Code the word "twenty-one" be deleted and the words "not otherwise represented" be added after the words "Presbyterial Committees".

M MYERS

# BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev R VALLELY  
Secretary: Mr L CONWAY, OBE

## **“Hope is the Fuel”**

1. Community Church is one of the new buzz words being used by many congregations that are involved in social outreach, social evangelism, social witness – call it what you may! Long before the term became fashionable, or the concept was discussed, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland had developed its own corner of the Community Church market. We simply called them - Church Extension Churches. Churches strategically placed to respond to the growing needs of new communities: churches able to grow and respond as communities grew.

2. Now the church is being challenged. How do we harness that spirit in communities that are well established and in congregations that are in decline? So much of the solution lies within how the church responds to the most basic of human needs and what attitude we take to the sections of our communities that have been excluded. Fred Catherwood in his book “It can be done” states, “So there is a huge responsibility on the Church to win hearts and minds for a Christian moral order on which a new fairer and more benign social order can be based.” - “The Christian’s duty to love our neighbour, is quite clear, but duty is not a popular word even amongst professing Christians and people give all kinds of reasons for not following it.”

3. There is no doubt that we make a huge difference to the lives we touch through our social witness and why? So often it gives hope to a hopeless situation. John Ortberg talks about “Hope is the Fuel” - “While Peter’s mind was focused on Jesus he was empowered to walk on the water - Hope got Peter out of the Boat - Trust held him up - Fear sank him”. To love our neighbour is our command; with hope as our fuel we can achieve all things. The Board of Social Witness continues to reach out to people, to challenge and campaign, to fill the gaps in services in a Christ-like manner. Our recent survey confirms that we as a church, both at congregational and Board levels are providing essential services to the community. Individuals and groups continue to be challenged and are responding to some very basic human needs.

## **Community Safety**

4. Violent Crime against the elderly continues to be a concern of the whole community. Initially raised at the 2003 Assembly, the issue has hit the headlines on a frequent basis ever since. Both the Board of Social Witness and General Board discussed this whole area at their October meeting, resulting in the Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Ivan McKay, calling on everyone to be a “Good Neighbour”. Letters were sent outlining the Church’s concerns to Mr John Spellar MP, Minister at the Northern Ireland Office, responsible for Law and Order, Mr Hugh Orde OBE, Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern

Ireland, and Professor Desmond Rea, Chairman of The Northern Ireland Policing Board.

5. Other issues relating to “car-jacking”, drug abuse, attacks on nurses, social workers and domestic violence have also been raised with the Board in recent times. Many of our congregations have hosted information days in partnership with Police, Fire Service, Victim Support and Age Concern – a tangible way for the church to respond to an ever increasing violent society. The Board is now exploring other opportunities for a similar approach to be available to the wider church.

### **May I Come In**

6. The Board conference this year discussed the whole area of disability and the church. We were challenged by the keynote speaker, Mr John Brown (elder in Ballydown) and a Trustee of the “Through the Roof Foundation”, to be inclusive and that the church had to change its attitude to people with disabilities. John assured us that “Presbyterians will be safe if earth was ever to be invaded by the Daleks - all we have to do, is go to the nearest church with steps and we will be safe from invasion”. In other words the issue is more than ramps and services, its to do with attitude. Other speakers shared their experiences both from a church and community perspective. Tenants from Willow Brook were interviewed and the “Open Doors” Drama Group challenged the conference with a very powerful drama on inclusion.

7. Groups then discussed a number of questions on the whole role of the Board in the area of disability. Participants were asked to contribute to a “Word Wall” – what word or phrase suggested inclusiveness. Some of the responses say it all – “People matter to God, Oneness, All God’s people have a place in the choir, All equally precious, Understanding, Come on in, I am an individual with abilities – can you see me?” The one universal message coming out of the Conference was to discuss the whole topic at Presbytery level.

8. Our Church has a strong desire to be inclusive, not because legislation is driving us in that direction but because the Spirit of Christ demands it and the Church wants to be and now sees abilities and not disabilities within a group of very special people. This whole area has been greatly enriched by our own work at Willow Brook. At Willow Brook we have experienced the richness of working with a group that is a tremendous encouragement and inspiration.

### **Ad hoc Committee on Priorities**

Our discussions and initial submission to the Ad hoc Committee on Priorities acted as a catalyst, resulting in the Board taking the opportunity to look at its total operation. The Board continues to respond to the growing needs of the church both at central and local levels. A traditional welfare model of care that replicates “the cradle to the grave – womb to the tomb” concepts of social care. The Board took the opportunity to re-organise and agree a structure that suits the environment we work in. This new structure must ensure that our activities are managed in an appropriate manner and that we provide vision and leadership and give essential direction to our work. Any revision must also

reflect the structures of the organisations and bodies we work with as well as fitting in with the General Assembly structures.

10. The Board of Social Witness has both General Assembly and Board Committees. The Board has also a number of House/Management Committees attached to individual units. Our proposed new structure is an attempt to include all these elements and achieve good cohesive management by involving Board/Committee Members, Clients, Staff and Stakeholders.

11. The Board has agreed that the work of the Board will be organised under: Adult Services, Special Needs, Elderly Services, Family Services, Pastoral Care, Student Services and Community Development. These may change as the discussion continues and reaches its final conclusion. We are now at the stage of widening the debate and will be consulting with the wider church, users of our services, funders and staff groups.

12. We are recommending for the forthcoming year the retention of our current structure and committees with the addition of the Chaplains and Forces Committees as an interim measure 2004/2005 to enable us to complete this review.

### **Funding**

13. Total income for the year 2003 was derived from the following sources:

Income from services	£3,913,000
United Appeal	221,000
Donations and Bequests	98,000
Grants	115,000
Other	292,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£4,639,000</b>

Total expenditure for the year 2003 was as shown below:

Older People	£2,971,000
Addiction and Education Services	443,000
Ex-Prisoners	363,000
Student Accommodation	252,000
Unemployed People	2,000
Deaf People	105,000
Learning Disabled	136,000
Relationship Counselling	13,000
Publications	4,000
Management Costs	155,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£4,444,000</b>

### **Social Witness Survey**

14. "Mission is finding out what God is doing in His world and doing it with Him". The Board continues to be active in Mission discovering and

developing the areas where God's love can be demonstrated. We distributed a survey on Personnel and Projects to all congregations seeking to discover the level of social witness at local level.

15. We express thanks to the 161 Ministers from 219 of our 555 Congregations (40%) who responded to the Survey. The result reveals a Church that is active in maintaining and developing its property, providing facilities for disabled people, catering in special projects for the elderly people, parents, children and young people and seeking personnel for specialist roles. Much of this activity is confined to the Church premises with few venturing into the community with innovative projects. On the basis of the Survey we tend to keep the mentality of expecting people to come to the Church as a building rather than being the Church as God's people with the Mission of going out to the community. The results of the Survey are appended to this Report.

### **Thanks - Dr Jean McClune**

16. The Board expresses appreciation to Dr Jean McClune for her time as Convener of the Kinghan Mission. Dr McClune has personal knowledge of the needs of the deaf and hearing impaired community and she has brought that valuable insight to the work of the Kinghan Church and the Mission Committee. She oversaw, with much wisdom, sensitivity and skill, the retirement of Rev Dr George Grindle and the installing of Rev Simon Henning as Superintendent. Dr McClune has contributed with expertise to the wider work of the Board.

### **The Staff**

17. The Board appreciates the care exercised in its name by the team of 350 staff members throughout our Centres and Units. We appreciate the commitment of those administering the work of the Board both past and present recognising the need to interpret and keep abreast of ongoing legislation and funding proposals. The support network within Church House especially from the General Secretary, the Financial Secretary, the Head of Personnel, the Buildings Manager and their staff is greatly appreciated.

18. The Board gives thanks for the leadership given by its Director of Social Service, Mr Lindsay Conway, OBE and commends him and the staff to the grace and guidance of God.

### **Project and Personnel Survey 2003**

19. The Survey gives the level of Social Witness in 219 or 40% of our 555 Congregations throughout Ireland. Congregations in four Presbyteries made no reply. 161 or 51% of our 315 active Ministers replied. Thanks are expressed to all who completed the Survey.

<b>Current Projects in Your Congregation</b>		<b>Cong.</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>% of 219</b>
1.	Mothers and Toddlers		97	1	45
2.	Luncheon Club for Elderly People		18	13	14
3.	Club for Elderly People		40	48	40
4.	None	81			
5.	Other		9		4

**Disabled Groups**

6.	Hearing Impaired	None			
7.	Vision Impaired	None			
8.	Physical Disability		2	2	
9.	Learning Disabled		3	1	
10.	None	162			
11.	Other	3			

**Project in Community operated solely by Congregation**

12.	Drop-in Centre/Café	15			7%
13.	Homework Club	None			
14.	Unemployed Club	None			
15.	None				
16.	Other	None			

**Project in Community operated in conjunction with other Churches or community Groups**

17.	Drop-in Centre	11			5%
18.	Community Centre	15			7%
19.	None				
20.	Other				

**Personnel Involved (F/T; P/T)**

		<b>F/T</b>	<b>P/T</b>	<b>% of 219</b>
21.	Minister – 161 in 219 Congregations			
22.	Associate or Assistant Minister	19	6	
23.	Retired Minister	3	15	
24.	Deaconess	5	3	
25.	Woman Worker	2	6	
26.	Family/Community Worker	9	5	
27.	Youth Pastor	18	1	
28.	Church Volunteers (in social witness)	14	82	
29.	Other	16		

**Hindrances to Possible Projects**

30.	Finance	110	50%	
31.	Resources	71	33%	
32.	Personnel	138	63%	
33.	Other			

**Are you currently working in any of these areas or planning to do so?**

	Existing	Future	% of 219
34.	Youth	155	76%
35.	Marriage and the Family	70	43%
36.	Mothers	44	24%
37.	Fathers	22	15%
38.	Bereavement	59	32%
39.	Divorced People	32	19%
40.	Disabled People	21	13%
41.	Debt	18	10%
42.	Other		



43. **List other Church or Community Groups using your premises on a regular basis:**  
120 congregations (55%) answered this question listing various groups.

<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of 219</b>
44. Major Hall/Sports Hall	195	89%
45. Minor Hall	184	84%
46. Individual Rooms	176	80%
47. Kitchen Facilities	219	100%
48. Out Door Play Area	37	17%
49. Coffee Bar/Lounge	53	24%
50. Changing Area/Shower Facilities	25	12%
51. Car Park	185	85%
52. Other		
<b>Equipment</b>		
53. Overhead Projector	207	95%
54. IT Presentation Equipment Powerpoint	81	37%
55. Computer	118	54%
56. Internet	66	30%
57. Loop System	144	66%
58. Large Print Hymn Books	29	13%
59. Large Print Bibles	13	6%
<b>Recording Facilities</b>		
60. Tape Ministry	157	72%
61. Audio Tape	117	54%
62. CD	11	5%
63. Video	35	16%
64. Other Equipment	23	11%
65. Has this equipment restricted use?	44/109	40%
<b>Special Facilities</b>		
66. Disabled Toilets	115	53%
67. Ramps	142	65%
68. Chair Lift/Platform	9	4%
69. Lift	6	3%
70. Baby Changing Room	44	20%
71. Car Parking for Disabled	80	37%
72. Removal of Pew (Wheel Chair)	71	33%
73. Special Seating (back problems etc)	20	9%
74. Other		
<b>Transport (For Church Services and Organisations)</b>		
75. Mini-bus Service	27	12%
76. Taxi Service	5	2%
77. Car Rota (Church Members etc)	63	29%

**78. Future Proposals:**

110 (50%) listed future plans which included the following:

- A volunteer drivers' scheme to take people to hospital;
- Develop a welcome area and a cafeteria;
- A strategy to work in the community and to develop programmes in the area rather than the Church;
- Appoint a Community Development Worker;
- Start a Men's Club;
- Disability access programmes in many Churches;
- A Homework Club and an Arts and Crafts Club;

- Facilities for day time community outreach;
- Support team to help people with letter writing, administration etc;
- Marriage enrichment courses;
- Internet café and Care-in-Crisis Centre.

**Minister in Recognised Service – (Called by the Board of Social Witness under Code Par 281.3)**

*Rev Douglas Baker, Mediation Network Northern Ireland, reports:*

1. My main involvement is as co-leader of Partners in Transformation, a joint initiative of Mediation Northern Ireland and The Irish School of Ecumenics. The aim of this project is to “*enhance, nurture and support the capacity of churches and faith communities in their calling to be peacebuilders and agents of transformation.*”

2. One of my main endeavours during the past year has been acting as a consultant to the Church of Ireland process that has become known as “*The Hard Gospel.*” This is an initiative of the Church of Ireland that seeks, in response to the gospel imperative to love our neighbours as ourselves, to deepen the Church of Ireland’s understanding of and practical actions in dealing positively with difference both within the church and in society. My involvement has included co-writing a related set of six Bible Studies for use in Church of Ireland parishes during Lent 2004.

3. Much of the rest of our time has been facilitating dialogue within and between leaders of various denominations on the ways churches relate to civil society and, in particular, the contribution churches may be able to make to a peaceful shared future.

4. Mr Joe Campbell, Assistant Director of Mediation Northern Ireland, and I continue to serve on the Conciliation Panel and assist, in a limited way, with supervision of casework with congregations and presbyteries.

5. Finally, I have continued to serve as Convener of the PCI Peace and Peacemaking Committee.

**CHILD PROTECTION MONITORING COMMITTEE**

1. The Committee continues to provide advice, help and training to congregations in this important area. We are indebted to those who have experience in the area of child protection and acknowledge the help of Mr Lindsay Conway as the Board office deals with many queries over the year.

2. Trainers in child protection are available to help Congregations and Presbyteries raise awareness of this issue. Please contact the Board office if you would wish training to be carried out locally.

3. The third edition of the Guidelines should be available in June 2004. The new edition has not made substantive changes to the referral procedure but it has introduced some new material in the light of current developments especially in the area of media/Internet and health and safety issues.

4. The major innovation with the third edition is in the format. The ring binder format will facilitate photocopying, and the addition of changes and new

inserts without necessitating a complete reprint of the Guidelines each time. Developments in the area of child protection occur at a rapid rate and we have produced the Guidelines in a more flexible format to accommodate this culture of change. Each congregation will be sent a number of the new Guidelines when they are available.

5. The General Assembly should also be aware that the current Guidelines are available to download off the Board of Social Witness web site.

6. The Committee acknowledges the differences between the two jurisdictions and continues to lobby the relevant departments in the Republic of Ireland with regard to standardisation of policies and procedures.

7. The Reports to this year's Assembly contain A Policy and Procedures for Handling Complaints of Sexual Abuse. The Policy is mainly designed to cover allegations made against ministers, or those in spiritual leadership in a local church or General Assembly situation. People who are employed by one of the central agencies of the church will primarily be subject to their own employment and contractual policies and procedures.

8. The Policy is designed to complement the Child Protection Guidelines and the Code, and provides additional guidance needed to handle complaints of a particularly sensitive and very complex nature, and which may involve criminal proceedings as well as investigation under church law.

9. This is a sensitive and very complicated area involving confidential referral, criminal investigation, pastoral care for all concerned, and financial and practical arrangements on the ground. In the event of such complaints we need to have clear procedures in place so that the work of a possible criminal investigation will not be impeded.

10. Because of the serious nature of such complaints we are also very aware of the impact this will have on the person against whom the complaint is made, the complainant and the church as a whole. The Policy seeks to provide guidance in church law and a pastoral framework to help all those who would be impacted by such serious allegations.

11. The framework of the policy is based on a similar policy of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, which we have adapted to suit the needs and unique features of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

12. The Policy includes theological reflection, a definitions section and a clear statement that it is the policy of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland that sexual abuse, or sexual harassment, of any kind by any church leader, staff member, or volunteer will not be tolerated.

13. As this area is so complex it is recognised that there will be a high level of advice and support required at an individual level at every stage of an investigation. The Policy sets in place structures to facilitate this advice and support which include an Advisory Panel, a Co-ordinator who will co-ordinate all arrangements for the investigation of allegations of sexual abuse, and advisors and pastoral support for the individual complainant and complainee and their families. We recommend that an advisor, responsible for advising on the church and legal process of the complaint, and a carer for general pastoral support, will each be offered to the complainant and the person complained against. Part of the role of the Advisory Panel will be to arrange for suitably trained people to be available to fulfil these important functions.

14. The Co-ordinator is an important position and we recommend that it is a General Assembly appointment to assert that the position bears General Assembly authority. The appointment is in a voluntary capacity.

15. Because of the importance of this document, and the seriousness of the issues being dealt with, it was felt appropriate to print the Policy on Sexual Abuse in the Reports for the General Assembly to read and approve, and appropriate Resolutions to the Assembly are appended.

16. A similar policy with virtually identical referral and pastoral procedures has been drawn up for complaints of sexual harassment. We believe such a policy is necessary. Sexual harassment is a very serious matter; indeed it can also be a criminal offence, and the same issues are raised. A complaint of sexual harassment therefore also requires a serious and measured response from the church in similar terms to that for sexual abuse.

17. Rather than print virtually the same policy twice we have printed the main differences from the Policy on Sexual Abuse, which lie in the definition section. The substantive content and procedures in the two policies are identical.

18. The Convener especially wishes to record his thanks to Mr Norman Chambers in his help in drawing up these policies. Our thanks also to the Child Protection Monitoring Committee, the staff of the Board of Social Witness and the Director for all their help over the past year.

NAL CAMERON, Convener

## **SOCIAL WITNESS AND SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

1. The past year has seen considerable expansion of the work of Dolebusters, the social witness outreach of the congregations of Abbey and Adelaide Road in Dublin. The new facilities at Adelaide Road have been enhanced by the setting up of a Citizen's Information Centre with additional services such as weekly clinics provided by the Free Legal Aid Centre, Money Advice and Budgeting Service, Threshold, the housing charity, and AIM, the family mediation service. This widening of the services offered by Dolebusters has not only led to an increase in the numbers using the centre, but has also meant a broader spectrum of the community are now availing of these services.

2. Dolebusters has also become a member of a consortium of local charities which sponsor Dublin South Supported Employment. This organisation has been set up to provide a job coaching service for people with disabilities who are seeking employment. The aim of the service is to place people with disability in employment of their choice, based on the person's strengths, interests and capabilities, and to provide ongoing support as they settle into their new position. This has obvious benefits in enhancing the service Dolebusters can provide for people with disability.

3. The Committee is currently investigating the feasibility of setting up a Child Contact Centre, based on the model established by Knock Presbyterian Church in East Belfast. The Child Contact Centre would be a place where parents who do not live with their children can meet them in a warm comfortable setting. Its aim is to ensure that a child's need for meaningful contact with both

parents is met, and in so doing, to alleviate the damage inflicted on children in a situation of family separation.

4. The Committee thanks the members of the Board and the General Assembly for their continued interest in, and prayerful support for its work in the Republic.

D BOYD, Convener

### **THOMPSON HOUSE**

1. A Bible study is held each Tuesday and is usually attended by four residents. The residents attend on a voluntary basis and ask very searching questions. There are two residents who are currently attending Church each Sunday.

2. Mr Bryan Marshall continues to engage residents in woodwork classes each week. It is the relationships built in this class that is one of the biggest contributors to residents attending the Bible study.

3. As drug use is increasing in Northern Ireland we have seen an increase in drug use by residents and an increase in drug related offences.

4. There are currently two volunteers working in Thompson House; they have been able to engage residents in basic literacy and numeracy work.

5. Thanks are due to the Management Committee for their faithfulness, interest and commitment. We also remember former members of the Management Committee as we celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in April, and thank them for their contribution in earlier years.

6. We thank the staff for their dedication and hard work over the year. There have been staffing shortages and all staff have willingly worked extra hours, sometimes at short notice, whenever required.

7. Thompson House is very grateful for the support and prayers of the wider church. The attacks stopped on the building and more residents are attending the Bible study and Church on Sundays.

JC BUICK, MBE, Chairperson

### **PCI ENTERPRISES**

1. PCI Enterprises has always been involved in employment support and job creation, however we have found it necessary to undergo a review of our core business due to changes in the sector. As a result PCI Enterprises sought funding to support churches that are involved in the Social Economy and those who wished to become involved. An unsuccessful application was made to Belfast Local Strategic Partnership, however a further revised application will be made when the appropriate Peace II measure reopens.

2. PCI Enterprises also seeks to incubate a local project based in Lower North Belfast and to deliver another aimed at resourcing the wider church to engage at all levels in the community sector. Both projects will be housed at 112 York Road, Belfast. We are presently pursuing avenues by which to fund the appointment of a Churches Community Development Officer. It is also planned to contact local North Belfast churches to ascertain if there is a collaborative

project they may wish to deliver from the PCI Enterprises premises at 112 York Road, Belfast.

3. Please continue to pray for the future of PCI Enterprises as it adapts to meet the current needs of church and community.

M GIBSON, Chairperson

### **COMMITTEE ON LEARNING DISABILITY**

1. The Committee continues to work at encouraging the church in our ministry to those with a learning disability.

2. To this end two sub-groups are presently addressing the issues of :- 1) the education and awareness of church workers in the area of learning disability, and 2) the production of a pack that will provide resources and advice to congregations that will be helpful in their ministry to those with learning disability.

3. The Willow Brook project in Coleraine, providing supported housing for nine people, continues to be a source of rich blessing to the tenants. The support staff, under the leadership of the Project Manager, Mrs Ann Campbell, has worked hard to establish a pattern of life in Willow Brook that is firmly based on Christian values. The Friends of Willow Brook, a support group of local church members, under the leadership of Rev Robert McMullan, is a great encouragement to both tenants and staff. Some adjoining property is being acquired by our partners Oaklee Housing Association and consideration is being given to the possibility of a small housing scheme for those with a physical disability.

4. A further development of the Committee's work concerns our involvement in Aaron House, Dundonald, which cares for people with more profound learning disabilities. It is envisaged that at some stage in the future the Board of Social Witness will assume responsibility for this work, thus adding another dimension to the work of the Committee.

5. The Committee is most grateful for the prayerful and practical interest in our work by many individuals and congregations throughout our church. We ask for your continuing prayers and support for this ministry to some of the most vulnerable people in our Church and community.

WJ WARING, Convener

### **ADDICTION AND EDUCATION SERVICES COMMITTEE**

#### **Carlisle House**

1. Carlisle House continues to offer a safe, but very challenging environment for those wishing to deal with their addiction problems. Referrals to the programme remain high. In 2003 there was not a drop in referrals around the Christmas period as in previous years. The majority of referrals are now self-

referrals who have demonstrated increased motivation levels while participating in the programme. This in turn has increased job satisfaction for the staff.

2. This year saw a sharp increase in those presenting with dual addictions. The most common substances are alcohol, cannabis and benzodiazepines. This has necessitated a modified approach in which the staff are working more closely with GP's and Shaftsbury Square Hospital in dealing with a benzodiazepine addiction. The importance of relaxation in the treatment of addiction has been increasingly recognised and integrated into the programme.

### **Gray's Court**

3. Gray's Court continues to offer a valuable move-on facility for those leaving Carlisle House, providing needed support for people at a very vulnerable time in their lives.

4. The second half of the year, in particular, was a stable, constructive period with the Life-Time Learning Programme proving a real success. A group event was held each month which enabled tenants to enhance their self-esteem and confidence. During this period two tenants gained part-time employment, one nursing and the other as a shop assistant.

5. We wish to thank Jackie Skilling for his dedicated work over the years. We wish him every blessing in his new work in Thompson House.

6. The Addiction and Education Services Committee continues to promote a positive Christian approach to lifestyles and attitudes through a programme of information, education and discipleship. The Co-ordinator of the ADE Volunteer Scheme, Mr Jonny Mitchell, has settled well into his work and is already finding many openings to speak with various groups. He is presently based at the PCI Enterprises Office, York Road.

7. The Volunteer Programme continues to operate, though with a reduced number of volunteers. It is envisaged that there will be a revision of this programme in the coming year. Jonny and the volunteers do, however, remain available for deputation work with church groups.

8. During past months, there have been a significant number of drugs seizures successfully attained by an active PSNI Drugs Squad. A congratulatory letter has been sent to the PSNI, thanking them for their continued fight against drugs and ensuring them of our wholehearted support in this matter. There is also an appended resolution giving the General Assembly opportunity to endorse this support.

9. It is alarming to hear media reports indicating a high proportion of drugs related road accidents, some fatal. Again we would commend the recent series of adverts warning against taking drugs and driving. This problem highlights the need for increased vigilance and education of those who come under the care of our congregations. It is vitally important that we are continually directing our people to pursue a life that is not dependent upon any form of drug or stimulant but that is stimulated by the love of God and directed by the word of God.

10. The reclassification of Cannabis has only succeeded in sending a confused message to the public. It must be remembered that Cannabis remains

an illegal drug with potential to cause harm and is often a step to other drug types.

11. The Committee would commend the government in the Republic of Ireland for the introduction of a Health Warning on Alcohol products and for banning smoking in public places. This acknowledges and highlights how harmful and damaging alcohol and smoking really are. The Committee would ask that the British government follow the Republic of Ireland's example on this, and enact similarly for the UK.

12. In Ephesians 5:18 Paul contrasts getting drunk with wine, which produces a temporary "high," to being filled with the Spirit, which produces lasting joy. Getting drunk with wine is associated with the old way of life and its selfish desires. In Christ, we have a better joy, higher and longer lasting, to cure our depression, monotony, or tension. We should not be concerned with how much of the Holy Spirit we have, but how much of us the Holy Spirit has.

13. The aim of the Committee is a 'Drug free lifestyle'.

A BEATTIE, T WILSON, Co-Conveners

## KINGHAN MISSION COMMITTEE

1. Henry David Thoreau once described a city as being "millions of people all being lonely together." Certainly there is a grain of truth in that as the community spirit of yesteryear has paled against a backdrop of individualism that has become so prevalent in society. In the stresses and strains that make up modern living some people have rejected the rat race in favour of the peace and tranquillity of some far-flung Hebridean island. For those who cannot afford such a radical move, and I suppose that means most of us, the only other option is to develop 'space' or 'quality time for me' – there are occasions when we all desire to be away from everything and everyone. The longing for splendid isolation!

2. For Deaf people a sense of isolation is nothing new, but far from being a welcome diversion from the pressures of life, it is a constant. For them, it is the norm. Someone once said that "blindness separates us from things, but deafness separates us from people". How true that is! Many Deaf people are isolated, not through choice, but through circumstances not of their own making. Their daily exclusion from many things that we take for granted can lead to a deeply held sense of frustration and anger.

3. The Kinghan Mission seeks to reach out to Deaf people in a way that breaks down this feeling of loneliness and isolation and make the whole 'Church' experience something they can feel part of. Jesus spent a lot of time meeting people where they were and relating to them in ways that were relevant to them – the Kinghan Church tries to do something similar by using Sign Language as its principal method of communication, but also by employing all means available, whether it be the Loop System, PowerPoint, or lip reading to connect with Deaf people.

4. While centred in Belfast, the Kinghan Mission provides spiritual and pastoral support to all Deaf people regardless of Denominational background. While the focus of the Kinghan Church is to encourage the spiritual



development of its members, there is a strong tradition of outreach that seeks to treat all Deaf people, whether churched or unchurched, with the dignity and respect they deserve.

5. Rev Dr George Grindle has retired from the Kinghan Church and moved into a busy and productive retirement. He continues to be an invaluable source of advice and support. Thankfully the difficult period of transition seems to have past its worst and a number of new people have joined the congregation.

6. Rev Simon Henning has full responsibility for the running of the Church and continues to learn about British Sign Language and Deaf Culture in both formal and informal settings. He is also involved in deputation work.

7. Mrs Anne Rodgers, the Lay Assistant, continues to work tirelessly and conscientiously within the congregation and has been a great support to the Minister over this last year. Anne recently visited Moldova and reported that it had impacted her life and has encouraged the congregation to participate in practical help. Donations are being used to revamp toilets, buy food, shoes and pay for medical care.

8. The Committee is grateful to all who support the Kinghan Mission both financially and through prayer. We are especially grateful for the assistance given by way of the United Appeal, which helps to sustain the vital work that is done here.

9. The work of the Kinghan Mission can be both rewarding as well as lonely, and we ask that the wider Church would remember the staff and congregation of the Mission in prayer. What is done in Kinghan is done for God's glory, and with the belief that God so loved the worlds – the hearing world as well as the deaf world – that He sent His only Son.

JEAN McCLUNE, Convener

## MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY COMMITTEE

1. During 2003 the Counselling Service provided by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has continued to grow. The Committee would encourage Ministers to refer individuals or couples in congregations who may be experiencing marital or relationship difficulties. If counselling is started at the earliest opportunity the outcome is more likely to be successful. Counsellors are dealing with many different issues including adultery, sexual and emotional abuse, debt, depression, unemployment and relationship problems.

2. Mainly counselling takes place in Church House, the Kairos Centre at Knock Presbyterian Church, McCracken Memorial in Belfast and High Kirk in Ballymena. The Committee is very grateful to these Churches for the use of their facilities and we appreciate the anonymity and confidentiality provided for clients. Others include Ballynahinch Presbyterian and Ballywillan Church in Portrush providing a good spread of province wide bases for counselling. Most of our clients live close enough to one of these centres or are within a reasonable distance of their homes.

3. Five new counsellors started in 2003. One male and four female counsellors joined our team giving us nine in total. As usual supervision for all

counsellors is provided by Christian Guidelines who also organise some of our training courses. Several courses were held during the year, including training on psychosexual therapy, sexual abuse and domestic violence.

4. The work of the Re-Marriage Panel continues with at least five couples being interviewed each month. The Committee is very grateful to all who agree to be panelists and do so in a professional and sensitive manner.

5. The new Marriage Bill which is now implemented will be kept under review by the Committee.

6. The Committee's attention was drawn to the explicit nature of the overtly sexual content of teenage magazines and 'soaps'. This has influenced and devalued the whole perception of love within the context of relationships. Whilst we are aware the Youth Board does a tremendous amount of work in this area we would like to support its work by drawing the problem to the attention of all those involved with young people, especially parents and those working with children and young people.

7. The Marriage and Family Committee is most appreciative of all the hard work, time, dedication and total professionalism of all the volunteer Counsellors who willingly give much time to this important area of Christian service.

8. Our thanks also go to Mrs Stephanie Windrum for the dedicated manner in which she carries out her work and to the Board staff for their support.

ROSEMARY SIMPSON, Convener

## **PRESBYTERIAN RESIDENTIAL TRUST COMMITTEE**

1. For fifty-five years the Presbyterian Residential Trust has provided care, within a Christian ethos, for elderly members of our own church and other denominations. The work of the Trust, within the remit of the Board of Social Witness, is therefore an integral part of the church's commitment to social welfare and outreach. We are conscious of the fact that our homes are required to maintain certain standards of personal care and to comply with stringent government regulations, however it is always pleasing to note that many choose a Presbyterian Residential Trust home in preference to others because of the added dimension of spiritual care that our residents receive.

2. The Registration and Inspection Unit in their frequent visits to our homes continually commend the staff for their diligence and dedication. Our staff represent a valuable asset within the homes and are to be commended for the professional and efficient manner in which they care for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the residents. We have again experienced a difficult year of staff shortages and the maintenance of staffing levels creates additional pressure on Heads of Home and those under their charge. The continued uptake of training opportunities is also to be commended, better equipping, as it does, our staff for the increasing demands of residential and nursing care.

3. A major review of wages aimed at standardising anomalies took place in October 2003. The Committee were conscious of the fact that Health Boards were paying higher rates and although the implementation of the new structure did not fully close the gap, it is hoped that it will ease the difficulties encountered in recruiting and keeping staff.

4. We commend the work of the Residential Services Manager, Mrs Linda Wray, her Assistant, Mrs May Gordon, and the office staff in Church House who continue to provide a high level of administrative support for our homes. The efficient running of the various units depends on a professional central management structure and the Committee are indebted to all those who provide this. It is particularly pleasing that their work is sealed with a personal desire to see Christ glorified through care of the elderly.

5. The occupation of the new Corkey House in North Belfast on 28 January last brought much satisfaction and rejoicing to the work of the Trust. The actual move was well planned and very successful, due in no small measure to the work and commitment of our Residential Services Manager and Mrs Ann Anderson, Head of Home. A number of volunteers from North Belfast Presbytery also contributed greatly to the preparation of the building and the transfer from the old Corkey House. The residents and staff are settling-in well to their new environment. It is a modern and pleasant place in which to work and live. The new Corkey is a project of which the whole church can be proud and we gratefully acknowledge the providing hand of our God in its planning, construction and occupation.

6. This new home is the first in what the Trust Committee hopes will be a series of replacement facilities which will maintain our high standards of practice and provision in care of the elderly. A significant extension to Tritonville Close in Dublin opened in November 2001. Corkey House will be followed by a new Sunnyside House in Bangor for which a contractor has been appointed. A possible site for the replacement of York House in Portrush has been viewed and an extension to Harold McCauley House in Omagh is under consideration. We are also engaged in a review of the standard of St Andrew Bungalows on the old Denegarath site at Mallusk. This is a period of development in the work of the Presbyterian Residential Trust as we deal with the reality that a significant proportion of our property is nearing the end of its useful life.

7. The financial position of the Trust has serious implications for the future of our development proposals. We continue to face difficult challenges in our revenue account, which bring into sharp focus the long-term viability of some of our units. We are constantly concerned by government under-funding for the care of an elderly resident in our homes. As a church committed to a ministry of care towards those of older years, we need to consider the financial requirements necessary for the continuance of such a ministry.

## SOCIAL ISSUES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. The Committee continues to provide resources for the wider church on a range of social issues and to respond to issues as they arise.

2. During the year a copy of the Challenging Issues Bible Study on Manhood was sent to each minister. The Committee Reprinted the Bible Study on Homosexuality and work has also begun on the next in the series on the subject of Materialism.

3. Other resources on a wide range of topics continue to be updated.

4. With the continued spate of attacks on the elderly there is the need to do more than condemn it. The Committee is looking at the possibility of providing guidelines for groups of churches on running workshops for the elderly drawing on the expertise of local statutory services.

5. The Committee welcomes the recent publication of 'Homelessness in Ireland' - a resource for churches published in partnership with the Simon Community of Northern Ireland and Simon Communities of Ireland. "Homelessness does not just mean having nowhere to stay. It also means living in hostels, in derelict houses, in institutions, in unfit homes, in guest houses, in fear of violence, on friends' sofas, on illegal unserviced Travellers' sites, in overcrowded houses, in fear of eviction." This is a quote from "Homelessness in Ireland - A Pack for Churches". A pack full of information and worship material, a pack that was initiated in response to the large number of requests from the churches throughout Ireland. Our hope is that churches will use the worship, children's and youth resources to draw attention to this growing problem in Ireland.

6. In recent years there has been much controversy and hurt surrounding the revelations about post-mortem practice in Northern Ireland and throughout the United Kingdom. The Human Organs Enquiry Report 2003 shows, 'there was a gulf between what the public knew and was told about procedures and practices on the one hand and what was actually happening on the other hand. This has created a legacy of distress and anger among some members of the public even if other people do not share their concern.' (Report: Ch. 1; Par 1.1)

7. For the bereaved and those involved with pastoral care the distress and anger has been all too real. The matter has raised issues such as renewed grief, burial of remains, and feelings of having betrayed or failed the deceased. These feelings have been particularly acute in regard to the loss of children. The committee is presently producing a leaflet looking at some of these concerns with a view towards providing some pastoral guidelines to those having to minister in such distressing circumstances.

RA LIDDLE, Convener

## PRESBYTERIAN WAR MEMORIAL HOSTEL COMMITTEE

1. Derryvolgie Hall continues to provide a home for 88 young people in a community where the friendship and fellowship is good and the programme of

events is busy and varied. Worship and teaching sessions continue each week, together with other study and social evenings.

2. The Committee continues to be grateful to Rev Steve Stockman and his staff whose dedication, commitment and enthusiasm for all the activities is so evident. Plans are now well advanced for a party of 70 young people, divided into three teams, to go to Cape Town, South Africa this summer to work as part of the Habitat for Humanity project.

3. The purchase of 14 Elmwood Avenue, next door to The Bush, is now complete and the work of the ad hoc group on the development of the two buildings is moving forward, assessing the overall vision and strategy of "One Chaplaincy in Two Locations", considering the building alterations that will be required to support this mission, and the business plan that will be necessary to ensure value for money and financial viability.

4. Derryvolgie Hall will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in January 2005 and consideration is being given to organising an event and Service of Thanksgiving to include not only the former Derryvolgie residents, but also those who lived in the War Memorial Hostel in Howard Street.

JH MARTIN, Convener

## OLD AGE FUND, WOMEN'S FUND AND INDIGENT LADIES' FUND

1. The Directors report that, during the last financial year which ended 31 December 2003, 109 beneficiaries (31 in the Old Age Fund, 59 in the Women's Fund and 19 in the Indigent Ladies' Fund) received grants.

2. The changes in beneficiaries during the year is as follows:

Beneficiaries Receiving Quarterly Grant	Old Age Fund	Presbyterian Women's Fund	Indigent Ladies Fund	TOTAL
At 1 January 2003	30	55	17	102
New Grants Provided	-	3	1	4
Deaths (1)	(6)	(2)	(9)	
Grants no longer required	-	(3)	(1)	(4)
As at 31 December 2003	29	49	15	93
Beneficiaries receiving one-off				
Donations 1	1	1	3	
Deaths and Grants no longer required (as above) 1	9	3	13	
No of Beneficiaries receiving Assistance during the year	31	59	19	109

3. The total distribution of the Funds in Grants, Donations and Gifts was £82,199 (£24,293 from the Old Age Fund, £44,890 from the Women's Fund and £13,016 from the Indigent Ladies' Fund).

4. An annual grant of £640, paid quarterly, was sent to Beneficiaries during the year (2002: £600).

5. A "Special Gift" of £160 (2002: £150) was sent to every beneficiary prior to Christmas.

6. During the year the Directors responded sympathetically to various problems which had been brought to their attention. They gave one-off donations, as needed, to assist in particular cases where immediate financial aid was more appropriate than annual grants. Ministers are asked to bear in mind the possibility of help from these funds in similar cases connected with their own congregations.

7. The Directors assure the Church that all monies that come to the Funds are carefully and wisely spent.

8. The Directors of the Funds deeply appreciate the kindness and thoughtfulness of those who have remembered the work of the Funds either by gift or bequest, and hope that their example may encourage others to support this vital aspect of the Church's outreach.

9. The Directors of the Funds wish to thank the Staff for the sensitive and sympathetic way in which they carried out the efficient administration of the Funds during the year.

WPH ERSKINE, Hon Sec

## **POLICY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND FOR DEALING WITH SEXUAL ABUSE**

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## **SECTION 1 INTRODUCTORY**

### **SECTION 1A RELATIONSHIP OF THE POLICY TO THE CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES AND THE CODE**

1. This policy should be read in association with the Child Protection Guidelines (Third Edition), and the Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
2. In 1996 the Presbyterian Church in Ireland issued Child Protection Guidelines to help raise awareness of the need for Church agencies to adhere to high standards of practice in their care of children and young people. The Guidelines included procedures for the handling of complaints made against

leaders, and the disclosure by children and young people of abuse allegedly perpetrated against them by persons outside the context of Church organisations.

3. The Guidelines, were updated in 2004, and all congregations should now have in place a Child Protection Policy and procedures that comply with the general principles contained in them. This policy provides additional information on the handling of complaints of sexual abuse against ministers and others in positions of church leadership, including referral to statutory authorities, pastoral care and suspension arrangements.

4. While this policy focuses on sexual abuse, all forms of child abuse are wrong. The Child Protection Guidelines detail the different forms of abuse. Sexual abuse may or may not include other forms of abuse, and the principles and procedures included in this policy are also relevant when dealing with allegations involving other types of abuse.

5. The Code of the Church provides for matters of a disciplinary nature to be dealt with by the courts of the Church and such provisions and requirements as are contained in the Code provide the legislative framework within which all investigations should be undertaken. The procedures contained in this document provide the additional guidance needed to handle complaints of a particularly sensitive and complex nature and which may involve criminal law proceedings as well as investigation under church law.

6. Church discipline should be conducted with continual prayerfulness, love, affection and humility. The Church is called to use this policy in the same way, under the continual illumination of the Holy Spirit.

## **SECTION 1B POLICY OVERVIEW**

1. It is the policy of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland that sexual abuse of any kind by church leaders, staff or volunteers will not be tolerated.

2. Because of the serious consequences of sexual abuse, the Church will make every effort to ensure that such abuse does not occur within its jurisdiction. When complaints of sexual abuse arise, the Church will respond with seriousness, sensitivity and concern for all involved, and will recognise the necessity of dealing with both complainant and the person complained against (occasionally referred to in this policy as the complaine) in a fair and just manner. This policy is designed to ensure that the Church deals with complaints sensitively and efficiently.

Every complaint will be taken seriously, and every response will include the following steps:

### **Discovery**

3. When a complaint has been received by someone in a position of leadership in the church, the process of dealing with the complaint will be set in motion, and those with a need to know will be informed. (See Section 3A). Some preliminary enquiries will need to be made to assess the facts of the complaint. Initially a determination is made, with the help of the statutory authorities and other advisors, as to whether the matter is of a criminal or non-criminal nature. Other issues that may be determined at this stage include whether the matter is to be dealt with by the Kirk Session, Presbytery, or a Board of the General



Assembly. This preliminary fact finding and determination will probably be undertaken by the Moderator and Clerk of the Church court which has received the complaint, after having taken appropriate advice from the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Co-ordinator set up under this policy.

### **Intervention**

4. Resources and support will be offered to the principal people involved, as deemed appropriate and in keeping with the provisions of the policy. Such support may include the appointment of advisors to both complainant and the person complained against, and the provision of pastoral care wherever needed. (See Section 3B).

### **Investigation**

5. Full investigation by the appropriate Church court will not take place until after the Police/Garda have decided not to bring charges under criminal law, or, where charges have been brought, the court has made a final decision, or, it has been established the matter is not of a criminal nature. Interviews will be conducted with both the complainant and the person complained against, and others as necessary. (See Section 3C).

### **Outcome**

6. Decisions will be made regarding the facts of the complaint, whether or not misconduct occurred, and if so, its nature and scope. After determining the nature and scope of any misconduct, decisions will be made by the appropriate church court regarding any actions to be taken. (See Section 3D).

## **SECTION 1C THEOLOGICAL BASIS**

1. The policy of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland on sexual abuse is set in the framework of what it means to be a person of Christian faith and a servant in the Church. Our sexuality, as a dimension of our whole selves, is to be offered to God. In the expression of sexual desires we are called to holiness. God values sexuality as good, blessed and purposeful, both as an expression of love and for the procreation of children (Genesis 1 v 27-28; 2 v 23-25). Sexuality is a gift to be celebrated. We are called to be responsible in the use of our sexuality and to respect each other as children, women and men made in God's image. From this belief in the sacredness of our physical beings we understand and declare that every person has the right to sexual and bodily integrity.

2. All those who serve the Church, especially clergy, church leaders, staff and volunteers, are expected to adhere to Christian ethical principles in their sexual conduct and in their exercise of authority and power (Titus 2 v 11-12). The Church in all its extended ministries is to be seen as a safe place in the community; a place where it is known that sexual abuse is not tolerated (Ephesians 5 v 1-4). This is part of our Christian witness to the community. Therefore, the leadership of any group using church premises for their activities is also subject to this policy.

3. Our commitment is to model the example of Christ and to be rooted in the love of Christ in all our relationships. For any Christian to betray trust by

the grave ethical transgression of sexually abusing another, whether child or adult, is to deny his or her own Christian identity, as well as to deny to the one abused the witness to the risen Christ in the world. Such a betrayal will be a gross injury to the one abused and a violation of faithfulness to Christ. Because of the serious consequences of sexual abuse, the Church must make every effort to ensure that sexual abuse does not occur within its jurisdiction. When such abuse does occur, the Church must make a clear and just response.

4. It is, therefore, the policy of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland that sexual abuse of any kind by any church leader, staff or volunteer will not be tolerated.

### **SECTION 1D GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. All complaints of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. Every complaint will be received, investigated and acted upon in accordance with the terms of this policy.

2. The person complained against is always presumed innocent until proven guilty. If the Presbytery or Kirk Session cannot conclude from the evidence on a balance of probabilities that the actions did occur as alleged, then it must decide that the complaint cannot be substantiated. In simple terms, the person complained against will be found innocent. Any complaint must be substantiated before discipline can occur.

3. Where a minister or other person has been wrongly accused, positive steps should be taken to restore their name and good standing in the Church and in the community.

4. The investigation of alleged abuse should have regard to the fact that more than one Presbytery and possibly both jurisdictions in Ireland may be involved. Hence, arrangements for investigation and reporting should be effectively co-ordinated, and duplication of action avoided.

5. The protection of children is a priority. In accordance with civil law, any complaint of abuse of a child will be reported to a child protection agency or the Police/Garda immediately.

6. A person who is alleging to have been sexually harassed should be informed of the right to seek the assistance of the appropriate Equality Commission.

7. This policy is the policy of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Therefore, church courts are expected to implement this policy as it is written. Changes to the policy will be made for the whole Church by the General Assembly. In the interests of fairness and consistency, Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and other church bodies will refrain from implementing unilaterally procedures not outlined in the policy.

8. All information obtained must be treated in strict confidence, subject to the legal requirement that any information about a serious offence must be reported to the Police/Garda.

9. A careful written record must be made of all statements received, and of all church and inter-agency discussions, with specific responsibility for subsequent action being assigned to individuals.

10. The church is called to implement this policy in the spirit of prayerfulness, love, affection and humility under the continual illumination of the Holy Spirit.

11. These guiding principles are the basis of the policy. The policy can be properly understood only when read in the light of the guiding principles.

## SECTION 1E DEFINITIONS

### What is Sexual Abuse?

1. *Sexual Abuse* of children includes, but is not limited to, any unwanted sexual contact. It occurs when an adult or other young person touches a child's private parts in a way which makes the child feel worried or unhappy. Some adults or other young people, who sexually abuse others, also ask the child to touch parts of their body or show them pornographic pictures or videos.

2. *Sexual Contact* includes, but is not limited to, sexual intercourse, genital contact, petting, fondling, sexually suggestive language or the display of pornography.

3. Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, *sexual assault* and other sexual offences.

4. Sexual abuse is often accompanied by violence. Violence impairs or destroys mutual consent, which is needed to ensure that sexual activity is voluntary. Sexual abuse therefore includes *spousal violence*.

5. Sexual abuse may include, but is not limited to, sexual harassment.

### The Question of Consent

6. In order not to be abusive, any sexual act must be done by mutual consent of the parties involved. Mutual consent presumes that the parties are on an equal footing with each other, so that one person is not pressurised by any consideration of the stature or position of the other person.

7. Ministers and all other church leaders are in a position of authority and trust, which makes the achievement of mutual consent difficult, and increases the potential for harm and abuse of those whom they serve.

8. The pastoral counselling function creates a particular relationship of trust. Exploitation of the trust developed in the counselling relationship through sexual activity is considered to be abuse, and will not be tolerated.

9. In relationships of unequal power or trust, consent may not exist even when sexual activity has been initiated by the one who feels violated and alleged abuse has occurred. Therefore, the claim of mutually consensual or private sexual contact does not relieve the church leader of ethical responsibility. Sexual contact will normally be considered a serious breach of pastoral responsibility and subject to strict disciplinary action.

10. Sexual contact between a church leader and parishioner, counsellee, colleague, employee or any person over whom the church leader has pastoral oversight is fundamentally at odds with a pastoral relationship. It is one or more of the following:

- A breach of the trust placed in a spiritual leader;
- An abuse of power over the vulnerability of the parishioner, counsellor, colleague or employee;
- A scandal to the Church;
- A breach of the standard of conduct expected of a minister or leader in the church.

### **Acceptable Social Relationships**

11. Sexual contact is not invariably defined as sexual abuse. The Church acknowledges that its leaders and members date, fall in love and marry. The Church is the natural environment in which Christians can develop healthy relationships. Where there is pastoral responsibility, care must be taken not to exploit the pastoral trust while developing a private relationship.

12. The minister or church leader who wishes to develop a mutually loving relationship which may eventually include sexual contact shall ensure that the pastoral needs of the other person will be met by another church leader. Within the bounds of private relationships the church leader is called to the highest standards of Christian ethics. Such relationship is not considered to fall into the category of sexual abuse. This does not imply that sexual abuse may not occur within such relationships.

## **SECTION 2 IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY**

### **SECTION 2A WHO IS SUBJECT TO THIS POLICY?**

1. While the principles of this policy are relevant to all members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and other groups using church space, it is mainly applicable to those in positions of church leadership such as ministers (including ministers in training, associates and assistants), elders, deaconesses and those in posts of mission. The Policy also applies to those serving under a Board or Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland whether serving in Ireland or overseas.\*

2. \*Special Note regarding employees, whether employed by one of PCI's central employing agencies, or by a local congregation: Where there is a complaint of sexual abuse against a person who is centrally employed by PCI or employed by a local congregation (i.e. not those mentioned in paragraph 1 above), those receiving such complaints must ensure that the relevant employment procedures and policies in place under the employee's contract are followed. The matter shall be reported through the appropriate line management procedures in the employment contract, ensuring that legal advice is taken and referral to the statutory authorities is carried out when necessary. When such complaints arise it is also necessary for the employer to inform the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Co-ordinator under this Policy in the event that wider pastoral, disciplinary or legal issues are raised in relation to the church.

**WHO PROCESSES THE COMPLAINT?**

3. The issue of which court of the church should process a complaint will depend on the nature of the complaint and the person complained against. In general the following guidelines should be followed.

**Presbytery**

4. Presbyteries deal with complaints made against those subject to their discipline. This includes ministers (including students, licentiates, associates and assistants), chaplains, deaconesses, elders, and other ordained persons in special work or who may not have a charge but who are under the care of Presbytery.

5. The Presbytery should be aware that at any time it may refer a matter to the Judicial Commission, especially if the matter is of a particularly sensitive or complex nature (see Code Par 21, 172(3) and 174).

**Kirk Session**

6. Kirk Sessions deal with complaints made against those subject to their discipline. This includes all members of their congregations (excluding elders) or those using their church space. This will include those who are church staff such as a youth worker, musical director or other paid position not under the discipline of Presbytery. Churches which are employing staff must firstly ensure that they are satisfying their legal/contractual obligations under employment law.

7. Congregational staff members who are not subject to the discipline of Presbytery and may not even be church members are still accountable to the Kirk Session by virtue of their position. Leaders of groups using church space may not be members of the congregation but are accountable to the Kirk Session while leading a group. Such groups must ensure compliance with PCI child protection guidelines.

8. The Kirk Session should be aware that at any time it may refer a matter to the Presbytery, especially if the matter is of a particularly sensitive or complex nature (see Code Par 21, 75(c), 173, 174 and 329(b)).

**General Assembly**

9. The relevant Board of the General Assembly will normally deal with a complaint against a person serving as a member of a Board or a Committee of the Board, a Convener or other member of a Board or Committee, Union Theological College or a College Professor. Complaints of sexual abuse involving staff employed by PCI Boards in the course of their employment will be dealt with, first of all, within their employment contractual procedures, and any such complaints should be reported to the appropriate Head of Department, the Head of Personnel, Church House, the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Co-ordinator.

10. Where a person complained against is also under the jurisdiction of another Church court – Kirk Session or Presbytery – the Board shall take the lead role in processing the complaint unless there are good reasons for the court taking precedence.

11. Where after investigation it appears that church discipline may be required, the matter must be referred to the appropriate court for determination.

## **SECTION 2B STRUCTURES WHICH SUPPORT THE POLICY**

### **Advisory Panel**

1. An Advisory Panel which can provide expert advice, information and support will be set up by the General Assembly which will be available for consultation and advice to Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and Boards. The Panel will also offer help and advice regarding liaison with the statutory authorities. The Panel will include the Church House Designated Persons, the Convener of the Child Protection Monitoring Committee, a legal advisor, an experienced minister and others who have a specialised knowledge in the area of sexual abuse. The Co-ordinator will act as Secretary to the Advisory Panel.

2. The Panel will have male and female representation and should meet collectively but can be consulted on an individual basis. The Convener of the panel will be the Convener of the Child Protection Monitoring Committee. The Panel will be responsible to the General Assembly through the Board of Social Witness.

3. The Panel will be able to obtain, and provide advice and help on matters of procedure, church and civil law, and facilitate the provision of advisors and pastoral support for the individuals involved.

### **Co-ordinator**

4. The General Assembly will appoint a Co-ordinator who will co-ordinate all arrangements for the investigation of complaints of sexual abuse, ensure that the statutory authorities are informed when necessary, ensure generally that procedures are complied with, and that reports are provided to those with a need to know about the progress of the investigation.

5. It will also be the responsibility of the Co-ordinator to ensure that arrangements have been put in place by the relevant court for the appropriate support of the complainant and his/her family, and the accused and his/her family. This will involve the appointment of advisors and pastoral carers as required.

6. The Co-ordinator will ensure that, where more than one court or Board has an interest in the case, the respective Moderators or Clerks receive appropriate information and that they are informed about the action that each is required to take.

7. Where the Co-ordinator has reason to believe that appropriate action is not being taken, he/she will inform the Moderator or Clerk concerned and, if necessary the Clerk of Assembly. While the Co-ordinator will not be responsible for the actions of others, he/she will have authority to give clear direction as to the procedure to be implemented by others.

### **Clerk of Session and Clerk of Presbytery**

8. When a complaint is made in the majority of cases this will be reported at an early stage to a Clerk of Kirk Session or a Clerk of Presbytery.

The Clerk should initially inform his or her Moderator and consult the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Co-ordinator. Where the Moderator or the Clerk is implicated, the person receiving the complaint should inform the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Co-ordinator directly.

9. It is important that information is handled with strict confidentiality. The main role of a Clerk is to take advice and facilitate reporting of the complaint, not investigation.

### **Commission of Presbytery**

10. A Commission of Presbytery should be appointed to receive, inquire into, investigate and recommend the action to be taken on complaints of sexual abuse. The Commission should be not less than four people, with male and female representation, and should have the power to invite consultants to sit and deliberate. The consultants need not be members of the Presbytery, but will be responsible to the Presbytery. They would not have a vote when the outcome is being determined.

11. It is recognised that, under the Code, a Commission will require at least three days to be put in place. Nevertheless a Commission is needed so that complaints may be dealt with as quickly and confidentially as possible.

12. The Commission must keep records of all its proceedings, including interviews, meetings, and any other relevant activity. The Commission should be making regular reports to the Presbytery.

13. The Commission, on behalf of the Presbytery, should acquaint itself with the local child protection agency (Health and Social Services Trust/Health Board).

### **Commission of Session**

14. A Commission of Session should be appointed to receive, inquire into, and recommend the action to be taken on complaints of sexual abuse involving persons not subject to the discipline of Presbytery. Other church members who have relevant skills and expertise may be asked to serve on the commission along with the elders, such as the congregation's Designated Person, although they would not have a vote, when the outcome is being determined.

15. The Commission keeps records of all its proceedings, including interviews, meetings, and any other relevant activity. The Commission should make regular reports to the Kirk Session ensuring that confidentiality is preserved.

16. Each Clerk of Kirk Session and Designated Person should know how to contact the local child protection agency (NSPCC; Health and Social Services Trust/Health Board or Police/Garda).

17. The Kirk Session should be aware that at any time it may refer a matter to the Presbytery, especially if the matter is of a particularly sensitive or complex nature (see Code Par 75(c) and 329(b).)

### **Sub-Committee of a Board of the General Assembly**

18. A Sub-Committee of a Board should be appointed to process a complaint against a person serving under a Board of the General Assembly.

19. The Sub-Committee should be aware that at any time it may refer a matter to the appropriate church court, especially if the matter is a particularly sensitive or complex nature, or if issues of discipline are involved.

### **Advisors and Pastoral Support**

20. As the area of sexual abuse is complex and pastorally sensitive it is recognised that there will be a high level of advice and support required at an individual level at every stage of an investigation. In addition to the support offered by the Advisory Panel to those in authority who are handling such complaints, it is recognised that the complainant, and those complained against, will require a high level of support.

21. Accordingly, it is recommended that an advisor, responsible for advising on the church and legal process of the complaint, and a carer for general pastoral support, will each be offered to the complainant and the person complained against (see Section 3B ) at an early stage. The Advisory Panel will arrange for suitably trained people to be available to fulfil these important functions. It is of course permissible for an individual to request their own choice of advisor or pastoral carer, subject to that person or persons being acceptable to the Advisory Panel.

22. The Advisory Panel will also draw up a list of counsellors or counselling agencies having expertise in treating sexual abusers, and those abused. This list should be held by the Co-ordinator and he or she can give advice regarding same.

## **SECTION 2C COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY**

1. The Child Protection Monitoring Committee shall ensure that this policy is clearly communicated to all Clerks of Presbytery, Clerks of Kirk Session, ministers and Board Conveners.

2. It is recommended that the Board of Social Witness be encouraged to assist Presbyteries in the provision of training for new church leaders in dealing with sexual abuse by church leaders, and that Union College provides education on dealing with sexual abuse by church leaders for all candidates for ministry in The Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

## **SECTION 3 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS**

### **SECTION 3A DISCOVERY**

#### **Ai Receiving Complaints**

##### *The Beginning: A Complaint is Made*

1. Complaints of sexual abuse may arise in different ways depending on the nature of the complaint and whether it involves a child, an adult, or an adult reporting incidents that occurred in their childhood.



2. The procedure in the Child Protection Guidelines refers to the handling of complaints/suspicions received in the context of a local church organisation, whether or not the incident happened on church premises. The reporting procedure in the Guidelines ensures that the following people are informed – the organisation leader, the minister and the Designated Person. Advice may be taken from the Church House Designated Persons and the statutory authorities as a decision is reached whether to make a formal referral to the statutory authorities. A confidential record is kept of the decision made and the reasons for the decision.

3. If a referral to the statutory authorities is made the additional guidance in this policy may be helpful in addressing the pastoral and other issues raised with the individuals/churches concerned.

4. When a complaint/suspicion involves a minister or a person in higher leadership in a church (eg an elder, deaconess, youth worker) complaints should be directed to the Clerk of Kirk Session and the Clerk of Presbytery. The Clerk of Presbytery should initially inform his or her Moderator, the Clerk of the General Assembly, the Co-ordinator and, if deemed appropriate, the congregation's Designated Person. Where the Moderator or Clerk is implicated, the person receiving the complaint will contact the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Co-ordinator directly. Any person who receives a complaint of sexual abuse must direct it to the appropriate channel immediately.

5. **The first issue to be determined** is whether the matter is of a criminal or non-criminal nature. The persons receiving the complaint should take advice from the Advisory Panel and the Police/Garda. If it is a Police/Garda matter the complaint shall be referred to the statutory authorities immediately, in accordance with standard procedure under the Child Protection Guidelines, which emphasise that the welfare of the child is paramount, and the Church will not conduct any further investigation until criminal proceedings are finished.

## **Aii Determining if a Criminal Issue will affect the Procedures**

### ***Categorising the Complaint***

6. The Clerk or the Commission seeks to determine as soon as possible if the subject of the complaint is governed by legislation in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland. The Commission should consult the Advisory Panel and obtain legal advice if there is any question whether the matter might involve a criminal complaint. All cases of suspected abuse must be reported immediately to a child protection agency and/or the PSNI/Garda.

7. Usually if the complaint involves minors or physical force, it will almost certainly be a criminal matter. A threat which creates fear for physical safety, or continuous pursuit of a person which amounts to "stalking", may also be legal offences.

8. In making the decision of whether the matter involves a criminal complaint, it is better to err on the side of caution.

***Duty to Report Suspected Child Abuse***

9. In accordance with Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland legislation all cases of suspected abuse of a child must be reported immediately to a child protection agency or the Police/Garda. Once the child protection agency has been contacted, their staff will begin an investigation and contact the individuals as they see fit. Under the process mandated for investigation, only the child protection agency or the Police/Garda may question the alleged victim or offender so their investigations may proceed unhindered. However, offering pastoral care is always appropriate as long as the church refrains from hindering the Police/Garda or child protection agency investigation.

***Duty to Report to Police/Garda other suspected criminal activity***

10. If there is a complaint involving criminal charges other than sexual abuse (in which case there is a duty to report), the Commission should report the complaint to the Police/Garda.

***Limited Action During Criminal Investigation***

11. If the Commission/Sub-committee finds that the complaint is of a criminal nature, it continues with intervention procedures (Section 3B of this document) but cannot proceed to investigate (Section 3C of this document) until the matter has been dealt with (including appeals) by the legal authorities.

12. The Commission/Sub-committee will not interfere with the child protection agency or the Police/Garda in their investigations.

13. If any member of Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board is questioned during the course of a Police/Garda or child protection agency investigation of a criminal complaint, he or she may assist the authorities by answering the questions asked. However, if the person being questioned fears that such assistance will violate pastoral confidentiality, or in some other way harm the integrity of the Church court, he or she may seek the advice of a lawyer before proceeding. He or she may also wish to consult the Presbytery Commission or Advisory Panel.

14. In order not to inadvertently violate the rights of the person against whom the complaint is made (occasionally referred to as the “complainee”), the Commission/Sub-Committee shall not approach the complainee on the subject of the complaint during the course of the criminal investigation unless the Commission/Sub-committee has first taken legal advice.

***Contacting Police/Garda Regularly***

15. It is appropriate for the Presbytery/Kirk Session to contact Police/Garda on a regular basis to keep the Presbytery/Kirk Session advised about the criminal investigation. If Police/Garda advise that the matter is no longer under investigation, the Presbytery may proceed to deal with the complaint before it. (See also Section 3C).

***Aiii Which Church court processes the complaint?***

16. A Clerk will also take advice from the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Advisory Panel regarding the appropriate Church body that will deal

with the complaint, and initiate the intervention procedures (see Section 3B) - namely Kirk Session, Presbytery or Board. The following matters will be borne in mind as this decision is made:- is this a criminal matter (see above), how serious is the complaint, is the person complained against normally under the jurisdiction of the Kirk Session or Presbytery, or serving under a Board; are children at risk?

In general the following guidelines should be followed:

### **Presbytery**

17. Presbyteries deal with complaints made against those subject to their discipline. This includes ministers (including students, licentiates, associates and assistants), chaplains, deaconesses, elders, and other ordained persons in special work or who may not have a charge but who are under the care of Presbytery.

18. The Presbytery should be aware that at any time it may refer a matter to the Judicial Commission, especially if the matter is of a particularly sensitive or complex nature (see Code Par 21, 172(3) and 174).

### **Kirk Session**

19. Kirk Sessions deal with complaints made against those subject to their discipline, and/or employed by the congregation. This includes all members of their congregations (excluding elders) or those using their church space. This will include those who are church staff such as a youth worker, musical director or other paid position not under the discipline of Presbytery. Churches which are employing staff must ensure that they are satisfying their legal/contractual obligations under employment law. The employer will also inform the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Co-ordinator of any complaints.

20. Staff members who are not subject to the discipline of Presbytery and may not even be church members are still accountable to the Kirk Session by virtue of their position. Leaders of groups using church space may not be members of the congregation but are accountable to the Kirk Session while leading a group.

21. The Kirk Session should be aware that at any time it may refer a matter to the Presbytery, especially if the matter is of a particularly sensitive or complex nature (see Code Par 21, 75(c), 173, 174 and 329(b)).

### **General Assembly**

22. The relevant Board of the General Assembly will normally deal with a complaint against a person serving under the Board or a Committee of the Board, a Convener or other member of a Board or Committee, Union Theological College or a College Professor. Complaints of sexual abuse involving staff employed by PCI Boards in the course of their employment will be dealt with, first of all, within their employment contractual procedures, and any such complaints should be reported to the appropriate Head of Department, the Head of Personnel, Church House, the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Co-ordinator.

23. Where a person complained against is also under the jurisdiction of a Church court – Kirk Session or Presbytery – the Board shall take the lead role in processing the complaint unless there are good reasons for the court taking precedence.

#### ***A Commission/Sub-Committee is set up***

24. The Clerk will arrange for a meeting of the appropriate court as soon as possible. As few details as possible will be disclosed. A Presbytery or Kirk Session will set up a Commission to process the matter; a Board will set up a Sub-Committee to process the matter. Strict confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

25. Because of the sensitivity of the matter the Commission should normally be given the powers of the Court for the matters remitted. (Code Par 146 1b).

26. It is recognised that, under the Code, a Presbytery Commission will require at least three days to be put in place. Nevertheless a Commission is needed, so that when necessary, complaints may be dealt with as quickly and confidentially as possible.

27. In cases of alleged harassment the Presbytery will inform the complainant of the right to seek the assistance of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

#### ***Other Involved Presbyteries***

28. If Presbytery bounds are crossed by the complaint, the complaint is dealt with by the Presbytery where the person complained against is:

- on the roll of Presbytery;
- under the care of Presbytery as a candidate for ordination;
- a member of a congregation whose Kirk Session has referred the matter to Presbytery.

#### **Records**

29. The Commission/Sub-committee should keep records of all its proceedings, including interviews, meetings and any other relevant activity. These should be kept confidential and stored in a safe place.

#### ***Reporting***

30. The Commission/Sub-committee is responsible to report to Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board on an ongoing basis.

#### **Aiv Information to Relevant Parties**

31. The Presbytery Commission/Sub-Committee will ensure that all concerned parties are informed as necessary, in a manner appropriate to concerns of confidentiality and pastoral care.

#### ***Confidentiality***

32. Discretion shall be used to keep the identity of the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made confidential unless otherwise

necessary. Details of the incident should not be disclosed except on a need to know basis.

### ***Child Protection Agency***

33. Any case of suspected child abuse will be reported immediately to the child protection agency.

### ***Complainee***

34. The person complained against is entitled to know that a complaint has been received. Advice will be taken from the Police/Garda and the Co-ordinator as to who should inform the complainee.

### ***Presbytery***

35. The Moderator and Clerk of Presbytery may call a special meeting of Presbytery if they deem it necessary.

### ***Kirk Sessions and Congregations***

36. Presbytery and the Kirk Session should keep each other informed during the course of the investigation of the progress of the matter, and especially of any decision made by the Presbytery that affects the ministry of the congregation.

37. Presbytery may discuss with the Kirk Session appropriate communication to the congregation

### ***The Media***

38. Where it becomes necessary to make any statement to the media or the wider church, the Presbytery Commission/Kirk Session/Board will determine, in consultation with the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Church Communications Officer and other relevant parties, what information should be made available, and by whom.

## **SECTION 3B INTERVENTION**

1. The Commission/Sub-Committee will consult with the Co-ordinator regarding the provision of pastoral care and advisors for the complainant and the complainee. These persons may be drawn from the Presbytery or from a panel of specially trained carers and advisors whose names are held by the Co-ordinator.

### **Bi Pastoral Care Providers**

2. The Commission/Sub-Committee arranges for a pastoral care structure to be put in place immediately, as follows:

### ***For the Complainant and Family***

3. The Commission/Sub-Committee will appoint an experienced person to offer pastoral care to the complainant and his/her family, if appropriate.

***For the Person Complained Against and Family***

4. The Commission/Sub-Committee will ensure that an experienced person is appointed to offer pastoral care to the person complained against, and his/her family if appropriate.

5. The person against whom the complaint is made should be cautioned that pastoral confidences may not be protected by the law, and that the pastoral care giver could be required to testify in a court of law, as to matters disclosed by the complainees to him or her.

***Who can be Appointed for Pastoral Care?***

6. Those people appointed for pastoral care need not be active members of Presbytery, but they are responsible to Presbytery in these functions.

7. The complainant and the person complained against may request their own choice of pastoral carer subject to the approval of the Advisory Panel. More specialised counselling may be required in addition to ordinary pastoral care. If this is the case the Presbytery should facilitate this.

***Avoiding Conflict of Interest***

8. To avoid conflict of interest, those persons who offer pastoral care cannot be members of the Presbytery or Kirk Session Commission or Board Sub-Committee, notwithstanding the limited resources of small Presbyteries/Kirk Sessions. If necessary they must withdraw from the Commission.

***Offer of Pastoral Care Always Appropriate***

9. It is always appropriate to offer pastoral care to any involved person during the course of these procedures.

**Bii Advisors**

10. The Commission/Sub-Committee arranges for advisors on church procedure to be appointed to the complainants and the complainees as follows:

***For the Complainant***

11. The Commission/Sub-Committee will appoint an advisor to the complainant .

***For the Person Complained Against***

12. The Commission/Sub-Committee will appoint an advisor for the person complained against.

***Who May be Appointed to Advise***

13. Individuals who are appointed in an advisory capacity may be members of Presbytery, or they may be drawn from a panel which has specialised knowledge, whose names are held by the co-ordinator. These individuals will have the task of advising complainants and complainees on the

processes of the Church, and therefore may need to attend private sessions of the Presbytery.

14. The complainant and the person complained against may request Presbytery/Kirk Session to appoint an advisor. Each may request that a specific person be appointed subject to the approval of the Advisory Panel. It is permissible for an advisor to be the same person as the pastoral carer, if the Presbytery considers that this is appropriate.

15. It is not suggested that an advisor within the Church be a replacement for an individual receiving independent legal advice from a lawyer.

### **Role of Advisors**

16. Advisors will give advice on the procedures of the Church courts.

17. The advisor to any party may be present as an observer when the investigating Commission interviews the complainant, or other witnesses. The advisor is not permitted to speak during the interview other than to request a brief recess. During the recess the advisor may speak privately to the Commission to raise concerns or suggest questions to be asked in the interview. The cross-examination of witnesses by advisors is not permitted.

18. The advisor does not participate in the deliberations of the Commission.

19. Although a voting member of the court, the advisor cannot participate in the decisions of the Presbytery on the case.

20. The term 'advisor' has been used instead of 'advocate' to avoid the notion that someone else would represent the person against whom the complaint has been made before the Church court. The advisor, however, may assist the person against whom the complaint has been made in preparing to answer the questions of the church court.

### ***Avoiding Conflict of Interest***

21. To avoid conflict of interest, those persons who act as advisors cannot be members of the Commission notwithstanding the limited resources of small Presbyteries. If necessary they must withdraw from the Commission.

### **Biii Liaison to Congregations**

22. In a case involving the precautionary suspension of a minister the Presbytery may consider assigning to a presbyter, other than the interim moderator, the responsibility for serving as liaison between the Presbytery and the congregation in all matters relating to the investigation. This will allow the interim moderator to enter a pastoral relationship with the congregation more fully. Presbytery and the Kirk Session should keep each other informed during the course of the investigation.

### **Rumours**

23. Liaison between the Presbytery and the congregation, or the interim moderator, should attempt to deal with persons engaging in rumour, with a goal to minimising the harm created. If necessary, the person using rumour should be subject to appropriate discipline.

**Biv      Leave of Absence while Investigation Proceeds**

24. It may be necessary for the person complained against to be suspended from duty until the investigation is complete. The Commission/Sub-Committee will take advice from the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Advisory Panel before instituting suspension (see Code Par 133(3).)

25. The Commission/Sub-Committee will inform the Convener of the Union Commission of the suspension and the necessary arrangements will be put in place.

26. Any leave of absence given during an investigation does not imply the guilt or innocence of the person under investigation.

***During a Criminal Investigation***

27. During a criminal investigation the person against whom the complaint is made will be placed on leave of absence with pay. In the case of a minister, the Presbytery will appoint an interim moderator for the congregation. During a criminal investigation the Presbytery/Kirk Session may at its discretion reinstate the person complained against into his or her position subject to whatever conditions may be appropriate. The Presbytery/Kirk Session must keep in mind the serious consequences if the person against whom the complaint is made should commit abuse during the investigation.

***During Legal Appeal from a Criminal Conviction***

28. The right to a paid leave of absence during criminal investigation does not extend to the time period during which a complainee appeals a criminal conviction. Once an individual has been convicted in a criminal court, the presumption of innocence is lost. While the person complained against must continue on a leave of absence and the Church court must wait to resolve the complaint until all appeal procedures are completed, the Church is under no obligation to continue providing stipend and benefits to the complainee during this time.

***During an Investigation into a Non-Criminal Matter***

29. If there is no criminal element to the complaint, the Presbytery or the Sub-committee will take advice and decide whether the person will be placed on a paid leave of absence, or may continue in his or her position during the investigation, attaching any conditions considered appropriate, keeping in mind the serious consequences if abuse should occur during the investigation. If the Commission/ Sub-committee has made a decision, it reports to the next Presbytery/Kirk Session meeting.

***Duration***

30. Except during a legal appeal for a criminal conviction, the paid leave of absence will continue until the Presbytery has fully investigated and resolved the complaint before it.



***Short-term Contract Workers***

31. It may be that a complaint arises against a person working on a short-term contract, where it can reasonably be expected that the investigation may outlast the length of term of the contract. In this case, the term “leave of absence” is not appropriate. If the person is to be removed from the position he or she may be paid until the end of the contract period, at which time the contract for work will end, although the investigation will continue until the complaint has been resolved. If the complaint is of a criminal nature, the person would be automatically removed from the position. Presbytery may use its discretion either to reinstate the person, or if the complaint is of a non-criminal nature, to allow the complainees to complete the contract, subject to whatever conditions may be appropriate. The Presbytery should keep in mind the serious consequences if the person against whom the complaint is made should commit abuse during the investigation.

32. If a person under investigation wishes to enter into a new contract prior to the resolution of the complaint, they must get the permission of the Presbytery.

***Special Note on Candidates for Ministry***

33. This provision may affect candidates for ministry who are working in short-term student positions when a complaint is made against them. A candidate for ministry may be allowed to continue theological education even while under investigation, but the Presbytery responsible for his or her care must decide whether the candidate may take part in a congregational placement or be allowed to take other ministry positions prior to the resolution of the complaint.

***Relationship to the Presbytery***

34. A member of Presbytery on a leave of absence retains the right to sit and correspond in Presbytery, and in particular, has the right to address the Commission directly (but not deliberate) on the issue of the complaint of sexual abuse against him or her.

***Limitations on Ministers during a paid leave of absence***

35. A member of Presbytery on a leave of absence may not moderate a Kirk Session on an interim basis, nor preach pulpit supply or anniversary services, nor conduct other services. The minister or licentiate minister must withdraw from any of these appointments that have already been scheduled. During the period of the leave of absence, if a special event occurs (such as the wedding of a family member) in which the minister wishes to participate in his or her capacity as a minister of religion, the minister must receive the permission of the Presbytery.

36. The credentials for any person against whom a complaint is made shall not be transferred to another Presbytery until the investigating Presbytery’s investigation and recommendations are completed.

***Informing Kirk Sessions and Congregations***

37. When a member of Presbytery is placed on a paid leave of absence, Presbytery must inform the affected congregation as quickly as possible. Before the next Sunday service, the Clerk of Presbytery, or his or her designate will meet with the Kirk Session and inform them of the investigation and assure them of the support of Presbytery, advise them on the appointment of an interim moderator, and make arrangements to conduct worship. Appropriate information should be offered to the congregation at the Sunday service, respecting the confidentiality of the information, and having the goal of quelling rumour and speculation. If the member of Presbytery is on a leave of absence from some position other than that of teaching and ruling elder to a congregation, the Presbytery must inform the necessary parties as quickly and confidentially as possible.

***Financial Hardship for Minister or Congregation***

38. If the investigation lasts so long that financial hardship may result to the minister or the congregation, the Presbytery must advise the Union Commission. The Union Commission will put the necessary special arrangements in place to alleviate the situation having consulted with the Judicial Commission.

39. In the event of a voluntary resignation of a minister, the Union Commission will be informed and special arrangements may be put in place after the Union Commission has consulted with the Judicial Commission (see Code Par 226(b)).

***Manse***

40. If a manse is involved, the person against whom a complaint is made, and his or her family, may continue to reside in it during the criminal investigation. If the Presbytery deems that such close proximity is inappropriate, another suitable residence must be arranged during this time period. If Presbytery deems it necessary for the minister to vacate the manse, the Union Commission when putting in place any necessary special arrangements, shall include a housing allowance, if appropriate. Should marital break-up ensue during this period, the Presbytery must strive to respond in a supportive and just manner to both spouses.

41. The Convener of the Union Commission will be kept informed of the situation regarding the manse arrangements by the Presbytery Commission.

**SECTION 3C INVESTIGATION**

1. This section should be read in conjunction with Chapter 19 of the Code on Disciplinary Proceedings.

2. Before investigating a complaint, the Commission/Sub-committee ensures that the Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board has addressed the intervention issues outlined in Section 3B; namely pastoral care, advisors, and leave of absence. They should also be satisfied that the matter is not, or is no longer, a criminal matter.

**Should there be an investigation?**

3. Where the statutory authorities believe the complaint is unsubstantiated, or where a criminal court has delivered a not guilty verdict, there may be no need for a church investigation or discipline. However, the appropriate court of the church will bear in mind the following considerations in making a decision whether to investigate the matter further:

- the burden of proof in a church investigation is on the balance of probabilities while in a criminal matter the burden of proof is beyond reasonable doubt;
- because of *fama clamosa* (public notoriety) (see Code Par 132 5(b)) the court may consider the interests of discipline would be best served by an investigation of the facts of the case.

**Ci Determining when the Presbytery/Kirk Session may begin its Investigation of the Complaint**

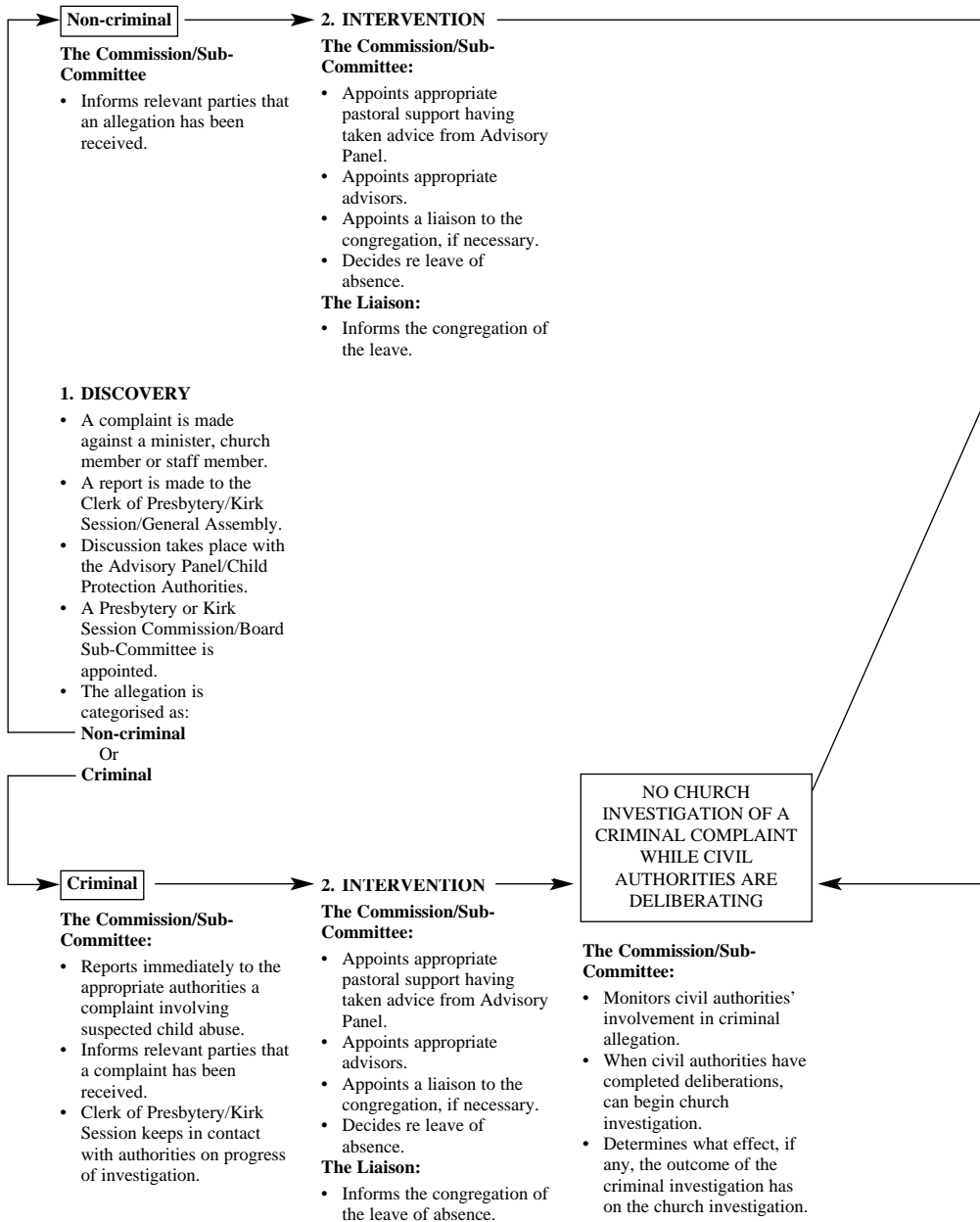
4. The Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board begins its investigation when:
- (a) there are no criminal issues;
  - (b) the criminal courts have made a final decision (either acquittal or conviction) and all appeals have been exhausted;
  - (c) the Police/Garda have decided not to lay charges or the case is no longer subject to a criminal investigation.

5. The Commission/Sub-committee must determine that the courts or the Police/Garda have concluded their actions in the matter before proceeding. It is appropriate for the Presbytery/Kirk Session Commission/Board Sub-committee to contact Police/Garda on a regular basis to keep advised about the criminal investigation.

6. The Commission/Sub-committee must begin its investigation as soon as possible after the complaint has been received, and criminal aspects of the complaint, if any, have been satisfactorily addressed. The Commission/Sub-committee should aim to conclude its investigation within 6 weeks of receiving the complaint/conclusion of criminal proceedings.

***Investigation after Criminal Conviction***

7. If the complaint has involved a criminal matter, and has resulted in the person complained against receiving a criminal conviction, a full investigation may not be required by the Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board. The investigative portion of the work could be simply to take note of the fact of the criminal conviction. However, the person against whom the complaint is made may wish to give his or her reasons why the conviction may not be relevant to the Presbytery's/Sub-Committees investigation, or show other reasons why the Commission should conduct a full investigation prior to the Presbytery adjudication and administering discipline. The Commission/Sub-committee should conduct a full investigation if requested to do so by the complainant(s) or the person(s) complained against.



**3. INVESTIGATION**

**The Commission/Sub-Committee:**

- Interviews the complainant, and any relevant witnesses.
- Interviews the person complained against.
- Liaises with the Co-ordinator and the Advisory Panel.
- Keeps records of all interviews.
- Makes a determination on the evidence or makes a report to Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board with or without recommendations.

**4. OUTCOME**

**The Commission/Sub-Committee:**

- Reports to Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board.
- Notifies the complainee of the decision.
- Reports to the Clerk of the General Assembly.

**COMMUNICATIONS FOLLOWING ADJUDICATION**

**The Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board:**

- Keeps records of the entire matter.
- Decides on the facts which will form the public statement regarding the complaint.
- Informs those affected.
- Calls a congregational meeting or meetings, if necessary.
- Offers appropriate aftercare/counselling.

**The Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board:**

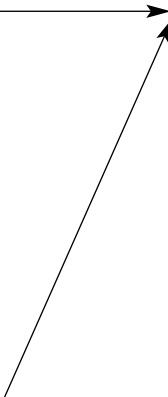
- Hears evidence directly from witnesses if it so chooses. (The complainant and the person complained against have the right to directly address the court on the complaint).

If the complaint is not substantiated, declares the complaint to be dismissed, reinstates the person and offers appropriate pastoral care.

OR

If the allegation is substantiated, decides on appropriate discipline in accordance with the Code.

IF THESE INTERVIEWS UNCOVER POSSIBLE CRIMINAL ELEMENTS OF THE COMPLAINT THE COMMISSION PUTS ITS INVESTIGATION ON HOLD AND REPORTS TO THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES



**Cii Guidelines for Interviews*****Who Interviews?***

8. As many members of the Commission/Sub-committee as possible should participate in all interviews.

***Who is Interviewed?***

9. The Commission/Sub-committee shall interview all complainants and all persons complained against, and any other person whom it reasonably believes to have corroborative evidence or information about the complaint.

***Techniques***

10. The Commission/Sub-committee should develop appropriate interviewing techniques, consulting with the Advisory Panel if necessary.

***Maintaining Records***

11. The Commission/Sub-committee will keep careful and *complete written records* of all its interviews and meetings and treat proceedings as *confidential*.

***No Face-to-Face Meetings between Complainant(s) and Complainee(s)***

12. The policy allows for complaints to be investigated by the Commission/Sub-committee without face-to-face confrontation between the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made because of the seriousness of the complaint and of possible risk to both parties.

***Advisors may attend Interviews***

13. Advisors to the complainants and advisors to persons complained against may be present at interviews of the complainants, the persons complained against, and other witnesses. Advisors attending interviews must read and adhere to the guidelines for advisors (Section 3Bii of this document).

**Ciii Interviewing the Complainant(s)*****Hear Directly***

14. The Commission/Sub-committee will meet with the one(s) alleging sexual abuse to hear the complaint directly.

***Written Statements***

15. The Commission/Sub-committee will request a written statement (signed and dated) along with any corroborating evidence for the complaint. (Code Par 333(1)).

16. The Commission/Sub-committee will prepare the complaint in written form even if the complainant does not wish to write down the complaint, in order that clear and concise records may be kept.

17. The Commission/Sub-committee will request permission to use the written statement in a meeting with the person against whom the complaint is made.

***Explaining Procedures to the Complainant(s)***

18. The Commission/Sub-committee will explain to the complainant(s) in detail, the process of Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board investigation of complaints or ensure that the advisor to the complainant has given these explanations.

***If the Complainant Hesitates or Withdraws the Complaint***

19. If the complainant refuses to allow the complaint to be put into writing, or refuses such written document to be used during the investigation, or refuses to appear before the Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board if requested, the investigation will be seriously hampered. The Commission/Sub-committee will still interview the person against whom the complaint is made, but discipline cannot ordinarily be based on complaints upon which the complainant is not prepared to provide written or oral testimony (see Code Par 333(1)).

20. A witness who chooses not to proceed with his or her complaint by refusing to testify to the complaint before the Presbytery or Kirk Session/Board is not liable to censure. The Commission/Sub-committee, however, must inform the complainant that his or her refusal to testify will, in most cases, cause the complaint to founder, unless other clear evidence exists which can be presented to the court.

***Interviewing Children***

21. The Commission/Sub-committee wishing to interview a child should proceed with the utmost care, to avoid possible trauma to the child. Civil courts now use videotape evidence, or with the use of screens in the court, so that children may present testimony without being required to face a room full of people. The child's welfare must be the overriding concern. Therefore it is recommended that only two of the Commission would interview the child, and at least one of them would be of the same gender. The child would be interviewed with one parent/guardian, in a location which is appropriate and child friendly.

22. In cases involving children which have resulted in a criminal conviction, the Commission/Sub-committee may choose not to interview the child. Instead it will make its report to the Presbytery/Kirk Session based on the evidence of the conviction.

***When Investigation Uncovers Possible Criminal Complaint***

23. In the course of interviewing the complainant, the Commission/Sub-committee may discover that the alleged behaviour might be of a criminal nature. The Commission/Sub-committee has the duty to inform the complainant that criminal charges may be warranted. If the complainant refuses to go to the Police/Garda, the Commission/Sub-committee must seek the guidance of a

lawyer before proceeding to interview the person against whom the complaint is made.

24. If the conclusion is reached that the matter is of a criminal nature, the Commission/Sub-committee shall immediately follow the procedures outlined for criminal complaints.

#### **Civ Interviewing the Person Against Whom the Complaint is Made**

25. If there is no suggestion of possible criminal charges, or all criminal matters have been dealt with by the civil authorities, the person against whom the complaint is made shall be interviewed.

#### ***Direct Meeting***

26. The Commission/Sub-committee will meet directly with the person against whom the complaint is made as soon as possible. The Commission/Sub-committee has the right to compel an expeditious meeting, with right of appeal to the Presbytery/Judicial Commission reserved for all concerned.

#### **Written Complaint Presented**

27. The Commission/Sub-committee will present the complaint in writing, to the person being complained against. If the complainant does not present the complaint in writing, the Commission/Sub-committee shall prepare the complaint in written form.

#### **Complainant Not Present**

28. The complainant(s) will not be present at this meeting with the person being complained against. (However, the advisor to the complainant may be present.)

#### ***Explaining the Process***

29. The Commission/Sub-committee will outline the process followed by the Presbytery/Kirk Session in dealing with such matters, emphasising the presumption of innocence and the right to due process.

#### ***Listening***

30. The Commission/Sub-committee will hear the complainee's response to the complaint.

#### ***Written Response***

31. The Commission/Sub-committee will request a written statement of the response.

#### ***Return to the Complainant***

32. The Commission/Sub-committee will share the complainee's response with the complainant, and provide the complainant with a written copy of the complainee's response.



**Cv      The Commission Makes a Determination**

33. If the Commission has been given full powers of the court in the matter remitted it will come to a determination.

**Principles of Decision Making**

34. For each complaint that comes to it under the policy for dealing with sexual abuse, the Commission must ultimately decide between two outcomes:

(a) *either* the complaint **has been** substantiated.

There must be clear and convincing evidence to support the complaint for it to be substantiated.

(b) *or* the complaint **has not been** substantiated.

A lack of clear and convincing evidence will necessitate a decision that the complaint has not been substantiated.

***The Standard of Proof Required***

35. All decisions made under the policy for dealing with sexual abuse are made on the basis of *the balance of probabilities*, a standard of proof used in civil law courts. This is to be contrasted with the standard of proof used in criminal law courts, which is proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

36. The balance of probabilities is a high standard of proof that protects the interests of the person against whom the complaint is made. This standard requires clear and convincing evidence to show that the event that is alleged did occur. It does not require that every doubt be explained away, but it does require that the evidence show that the event did occur as alleged. Using a balance of probabilities would never legitimise a Presbytery/Kirk Session deciding that an alleged action did happen in the absence of clear and convincing evidence.

37. Oral reports can be accepted as evidence, but such reports must be subject to questioning by the Commission/Sub-committee or Presbytery/Kirk Session to satisfy the Presbytery/Kirk Session that the report is truthful and not exaggerated.

38. If, on balance of probabilities, the Presbytery cannot conclude that the evidence demonstrates the actions probably did occur as alleged, then it must conclude that the alleged actions did not occur. The Presbytery declares the complaint to be dismissed. In simple terms the person against whom the complaint is made will be found innocent.

**Cvi      Procedures of Decision Making*****Adjudication and Voting***

39. Even if they are members of Presbytery/Kirk Session, the person complained against and the complainant are not permitted to adjudicate or vote on the question of whether the complaint is sustained.

***Paper Ballots***

40. Presbytery/Kirk Session may choose to vote by paper ballot when deciding whether the complaint is sustained. A paper ballot would remove the

possibility that Presbytery/Kirk Session members might be affected by the way other members cast their votes.

***Records***

41. Regardless of the decision arrived at by Presbytery/Kirk Session, all records will be kept, and the files regarding the whole matter shall be retained.

**Cvii The Commission/Sub-committee Prepares its Report to Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board**

***Where the Commission/Sub-committee does not have full powers granted to it***

42. Where the Commission/Sub-committee does not have full powers granted to it for the matter remitted it will report its findings to the Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board for a determination. The Committee/Sub-committee may choose to present its report to Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board with or without recommendations.

**Reporting to Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board**

43. The Commission/Sub-committee reports in full in private. The Commission/Sub-committee may make recommendations, but only the Presbytery/Kirk Session determines whether the complaint has been substantiated. (See section C (V) principles of decision making and standard of proof required).

***Reporting a Conviction of a criminal Offence***

44. If a criminal conviction has been entered against the complaine, the Commission/Sub-committee should report the fact of the conviction to the Presbytery/Kirk Session, along with any other relevant information arising from the Commission/Sub-committee's investigation.

***Right to Address the Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board***

45. The person against whom the complaint is made has the right to address the court directly on the subject of the complaint, even if that person is on a leave of absence from his or her position. The complainant may also be allowed to address the Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board directly.

**SECTION 3D OUTCOME**

**Di Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board Decision**

1. The Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board determines whether the complaint has been substantiated or not.

2. If, on a balance of probabilities, the Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board decides that the complaint has been substantiated, then it moves to considerations of discipline.

3. If, on a balance of probabilities, the Presbytery/Kirk Session/Board decides that the complaint has not been substantiated, then it declares the

complaint to be dismissed. Where a person has been wrongly accused, positive steps should be taken to restore their name and good standing in the church and in the community.

4. In the case of a Board having decided that a complaint has been substantiated, it shall refer the matter together with all related documents to the appropriate court for determination of the discipline, if any, to be administered.

#### **Dii Discipline/Censure**

##### ***Presbytery/Kirk Session Determines Appropriate Discipline***

5. The Presbytery/Kirk Session shall determine what discipline is appropriate in the circumstances. (See Code Par 133(i)).

##### ***Right to Address***

6. The complainant and the person complained against have the right to address the disciplinary body making the determination directly on the subject of the discipline to be administered.

#### **Diii Right to Appeal**

7. In most cases, decisions made under the Policy will be accepted by the complainant and the person complained against. If either party objects to the decision they have the right to appeal to the immediately superior court. (See Code Par 163).

### **SECTION 3E COMMUNICATION FOLLOWING DETERMINATION OF OUTCOME**

#### **Ei Recording the Decision**

1. Whatever decision is made by the Presbytery/Kirk Session, all relevant information, including records of interviews and meetings shall be retained.

2. The Presbytery/Kirk Session may meet in private to determine which of the facts shall constitute the public record of the Presbytery/Kirk Session. These facts shall be entered into the minutes. Care should be taken to ensure that only those facts which have been substantiated become part of the public record of the Presbytery/Kirk Session. Complaints which have not been substantiated should not be discussed outside the court.

3. When a complaint has been dismissed, the public record of the Presbytery/Kirk Session should respect the privacy of the complainant as well as of the person complained against.

4. Even when a complaint has been substantiated, the public record of the Presbytery/Kirk Session should still attempt to respect the privacy of the individuals involved as much as possible. Only those details that are vital to the understanding of the decision should be put in the public record.

**Eii Communicating with the Individuals Concerned**

5. The complainant(s) and the person(s) complained against shall be informed in writing of the decision to dismiss or substantiate the complaint and, if applicable, the discipline imposed.

**Eiii Communication between Kirk Sessions and Congregations**

6. If the person complained against is serving a congregation, the Presbytery will inform the concerned Kirk Session in writing of the result of the investigation, and the action it has taken.

7. Presbytery may discuss with the Kirk Session appropriate communication to the congregation, taking care to ensure respect for the privacy of the complainant. Any statement prepared for the congregation should be reviewed by the Presbytery Clerk and the Advisory Panel to ensure its accuracy. The statement will disclose only information held in the public records of the Presbytery/Kirk Session.

8. A congregational meeting may be called in order that Presbytery/Kirk Session representatives may answer questions, and the Presbytery will ensure that the welfare of the congregation is kept under review for a further period.

***When Discipline Involves the Severing of the Pastoral Tie***

9. If it has been decided that the pastoral tie is to be severed, the Presbytery must arrange for the charge to be declared vacant. (Code Par 348(2).

**Eiv Communicating with the Wider Church**

10. The fact of the substantiation of the complaint, together with a copy of the public record of the relevant sections of the Presbytery minutes, shall be forwarded to the Clerk of the General Assembly.

***Checking Files when Calling/Appointing a Minister***

11. Interim Moderators are required to consult the General Secretary's Office regarding the files of candidates for calls or appointments. The Kirk Session should be informed of a substantiated complaint under the Policy prior to a decision to extend a call to the candidate.

**SECTION 3F AFTERCARE**

1. The Church should provide effective guidance and pastoral care to any person, group or congregation affected by the complaint, regardless of the outcome. After dealing with a complaint, the Presbytery or Kirk Session should consider its own need for pastoral care and renewal.

**SECTION 3G CONCLUSION**

1. Presbyterians must be willing to recognise that sexual abuse can occur within the Church. The Church desires to prevent abuse. To this end we must learn to create environments that foster healthy relationships and sound leadership. Educational programs are a necessity and must be initiated and supported by all parts of the Church.

2. The Church will continue to promote the healing of the person or persons scarred as a result of sexual abuse, and consider if, or how, ministry which has been damaged may be most effectively renewed.

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## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

A similar policy to that on sexual abuse has been drawn up. The formal procedures for handling complaints of sexual harassment are the same as those for sexual abuse. Printed below are the major differences in the sexual harassment document from the sexual abuse document. The differences are found in the Introductory Section.

### **SECTION 1 INTRODUCTORY**

#### **SECTION 1A RELATIONSHIP OF THE POLICY TO THE CODE**

1. This policy should be read in association with the Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This policy provides information on the handling of complaints of sexual harassment against ministers and others in positions of church leadership, including referral to statutory authorities, pastoral care and suspension arrangements.

2. Although this policy deals specifically with complaints of sexual harassment, all forms of harassment are wrong. The principles and procedures included in this policy are also applicable when dealing with complaints involving other forms of harassment.

3. The Code of the Church provides for matters of a disciplinary nature to be dealt with by the courts of the Church and such provisions and requirements as are contained in the Code provide the legislative framework within which all investigations should be undertaken. The procedures contained in this document provide the additional guidance needed to handle complaints of a particularly sensitive and complex nature and which may involve criminal law proceedings as well as investigation under the law.

4. Church discipline should be conducted with continual prayerfulness, love, affection and humility. The Church is called to use this policy in the same way, under the continual illumination of the Holy Spirit.

### **SECTION 1E DEFINITIONS**

#### **What is Sexual Harassment?**

##### *Sexual Harassment is defined as:*

1. A course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to have been known to be unwelcome, including repeated sexual remarks or physical contact that is degrading;

2. A sexual advance or solicitation made by a person who is in a position to grant or deny a benefit to another;

3. The threat of or an actual reprisal by a person in authority against a person who has rejected a sexual advance from that person in authority.

### **The Question of Consent**

4. In order not to be abusive, any sexual act must be done by mutual consent of the parties involved. Mutual consent presumes that the parties are on an equal footing with each other, so that one person is not pressurised by any consideration of the stature or position of the other person.

5. Ministers and all other church leaders are in a position of authority and trust, which makes the achievement of mutual consent difficult, and increases the potential for harm and abuse of those whom they serve.

6. The pastoral counselling function creates a particular relationship of trust. Exploitation of the trust developed in the counselling relationship through sexual activity is considered to be abuse, and will not be tolerated.

7. In relationships of unequal power or trust, consent may not exist even when sexual activity has been initiated by the one who feels violated and alleged abuse has occurred. Therefore, the claim of mutually consensual or private sexual contact does not relieve the church leader of ethical responsibility. Sexual contact will normally be considered a serious breach of pastoral responsibility and subject to strict disciplinary action.

8. Sexual contact between a church leader and parishioner, counsellor, colleague, employee or any person over whom the church leader has pastoral oversight is fundamentally at odds with a pastoral relationship. It is one or more of the following:

- A breach of trust placed in a spiritual leader;
- An abuse of power over the vulnerability of the parishioner, counsellor, colleague, or employee;
- A scandal to the Church;
- A breach of the standard of conduct expected of a minister or leader in the church.

### **Acceptable Social Relationships**

9. Sexual contact is not invariably defined as sexual harassment. The Church acknowledges that its leaders and members date, fall in love and marry. The Church is the natural environment in which Christians can develop healthy relationships. Where there is pastoral responsibility, care must be taken not to exploit the pastoral trust while developing a private relationship.

10. The minister or church leader who wishes to develop a mutually loving relationship which may eventually include sexual contact shall ensure that the pastoral needs of the other person will be met by another church leader. Within the bounds of private relationships the church leader is called to the highest standards of Christian ethics. Such relationship is not considered to fall into the category of sexual harassment. This does not imply that sexual harassment may not occur within such relationships.

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the resignation of Dr Jean McClune as Convener of the Kinghan Mission committee be accepted, that she be thanked for her services, and that \_\_\_\_\_ be appointed in her place.
3. That the General Assembly express its appreciation to the Police Service of Northern Ireland for the determined stand taken against drug trafficking in Northern Ireland, congratulate them on recent significant seizures and encourage their future endeavours in the fight against a great social evil.
4. That the General Assembly welcome the Third Edition of the Child Protection Guidelines and encourage every congregation to regularly review their procedures in light of these Guidelines.
5. That the General Assembly approve and adopt the policy document: Policy and Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse.
6. That the General Assembly approve and adopt the policy document: Policy and Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Harassment.
7. That the General Assembly appoint \_\_\_\_\_ to the position of Co-ordinator, responsible for the efficient handling and co-ordinating of complaints received under the Policy and Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse and/or Harassment.
8. That a charge be made on the Incidental Fund for the printing and promotion of the third edition of the Child Protection Guidelines.
9. That a charge be made on the Incidental Fund for the printing of the policy documents: Policy and Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse/Harassment.
10. That the customary grant made by the Social Issues and Resources Committee up to a total of £3,000 be met from the Incidental Fund.

**Motion on the Books**

11. That Willow Brook be added to the list of agencies recognised by the United Appeal.

**General**

12. 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:-

# SHANKILL ROAD MISSION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev JS DALLAS

Superintendent: Rev WM CAMPBELL

1. When the Rev Henry Montgomery, minister of Albert Street Congregation in West Belfast, came over to the Shankill for a walk one Sunday evening in 1892, he encountered scenes which would affect his life and the life of the Shankill.

2. He saw there not only abject poverty and social deprivation on a grand scale, but also open drunkenness, wanton promiscuity and evil influences being brought to bear upon children as they carried beer pots home to parents.

3. The work carried on by Mission Staff under the leadership of Rev Henry Montgomery was inspirational. Through the boundless energy, enthusiasm and dynamism of its founder, the daunting task of tackling poverty, destitution and general despair was undertaken.

4. Dr Montgomery, as he became in 1912, introduced radical and pioneering measures to the Shankill people, such as free medical treatment; free clothing; Christian education; direct food aid and free holidays.

5. It was not long after his death in 1943 that the Welfare State came into being and life changed for all the citizens of Northern Ireland. There was not the abject poverty of earlier days, but there was deprivation and unemployment. Shankill Road Mission did what it could to alleviate genuine need, in the face of these problems.

6. All through the current civil disturbances, the Mission carried on a quiet but effective ministry and witness to the Shankill community. Many unsung heroes worked tirelessly for the welfare of the ordinary people.

7. Times have changed, not only on the Shankill road, where some of the best modern, public housing in Europe can be found, but also in Church structures. Which is why this is the final report of Shankill Road Mission Commission.

8. In the year since the 2003 Assembly, the work of the Mission has continued as usual.

9. **The Café and Coffee Shop**, managed by Mrs Rosalind Wilson, provided a warm and homely Christian atmosphere, offering tasty and nourishing food. Over 700 people used the facility on a weekly, regular basis during the year.

10. **Christian Literature** was taken by many of the customers and the quiet, listening ministry of the **Mission Worker, Albert Lofthouse**, was appreciated by many with personal and spiritual problems.

11. Mr Lofthouse carried on his systematic visitation of homes in the Shankill area. His outreach programme to men, using the Mission as a base, was quite encouraging.



12. **The Charity Clothing Shops** providing clean second-hand clothes met a genuine need. Mrs Sandra Erwin and her staff worked extremely hard to provide an excellent service.

13. **The Office Staff:** Mrs Beth Morrow and Mrs Marilyn Caswell, as usual, gave support and back-up to all endeavours of the Mission, and did so with a welcoming smile and pleasant attitude to everyone.

14. In the new dispensation, about to begin, the Shankill Road Mission team look forward to an exciting partnership with the Board of Mission in Ireland, taking the Gospel into the Greater Shankill area, for another one hundred years.

15. Commission would like to thank everyone who has supported the Mission by their prayers and regular donations. Such commitment has been invaluable over the years and will continue to be so as long as the Mission is able to carry on its task in this needy area of God's Kingdom.

### RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Superintendent and the Shankill Road Mission Staff be commended to the prayers of the General Assembly, as they carry on the work in West Belfast.
3. That the Shankill Road Mission Commission be thanked for its services and discharged as a Commission, but that the Shankill Road Mission Committee be appointed, under the Board of Mission in Ireland.

# YOUTH BOARD

Rev EDWARD J HYNDMAN, Convener

Miss ROSALIND STIRLING, Director of Youth Ministry

1. The Youth Board, under the proposed restructuring of the Boards, anticipates the inclusion of its work within a Board responsible for ministry to children and young people. Preparations for the integrated Board structure should ensure continuing support to congregations in developing strategies and programmes for youth ministry, training leaders, and the creation of opportunities for evangelism, discipleship, fellowship and worship for young people. The Board is encouraged to see priority given to both youth and children's ministry which it sees as essential to the church in the years ahead.

2. The Youth Board records its gratitude to the vast number of volunteer youth leaders and growing number of full time youth workers in local congregations for the excellent work that they do. Many leaders work long hours and give sacrificially, a commitment that is many times overlooked and without praise, yet without their dedication and perseverance the development of an effective youth ministry would not be possible.

3. The Board is deeply grateful to those employed to serve the Church through the Youth Board. Miss Roz Stirling, Director of Youth Ministry, and the team of administrative staff, Miss Lois McIlrath, Mrs Claire Child, Miss Pamela Patton, Mrs Helen Bruce, Mrs Marianne Trueman, and Mrs Janet Maxwell. The Board is indebted to Mr David Pattison for his expertise in organising and compiling Board finances.

4. The Youth Development Officer for Northern Ireland and the Youth and Support Worker for Donegal and Monaghan Presbyteries are continuing to bring support and training to many congregations. The Board thanks Mr Graeme Thompson and Mr Richard Houston for the insight and enthusiasm they bring to their work. The Board encourages Kirk Sessions and congregations to make use of the training and advice they offer.

5. The Board wishes to thank Mr David Smith, Preparing Youth for Peace Programme Officer, for the excellent work that he has done in planning, developing and delivering this single identity programme that assists leaders and young people in exploring the issues of reconciliation and citizenship. The Board is deeply grateful to the many facilitators who committed themselves to the training programmes and are now delivering programmes. The Board welcomes Miss Suzanne McMullan as assistant to the Programme Officer and thanks her for her work in this role.

6. The Board thanks Mr Lawrence Walker for his work as Centres' Director and for the experience and insight which he brings to it.

7. The Board wishes to extend its thanks to Mrs Gillian Brownlow (Guysmere Resident Warden) and Mrs Marie Claire Douglas (Rostrevor Warden). Also to Mr Reuben McCormick, Mrs Monica Power and Mr Bill Canty (Lucan Youth Centre) who left our employment this year and for whose service we are deeply grateful.

8. The Board thanks all those who contributed to the Youth and Sunday School project 'Looking Up' which supports strategic outreach work among children and young people both at home and overseas.

9. In reviewing the work of the three centres, the General Board was invited to participate in a review. An Ad Hoc Panel of the General Board which included Youth Board representatives was established. This Panel will report to the General Assembly through the General Board.

10. The Board records their thanks to the Conveners of its present Committees as we reorganise committee structures for an integrated Board of Youth and Children's Ministry. Conveners and Committee members give their time and effort freely and the Board is deeply indebted to them.

11. The Board is indebted to the Church for the finance received through the United Appeal allocation. The Board deeply appreciates the effort required by congregations to meet their targets permitting its work to continue. The Board seeks to use this financial assistance with great prudence.

## YOUTH EVENTS COMMITTEE

1. The Youth Events Committee continues to oversee the major events of the Youth Board. Two Youth Nights take place at the end of the General Assembly each year. The Bible Conference, Route 66, (for ages 17+) is held in August, and the MAD weekend in October. In past years we have hosted a social awareness event, TGI Christmas, and we look forward with great expectation to what our God will do through these events in the coming year.

### **Youth Night**

2. Our Youth Nights still gather thousands of Presbyterian young people from every part of our land for fellowship and to hear the life-changing message of the gospel. During Youth Night 2003, Duffy Robbins addressed two large gatherings in the Assembly Hall on the theme 'Roaring Lambs'. The band, ID from Edenderry, led the praise. This year the speaker will be Stuart Blythe, a Baptist Pastor from Scotland, and worship will be led by Andy Flannagan, a native of Northern Ireland. Youth Night dates are 11 and 12 June 2004.

### **Route 66**

3. The Bible conference held at Loughry College continues to fulfil its clear remit to provide high quality and relevant Biblical teaching for our young people. The conference aims to cross the whole terrain of scripture over a three-year period, providing a thorough base to Bible understanding. This year, as has been the practice in previous conferences, we are tapping into Biblical knowledge from far and near. We will welcome the Rev Bill Borrer, Senior Pastor of Media Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia and our own Rev David Montgomery, Associate Minister of Knock Presbyterian Church. The dates for the conference are 26-30 August 2004.

**MAD**

4. The purpose of the MAD weekend has always been to model a youth weekend. Therefore, in the Board's organisation of the MAD event we provide an opportunity for youth groups to attend, without the pressure of all the organisation while allowing leaders to spend more time on working on relationships and evangelism with their own young people. The event continues to be oversubscribed each year. Through the keynote speaker we present an evangelistic message with many young people coming to a living faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The keynote speaker in 2003 was Paul Bowman (Youth worker in Ballysally Presbyterian Church). This year our speaker will be Jonny Ross (Exodus) with the dates of the weekend being 22-24 October 2004.

**Future Events**

5. The TGI Christmas event has gone through a period of review. Through a poll and a question posed through the forum on the pciyouth.org web site, it would seem in principle young people would like a Christmas event run by the Youth Board. Plans have been put into place to investigate the remit of such an event.

JONATHAN MOXEN, Convener

## YOUTH TRAINING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. The committee gives thanks to God for his guidance and blessing in each working group, for envisioning and for the joy of seeing goals reached and ideas blessed.

**Certificate and Advanced Certificate in Youth Ministry**

2. The Youth Ministry Certificate courses are run at Union Theological College. The Certificate course was filled to capacity this year. It seeks to equip those who work with young people and provides a challenging and inspirational introduction to the theory and practice of youth Ministry. The Advanced course ran for the first time this year for anyone who had previously completed the certificate course and fifteen youth leaders were involved. We are indebted to all those who gave of their time and expertise to lecture. Two residential weekends provided opportunity for personal reflection and fellowship with fellow course members.

**National Youth Leaders Convention**

3. The Youth Board continues to recognise the very valuable contribution made to congregational youth work by volunteer and full time youth leaders. One of our commitments, therefore, is to provide quality training for this wide variety of people. The National Youth Leaders Convention was established last year to provide such training. (This is the successor to the Training Trevor event.) In June 2004, the convention will develop further by

having a Dublin day alongside the Belfast event. We welcome as our keynote speaker Rev Mark DeVries who has spent sixteen years as a full-time Youth Pastor in First Presbyterian Church in Nashville. Mark's experience in developing family-based youth ministry makes him a strategic choice at this time of major change for the Youth Board. The National Youth Leaders Convention is also being developed into a partnership with the Methodist and Church of Ireland youth departments, a strategy welcomed by the Youth Board.

4. Youth Link continues in its role of seeking to support and complement the work of the Youth Board and we are grateful to its representatives for their input into our working groups and committee.

#### **Web site**

5. <[www.pciyouth.org](http://www.pciyouth.org)> continues to develop under the care of an enthusiastic and dedicated working group. New developments on the site include popular new forums, an expanded leaders section and large searchable links section. Increasing numbers of leaders and young people are finding it to be a useful location for the latest Youth Board news and information.

#### **Resources**

6. This working group has not met this year but the committee continues to resource young people and leaders through information on our growing web site. The remit of this working group is under review pending the restructuring of the new Board.

#### **Preparing Youth for Peace**

7. This has been a very busy year for David Smith, Programme Officer, and his working group. An assistant to David has been appointed for a fixed term period. The working group has been discussing issues relating to the sustainability of the programme which to date has seen some 700 young participants and development work with those who have been through it. The Facilitators programme is now also running in the North West of the province.

HEATHER LYLE, Convener

## **YOUTH HOME MISSION COMMITTEE**

#### **Year Team**

1. The Year Team continues to play an important role in the congregations in which they have been placed. They help in many ways, as deemed necessary, under the direction of each Kirk Session, with advice and guidance from the Year Team Working Group.

2. Members of the team continue to benefit greatly from their work, developing their spheres of service both as individuals and as a team.

3. Work is already well under way to establish a team for the year from September 2004 as well as from September 2005. Congregations are encouraged

to recommend young people to serve on the Year Team as well as considering having the Year Team placed within their boundaries.

### **Summer Outreach**

4. Summer Outreach continues to provide an opportunity for people from 16 years upwards to serve God; people of all ages to be reached with the Gospel and congregations to be assisted in their work for a short period each year.

5. The interest shown by congregations in receiving a team continues to be an encouragement. The working group oversees the assessing of the usefulness of existing teams and the assigning of new teams so that the effectiveness of limited human resources can be maximised.

6. Congregations wishing to apply for teams are reminded that they should do so by March in the year prior to a team commencing work, e.g. application for a team commencing in July 2006 should have an application with the Youth Office no later than 31st March 2005.

7. Summer Outreach teams are not just for young people but are open to everyone over the age of 16. Congregations are encouraged to recommend people of all ages to serve God on summer outreach teams.

### **General**

8. The Committee acknowledges the time and effort given by Rev John Flaherty and Rev William Sinclair as chairmen of the Summer Outreach and Year Team Working Groups respectively. They worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of all the activities under the care of their working groups. The new chairmen are Rev Philip Thompson (Year Team) and Mr Mark Smyth (Summer Outreach), both of whom have a wealth of knowledge and experience in their respective areas of responsibility.

9. The Committee wishes to express thanks to the working groups, chairpersons, Director of Youth Ministry and Youth Office staff for all their hard work and dedication, often beyond the call of duty.

10. The prayerful support of all our members is sought that God might continue to use our efforts in His service and that His blessings might continue to flow upon us.

DESI PAUL, Convener

## **YOUTH OVERSEAS COMMITTEE**

1. The Overseas Committee seeks to continue to provide opportunities for young people to be exposed to the Lord's work in other cultures and contexts around the world. Those who serve on the Committee are deeply passionate about this area of the Board's work and believe it has long term consequences for the Overseas work within PCI by raising up a new generation committed to "*the ends of the earth*", part of Christ's commission to the church (Acts 1.8).

**Outgoing Teams Working Group**

2. In 2003, due to Christopher Macwan's visit to India and the retirement of the minister from one of the congregations in which we work, no team travelled to Wembley. This year however that work resumes with a team under the leadership of Rev Danny Rankin travelling across to London in July.

3. Once again a team will travel to Uganda under the leadership of Rev Ian McDonald to be involved in the 'Jesus Cares For All' ministry in the Kampala area. The purpose of the team will be twofold. Firstly, to help with building work at the Jagala Christian Centre established for street kids and secondly, to do evangelistic work in the Stephen Jota Children's Centre. In addition to these two centres, there will be an opportunity to do holiday bible club work in Kampiringisa, a government run resettlement centre and Naguru, a government run remand centre.

4. A new venture will be a team travelling to Moscow in Russia to provide a Children's camp for orphans, street children and children from poor families with church connections. Our team will be working alongside Samaritan's Purse, a Christian charity that specialises in meeting the needs of people who are victims of war, poverty, natural disasters, disease and famine with the purpose of sharing God's love. Many congregations within PCI will have been involved in their 'Operation Christmas Child' (Shoebox Appeal). This team shall be led by Nigel & Lindsey Finch who have previously worked with Samaritan's Purse Children's Camps.

5. We were delighted that in September 2003 Philip Houston and Alastair Chestnutt returned to Kenya for a second year to work alongside Andrew and Cleragh Clenaghan with a Literacy Project in the Zombe-Nendeni area. Following the success of their work during their year as Youth Board volunteers their support is continued under the Sunday School Project.

**Incoming Teams Working Group**

6. In the summer of 2003 we welcomed a team from France who linked up with a team of young people from PCI. For one week they stayed on the north coast where they shared on a work camp to develop a programme for Christian street work which they then took on tour around the province working in connection with local congregations. Whilst very hard work for those involved in the organisation, especially Revs Cheryl Reid and Adrian McLernon, it proved to be a very worthwhile venture.

**Concorde Travel Fund**

7. The work of distributing funds from the Concorde Fund to young people involved on an individual basis in Christian work around the world continues with increasing demand each year. In all circumstances the work venture is worthy of our support and the plans in many cases are exceptional. The amount of funds available each year depends on the interest gained from the sum invested. This means that we have to work with a set amount to be distributed among the applicants. The more applying means the less that can be shared. This is frustrating as so many are worthy of far more than we can give.

8. We are so encouraged that so many congregations within PCI have taken the path pioneered by the Youth Board in sending teams overseas. However, in the midst of so many congregations making their own links and arrangements we still see a valuable role for the kind of teams which we provide with the different experience of sharing in a denominational team as opposed to a congregational one.

PETER LYLE, Convener

## YOUTH CENTRES' COMMITTEE

1. Since the last Assembly much of the work of the Youth Centres' Committee has taken place while awaiting the proposals of the Centres' Review Panel which will be reporting to this year's General Assembly. While we wait for the outcome of these deliberations the work continues as follows:

### Summer Activities

2. The summer activities planned for 2004 are as follows:
  - Surf the Rock, Guysmere (2-5 July) for young people aged 13 and upwards.
  - Guysmere Boys' Adventure Camp (8-16 July) for boys aged 11 to 16 years.
  - Creative Arts Camp at Rostrevor (11-17 July) for young people aged 14 upwards.
  - Guysmere Girls' Camp (31 July-7 August) for girls aged 12 and upwards.
  - Adventure Camp at Greenhill YMCA Centre Newcastle (9-13 August), for young people aged 14 to 16 years.

We commend these Camps to the young people of your congregations and express our sincere appreciation to all who plan and staff the activities.

### Lucan

3. The residential block remains closed awaiting the report of the Centres' Review Panel. Day bookings of the dining hall and the leasing of the three chalets ensure that the buildings are still in use and help to offset the costs of a newly appointed part-time caretaker. Since the last Assembly we said farewell to Reuben McCormick, Monica Power and Bill Canty. We are indebted to them for all the work they carried out over recent years at the Lucan Centre and we wish them every blessing for the future.

### Guysmere

4. The Guysmere Centre continues to be well used both summer and winter. Thanks are due to Gillian Brownlow for the excellent job she does as Resident Warden and to the local management committee for their commitment to the ministry of the centre and its ongoing development.



**Rostrevor**

5. The Centre at Rostrevor continues to offer a warm welcome to smaller groups. Marie Claire Douglas, Warden, continues to ensure that groups enjoy their stay.

**Staffing**

6. Lawrence Walker, Centres' Director, continues to work tirelessly to ensure the highest quality service is given at our Centres and provide care and support for the staff while carrying a heavy load in the development of a future strategy.

7. The Committee await the significant decisions to be made following the report of the Panel on Centres and give thanks to God for how He is continuing to use the three Centres and the activities organised as a means to touch the lives of many young people.

ROBIN L BROWN, Convener

**APPENDIX****Integrated Board of Youth and Children's Ministry****Proposed Developments and Structures**

The decision of the General Assembly in June 2003 to bring together the work of youth and children, and thereby create an integrated approach to our denomination's ministry within these fields, is a welcome one. Those already engaged in these ministry fields see great potential for the development of a visionary and effective work that will address some of the most urgent needs faced by our denomination at this time. At a time when young people, whole families and even children opt not to be part of church life we cannot ignore the consequences of these trends. And yet the age we live in provides huge opportunities for the Christian Church as this is a time of spiritual hunger and searching. As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century presents us with these enormous, but exciting challenges, any initiative that will facilitate fresh ideas, an evaluation of where we are and where we need to be going, has to be a good thing. Therefore, the opportunity to look at and reorganise our ministry within the field of children and young people is to be welcomed. Without a creative and effective approach in youth and children's ministry, most other areas of work will struggle as the common-sense reality of the need to pass faith on from one generation to the next is an imperative building block of present and future congregational life.

A Working Group drawn from the current Youth Board, Education Board and the Clerk's office has met throughout the autumn to consider the structure, development and ministry role of the proposed Board for children and young people. Those serving on this Working Group are Rev Dr Donald Watts (Clerk of Assembly), Rev Harry Robinson (Deputy Clerk), Roz Stirling (Director of Youth Ministry), Rev Ian McKee (Sunday School Organiser), Rev Eddie Hyndman (Youth Board Convener) and Rev Roy Patton (member of the Church Education Committee). The following paper is a summary of our work up to 31

December 2003 and will reflect the process that has been adopted to achieve the current perspective.

### **Defining our task**

In assessing our starting point it was noted that the decision of the General Assembly is that a Board is to be formed that brings together the current work of the Youth Board and the Church Education Committee, with the development of new areas of work whereby children's ministry will be further facilitated and resourced. It was noted early on that this cannot therefore be defined as a 'new' Board; rather it is a 'redefined' Board in that two existing areas of work are being brought together and a new area of work is being included. This clarification has significant implications for the structures and staffing of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.

It was further noted that the Ad Hoc Committee has put an emphasis on the 'bringing together' of children and youth as an opportunity for congregations to develop an integrated approach to their ministry for the 0-25 year olds. In considering how a central Board of the Church would support and facilitate such a vision, we recognised that a definition of this integration is required. Equally it was noted that some work needs to be done in researching what might be current examples of such integration within our denomination, if in fact any exist. In addition some clear thinking needs to emerge on how integration would look and how it would better serve the ministry work among children and young people.

The research into the nature of integration was in fact recognised as an integral part of the work of this redefined Board which will in its own structures need to reflect the commitment to integration of children and youth ministry.

The role of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry in the overall structures for the central work of our Church was noted. This Board is a 'mission and ministry' Board which therefore requires the focus of its work to be the encouragement, facilitation and resourcing of mission and ministry in the local congregation and, where appropriate, to manage and oversee specific mission and ministry initiatives.

With these clarifications in place, the following areas were identified as the key tasks for our group:

- Assessment of congregational needs in regard to children and youth ministry;
- Assessment of current ministry provision under Youth Board and Church Education Committee;
- Development of the management and ministry structure of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry;
- Identification of the human and financial resources that will be required to operate the Board and provide the service the church expect and require;
- The process that will be required to ensure a good transition from the current Youth Board and Church Education Committee to a Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.

### **Congregational Need**

During the last decade the Youth Board has on a number of occasions engaged in research and analysis of the needs of our congregations in respect to youth ministry. The Church Education Committee had planned to engage in a congregational survey on children's ministry issues, just prior to the commencement of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. In light of the possible implications for their work, they decided to postpone the survey until the current restructuring process was complete. However, the current numbers of those attending Sunday School and Bible Class which is decreasing year on year, indicates something of the challenge we face.

The information gleaned from the various research projects done by the Youth Board is very informative. In 1999 a survey of baptismal trends was undertaken throughout the denomination. This survey sought to discover how effective we have been within our denomination in keeping those we baptise through their childhood and teenage years into mature Christian adulthood. The results were challenging. In general terms, this investigation revealed that throughout the denomination, whether in rural areas or provincial town, whether in the west of Northern Ireland or urban east, we manage to keep only one third of those we baptise. In some regions the statistics were lower and in some, slightly higher.

The outcome of this survey was that many congregations began to ask themselves questions about how to be more strategic in their work with children and young people. The Youth Office found themselves responding to many requests to work with local congregations in the drawing up of a strategy for their ministry with their young people.

In 2002 the Youth Board presented to the General Assembly the results of a further piece of research. On this occasion a more in-depth questionnaire addressing specific areas of ministry life was issued to every congregation. The baptismal survey used a random sample of congregations to gather its information. The 2002 survey produced information on:-

- Public Worship
- Leadership
- Community and Integration of Young People
- Outreach and Discipleship
- Programming and Strategy
- The role of the Youth Board

In broad terms, the outcome of both of these pieces of research is that many of our churches recognise that they must review their approach to youth ministry and address the issues that are causing young people to be disillusioned with our practise of church. It was so clear from the research among the young people that their commitment to a belief in God is still strong. Their acceptance of church practise, however, is not, with many young people feeling that the world of church and that which their peers inhabit are vastly different. Christian young people therefore struggle to live effectively in the 'two world' themselves and also find it enormously difficult to invite their friends to church.

Much more could be said about the information gained from these pieces of work and the implications for our future work as a denomination. The significant point in the context of the development of a Board of Youth and

Children's Ministry is that congregations have clearly expressed their need for help in many areas of ministry development within the field of children and young people.

### **Current Ministry Provision**

A brief analysis of the current ministry provision of the Youth and Sunday School departments identified **training** of full-time and volunteer personnel as a key aspect of the work of both departments. This training, which is multi-faceted, is continuously delivered in one form or another throughout the year, and is available in central and regional locations. Examples of this training are the Children's Ministry Certificate course, the Certificate and Advanced Certificate in Youth Ministry, the Building Blocks Children's Ministry conferences, the National Youth Leaders Convention, Preparing Youth for Peace programme, the Starting as a Student conference and the Presbytery and local congregational training delivered by Youth Board and Church Education personnel.

In close association with training is a strong **educational** focus which includes raising awareness of:-

- (i) trends in child and adolescent thinking and behaviour, and the subsequent ministry implications;
- (ii) societal change and cultural trends that impact children and young people and the ministry implications for congregations;
- (iii) child protection issues and training needs (NB Although this work is largely carried out through the Board of Social Witness, Youth Board staff are widely used to assist in this area);
- (iv) employment issues relating to the recruitment and management of full-time personnel responsible for congregational youth ministry.

These training and educational issues are addressed through many aspects of the current ministries of the Youth Board and Church Education Committee. It was therefore agreed that:

*Training and Education are both essential in terms of current needs within our congregations and therefore are necessary elements for inclusion in the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.*

Provision of inter-congregational activities in both the children's and youth field were identified as important aspects of the current work. Examples of these are the Youth and Sunday School Project, Fun Day, the MAD weekend, Route 66 Bible Conference, summer activity camps and Youth Nights. These activities were recognised as a mark of our denominational ethos and strength. They provide **ministry opportunities** and activities that many individual congregations would find difficult if not impossible to create. They also provide a vital opportunity for denominational community and belonging as well as outreach and witness. The availability of such denominational initiatives was agreed to be a vital part of Presbyterianism. Therefore

*Ministry events and activities are a valuable part of the current ministry and should continue to be nurtured and developed within the structures of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.*

Outreach, evangelism, discipleship, nurture and service are a crucial part of the current ministry function of the Youth and Sunday School departments.

These essential dimensions of Christian work and ministry find their expression through the Youth Board Year Team and Volunteer Scheme, the home-based summer outreach programme which serves PCI congregations throughout Ireland and the overseas teams which each summer provide a vital service opportunity for young people outside of Ireland.

One of the stated needs of many of our congregations is the lack of leadership. They find their adult potential for leadership is greatly minimised by:

- (a) their limited membership;
- (b) young people leaving the area to go to college or university and often not returning;
- (c) the lack of local employment opportunities forcing potential leaders to leave in search of work. During the last five years in particular, the sharp decline in the farming industry has made this shift in population and subsequent loss of membership in rural churches a real problem.

These leadership issues leave congregations struggling to survive in some areas which means that any support and assistance from outside their membership is truly welcome. The work of the PCI Year Team, the home-based volunteer scheme and summer outreach programme are an enormous ministry support to such congregations.

A recent feature in the life of many congregations has been the appointment of a full-time youth worker or pastoral support person. Some congregations have widened the role to Youth and Family worker hence putting an emphasis on children's ministry as well. These appointments, the resourcing and support of the personnel once in post, and the support of congregations as they think through the possibility of such an appointment have created a considerable workload for the Youth Board. With over ninety full-time, part-time or volunteer people currently in such posts in local congregations, providing a pastoral support and resource service for them and the churches they serve in is developing into a crucial aspect of the current work of the Youth Board.

It was agreed that these current ministry support and mission opportunities available to local congregations are vitally important to the life of those congregations. It was also recognised that the opportunity for growth in faith and overall discipleship given to the young people who take up these ministry opportunities is vital to them and our health as a denomination. Ministry opportunities which serve and provide an opportunity for service are a living aspect of the current ministry that should continue within the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.

While much of the current work described above could be placed under the broad heading of **resourcing local congregations**, there is a part of the current work of the Church Education Committee and the Youth Board that intentionally seeks to be a resource. One major aspect of this is the provision of the three youth centres. This aspect of the Youth Board's work is currently under intense review, the outcome of which will be brought to the 2004 General Assembly by the Panel charged with the work of that review.

Resourcing through the current work is also carried out by the full-time appointed staff, both Church House based and Field Staff, and through website work, networking of people and ideas, and a limited number of in-house materials that are produced by staff and volunteers. While difficult to quantify,

these resources are essential to the life of our congregations. As in other areas of the work provided centrally, the demand for support far exceeds the capacity to give it, with staff worked at full stretch all the time. The ongoing nature of this demand and the insights gained from research among our congregations indicates the real importance of this work. Therefore:

Resourcing people locally through local availability of support personnel and the provision of up-to-date materials and ideas is another 'given' for the ongoing work. (Providing facilities as a resource for local congregational use is an area under current review and will be addressed separately.) It was therefore agreed that the provision of resources as described above will be an essential element of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.

### **Management and Ministry Structure**

As stated at the outset, the bringing together of children and youth ministry under one Board provides an exciting opportunity for review of our current ministry. Research into the demands of our current age and era in respect of children and young people and the opportunity and challenges before the Christian church to reach and keep the up and coming generations will be a demanding but exciting work. The management and ministry structure for the Board must reflect this opportunity and be able for the challenges of this field of ministry.

The proposed structure for children and youth outlined below has therefore attempted to take on board these issues. Furthermore, the *raison d'être* for the proposed management structure draws heavily on the current ministry success of both the Youth Board and Church Education Committee alongside what we perceive to be the task of a central Board whose existence is to support and inform the mission and ministry of children and youth in the local congregation.

Five General Assembly committees were identified as the most effective way to organise the work. These are:-

1. Training
2. Education
3. Ministry Resources
4. Ministry Opportunities
5. Ministry Events

It is further anticipated that a 'Board' Committee will exist, similar but with an enhanced remit to the existing Youth Board Standing Committee. This '**Strategy and Steering Committee**' will be a management committee dealing with the day-to-day business of the Board in between Board meetings. It will also be a think tank in that one of its express functions will be to bring visionary and strategic thinking to the committees of the Board, pushing them to apply their area of ministry to the ongoing challenges of developing an integrated children's and youth ministry.

It is anticipated that the Conveners of the five General Assembly Committees will be members of the Strategy and Steering Committee, along with the Board Convener, the Director and Deputy Director of Youth and Children's Ministry and some specialists drawn from the Board.

The remit of the five General Assembly Committees has to some extent been outlined in the section on 'current ministry provision'. It is, however,

anticipated that within each of those areas of ministry, careful thought will be given to the question of integration of children and youth and that the emerging work will bring vision and practical assistance to congregations as they work out an integrated approach. Furthermore it is equally anticipated that within these committees careful thought will be given to the missing dimensions in either children's or youth ministry and proposals for developments in these areas brought through the Board over a five year period. In other words, there will be a time of transition during which key objectives will be set in accordance with the analysed need and realistic targets aimed at.

### **Human and Financial Resources**

The staffing needs, along with the volunteer capacity that will be required to meet the needs of the Board, were discussed at length. It is the recommendation of the working group that there be an overall Director for the Board, a Deputy Director and in the initial stages two field/ministry staff. In that the current Youth Board has ongoing Department of Education grants, and some reasonably stable sources of outside funding, it is not anticipated that the United Appeal would be required to fund the other field staff positions currently in existence. However, in order for the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry to get off the ground and begin to deliver on the remit given to it by the General Assembly it will be essential that two General Assembly field staff are appointed at the outset. It should be noted that one of these posts (which to date has been largely funded by non United Appeal sources) has been in existence in a temporary capacity within the Youth Board structure for the past five years. The two field posts referred to would therefore incorporate this temporary post and one other of equal status and responsibility. The working group were very clear that this core staff requirement is imperative to the early success of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry.

The work expected of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry has been designated a priority for our denomination. It must therefore be recognised that this will only be possible if those required to deliver the work are properly resourced. Volunteers will continue to be crucial for the delivery of this Board's work. However, an adequate quota of employed personnel who take responsibility for the core work and facilitate and support the work done by volunteers will determine the effectiveness of volunteers.

### **The Transition**

The Working Group are clear that a year of thinking and planning, followed by an adoption of plans at the 2004 General Assembly, will not allow for a sharp change from Youth Board and Church Education Committee straight into a fully functioning Board of Youth and Children's Ministry. To ensure an effective move to the new structure there will be, of necessity, a time of transition when staff and programmes will adapt to the new structure.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

<b>Job Title:</b>	Director of Youth and Children's Ministry
<b>Board:</b>	Reports to the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry Appointed by Board of Finance and Administration
<b>Responsible to:</b>	The Clerk of Assembly and Convener of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry
<b>Main Function of Job:</b>	To require knowledge and expertise across the Board's ministry areas, to contribute to and implement the Board's overall strategy for ministry through staff leadership and functional management.

#### **BOARD/COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. To inform and assist the Board in the development of its overall strategy and plans for ministry.
2. To ensure the efficient servicing of the Board and its Committees.
3. To manage the implementation of the Board's plans through its programmes of work.
4. Generally to promote the aims of the Board throughout PCI and to raise awareness of the work of the Board within and without the Church involving deputation work, publications and representation on external youth and children organisations, as appropriate.
5. To consult regularly with the Convener of the Board and the Conveners of the Committees in relation to the on-going work of the Board and its finances.
6. To ensure effective follow-up action for all policy decisions taken by the Board and its Committees.
7. To assist other PCI Boards, committees and panels as required.
8. To liaise with the Clerk of the General Assembly regarding the policies of the Board and their outworking.

#### **STAFF LEADERSHIP:**

1. To provide staff leadership which motivates and supports staff in the efficient performance of their duties, both within and external to Church House.
2. To provide first line management to senior Board staff.
3. To identify and provide for staff training and developments needs.

#### **FUNCTIONAL MANAGEMENT:**

1. To exercise responsibility for the efficiency of the Board's administration and the performance of all Board training, programmes and



events in relation to all statutory duties and good practice requirements, including Child Protection requirements.

2. To be responsible for the Board's overall financial functioning and efficiency, including the setting of United Appeal budgets, monitoring of income and expenditure and reporting within PCI structures.

3. To source and initiate applications for external funding.

4. To support the Board's ministry training by involvement in its delivery within PCI structures and externally.

5. To encourage and support PCI presbyteries and congregations in the development of their strategy for Youth and Children's ministry.

6. To fulfil a representative role for PCI in relation to involvement with other church, voluntary and statutory bodies responsible for youth and children issues.

7. Assess the relevance of external reports and research developments in the Board's areas of ministry and inform the Board accordingly.

8. To work within the Head of Department structures of Church House in the wider interests of PCI.

## JOB DESCRIPTION

### DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

<b>Job Title:</b>	Deputy Director of Youth and Children's Ministry
<b>Board:</b>	Reports to the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry Appointed by Board of Finance and Administration
<b>Responsible to:</b>	The Director of Youth and Children's Ministry
<b>Main Function of Job:</b>	To contribute to the development of the Board's overall strategy and to manage and develop the Children's Ministry dimension of the Board.

#### Responsibilities:

1. To develop and initiate new strategies and areas of work within the Board's children's ministry in consultation with local congregations.

2. To support Kirk Sessions in the implementation of new strategies, involving training, speaking and leading.

3. To exercise responsibility for the development and management of the Board's training activities in relation to children's ministry which involves management of the Children's Development Officer and of the Children's Ministry Course.

4. In conjunction with the Children's Development Officer to deliver training in children's ministry within the Board, PCI and the wider church context.

5. To organise conferences and courses to promote the development of the Board's programme for children's ministry.

6. To oversee Board projects in relation to children's ministry eg PCI Fun Day and Sunday School projects.
7. To raise awareness of the Board's work in relation to children's ministry both within PCI and outside the denomination, and to report *externally* in relation to this, as appropriate.
8. Prepare reports for the Board and Committees, as required.
9. To support the Director in his/her absence by attending the Board's committees and working groups.
10. To deputise for the Director in his/her absence.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the report be received.
2. That a grant of £6500 be paid to Youth Link NI from the Incidental Fund.
3. That the resignation of the Rev Jonathan Moxen as Convener of the Youth Events Committee be accepted and that he be thanked for his services.
4. That the resignation of Mrs Heather Lyle as Convener of the Youth Training and Resources Committee be accepted and that she be thanked for her services.
5. That the resignation of the Rev Desi Paul as Convener of the Youth Home Mission Committee be accepted and that he be thanked for his services.
6. That the resignation of the Rev Peter Lyle as Convener of the Youth Overseas Committee be accepted and that he be thanked for his services.
7. That the resignation of the Rev Robin Brown as Convener of the Youth Centres Committee be accepted and that he be thanked for his services.
8. That the proposals for development of the new integrated Board of Youth and Children's Ministry be accepted and the revised job descriptions adopted.
9. That the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, with its associated working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed as follows:

# BOARD OF EDUCATION

Convener: Rev JAMES McALLISTER, OBE

Secretary: Rev STANLEY STEWART

1. Things have been happening in Education during this year, things that effectively influence the kind of Education we deliver and the way we deliver it for years to come. Principal among the happenings has been the Costello Report or more fully the report on “Future Post Primary arrangements in Northern Ireland.” This definitive distillation of the hugely diverse reactions to the Burns Report presents an exciting opportunity and a demanding challenge to everybody associated with this sector of learning in the Province, not least the Department of Education; and it anticipates a revolution bigger than any since the 1940-50’s.

2. Alongside this report and essentially entwined with it is the review of the curriculum, where here and there new emphases and new objectives create some tensions.

3. The Religious Education curriculum has also been under Review where Mr Tom Shaw, CBE has served as joint chairman of the Review Panel. This would be an appropriate time to pay tribute to him for the massive contribution he made to the Review, its working and its outcome. A wealth of knowledge, a clear mind, an unflustered temperament, a quiver full of negotiating skills, an inexhaustible patience, a great deal of personal charm and a deep commitment to the subject matter. (The teaching primarily of the Christian faith) made him the right person, at the right time for the right job. (Presbyterianism at its best!!) and the church, in all its denominations is greatly indebted to him.

4. The church is grateful too for other members who contributed substantially to all of these reviews and reports and will reward them with finding for them new things to do!!

5. Another happening during the year was the appointment of Rev Stanley Stewart as Secretary (Part-time) to the Board. Since the separation of the duties of Secretary of the Board of Education from the Deputy Clerk’s remit, the task of secretary has been done by Rev Dr Donald Watts, first when he was Clerk Designate and latterly, until Stanley was appointed, as Clerk. The Board is greatly indebted to him for his work and leadership, for as one who had been closely associated with the work of the Board in the past, as one who had experience of education in the wider fields of administration and practice and as the one at the centre of our church’s contact and co-operation with other churches and other bodies he made a huge contribution to the thinking and smooth running of the Board. Rev Stanley Stewart is an experienced man both in education and administration and we welcome him to his new office.

6. The Board of Education will lose one of its three legs in June! But comment on that will be left until then.

**Rev James McAllister, OBE**

*The Rev Dr DJ Watts writes:*

In the Rev James McAllister the Board has been well served by a Convener who has had years of experience in education. Particularly his experience as Chairman of the Belfast Education and Library Board has been invaluable to the Church. His many contacts and keen grasp of the detail and background of our educational involvement has enabled Mr McAllister to lead the Board with wisdom and insight.

**Recognised Ministries**

*Rev David Bruce, Regional Secretary of Scripture Union in Britain and Ireland, reports:*

1. From 1 September, I have taken on a new role within Scripture Union. This encompasses our work throughout the British Isles, and includes a mission component in the Former Soviet Republics.

2. Since November 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down, the former communist countries of central and eastern Europe as well as the Soviet Union itself have been open to Christian mission from the west. Most of this new influence has been positive, and much has been enduring. Scripture Union is established in all but one of the central European states, and in nine centres within the former Soviet Union. In each place the work is indigenous while continuing to receive support (in the form of modest financial gifts with prayer, training and ministry expertise) from outside. Part of my new role is to work with these emerging movements, training their leaders and seeking to ensure their long term stability and growth.

3. In Britain and Ireland, Scripture Union continues to grow steadily. One new initiative that many within PCI will see come September is the replacement of the old SALT Sunday School materials with an entirely new production: "Light". Details can be found on [www.scriptureunion.org.uk/light](http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/light). Links from this site will take you to Light, Bubbles, Splash, Xstream, theGRID and Light Years which are the age-specific publications planned for the launch.

## STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The State Education Committee has continued its work through the year in support of all those who work in education. It has had constructive conversations with other education "partners", not least the Department of Education and the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards. It is pleasing to note the recognition given by Government to the Churches as having a legitimate voice in education matters. It has raised with the Education and Library Boards the importance of adequate funding for special needs and is presently responding to a consultation.

### **Transferor Representatives' Council**

2. Much of the work of the State Education Committee is shared with the equivalent Church of Ireland and Methodist Boards through the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC). It has been working on a process to introduce discussion in schools on the "ethos" of the controlled sector. In theory and in terms of management, the controlled schools are church-related. However, the extent to which Christian values are reflected in these schools is becoming a matter for debate. The TRC is working on an "ethos" statement which at the time of writing is being discussed with principal teachers and will then be shared with school governors.

### **Cross-Sectoral Co-operation**

3. Meetings have been facilitated by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and Department of Education to consider how the various educational sectors may work more closely together, so that young people may experience good relations in schools. This discussion has been given fresh impetus by the Minister for Education's acceptance of the Costello Report's recommendations on co-operation. Representatives of the Transferor Representatives' Council, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and the Trustees of Maintained Schools are meeting to share views on ways forward.

### **Post Primary Review**

4. Both the Transferor Representatives' Council and the Education Board have welcomed the Minister's acceptance of the Costello Review Group's findings. While recognising the challenge ahead for all involved in education, the emphases on pupil entitlement, genuine choice of educational pathway and local implementation are important markers on the way ahead.

### **Religious Education Curriculum Review**

5. The review of the RE Curriculum is now complete and the consultation has been very positive. The Churches owe much to the hard work and dedication of the working group under the skilful chairmanship of Mr Tom Shaw, CBE and Dr Aidan Donaldson. While there has been widespread acceptance of the proposed curriculum, there is some discussion continuing under equality issues raised with the Department. The TRC would also wish to engage with the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, so that there can be cross-referencing between Religious Education and other elements of the curriculum.

### **Thanks**

6. The controlled sector of our education system depends greatly on the dedicated work of members of Boards of Governors, along with the teaching and other staff members in our schools. We express our thanks to them and to all who lead in education at a very demanding time.

**Rev Dr RFS Poots, OBE**

7. Not least our thanks is offered to the Rev Dr Derek Poots who for so many years has been a leader in the educational thinking of our Church. His many years of service to the community were recognised last year in the tribute of the Assembly but we thank him also for his additional year as Convener of the State Education Committee.

**REPUBLIC OF IRELAND****Primary Schools**

*Rev Nancy Cubitt, Director of Primary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:*

1. There are 200 Protestant National Schools currently in the Republic of Ireland, 16 of them have Presbyterian patronage and several others have shared patronage with the Church of Ireland and/or the Methodist Church.

2. A Presbyterian school is one which recognises the Presbytery within whose bounds it resides, as the patron. The Presbytery appoints 2 representatives to the Board of Management, 1 to be Chairperson, usually the local minister. The teachers appoint 2 representatives, the parents appoint 2 representatives and those 6 then unanimously agree on 2 community representatives who are also Presbyterian or in sympathy with the ethos of the school. The appointment of community representatives was to secularise school boards a little more as the churches still have major control. However, this has not been particularly successful. From the church's point of view it is good to have such strong influence on our schools. Boards of Management appointed in November 2003 will now serve for 4 years instead of 3 years as in the past.

3. Presbyteries have been asked to appoint a small committee to oversee the running of schools and to examine accounts and school policies on an annual basis in accordance with the Education Act. The Board of Education is hoping to facilitate a training seminar for all who are involved as patron's representatives in Presbyterian schools.

4. There is a great shortage of Protestant teachers in general and Presbyterian in particular. The necessity for the qualification in the Irish language has meant teachers trained in Northern Ireland could not be employed. However, a relaxing of this law now allows a teacher 5 years to attain the appropriate qualification. On the other hand, the Irish Exam is of a very high standard and has a very low pass rate, which deters teachers from even attempting to do it.

5. The government has announced a School Building Programme for 2004. At least 190 million Euro has been ear marked for Primary buildings and several Protestant schools will benefit from this Programme. In addition there will be a Summer Works Scheme where money is allocated to the local school to do necessary work in the summer holidays. Again some of our schools will benefit from this scheme.

## Secondary Schools

*Mr Brian Duffy, Director of Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:*

### Secondary Education Committee

1. The Secondary Education Committee (SEC) is a body comprising representatives from the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Religious Society of Friends.

2. The Committee derives its authority from a resolution passed by the sponsoring churches in 1965.

3. The functions of the SEC are twofold. Firstly, to distribute a Block Grant provided by the Department of Education and Science (DE&S) to families, where at least one parent is a member of a reformed church and who need assistance to send their children to Protestant secondary schools. Secondly, it also seeks to represent the interest of the member churches in the post-primary education system.

4. The committee operates as a limited company thus allowing both the corporate body and the liability of individual members to be appropriately insured.

### Administrator

5. Mr David Wynne was appointed as administrator to the scheme following the retirement of Mr R Kilroy. Mr Wynne had already provided support for the IT aspect of the work of the SEC office. He also has had a background in a number of relevant areas including financial administration and the provision of benevolent services.

### Block Grant Scheme

6. Enrolments in the twenty-one fee charging schools totalled 9172 (9169 in previous year). This figure does not include the five comprehensive schools. As yet the total figure has not reflected the national trend of reduction in enrolments in the post-primary sector.

7. In the school year 2002/03 the audited account showed the totals received from the DE&S was €4,917,619 (€4,693,574) the grant in aided fees totalled €4,573,929 (€4,272,465) and capitation adjustment grant €343,434 (€339,254). The cost of administering the SEC scheme was €149,554 (€117,517). Apart from salary costs key elements in the increased expenditure were professional fees and computer system upgrading.

8. The block grant has shown no increase since 2002 and this has resulted in the grant levels set in 2003/04 being also applied for the year 2004/05.

9. The number of pupils assisted with grants was as follows:

10. Day grants 1373 (previous year 1365); boarding grants 1068 (previous year 1098); total 2441 (previous year 2463).

11. Grants are allocated for the current school year 2003/04 and the coming year 2004/05 on a scale from: boarding €1,140 - €4,050, day €480 - €1620.

12. The Administrator attended several open days at the request of schools and parents have appreciated the opportunity to clarify particular issues relating to grant assessment. The Administrator calls to schools each year and this is a useful interaction with the principals or bursars who may be aware of family difficulties where the SEC grant may be a support.

13. Parents who contact the SEC office will be assured of a helpful response from Mr Wynne or his assistant Mrs McCauley. There are procedures in place where a family suffers a sudden and significant change in circumstances due to unemployment, long-term illness or bereavement. A leaflet outlining the scheme is available and has been circulated to clergy and primary schools.

### **The role of the Scheme**

14. Concerns had arisen following reported comments by the Minister of Education & Science, Mr Noel Dempsey TD, concerning fee charging schools. This raised anxieties about the continuance of the block grant scheme and about the allocation of capital grants for school buildings. The Minister was subsequently provided with documentation to indicate that the block grant existed to counter disadvantage and that the schools as a group had significant numbers of children from families experiencing very real and measurable financial difficulties. The Committee was also appreciative of the role of the Archbishop of Dublin, Most Rev JRW Neill, in raising these anxieties with the Minister. Mr Dempsey later indicated by letter that he had had no intention of altering the block grant scheme. Several schools have subsequently been included in the published building programme for 2004 in relation to proposed extensions or classroom development. As yet none has permission to go to tender but it is understood that schools listed should see the projects complete within the five year capital funding '*envelope*' which has been provided by the Department of Finance.

15. It is regretted that the Comprehensive Schools, built very economically in the early seventies have not as yet progressed to tender stage. The age and condition of these buildings has given rise to continued health and safety issues and concerns about security.

### **Education Issues**

16. The Committee maintains a watching brief on educational issues but many concerns will be raised by the Joint Managerial Body, the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools and the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD). These bodies include representation from the Protestant schools. Indeed it is appropriate to congratulate Mr DR West, Principal of Newpark, who is the current chair of NAPD.

17. The implementation of the Religious Education syllabus for Leaving Certificate (established) has been rightly welcomed and it is hoped that those who have already taken the subject at Junior Certificate level will consider it as an option for Senior Cycle.

18. In recent reports the possibility of a pilot scheme for the provision of funded chaplaincy has been outlined. There is currently no progress in this matter.



19. The national agreement on pay and conditions, *Sustaining Progress*, to which employers, trade unions and government are parties included a commitment to standardise the school year. The implementation of this has been difficult as primary and second-level sectors have different minimum lengths of school year and different traditions in regard to religious holidays. Boarding Schools which cater for children who naturally travel long distances to homes within Ireland, or to homes where families are serving overseas, have found grave difficulty with the standardised year. The late conclusion of talks on the issue and the utilisation of short weeks which greatly increase costs, together with overseas parents reluctance to have children travel at peak times have all been raised in the context of the discussions. It is understood that the Irish School Heads Association has raised particular concerns with the Minister of Education and Science about these matters. The Education Act, 1998, does give the Minister the legal right, following consultation, to prescribe the organisation of the school year (section 25 (c)).

20. The Committee has also discussed issues regarding the introduction of Social, Personal and Health Education at Senior Cycle and the Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill.

*Rev Patricia McBride, Chaplain at the Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe, Donegal, reports:*

1. I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to minister as school chaplain in the Royal and Prior School. As a minister, it is good to be able to meet young people in their own school setting, thus conveying a message that the church and the school believe that Christian Spiritual Development is an important part of full education.

2. Daily year-group assemblies, provide a regular short time of worship for pupils. Usually I conduct the worship, but we also have occasional visiting speakers.

Other times of worship as a school community include special services to mark the start of the academic year, and a service to ask God's blessing on our Leaving Certificate students as they head out into the world of further and higher education.

3. Our Scripture Union group has expanded considerably this year, and is led by an enthusiastic team of pupils. Meetings, attended by some of the staff as well as the pupils, are lively and varied. Students have been active in inviting guest speakers, and it is a blessing to see the students grow in confidence as they take turns at leading meetings also. With the help and participation of staff members, occasional weekend meetings provide opportunities for fun and fellowship.

4. Religious Education is now an optional examination subject, and although we are not entering pupils for the state exam, we have begun following the new syllabus, which is designed to promote spiritual and moral development, as well as knowledge about Christianity, and some understanding of other world religions.

5. My integration into the full life of the school is facilitated by a few hours per week teaching other subjects, including a Citizenship Development class with Transition Year Students, as part of which, this year, we used an

adapted version of our church's Preparing Youth for Peace programme. Our Presbyterian Youth Worker, Richard Houston, put a lot of thought and effort into adapting and leading the programme, and we are very grateful to him.

6. The pastoral care of students and staff is an important on-going part of my role as chaplain, especially at times of difficulty, sadness or indeed tragedy.

7. I very much value the continued prayers of the Assembly in my ministry.

DONALD J WATTS, Acting Convener

## CHURCH EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The Sunday School Organiser continued to deliver the basic work of his office ie to facilitate training for teachers and leaders in Sunday School, Bible Class, Holiday Bible Club and Children's Church both at Presbytery and congregational level.

2. An integral part of this work is the **Children's Ministry Certificate Course** and it continues to flourish. Certificates were presented in May (2003) to 45 successful students, 19 from the course held in Coleraine and 26 from a similar course held in Bangor. Presently a course in the Monaghan Presbytery has attracted 24 students. This course, which runs alongside a Youth Board Course, is promoted by Union College where the organiser has also been involved in lecturing.

3. The Organiser is also the driving force behind the Fun Day; held in 2003 at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, when almost 8,000 people had a most enjoyable action-packed day out. A survey undertaken at the event should provide useful information for sharpening the focus for future years. Arrangements for the Fun Day, this year (2004) planned for Gosford Forest Park, including some exciting new things, had to be aborted at a very late stage when insurance cover (necessary) could not be found.

4. The **Moving On** Project for (2002/2003) – Joint Sunday School and Youth Board – raised a magnificent £110,000. This is an increase of 38% from previous years. Gratitude is expressed for the very enthusiastic way in which many of our congregations support the Project year on year, and the numbers involved have shown a marked increase but there are still large numbers of Sunday Schools and Youth groups who do not participate. The distribution of that money has been – Rostrevor Youth Centre £25,000; transport in Malawi £33,000; Kenya £14,000; Pakistan £14,000; India £14,000.

5. The Sunday School Organiser had the opportunity to visit Central Africa, and was able to see for himself the great contribution that the **“transport”** was making. He was deeply moved by the expressions of thanks given to him.

6. The **Looking Up** Project for 2003/4 seeks to support strategic outreach work among children and young people in Kilcooley, Bangor; in Howth and Malahide, Dublin; SGM's worldwide pavement project for street children and a literacy programme in the Zombe region of Kenya. The Project for 2004/5 will concentrate on Sumba.

7. The 'Building Blocks' Children's Ministry Conferences held on Saturday 22 November 2003 in All Hallows College, Dublin and on Saturday 29 November 2003 at Wallace High School, Lisburn were greatly appreciated. Our Church, in partnership with a wide spectrum of those involved in children's ministry throughout Ireland, organised these very successful Conferences. 300 attended the Conference in Dublin and 350 the Conference in Lisburn. Ron Buckland from Australia was the keynote speaker and in his two addresses he placed tremendous challenges before those attending. Participants could choose from a wide selection of seminars provided by experienced practitioners. The feedback from both was most encouraging.

8. Building Blocks Children's Ministry Conferences 2004: Dublin Conference - Saturday 27 November; Northern Conference, University of Ulster, Jordanstown - Saturday 4 December. Nick Harding will be the keynote speaker sharing from his wide experience in children's ministry – as a Children's Mission Support Officer for the Diocese of Southwell in Nottinghamshire, as an OFSTED inspector. He is a well-known speaker at events like Spring Harvest and the author of a number of books for children's leaders eg Kid's Culture, Raising the Standard, Children can Worship, and many more. He has also written many really great children's songs.

9. The Sunday School Organiser attended the Children's Ministry Conference in Eastbourne during the 23-25 January 2004. It was a most useful conference - affording opportunities to sample what is best about children's ministry today – the input from good speakers, viewing a wide range of good resources and networking with those who are doing similar work all proved beneficial.

10. The very important contribution to the work of the Committee by all the staff in the office is acknowledged and Mrs Donna Thompson & Mrs Valerie Moore are thanked for their endeavours in assisting and supporting the Rev Ian McKee.

11. Co-ordination of the amalgamation of the work of the Church Education Committee with the work of the Youth Board continued and the distillation of this work is included as an appendix to the Youth Board Report.

## UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. The University Education Committee continues to focus its efforts on improving contacts with and facilities for all those, both staff and students, working and studying in Institutions of 3rd level education throughout the island of Ireland.

2. In the Dublin area we operate a joint chaplaincy scheme in conjunction with the Methodist Church, and are represented at Trinity College by Rev Katherine Meyer, at University College Dublin by Rev Stephen Skuce, and at Dublin Institute of Technology by Mr Baird Lewis. Rev William McLaren had been our chaplain covering Dublin City University (DCU) and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), however chaplaincy duties at RCSI had developed in recent years, due to the increasing number of students attending courses, many of whom come from overseas, and we were approached

by the administration to see if Mr McLaren's involvement could be increased to allow him to serve there in a full time capacity. This was agreed and Mr McLaren has been serving as full time chaplain at RCSI since September 2004. While the development of a full time post of chaplain at an institution of 3rd level education is welcomed, since it means that the chaplain can spend much more time in building relationships with staff, students and the institution administration, we have found it difficult to fulfil our responsibility in providing a chaplain to DCU. We are currently seeking in conjunction with the Youth Board to combine chaplaincy duties at DCU with those of a Youth Development Officer for the Dublin area.

3. We have begun a review of the operation of the Joint Chaplaincy Scheme in the Dublin area which had an agreed initial trial period of five years, having begun in September 2001. Meetings with representatives of the Methodist church in the Dublin area, the current chaplains, and with other denominations involved in University/College chaplaincy are ongoing, as we seek to improve our influence for Christ throughout institutions of 3rd level education in the Dublin area and as we hope to encourage such institutions to recognise the valuable contribution of chaplaincy to the life of staff and students and to the debate on current ethical and moral issues.

4. In the Belfast area, Rev Steve Stockman, Chaplain in Residence, and Miss Lynn Ferguson, Assistant Chaplain, head up our chaplaincy team, where chaplaincy effort is concentrated on two locations: at Derryvolgie Halls of Residence, operated by the War Memorial Hostel Committee of the Board of Social Witness, where some 80-90 residents (most of whom are students) are accommodated and a full programme of Christian worship and events takes place mainly in the evenings and at weekends; and at the Queen's Chaplaincy Centre at the Bush, where in addition to the Cafe and chaplains office many smaller groups meet during the day.

5. We are excited by the potential increase in the scope of Chaplaincy impact upon student life offered by the purchase of the property adjacent to the Bush, at 14 Elmwood Avenue by the War Memorial Hostel Committee, and are currently in the early stages of planning what alterations are required to incorporate both buildings into one Chaplaincy Centre. A radical redevelopment of the internal structure of both buildings seems necessary to provide us with the right mix of facilities. We hope that such redevelopment should be completed by September 2006.

6. In February, members of the Committee had the opportunity to visit and see at first hand the Chaplaincy at University of Ulster, Jordanstown, where Rev Dr William Crawley is our chaplain. We continue to support the integrated chaplaincy effort here ministering to the needs of staff and some 5000 students and hope that in any re-siting of the chaplaincy facilities the important central role of chaplaincy is recognised by the University administration.

7. Rev John Coulter and Rev Joe McCormick represent our church in conducting part time chaplaincy duties at UU Coleraine and Magee, Londonderry campuses respectively. The Committee also wish to recognise the effort of many other ministers who contribute to the care and support of staff and students at those institutions where we do not have an official Presbyterian Chaplain.

8. Please continue to pray for the influence of University Chaplaincy and that we may make the correct decisions which will assist our Chaplains in their witness for Christ in the many areas of university life.

### **Queen's University**

*Rev Steve Stockman reports from Queen's University:*

1. The Chaplain in Residence, Rev Steve Stockman, and the Assistant Chaplain, Lynn Ferguson, continue to reach out and to pastor and teach the Presbyterian community at Queens. They continue to develop the "one Chaplaincy in two locations" policy using the Bush Café and Derryvolgie Hall as the basis for a very full programme of worship, prayer, study and recreational activities. They have been ably supported by Maureen Rankin (Bush manageress), Liz Gibson and Karol Creighton at the Bush, Lorna Dunlop and Carol McMahon administrators at Derryvolgie and Chris Guiney this year's Resident Volunteer. The Chaplain would like us to thank the entire team for their commitment, in many cases way beyond their contracted hours.

2. The Bush continues to be busy as a café and the building is used very regularly by many other Christian groups as well as the Chaplaincy Team - the Christian Union for Bible Study groups, evangelism groups and various other projects. A new group STEP (Students Tackling Eating Disorders) has been based in our offices and we have been very excited to help this group in whatever way possible.

3. Derryvolgie continues to be a lively and exciting community where we continue to worship and study and challenge outreach in various ways. We have weekends away for teaching and fellowship.

4. Our third bi-annual CAPETOWNSHIP project is this summer. We will be taking over 60 students to Cape Town (3 teams in 8 weeks) where as well as building houses with Habitat For Humanity we will study reconciliation, Fair Trade, AIDS/HIV in partnership with both the Youth Board's Preparing Youth For Peace and Christian Aid. Fund raising and orientation has added a lot of work to the year but it has also given our Chaplain and Asst Chaplain opportunities to share the work of Chaplaincy as they have been invited to speak at so many Churches.

### **University of Ulster**

*Rev Dr William Crawley reports from the University of Ulster, Jordanstown Campus:*

1. The Jordanstown chaplaincy team has seen some significant personnel changes in the past year. The Rev Mercia Malcolm left the team during the summer of 2003 to become Vicar of Carnmoney Parish, leaving a vacancy for an Anglican chaplain which, we understand, will probably be filled by the summer of 2004. Carole Grattan, the Methodist Assistant Chaplain, also left the team to take up a new position with Youth For Christ, to be replaced by Helen Graham at the start of the 2003 academic year. Helen's experience of Christian Union work has been invaluable to our team throughout the academic year.

2. In February, we were honoured by a visit from the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Right Rev Dr Ivan McKay and Mrs McKay. The Provost of Jordanstown, Professor William Clarke, generously hosted a lunch to mark the occasion, which was attended by some staff and students, along with members of North Belfast Presbytery; and the Moderator met students and staff informally in various groups, including a Question and Answer session at the chaplaincy. This visit afforded us the opportunity to further strengthen the churches' relationship with the university.

3. The future of chaplaincy facilities at Jordanstown continues to be a matter of great concern to our team. The University's necessary structural re-development on the main Mall of the campus means that our chaplaincy centre will soon need to be relocated. Since access to students is a key feature of the centre's work, we have repeatedly raised this matter with University staff and have kept the University Education Committee apprised of the situation.

4. One of the new programmes of this academic year was the creation of a "Faith Academy" at the chaplaincy – a weekly seminar-style exploration of issues and ideas from a distinctively Christian perspective. This group has succeeded in bringing students together both intellectually and personally and is now, I think, a mainstay of the weekly programme. Also in the area of Christian education, we have run various events which seek to explore aspects of contemporary cultural life, such as a seminar in the Students' Union Bar on the theme of spirituality and cinema, which was addressed by the Christian film writer Gareth Higgins. Events of this kind complement the chaplaincy's off-campus weekend retreats, which enable students to explore ideas, worship, relax and have fun together. As is our tradition, we will end the academic year with a week-long break-away experience for students; this year, we visit Galway.

5. We continue to find important opportunities for inter-campus ministry through the work of the University Chaplaincy Council, which I currently chair. We are actively developing joint pastoral care initiatives, such as the establishment of regular pastoral seminars - dealing with, for example, relationship breakdown, spirituality in the workplace, and coping with stress - aimed at university staff members. We have also held a joint chaplaincy retreat at Corrymeela, will soon be launching a new inter-campus chaplaincy website, and plan other shared ministry initiatives.

6. Our commitment to Habitat for Humanity has grown and deepened in the past three years. I continue to be a member of Habitat's International Programme Committee, and this summer, for the first time, Jordanstown and Coleraine campuses will send a joint team of students to work on an overseas project. I have much enjoyed working closely with Fr Raymond McCullagh, Catholic Chaplain at Coleraine, on developing this joint team, which will spend two weeks working on a poverty housing project near the Hungarian capital, Budapest, in June 2004.

7. I am delighted to report some very positive developments in the chaplaincy's relationship with the Christian Union at Jordanstown. In the past two years, particularly, we have seen a growth in trust and friendship, more opportunities to work together and learn together, and a willingness to take advantage of those opportunities.

8. I have been involved in some quite complex pastoral situations throughout the year, involving both staff and students. One particularly challenging case enabled me to learn a great deal more about the extremely important work of the Belfast Rape Crisis Centre, who subsequently invited me to serve as one of two honorary chaplains.

9. I have enjoyed the chance to take part in various university-wide public events - such as a debate on the existence of God, a seminar on belief in God in an age of science, and various opportunities to reflect on the ethics of war on Iraq. The University marked the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the structure of DNA by participating in the web-cast lecture by the Nobel laureate James Watson, and I took part in the University's four-person panel of discussants gathered on that occasion to explore the cultural and ethical implications of "the DNA Age". I am also working on some joint writing projects with university lecturers, which enables me to engage in theological reflection about University research matters.

### **Coleraine Campus**

*Rev John Coulter reports from the University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus:*

1. During my first full year in the University I have been continuing to try to get to grips with the various aspects of the work in the Chaplaincy. I have been getting to know the other members of the Chaplaincy Team in Coleraine and those members of the University staff who work closely with us. The new University Chaplaincy Council has been providing an opportunity to meet with all the Chaplains on all four campuses to discuss common issues and to develop a more co-ordinated approach to our work.

2. I have been in attendance at formal occasions such as the Graduations and at the Court of the University, but of course the main work is with the students. Wednesday is my day "on duty" in the Chaplaincy Office where I am available to talk to anyone who calls in. Students from all kinds of different backgrounds call in with various questions and problems and I have been encouraged by the opportunities for ministry. During the year I also took part in leading an Alpha Course organised by the Chaplaincy Team.

3. I have continued to develop links with the CU, attending some of their meetings and getting to know members and leaders. We have developed a joint Service Project where about 14 members of the CU help out with Brainstormers, the homework club in my own congregation in Ballysally. This has proved to be very beneficial for all those concerned.

4. The settling in period has at times been frustrating, but I continue to be encouraged by the possibilities for ministry here in Coleraine.

### **Magee Campus**

*Rev Joe McCormick reports from the University of Ulster, Magee Campus:*

1. Duties continued as normal in 2003.

2. We welcomed a visit from the Moderator of the General Assembly to the campus in October.
3. Meetings with representatives of the University, Student Welfare and Chaplains, resulted in a relocation of the Chaplains' Office to make it more accessible to students.

### **Trinity College, Dublin**

#### *Rev Katherine Meyer reports:*

1. The work of the chaplaincy continues to weave together a number of different strands: the provision of a place of meeting and welcome to all students, regardless of religious background; the creation of a shared Christian space of worship, prayer, and faith exploration; and participation in wider College structures and events. In addition, I maintain regular contact with any Presbyterian or Methodist who makes themselves known to me.

2. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2004 was observed under the title "Table Settings" with a series of celebrations of the sacrament of communion, according to various traditions, in the College Chapel. These took place on consecutive evenings, and culminated with a festival meal on Friday night, "A Taste of Things to Come".

3. Events of last winter and spring included an evening series on the Orthodox tradition (led by the priest of the local Russian Orthodox community, who is himself a Trinity postgraduate), a film viewing and seminar discussion, a day trip to Kilkenny, and a walking tour of contemporary Dublin architecture. Holy Week once again fell during term, and our nightly events included an interpretation of the passion story by local puppet artists, a seminar on the passion narratives with Prof Sean Freyne, and a series of outdoor dramas on Maundy Thursday. I preached at the sung Anglican eucharist on Palm Sunday.

4. In the autumn our welcome events for new students included both a week of soup lunches and an early evening series of short events followed by pizza. These events included an introduction to head and shoulder massage, and an audio-visual narrative on my recent trip to India with the World Development Committee. As the term continued, we hosted a further evening series, "God on the Net", another of our well-subscribed walking tours of Dublin, and a day trip to Downpatrick, including a visit to the St Patrick Centre. A contemporary art installation, exploring the theme of the communion of saints, was constructed in the Chapel around the time of All Saints' Day and drew large numbers into the Chapel during the following week.

5. I continue to receive a wide variety of invitations from groups outside of College, asking me to lead adult education events or to preach, and among those I accepted this year were from Our Lady's Hospice, Harold's Cross, the Women in Ministry group of the Church of Ireland, and two local inter-church groups. I continue as an active member of the Race Relations Committee of the PCI, and I have recently been asked to join the Standing Committee of the Glenstal Ecumenical Conference.



## **Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland**

### *Rev William McLaren reports:*

1. Since October 2003 I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve as full-time chaplain and pastoral care co-ordinator at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. An international medical school with students of around 50 nationalities and many faiths, RCSI presents unique challenges but I have found both staff and students welcoming and supportive.

2. As chaplain I am responsible for worship in College including Morning Prayers Monday – Friday, the annual Christmas Carol Service and other occasional acts of worship.

3. A weekly “Friendship Lunch” of soup, bread and cheese is well attended and provides the opportunity for informal discussion between students of different disciplines, medicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy and nursing.

4. I make weekly visit to Beaumont Hospital, where I host the “Chaplain’s Coffee Break” and I maintain links with students in other teaching hospitals associated with the College.

5. I am president of the RCSI Film Society founded this year and other clubs and societies continue to welcome the interest of the Chaplain. I sit on the RCSI Student Affairs Committee and the Cultural Affairs Committee. I am happy to represent the Presbyterian Church on the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS).

6. It is a great joy and a real privilege to minister in Third Level Education and I thank friends and colleagues throughout the church for their prayerful support.

## **University College, Dublin**

### *Rev Stephen Skuce reports:*

1. Most of my work in UCD consists of being the Student Advisor in the Law Faculty. To a large extent, chaplains at UCD are appointed to faculties rather than working as denominational chaplains.

2. The staff Bible study group continues to be useful. The ‘Step Up’ Club, facilitated by Dublin Central Mission continues a very good work under Dr John Clifton Brown’s leadership.

3. A group of students from Slovakia were hosted by the UCD chaplaincy from 17 – 23 October.

4. In November I hosted a Day Conference for the Irish Methodist University Chaplains.

5. I taught two courses at UCD in the first semester – ‘Rediscovering the Bible’ and ‘The Clash of Civilisations?’ Both these proved very useful and I will look to expand this teaching role in 2004/05. I also taught ‘Missiology’ at the Irish Bible Institute. In the 2nd semester I am teaching ‘Study of World Religions’, a 12 week module for 2nd/3rd year students at QUB starting 3 February 2004. In addition, in conjunction with Eoin Cassidy of Mater Dei, I will teach a similar course to BTh modular students in the evening at Edgehill.

6. In February 2004 I led an RTE televised service with UCD CU and I am arranging a joint QUB-UCD Habitat for Humanity team to Malawi in summer 2005.

### **Dublin Institute of Technology (Rathmines Campus)**

*Mr Baird Lewis reports:*

1. Chaplaincy at Dublin Institute of Technology on the campus of Rathmines has sponsored and/or taken part in the following in the 2003/04 Academic year. In September 2003 an induction of new students was held and the Chaplain made his presence on campus known by making formal presentations. In late Autumn an 'Autumnal Gathering Celebration' was organised by the Chaplain. This event focused on welcoming both students and staff and was supported by various students of the college. A Remembrance Service was organised in November which is a DIT side service involving planning and participation by all members of the Chaplaincy Service. A Carol Service at Christmas was supported by the DIT musicians. The Chaplaincy Intranet web page, <http://student.dit.ie/chaplainchy/intro-page.html> continues to be maintained by the Chaplains and is available to both staff and students of DIT. Pastoral care continues to play the biggest role in Chaplaincy at Rathmines.

TR BUICK, Convener

### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly welcome the work being undertaken by the Transferor Representatives' Council on "ethos" in the controlled sector.
3. That the General Assembly, grateful for the diligent work of the Religious Education Curriculum Review Group, offer thanks especially to Mr Tom Shaw CBE and Dr Aidan Donaldson.
4. That the General Assembly note the initiative of the Board in providing training for patron's representatives in Presbyterian schools.
5. That the work of the Church Education Committee, particularly in the "Moving On" project and the "Building Blocks" Children's Ministry Conferences, be commended to the support and prayers of the church.
6. That the University Chaplains be thanked for their dedicated work and commended in prayer.
7. That the resignation of the Rev James McAllister, OBE, as Convener of the Education Board be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and \_\_\_\_\_ be appointed in his place.
8. That the resignation of the Rev Dr Derek Poots, OBE, as Convener of the State Education Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and \_\_\_\_\_ appointed in his place.
9. That the Board of Education, with its associated working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 284 of the Code as follows:

# BOARD OF STUDIES AND CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Convener: VERY REV Dr AWG BROWN

1. The highlight of this year has been the sesquicentenary of Union Theological College which was opened on 4 December, 1852 as The Presbyterian College, Belfast. This important anniversary was marked by the reopening of our refurbished college buildings and a special Service of Thanksgiving at which the preacher was Dr Alister McGrath, Professor of Historical Theology, University of Oxford and Principal, Wycliffe Hall, who later delivered a public lecture entitled *Renewing our Vision for the future of Protestant Christianity in Northern Ireland*.

2. The work of the Board has continued to prove challenging as it copes with the whole range of theological education for our ministry students, and for the wider Church. Once again this year it has been most encouraging to have a sizeable number of candidates who have completed their applicant's process successfully and are now being recommended to the Assembly as students for the ministry. The number of applicants offering for the next interview is even larger, and it seems as if the lean years are now behind us. The need for future ministers however remains a matter of ongoing concern, and we would encourage ministers and Kirk Sessions to keep this issue before our congregations as a subject for prayer and as we encourage our people to listen for God's call.

3. Once again this year we have held an Information Day for people who have thoughts of entering the Christian ministry, but who are not yet sure if this is what God is calling them to do. We do hope it has been helpful to those who came, and that it will prove once again a valuable way to help those who are considering serving our Church in this way.

4. Our College continues to provide a valuable service in teaching a large number of undergraduates doing theology at Queens, as well as those who wish to do single courses, part-time study and research degrees. This is a valuable and strategic ministry and we pay tribute to our staff for the way they cope with the considerable work-load this involves.

5. The Magee Institute for Christian Training continues to provide a range of excellent courses. We are most grateful to Dr Desi Alexander who has sought to develop this work, making use of audio and video programmes as well as courses delivered at Union College and other centres. We would urge Presbytery agents and congregations to do whatever they can to encourage our members to grow in knowledge of God's word and of the skills they need to share their faith with others.

6. We have greatly missed the contribution of the Rev Harry Robinson to every aspect of our work this year. We thank him for the generous help he has continued to give and we look forward to welcoming his successor. We would

also express thanks to those who covered key aspects of the Director's work during this academic year.

7. One of the tasks in which the Board has been engaged was to survey key areas of ministry, and to see how best we might prepare future ministers to face up to the challenges involved. We have begun this exercise by looking at ministry in the Republic. A questionnaire was sent out to all ministers serving there and we look forward to examining their replies, in order to draw up conclusions that will hopefully guide us as to the most appropriate help we can offer.

8. At the invitation of the Chaplain-General, the Convener attended a conference in Windsor from 1-2 March on the changing face of Chaplaincy in the Forces and on the need to keep up recruitment. The need for chaplains is perceived to be greater than ever and this at a time when the Churches generally are experiencing falling numbers of candidates for ministry and more and more older applicants. Our Church has had a reputation for providing excellent chaplains for all three services and we will want to continue to encourage students to consider this as a possible vocation.

9. In response to the request of the Ad hoc Committee on Priorities, we reported that no further change was contemplated after our recent re-organisation of Committee structure.

10. This year I have completed my seven-year term as Convener of the Board. It proved to be an interesting and demanding job carried out at a time of rapid change in education for the ministry, in Christian training, and in the physical renovation of the College buildings. I would like to thank all those who helped me: the Committee Conveners past and present, the members of Faculty, the College staff, especially Mrs Dale Wright, and most of all The Rev Harry Robinson without whose wisdom, patience and humour my task would have proved a burden rather than a pleasure.

*The Rev George Moore writes:*

11. The Very Rev Dr Godfrey Brown has served as Convener of the Board for seven years. He had served for one year before that as Convener of the Committee on Studies. He came to the task with a wide knowledge of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and a long time interest in theological education.

12. During his tenure in office he oversaw several changes in the structure of the Board, not least the extension of its brief to include the whole area of Christian training. His Convenership of the Board also saw the extensive renovations of Union Theological College.

13. We thank Dr Brown for his wise leadership and for all the work he has done on behalf of the Board and wish him a long, happy and well-earned retirement.

## **REVIEW OF LEGISLATION ON ASSISTANTS AND ASSOCIATES**

### **(Code Par 193(4))**

This legislation has now been in place for five years, and last year the Assembly requested this Board, in consultation with Union Commission, Board

of Mission in Ireland and other interested parties to carry out a review. (Reports 2003, p248 Res 7). A representative Committee was set up by this Board. At its initial meeting it noted the concern of rural charges that at a time of shortage, potential ministers were being drawn away by urban and suburban congregations. On the other hand it noted the real concerns of ministers in larger congregations for adequate staffing.

Various other concerns were fed into the process, such as the ineligibility of licentiates to conduct wedding services, and on a different level the need for lengthier periods of probation, coupled with a shortening of the applicants' process. The Committee noted also the feeling on the part of some that the time may be ripe to re-examine the need for an auxiliary ministry, and also the training and appointment of 'Readers' to assist with services in, for example, multiple charges. The Committee felt however that this matter was outside its immediate remit.

We identified two main areas of concern arising out of the present legislation, set up working groups to guide our thinking, and now recommend as follows:

## **1 ASSISTANTS**

1. That the Church continue to meet the need for assistants by the use of 'licentiates' rather than by ordained assistants. We recommend that under the new NI legislation licentiates should be 'designated' to conduct wedding services subject to the usual Church rules.

2. That licentiates would normally serve a 32 month assistantship, but those over 40 when eligible for licensing would have this reduced by 12 months. The present licentiate course should be spread over 20 months.

That licentiate service will continue to be counted from 15 May, with licentiates becoming eligible for call on 15 January in the relevant year.

These proposals would come into effect with those who will have been received as students for the ministry after 15 September 2004.

We recognise that if adopted by the Assembly these revised regulations would lengthen considerably the period in which Assistants would be available to congregations, and would also standardise the age boundary at 40. We plan to put in place financial arrangements that will ensure that assistants will not suffer loss of income.

## **2. ASSOCIATES**

We believe that the Associate Scheme has proved very worthwhile, and that Associate ministries in larger congregations have made a valuable contribution.

1. We recommend that there should not be any major change in the scheme as it is presently regulated by the Union Commission, with its pattern of 3 years + 1 year + a possible further 3 years. We see associates being required:

- (a) In larger congregations where there is a heavy preaching and pastoral load to be shared by two ordained ministers, with room for some specialisation.

- (b) In congregations where there is specialised work to be done *for which only an ordained minister is qualified and suited*. It would be the responsibility of the Union Commission to oversee that this is how the post works out, and to judge whether it ought to be extended beyond the initial 3 years.

2. In a very small number of situations there may be a case for an associateship to be extended beyond the present 7 year maximum. We believe this would call for a thorough-going review by the Union Commission, involving Minister, Kirk Session, Associate and Presbytery. Thereafter the appointment would still be subject to 3 yearly review by the Union Commission. Such arrangements would require the congregation to accept more significant financial obligations. It would also be important that the Associate could and would rise above the appropriate ministerial minimum.

3. We do not believe that it is appropriate for an Associate in post prior to a vacancy to be eligible for a call, inasmuch as this may well be to the disadvantage of other eligible candidates. We would not be opposed in principle, however, to a congregation that has obtained permission to do so appointing a minister as 'Associate and Successor'. We have therefore included a resolution to test the mind of the Assembly.

4. While we believe that the Assembly should not over-react to the immediate shortage of ministers, we also recognise that the Union Commission should have the right to take into account the overall needs of the Church.

### 3. APPLICANTS

The Committee also considered the length of the Applicants' Course in the light of these proposals, and of representations made to them. The present course has been carefully developed to test suitability, with excellent results. Nowadays Presbyteries seem to be exercising more care with their nominations. We now feel that most candidates do not need the academic element in the course, whereas the placement has proved invaluable. In most cases, a single interview, coming after the placement should prove sufficient. This would save delaying the majority of applicants unnecessarily, while leaving open the possibility that the Director of Ministerial Studies, in consultation with the Committee on Ministerial Studies, and/or the Interviewing Panel could set additional work, elongate the process, or require a second interview where this was deemed necessary.

We therefore propose to amend the timetable for applicants, reducing the period between first application and entering theological study by 8 months. The date for application will now become 15 September. Names will be forwarded to Presbyteries for their October meetings, so that they may interview and nominate (either by a full Presbytery, or by giving power to issue to their student Committee) in November. The DMS will meet nominated candidates for a Study Day(s) in December. There will be a congregational placement for applicants beginning in January. A single phase interview will be held in the first week of Union College Easter break. The outcome of the Interview will be reported to the Board when it meets in May and to the General Assembly in June. This process will depend on Presbyteries continuing to be careful in their interview

of candidates, and not sending candidates forward if they feel that they ought not to pass the Board interview.

## **CONCLUSION**

A resolution is appended asking that the Assembly approve these proposals, and allow them to be implemented for two years before any formal changes are made to the Code. Specific resolutions are included on three other matters in the report. The Committee will remain in being for the present.

## **MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

*The Convener, the Rev Prof W P Addley, writes:*

In the past year the number of ministers receiving grants from the Ministerial Development Programme has increased. The amount given in grants has almost doubled, from £8,771 in 2002 to £17,433 in 2003. While this trend is encouraging, it is still true that only a minority of ministers are making application to the Programme.

As we now have sufficient funds in reserve to meet all sabbatical requests it is recommended that the annual assessment to the Programme be reduced from 0.75p to 0.25p per £ of stipend.

The Committee notes with interest that a new item in the job description of the Director of Ministerial Studies is the promotion of the Ministerial Development Programme. It looks forward to fruitful cooperation with the DMS.

## **ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE**

*The Rev Dr DJ Watts reports:*

Interviews for students eligible for assignment took place in December. Fourteen congregations had expressed a desire to have a student assigned, although one of these would require a special financial arrangement. There were thirteen students to be assigned. At the time of writing all but one of the assignments have been successfully agreed.

## **STUDENTS' BURSARY FUND COMMITTEE**

*The Rev Stewart Mackay reports that:*

1. The Students Bursary Fund Committee continues to administer the church's financial provision for students for the ordained ministry and their families.

2. The total income for 2003 was £284,581 and the total expenditure was £250,559. These figures reflect the increasing number of students and it is hoped this trend will continue, in order to fill the high number of vacant charges. However it means that we will need to call on the continued generosity of our members and of the United Appeal Board, from whom we receive most of our money.

3. We continue to be grateful to all who have contributed through offerings at services of licensing, ordination, installation etc. and would urge Presbytery Clerks and Vacancy Conveners to ensure that such offerings are taken, that use is made of the literature available and that advantage is taken of the Gift Aid scheme.

4. We hope to have new literature produced this year which will incorporate a bookmark similar to the current one and also a Gift Aid envelope for use at the above services.

5. Much of our time during the past year has been spent in conducting a full review of **The Repayment Policy**.

**a. Current Situation**

Those who are accepted as Students for the Ministry may apply for a Grant from the Students' Bursary Fund to cover living costs and the College Fees for their courses. They are required to sign the following undertaking: 'Should I not continue until Ordination, or be required not to continue until Ordination, or cease to serve the Church or be required to cease serving the Church within five years after Licensing, I accept and hold myself under obligation to repay such Bursaries as I have received (including Fees) in whole or in part, as shall be determined by the Fund Committee.'

Although the wording leaves the decision for repayment and the amount of repayment up to the Committee, it has been the policy of the Committee to ask for repayment in all cases. No interest is added and it has been acceptable that repayment may be made over a number of years. In many cases the actual amount repaid is reduced, the amount of reduction depending on the degree of co-operation of the former student.

**b. Reasons for withdrawal**

Each situation is different but there are usually three main reasons for a student 'withdrawing'.

- (i) There are difficulties with assignments to congregations and the student is told that they will not be re-assigned.
- (ii) The student decides that they now believe that the ordained ministry is not God's will for them.
- (iii) There is illness or family difficulty.

**c. Matters considered**

The Committee have looked at such questions as:

Should we require repayment in all cases, whether students have been asked to withdraw or have withdrawn voluntarily?

Should the repayment amount be reduced on a pro rata basis for years of study/service completed?

Should we set an income level below which we should not ask for repayment, as with LEA student loans?

What should we do when a student already has an outstanding LEA loan to repay?



We acknowledge that we have to be good stewards, under God, of the financial resources which are available to us from the United Appeal Fund and Services of Installation, Ordination and Licensing, while at the same time trying to exercise compassion to the people resources which God has given to us; those who withdraw and their families.

We have also made inquiries of three other churches; the Church of Scotland, the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland. None of these churches asks for repayment of grants or fees, whilst retaining the right to do so.

We have also borne in mind:

- that the current interviewing procedure provides greater opportunities for assessment of applicants by the Interviewing Panels, and also for applicants to experience more of the life and work of a minister before commencing studies;
- the sacrifice and commitment of applicants who often leave well paid employment to commence studies;
- the effect of repayment on those who have to seek secular employment often at a lower level than before and the burden of repayments;
- the detrimental effect on our relationships with former students which is caused by our current policy.

Taking all this into consideration, the Committee would recommend that, whilst retaining the wording of the application form, we should not require repayment of grants or fees from those who have withdrawn or have been required to withdraw from training for the ministry, unless there are compelling reasons for doing so, as determined by the Board on the recommendation of the Students' Bursary Fund Committee.

We would also recommend that we write to those who are currently repaying and ask them to cease repayment, unless, following a review of such cases, there are compelling reasons to ask for continuing payment.

## **QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE**

*Very Rev Dr AWG Brown reports that:*

Last year we reported preliminary consideration of a request received under Par 217(8)(d)(ii) of the Code regarding what academic degrees should appear in the official records of the Church. The Qualifications Committee met again this year to give the matter fuller consideration, and reports as follows:

Our Church has always exercised great care as to what degrees or other academic awards are recognised in order for students to fulfil the regulations of our Church. So far as what academic degrees should appear in the official records of the Church, our practice in recent years has been determined by decision of the General Assembly in 1980 (Reports pp 217-8) that no degrees, diplomas, etc., should be recorded in the Presbytery Directory printed with the annual Minutes of Assembly, but that in the Alphabetical List of Ministers also printed in the Minutes, a full list of degrees, etc, as submitted by ministers should be recorded, and that a key to the various awarding bodies be provided.

The Committee felt that some modification of the present practice was necessary. While welcoming the fact that ministers engage in further study, and believing that generally speaking all study is worthwhile, the Committee was of the view that some institutions may not meet our full criteria. Exercising our responsibilities under the Code, we would offer the following guideline, in the hope that it might assist ministers in deciding what institutions they should choose when seeking further academic qualifications.

*The Committee will normally recognise degrees awarded by*

1. Any university or faculty in Great Britain or Ireland incorporated by Act of Parliament or Royal Charter (Code Par 217(1)(a)(i))
2. An American university or seminary that has full ATS accreditation
3. A university in another country which, in the judgment of the Committee, is of an academic standard equivalent to (1) or (2) above.

The Committee recognised that ministers are personally responsible for what qualifications they choose to put on their notepaper. Congregations are responsible for what appears on their Church noticeboards and in such documents as their Annual Reports. We do not want to cause hurt or embarrassment to anyone, nor to take retrospective action. We are therefore proposing that, as from 2005, when ministers are notifying their qualifications for inclusion in the Alphabetical List, they indicate as at present the institution from which their degrees are taken. The key to institutions will now appear at the end of the list, and will include only those institutions which meet the above criteria. The key will include the words:

'Key to recognised institutions listed above.'

## COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL STUDIES

1. The Committee met three times during the year.
2. Through the former Director of Ministerial Students (DMS), the Convener of the Board and the Convener of the Committee, it continued to give advice to prospective candidates and to set courses and administer examinations in accordance with the Regulations of the General Assembly and the direction of the Board of Studies & Christian Training. The Committee is deeply grateful to the Rev Harry Robinson for his gracious assistance and wise counsel over the past year.
3. In the academic year 2003/2004 there were 37 students under the care of Presbyteries (30 in 2002/2003, 25 in 2001/2002, 22 in 2000/2001), as listed in the appended Schedule. These statistics are a fitting tribute in many ways to the work and influence of the former DMS, the Rev Harry Robinson.
4. One student was granted permission to study at Universities/Colleges other than Union, namely Regent, Vancouver. Another student was granted permission to study for 1 semester at Trinity, Singapore. The Committee also noted with regret the withdrawal of 2 applicants prior to the Phase II Interview.
5. The Committee expresses its thanks for the work of the following external examiners:

OT Language and Biblical Theology - The Rev IJ Patterson, BA, MTh  
NT Language - The Rev WPH Erskine, MA, BD  
NT Greek (Qual) - The Rev WPH Erskine, MA, BD  
Systematic Theology - The Rev D Bradley, BA, BD  
Church History - The Rev WD Patton, BSSc, BD, PhD  
Homiletics, Public Worship and Pastoral Work - The Rev DC Irwin, MA,  
BD, DMin

### **Study In A Missionary Partnership**

*Rev Dr Ian Hart reports:*

6. Students who are studying for the ordained ministry of our church at Union College are encouraged to spend one of the 3 theological years (or, if they prefer, a “year out”) studying theology in a country where we have a missionary partnership. Such a time can be a very stimulating and enlightening experience. For example, overseas churches are often struggling with very different issues from those we are concerned with in Ireland. We sometimes need to be freed from localistic practices, and we may realise that we have been following social conventions rather than the gospel. In recent years students have taken up this opportunity in Kenya (St Paul’s United Theological College, Limuru), in Jamaica (United Theological College, Kingston), and in Singapore (Trinity Theological College). Mr Colin Dickson, a second year student at Union, spent a semester at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon.

### **Pre-Theological Summer School & Phase I Interview**

7. The Pre-Theological Summer School and Phase I Interview was held in Union College from 17-20 June, 2003. The interviewing Panel comprised: Revs Drew Abernethy, Robert Bell, Helen Boyd, Jim Campbell, Maynard Cathcart, Rob Craig, Ronnie Hetherington, John Hutchinson, David Knox, Robert Lockhart, Colin Morrison, Hastings McIntyre, Brian McMillen, Ian McNie, Roy Patton, David Porter, Dr John Ross, Brian Savage, Ivor Smith, David Thompson; Mrs Mary Robinson, Mrs Jayne Wright; Messrs Wilbur Clarke, Robin Manson, Henry Plester, together with the Very Rev Dr Godfrey Brown (Chairman), Rev Harry Robinson (Coordinator), Rev Stephen Moore (Secretary) and Dr Joan McQuoid BA CPsychol and Mrs H Mullan BSc PGCE (Vocational Consultants acting as advisors to the Panel).

8. Twenty candidates were in attendance and completed the normal aspects of the interviewing process. 11 are being recommended to the General Assembly of this year, together with 2 candidates from previous years whose Applicants’ Courses had been extended.

9. The 2004 Pre-Theological Summer School and Phase I Interview is planned for 22 to 25 June, the size and personnel of the Interviewing Panel having been approved by the Committee.

STEPHEN P MOORE, Convener

**APPENDIX****SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS**

ARDS	Amanda Best	Union
	Nigel D Craig	Union
	Colin I Dickson	Union
	Chris W P Kennedy	Union
	James W D Rogers	Union
ARMAGH	S J Mervyn Lindsay	Union
	John D Montgomery	Union
	Kenneth Nelson	Union
BALLYMENA	Mark E Donald	Union
	Rod Mulholland	Union
	Jonathan E Sloan	Union
CARRICKFERGUS	Richard S J McIlhatton	Union
	Heather M Rendell	Union
NORTH BELFAST	William G Hamilton	Union
	David J Laney	-
EAST BELFAST	Alastair J Dunlop	-
	Richard A Johnston	Union
	Martin D McNeely	Union
	Mark J Welsh	Union
	Scott A Woodburn	Union
COLERAINE	David S Brownlow	-
	J Emerson McDowell	Union
	Philip B Wilson	Union
DERRY & STRABANE	Roy A Campbell	Union
	Nigel J E Reid	Union
DOWN	Leslie A Patterson	Union
DROMORE	Michael R J Anderson	Union
	Colin McKibbin	-
DUBLIN & MUNSTER	Karen Campbell	Union
	Gareth McFadden	Regent
IVEAGH	T Neil Bingham	-
NEWRY	Richard C Kerr	Union
OMAGH	Philip L McKelvey	Union
ROUTE	Glenn A Chestnutt	-
TYRONE	David H Brown	Union
	Knox A Jones	Union
	Adrian T S McAlister	-

## COLLEGE AND MAGEE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Since last General Assembly the Committee has met 3 times.
2. The redevelopment of our buildings is almost complete. This gives the Management Committee the opportunity to turn its attention to developing a strategic plan for the next period of time in response to the General Assembly's priorities.
3. Celebrations of our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary began with a splendid day on 4 December last when our guest speaker was Dr Alister McGrath. Interesting exhibitions continue to be on show in our library. A limited edition print of a painting unveiled in honour of the centenary is on sale in the College and available for former students and friends.
4. It was decided during the year not to proceed with the sale of the Principal's House. We are currently drawing up plans to develop the house and 26 College Green as part of our future strategy.
5. In the Academic Year 2003-04 there are 163 undergraduate full-time students (25 ministerial students), and 104 part-time students. This has been a difficult year for our teaching staff with Professor Cecil McCullough being on a double sabbatical, Principal Patton Taylor spending four months on tour in Afghanistan and the post of Director of Ministerial Students being vacant. We pay tribute to those who have shared the burden in their absence and thank them sincerely. We are particularly pleased at the upturn in numbers of students for the ministry studying at Union.
6. The past academic year has witnessed the consolidation and growth of short courses offered through the Magee Institute. Over 500 participants have taken various courses, most running for six weeks, covering topics from personal evangelism to pastoral care, from understanding the psalms to engaging in prayer. While Union College has been the venue for many of these courses, some have been held at venues as far apart as Londonderry and Dublin. We appreciated greatly the support of those who have either attended or taught these courses.
7. The Management Committee records its appreciation of the work of the Magee Institute and College, the academic and administrative staff for their interest in the students and in the delivery and promotion of courses within a warm fellowship of pastoral concern.
8. There has been no further progress to report with the University Chaplain and representatives from the War Memorial Hostel, but the College Principal continues to liaise in pastoral support of students and residents. We thank the Chaplain and his team for helping us streamline our administration in relation to our residents.
9. As I conclude my convenership, I warmly thank all the College community for their support and help, including students, teaching and administrative staff and volunteers. In particular, I would like to thank Mr David Clements who voluntarily gives so much time to the College in relation to all matters financial.

*The Very Rev Dr AWG Brown writes:*

10. The Rev Graham Connor has, regretfully, decided to resign as Convener of the College and Magee Management Committee. Mr Connor worked tirelessly to establish the Committee in its new dual role overseeing both the management of the College, and of the Magee Institute for Christian Training, and not least the demanding task of refurbishing the College buildings. He handled the many important and sometimes sensitive issues with competence and grace. He contributed with great wisdom to the work of the Board, and earned the respect of Faculty, and of the many professions and providers with whom he had to deal. He did this alongside a busy ministry, and other major commitments, yet always in a seemingly effortless way. He hands over to his successor not only a most successful renovation, but a model of management in which vision for the work of God in 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland was at the forefront of his thinking.

GRAHAM CONNOR, Convener

## COMMITTEE ON RESOURCING CHRISTIANS FOR MINISTRY

1. The past year saw the completion of *From Pew to Pulpit*, a resource consisting of six videos/DVDs and discussion material, which is designed to help ruling elders who are called upon to conduct public worship. The Committee want to thank Professor Bill Addley, Dr Godfrey Brown, Rev Ian McKee and the Rev Harry Robinson for their contribution to *From Pew to Pulpit*, and to Rev Ian Abraham for piloting the programme in the Omagh Presbytery.

2. The Committee ran and facilitated various learning modules throughout the year. Rev Harold Boyce and Mr Colin Millar taught courses on personal evangelism in Union Theological College and Mountjoy Presbyterian Church during September. Dr John Gillespie led a course on the kind of world in which we serve the Lord during November in Ballymena. Dr Desi Alexander taught courses of the eldership and the Psalms in Union Theological College and Greyabbey. Rev David Montgomery led a course for ministers and organists in Union in May.

3. The Committee has embarked on a revision of *The Eldership*, the training manual for elders produced by its predecessor, the Christian Training Committee. This revision is in its early stages, but it is hoped to have the new material available for the 2005 General Assembly.

4. The Committee is in debt to Dr Desi Alexander, the Director of Christian Training, for all his help and practical advice. It also wishes to express its gratitude to those who have administered and delivered the various learning modules, and to those who have prepared the resource packages.

RODGER CROOKS, Convener

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly note with gratitude to God the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Union Theological College, and pray for God's continued blessing on the Principal, Faculty, members of staff and students.
3. That the General Assembly note with pleasure the continued good number of applicants for the ordained ministry, and urge ministers and Kirk Sessions to encourage suitably gifted members to consider the possibility of God's call.
4. That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Board of Studies and Christian Training, be accepted as students for the ordained ministry and placed under the care of their Presbyteries:

Ronald S Agnew	Craigavon	Armagh
P Martin Baxter	Ballywillan	Coleraine
Andy Carroll	Lucan	Dublin & Munster
Mark R Catney	2 <sup>nd</sup> Comber	Down
David Clawson	Strand	East Belfast
J Martin Gracey	Downshire	Carrickfergus
William Montgomery	Aghadowey	Coleraine
David McCarthy	Dunmurry	South Belfast
Andrew McConnell	Hill Street, Lurgan	Armagh
T Philip McCullough	Kells	Ballymena
Stephen R Robinson	Kilmakee	South Belfast
D Mark Shaw	Ballysillan	North Belfast
WJ Ivan Thompson	1 <sup>st</sup> Holywood	Ards

5. That the General Assembly note the recent review of legislation on assistants and associates, together with revised regulations for applicants, and approves their implementation for two years before any formal changes are made to the Code.
6. That the names of licentiates be included with those who are designated to conduct wedding services, subject to the rules of the Church.
7. Recognising the need for a small number of congregations to extend an Associate ministry beyond the present seven-year limit, the General Assembly approve the drawing up of legislation along the lines indicated in the Report.
8. That the General Assembly invite the Review Committee to pursue further the possibility of a new category of 'Associate and Successor', and to report to next year's General Assembly.
9. That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be reduced from 0.75p per £ to 0.25p per £ of stipend.
10. That the General Assembly approve the repayment policy outlined in paragraph 5 of the Student's Bursary Fund report.
11. That the General Assembly accept the revised guidelines for the recording of academic qualifications in the Alphabetical List of Ministers, with effect from 2005.

12. That the resignation of the Very Rev Dr Godfrey Brown as Convener of the Board of Studies and Christian Training be accepted, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev George Moore be appointed in his place.

13. That the resignation of the Rev Graham Connor as Convener of the College and Magee Management Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev DW Brice be appointed in his place.

14. That the following grants be paid from the Incidental Fund:

June Summer School & Phase I Interview	£1,534
Pre-Term College Retreat	£2,270
Applicants' Study Day	£340
Phase II Interviews	£40
Licentiate Courses	£95
Meetings for students and spouses	£400
Honoraria for Extern Examiners	£300
Teaching in Communication Skills for students outside Ireland	£100
Information Day	<u>£452</u>
TOTAL	£5,531

15. That the Board of Studies and Christian Training, together with the appropriate working Committees be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 285 of the Code, as follows:

## COMMITTEE ON THE RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES

1. The committee has introduced two changes in procedure during the past year. The decision of the 2003 General Assembly that all ministers applying to be received should be interviewed has been implemented and a total of eight interviews have been held or are scheduled.

2. The committee has also introduced an information gathering form so that it will have the information it needs about each applicant in a standardised format. Only when a minister has submitted the form is he/she considered to be an official applicant.

3. The Code allows applications to come to the Committee until 15 April and this late date together with the high number of applicants to be interviewed means that the outcomes of most of the applications cannot be included in this written report. The Committee's verbal report will include this information and, if necessary, additional resolutions will be tabled.

4. This year there have been ten applicants, forms have been supplied to three possible applicants, two other people are at an earlier stage of the process and two theological students are considering making application to the PCI when they have been licensed/ordained in their home denominations. In addition one of the applicants from last year comes before the General Assembly again.

5. The Committee considered that two of the applicants did not come within its remit and they were advised to apply to enter the ministry as students.



**Rev Jane Dasher**

6. The General Assembly of 2003, on the recommendation of the Committee declared the Rev Jane Dasher, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, USA to be eligible for an Ordained Assistantship within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. In the period between being interviewed and the meeting of the General Assembly Ms Dasher accepted a call to a congregation within the USA. She has also expressed a continuing interest in coming to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at some future date.

7. The committee are unanimously of the opinion that Ms Dasher should be required to make a new application rather than rely on the decision of the General Assembly and a resolution to that effect will be proposed.

**Rev Alen John Ronald McCulloch**

8. Rev Alen John Ronald McCulloch, MA, BD, a minister of the Church of Scotland and currently serving as an Army Chaplain applied to the Committee. He was interviewed and declared to be eligible for call to a congregation of the PCI under Par 193 of the Code.

**Rev Warwick Sean Smart**

9. Rev Warwick Sean Smart, BTh, a minister of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa was mentioned in the Committee's report last year. He made formal application and arrangements were made to interview him but illness prevented him from travelling to Ireland.

**Rev Robert Peter Geoffrey Reilly**

10. The memorial of the Rev Robert Peter Geoffrey Reilly, BD, BEd, will come before the General Assembly. Mr Reilly was formerly a minister of the PCI and is now a minister of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Australia. The Committee's panel has interviewed Mr Reilly and also arranged for him to have a medical examination. A report will be brought to the April meeting of the Committee and its recommendation brought to the General Assembly.

**Rev Jeffrey Wayne Godwin**

11. The memorial of Rev Jeffrey Wayne Godwin, BA, MDiv, a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America will come before the General Assembly. Arrangements have been made to interview Mr Godwin.

**Rev Damien John Boyle**

12. The memorial of Rev Damien John Boyle, BD, a minister of the Methodist Church in Ireland will come before the General Assembly. Arrangements have been made to interview Mr Boyle.

**Rev Samuel Alexander Reid Torrens**

13. The Rev Samuel Alexander Reid Torrens, BSc, BD, a minister of the Church of Scotland has applied to the Committee and arrangements have been made to interview him.

**Rev Charles Tarter**

14. The memorial of Rev Charles Tarter, a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America will come before the General Assembly. Arrangements will be made to interview Mr Tarter and a report brought to the General Assembly.

**Rev Maurice Sloan**

15. The memorial of Rev Maurice Sloan, a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Brazil, will come before the General Assembly. Arrangements will be made to interview Mr Sloan and a report brought to the General Assembly.

**Rev Troy Christopher Morgan**

16. Rev Troy Christopher Morgan, MA, MDiv, a minister of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has applied to be received as a minister of this Church. Arrangements will be made to interview Mr Morgan and a report brought to the General Assembly.

17. The Committee records its thanks to the members of the interviewing panel who have undertaken this time consuming and difficult work throughout the year.

R BRIAN SAVAGE, Convener

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Rev Jane Dasher be required to be reinterviewed by the Committee for the Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees should a future application be submitted.

**MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED**

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

**The Memorial of the Reverend Damien John Martin Boyle Respectfully Showeth:**

That he is 42 years of age; that he was born in Newry, Northern Ireland; that he is married with two children; that he is in good health; that he was regularly ordained to the Christian Ministry in June 1999 by the Methodist Church in Ireland; that he was a Minister in good and regular standing until he chose to resign from the Methodist Ministry in 2002; that he is in full accord with the Doctrinal Standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

That he served in the Methodist Church in Ireland in the West Cork Circuit, from 1998 to 2002.

That he was appointed as Chaplain to the Northern Ireland Hospice, Somerton Road, North Belfast, from 2002 to the present day.

That he holds the following earned diploma and degree: Diploma in Christian Ministry (Emmanuel Bible College); Bachelor of Theology (QUB).

That he is desirous of being accepted as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland with a view to parish ministry.

That he applied to the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates; that, if accepted, he will undertake any additional studies required by the Board of Studies and Christian Training.

Memorialist therefore prays your Venerable Assembly to receive him as a Minister without Charge and to place him under the care of the Presbytery of Armagh.

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

DAMIEN JM BOYLE

Dated the Second day of February, 2004

Licensed by the Presbytery of Armagh at its meeting in Richhill on 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2004, and transmitted with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

PHILIP McCONNELL, Moderator  
COLIN HARRIS, Clerk

Transmitted by the Synod of Armagh and Down, meeting by Commission at Newry on 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2004, with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

MICHAEL BARRY, Moderator  
PETER GAMBLE, Clerk

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

**The Memorial of the Reverend Jeffrey Godwin Respectfully Showeth:**

That he is 35 years of age, that he is married with two children, that he is in good health, that he was regularly ordained to the Christian Ministry by the Presbyterian Church of America, that he is a minister in good and regular standing with his church body, and that he is in full accord with the Doctrinal Standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

That he served his Assistantship in Willow Creek Presbyterian Church. That he holds the following earned degrees: Bachelor of Arts, (Covenant College 1990) and Master of Divinity, (Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando 1999).

That he was regularly ordained to the Christian Ministry in February 2000 by the Rocky Mountain Presbytery of the PCA, that he is currently an Assistant Pastor of Youth at Village Seven Presbyterian Church, and that having contact with Ballysally Church Extension Charge he would be desirous of being accepted as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

That he has applied to the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates and that if accepted he will undertake any additional studies required by the Board of Studies and Christian Training and will serve the Church for at least one year as an Assistant Minister as required by Par 193(1)(d) of the Code.

Memorialist therefore prays your Venerable Assembly to receive him as a Minister without Charge and to place him under the care of the Presbytery of Coleraine.

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

JEFFREY GODWIN

Dated the twenty-fourth day of February, 2004

Licensed by the Presbytery of Coleraine at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2004 and transmitted to the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

T PETER FLEMING, Moderator

IVAN HUNTER, Clerk

Transmitted simpliciter by the Commission of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine at its meeting in Loanends on 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.

WD WEIR, Moderator

JOSEPH J ANDREWS, Clerk

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

**The Memorial of the Reverend Geoffrey Reilly Respectfully Showeth:**

He is 46 years of age; that he was born in Belfast, N Ireland, and emigrated to Australia in 1996; that he is married with three children; that although he has some degree of physical disability he is in good health; that he was regularly ordained to the Christian Ministry in February 1990 by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; that he is a minister in good and regular standing with his church body; that he is in full accord with the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

That he served as student assistant minister in Ballykeel congregation, Ballymena; that he served as assistant minister in Craigyhill congregation, Larne; that he served as minister to the joint congregations of Dromore and Drumquin, Omagh; that he served as teaching elder in the Westminster Presbyterian congregation of Indooroopilly, Brisbane.

That he holds the following earned degrees: Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Divinity with Second Class Honours.

That he is desirous of being accepted and recognised as a Minister without Charge within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

That he applied to the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates; that he submitted to a medical examination under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; that if accepted he will undertake any additional studies or training required by the Board of Studies and Christian Training, or any other Board of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Memorialist therefore prays your Venerable Assembly to receive him as a Minister without Charge and place him under the care of the Presbytery of Omagh.

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

GEOFF REILLY

Dated this twenty-eighth day of February, 2004

Licensed and transmitted simpliciter by the Presbytery of Omagh at its meeting in Omagh on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2004.

G AITCHESON, Moderator  
JF MURDOCH, Clerk

Transmitted simpliciter by the Synod of Derry and Omagh at its meeting in Sixmilecross on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.

NW McAULEY, Moderator  
JL CASEMENT, Clerk

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

**The Memorial of the Reverend Maurice Sloan Respectfully Showeth:**

That he is 65 years of age; that he was born in Belfast; that he was regularly ordained to the Christian Ministry in May 1972 by the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB), North Minas Presbytery (PNTM); that after a period of fifteen years he relinquished connection with the IPB in order to engage in a wider ministry in Brazil with UFM Worldwide, an interdenominational faith Mission; that he retired from UFM Worldwide on 31<sup>st</sup> day of December, 2003; that he is in full accord with the Doctrinal Standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

That he holds the following academic qualifications: BD from Queens University Belfast (Union Theological College); Diploma in Theology from the University of London; currently completing an MA degree in Pastoral Studies/Missiology with the University of Wales, Lampeter; Pastoral Theology (one year uncertified) at Union Theological College, Belfast

That he has served as a full time missionary in Brazil for 39 years under UFM Worldwide; that he has served as Minister's Assistant to Rev RT Anderson on various occasions in Richview, Belfast and for one year to Rev Dr John Lockington in Gardenmore, Larne.

That he is desirous of being accepted as a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

That he applied to the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates; that, if accepted, he will undertake any additional studies required by the Board of Studies and Christian Training.

Memorialist therefore prays your Venerable Assembly to receive him as a Minister without Charge and to place him under the care of the South Belfast Presbytery.

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

MAURICE SLOAN

Dated the Fifth day of April, 2004

Licensed by a Commission of the Presbytery of Belfast South, at Fisherwick, on 22nd April 2004 and transmitted to the Synod of Belfast.

JA BRAITHWAITE, Moderator

R TREVOR ANDERSON, Clerk

Transmitted by the Commission of the Synod of Belfast at Stormont, on 24th April 2004.

J RONALD SAVAGE, Moderator

WDF MARSHALL, Clerk

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

**The Memorial of the Reverend Charles Tarter Respectfully Showeth:**

That he is 39 years of age; that he was born in Alabama USA and moved to Ireland in 1996; that he is married; that he is in good health; that he was regularly ordained to the Christian Ministry in July 1995 by the Presbyterian Church of America; that he is a minister in good and regular standing with his church body; that he is in full accord with the Doctrinal Standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

That he holds the following degree: Master in Divinity from Beeson Divinity School.

That he worked for 'Mission to the World', the permanent committee for World Missions of the Presbyterian Church in America since 1996 in the towns of Wicklow, Gorey, Enniscorthy, Wexford, Greystones and Dun Laoghaire; that he is currently attending Dun Laoghaire Presbyterian Church and is serving under the supervision of Rev Andrew Smith and that he previously worked in Co Wexford with Rev Samuel Anketell.

That he is desirous of being accepted as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

That he has applied to the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiatees; that, if accepted, he will undertake any additional studies required by the Board of Studies and Christian Training, and will serve the church for at least one year as an assistant minister as required by Par 193(1)(d) of the Code.

Memorialist therefore prays your Venerable Assembly to receive him as a Minister without Charge and to place him under the care of the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster.

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

CHARLES TARTER

Dated the Second day of March, 2004

Licensed by the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2004.

ALAN MITCHELL, Moderator  
JOHN FARIS, Clerk

Transmitted by the Synod of Dublin, meeting at Cavan, on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.

NANCY CUBITT, Moderator  
ALAN MITCHELL, Clerk

# COMMISSION ON TRUSTS

1. Attention is drawn to the Capital Account of the General Investment Fund. The Commission advised the acceptance of the Trust Funds.

2. The Commission authorised the Trustees to accept a transfer of ownership and control of the Currie Community (a company limited by guarantee with charitable status), on behalf of the Board of Social Witness. This is a residential home for sixteen people with a profound learning disability.

AJ RANKIN, Convener

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the Commission on Trusts for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 130 of the Code as follows:-



# BOARD OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Convener: Mr FRANKLIN ADAIR

1. The Board met five times during the year.
2. The Board, at the time of writing, is still reviewing with Customs and Excise the extent of the Church's liability for VAT in respect of some of its central activities. The "General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland" is now registered for VAT with Customs and Excise. Registration took place before the expiration of the "Belated Notification Penalty Exemption" which expired on 30 September 2003. This provided exemption from any penalties that might arise from late registration. At the time of registration it was unclear as to the date when the Church should have first registered and therefore the Church was registered for VAT from the date of the introduction of the tax in 1973 but the right was reserved to amend the date when the actual date was established. There will be a liability for past tax and a supplementary report will be included in Daily Minutes providing an update on discussions with Customs and Excise regarding the amount of these arrears. The Church is in a "partial exemption" situation in that it has income that is zero-rated, standard rated and exempt and this increases the degree of complexity. Changes will need to be made to the Church's accounting systems so that they can account for VAT in the future.
3. The Board has been concerned that a number of organisations within the Church have had to incur overdrafts in order to finance situations where their expenses exceeded their income during the year and the Board is therefore implementing a more formal approval system for authorisation of debts to try to avoid problems arising in relation to their repayment.
4. The Board once again records its appreciation for the excellent and progressive work done by Clive Knox, Financial Secretary, Eileen McClenaghan, Head of Personnel, Jonathan Kelly, Secretary to the Assembly Buildings Committee, Harry Orr, Buildings Manager, and all the staff in the areas of accounting, personnel and property management during the past year. Having professional, expert and committed staff is extremely important to the Church at this time of substantial change.
5. The pension scheme for Church House staff and those employed by the Board of Finance and Administration is The Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension and Life Assurance Plan. The Actuarial Valuation of the Scheme as at 1 January 2003 was received during the year. There was a funding deficit of £217,000 which is a position faced by many schemes at present. The Actuary recommended a combined funding rate of 25.85% (previously 19% ie 3.75% employee and 15.25% employer with a further 2.3% paid directly for Death in Service benefit). The Board decided that the current scheme should be retained because of its benefits for employees and that it should be funded fully with the employer rate rising to 20.85% (including the 2.3%) and the employee rate rising to 5%. The latter rate would be in line with other Church schemes. The

Board took the decision, to raise the employee contribution, very reluctantly in view of the increased cost to our staff.

6. As reported at the 2003 General Assembly, a booklet on wills has been produced. It is now being distributed to congregations.

7. A Health and Safety policy document has been prepared for the central organisation of the Church and the Board received regular updates on the Health and Safety position during the year.

8. The first update of the Handbook for Treasurers has been produced to assist congregations. The handbook is an important reference source to help ensure that there are consistent standards of accounting in all congregations. The Board is concerned that some congregations have not yet taken up the update or the Handbook, which are currently being offered free of charge.

9. At the General Assembly in 2003, it was reported that a serious position had arisen in relation to the cost of stonework repairs to the Assembly Buildings complex. During the year the Board took the view that the issues that were arising required consultation beyond the Board and therefore referred the matter to the General Board and an overall review is included in their section of the reports to this Assembly.

10. The issue of determining where rights and liabilities lie in relation to contracts of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was raised at the General Assembly in 2002. Following the fuller discussion at the 2003 Assembly, action has been taken to provide some protection for the Church and for Board and Committee members:

- a) Even greater endeavours are being made to ensure that people with appropriate skills are being appointed to Boards and Committees
- b) Board and Committee members are being advised of their responsibilities and potential liability
- c) Guidelines have been prepared to assist Board and Committee members
- d) If Board and Committee members make decisions in good faith, and within their authority, the General Assembly decided last year that they should be indemnified out of the assets of the Church
- e) In order to give the Church some protection in such a situation, it has taken its insurance brokers advice in relation to putting in place an appropriate insurance policy and,
- f) In addition, training is being provided for Board and Committee members.

The Board recommends that all Board Conveners brief members at the first Board meeting of a new session and encourage members to read carefully the Guidelines as well as attending appropriate courses as they are provided.

The issue of the creation of a company limited by guarantee, under the name 'Presbyterian Church in Ireland', to execute particular contracts on behalf of the Church was again considered by the Board during the year and the Board recommends that the matter be left in abeyance at present, in view of the actions that have already been taken. The position should be monitored regularly to determine whether any better proposals emanate, over the next 3-4 years, from the Law Reform Advisory Committee that is considering introducing a new form of incorporation for unincorporated organisations and associations.

In addition, the position of Congregations, Presbyteries etc needs to be addressed. The Board's view is that they should be advised of the issue so that all those serving on Presbyteries, Sessions, Committees etc will be aware of the risks and that they should be advised to consider taking at least similar action to the central Church after obtaining whatever advice they consider necessary from their own advisors. The action should include a) ensuring that those carrying out tasks have, or employ those who have, suitable skills, b) providing appropriate training, c) giving indemnities and d) having adequate indemnity insurance. The General Assembly Solicitor has been consulted on the proposal and the General Assembly is being asked to pass a resolution confirming this proposal.

11. The Board is pleased with the service being received from our auditors, Ernst and Young LLP. However in the interests of ensuring that value for money is still being received the Board has made plans that the Audit will be put out to tender during 2004. In the meantime the Board recommends the reappointment of Ernst and Young LLP for the coming year.

12. The Board refers readers to the report of the Board of Ministry and Pensions regarding the arrangements for a new Board of Finance and Personnel.

13. The Board places on record its thanks to the Conveners of its Assembly Committees:

Rev Bob Allely, Assembly Buildings Committee

Mr Michael Fitch, Incidental Fund and

Mr David Lamb, Finance and Staffing Committee.

They are people of considerable ability, have given dedicated service over a number of years and despite being very busy have made themselves available for consultation on many issues during a period when significant matters were arising. Michael Fitch and David Lamb will, subject to the decision of the General Assembly, be acting as Conveners of Assembly Committees of the new Board of Finance and Personnel. Bob Allely will be standing down as Convener of the Assembly Buildings Committee after seven years.

The Board also records its thanks to the special Structural Committee that it put in place after the issue with the Stonework arose. The Board has benefited greatly from the expert participation in that Committee and it records its particular appreciation for all the work of Mr Hubert Martin.

14. The Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" issued by the Charity Commission for England and Wales recommends that a Charity's Annual Report should include "a statement confirming that the major risks to which the charity is exposed have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks". While at present there is not a Charity Commission in Northern Ireland our auditors have suggested that the Church should consider carrying out an assessment of major risks. The Board of Finance and Administration support such a review but recognise that, while not mitigating risks often results in financial commitments, risks are not always financial in nature. It is recognised that the Board of Finance & Personnel should take the lead in bringing a report to the Assembly on this matter but it will require input from and consultation with other Boards and Agencies of the Church.

**Mr DF Adair**

*Rev Dr DJ Watts writes:*

15. Mr Franklin Adair has been a very effective Convener of the Board since 1999. During that time a wide range of issues have been considered, including: the introduction of a Treasurers' Handbook and Guidelines for Board and Committee members; indemnity and Value Added Tax concerns; frequent changes to employment policies and procedures. He was also involved during his Convenership as a "specialist" on the Nomination Board for a number of senior appointments and has recently been guiding the Board through the complexities of the stonework repairs to Church House. The Board has found his financial and business experience to be invaluable.

## ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

1. The surplus generated by the Committee, before the impact of the stonework repairs, was largely in line with the previous year. However, retail trading in central Belfast continues to be difficult. For most of the year there were one or two vacant units within the Mall. A key concern is the footfall passing through the Mall. As a step to address this, the Committee instigated an advertising campaign to promote the Mall in the run up to Christmas.

2. As reported at the 2003 General Assembly, the estimated cost of completing the repairs escalated to £2,016,000 (net of anticipated grant from the Environment and Heritage Service). In conjunction with the Structural Committee, the contract was brought to a close in February 2004 upon completion of the repairs to the Fisherwick Place elevation, excluding the clock tower. All areas that could represent an immediate danger to the public were also included. The Committee acknowledges the goodwill of the contractor and professional advisors in agreeing to this and commends them for the responsible and co-operative manner in which they carried out the repairs.

3. Total expenditure under the contract will be £620,000, net of grant from the Environment and Heritage Service. The Committee thanks the Environment and Heritage Service for their support.

4. Recognising the increase in the estimated cost of the stonework repairs, the Committee asked BTW Shiells to consider ways of increasing income from the Mall and Fisherwick Buildings. The report from BTW Shiells concludes, "it is difficult to foresee any significant increase in future income derived from the scheme. In all probability, expenditure will escalate in terms of rent and service charge voids, tenant incentives, vacant rate liability, disabled access compliance and physical enhancements to the property, in particular to the Mall entrances, signage, lighting and a refurbishment of the offices to modern standards."

5. Recognising these financial concerns the Committee recommended to the Board of Finance and Administration that Church House should be sold expediently and in its entirety.

6. Despite the above, the Committee is pleased to report that it has been able to fund the stonework repairs to date, that cash flow has improved and that general renovations have been carried out to maintain the building and provide offices for the work of the General Assembly.

7. We commend the professionalism and dedication of the Buildings Manager, Mr Harry Orr and his assistants.

8. We thank our Architect, Mr Ken Best of Gordon McKnight Partnership, for all his help during the year and acknowledge the assistance of our Solicitors, Cleaver Fulton & Rankin.

RIA ALLELY, Convener

## INCIDENTAL FUND COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met on three occasions during the year.

2. The Incidental Fund Account (including General Purposes Fund) confirms a credit balance in general funds at the year end 2003 of £124,798 and a further £21,181 in restricted funds. The Committee considered the balances to be satisfactory.

3. The Ministerial Development Fund Account confirms a credit balance at the year ended 2003 of £359,878. The Committee continues to raise its concern with the Board of Studies and Christian Training in relation to the accumulation of funds in this account and understands the rate of assessment for 2004 will be reduced from 0.75p to 0.25p per £ of stipend.

4. The Special Assembly 2004 Account contains a credit balance of £59,953. The Committee considered the accumulation of funds satisfactory.

5. The Committee reviewed applications for funding and recommends that the following grants be allocated in 2004.

Arrangements	16,000
Inter-Church Relations	52,950
Social Witness	15,000
Youth Board	6,500
PCI Holiday	2,000
Peace and Peacemaking	2,500
Historical Society	13,700
Church and Government	15,200
Board of Studies and Christian Training	5,380
Conciliation Panel	1,000
Public Worship	800
Architecture	1,500
General Board	16,000
	<hr/>
	148,530
	<hr/>

The Committee reviewed an application for funding and recommends that the Incidental Fund be authorised to meet any liability to Customs and Excise arising from late registration.

6. Accordingly the Committee recommends that the assessment be 5.0p/£ for the Incidental Fund Account and be maintained at 0.25p/£ for the Special Assembly 2004 Account.

7. Thanks are recorded to all who have served in the Incidental Fund Committee and also to members of staff at Church House for their help during the year.

MICHAEL C FITCH, Convener

## **FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE**

1. The meetings of the Committee during the year were more numerous than usual and much lengthier, reflecting the wide range of important issues being addressed. The more significant items are included in the report of the Board of Finance and Administration.

2. The work of the staff within the Financial Secretary's Office, under the leadership of Clive Knox, continues to provide the wider Church with a greater degree of quality financial information.

3. The centralised Personnel Department, led by the Head of Personnel, Eileen McClenaghan, continues to progress all staffing issues, including policy development and maintenance, in a most professional manner.

4. The appointment of Mr Stephen McMurray during the year is allowing the provision of an appropriate IT infrastructure with associated systems, as detailed in the IT strategy, to be advanced.

5. Statistical and financial data for 2003 is summarised in the appended tables, together with comparative figures for the preceding year.

6. The headline statistics since 1975 are shown by way of line graphs and indicate that the slight decline is continuing.

DAVID LAMB, Convener

TABLE ONE

## PERSONS AND AGENCIES

	2002	2003	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	210	211	1	
Ministers in Active Duty	404	394		10
Retired Missionaries	4	6	2	
Missionaries in Active Duty	75	77	2	
Total Ministers and Missionaries	693	688		5
Licensures	3	5	2	
Congregations	555	552		3
Total Families	113,309	111,890		1,419
Persons of All Ages	276,117	273,285		2,832
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	92,233	91,442		791
Baptisms	1,971	1,976	5	
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	1,959	1,880		79
Communicants	115,478	113,508		1,970
Attended at Least One Communion during year	73,805	72,071		1,734
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	7,158	7,073		85
Number on Rolls in Sunday Schools and Bible Classes	30,905	30,277		628

**TABLE TWO**  
**CONGREGATIONAL INCOME**

	2002		2003		€	% N.I.	% Difference	R. of I.
	£	€	£	€				
Specified Sources	24,476,245	2,070,623	25,501,710	2,168,165		4.2%+	4.7%+	
Building Fund etc.	11,250,671	1,012,072	12,488,644	1,034,077		11.0%+	2.2%+	
“For Others”	5,912,763	414,320	6,032,849	431,214		2.0%+	4.1%+	
Raised from other sources	4,444,795	963,049	4,759,811	961,705		7.1%+	.1%+	
Bequests etc.	5,442,336	207,295	8,065,179	578,810		48.2%+	79.2%+	
Total Receipts	51,526,810	4,667,359	56,848,194	5,173,972		10.3%+	10.9%+	
Total Receipts Less								
Bequests etc.	46,084,474	4,460,064	48,783,015	4,595,162		5.9%+	3.0%+	
Bequests	813,754	49,505	1,487,256	81,013		82.8%+	53.6%+	



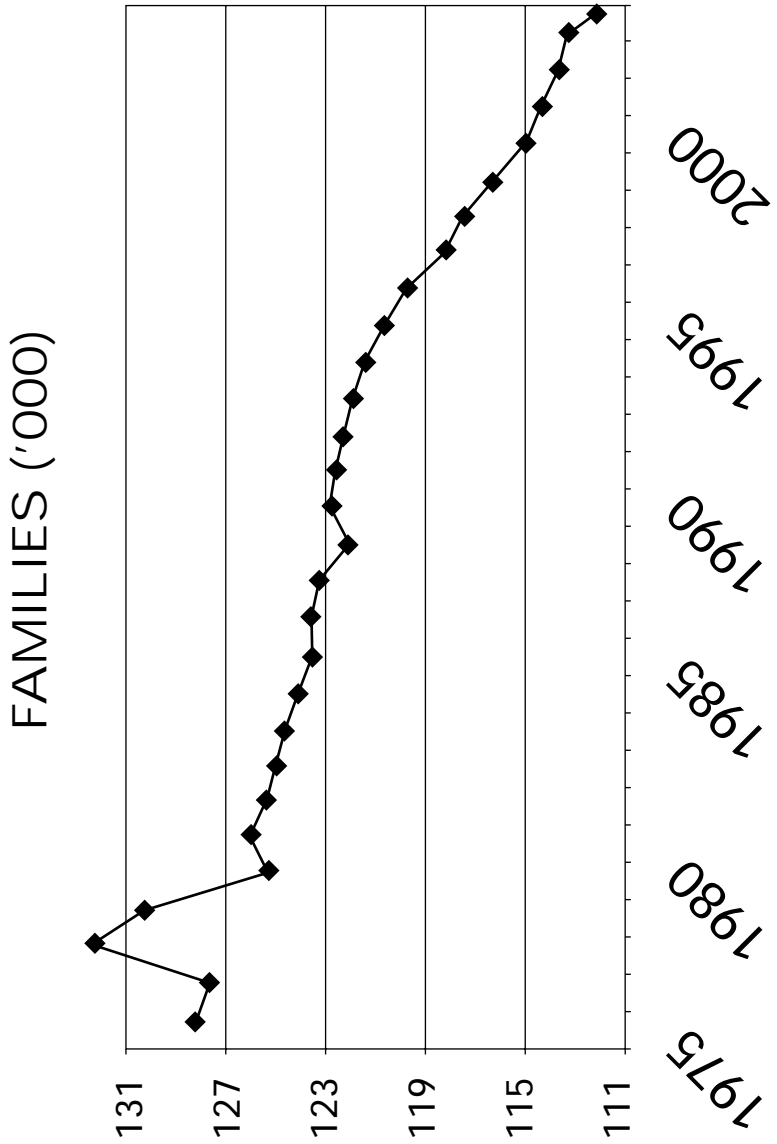
**TABLE THREE**  
**CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE**

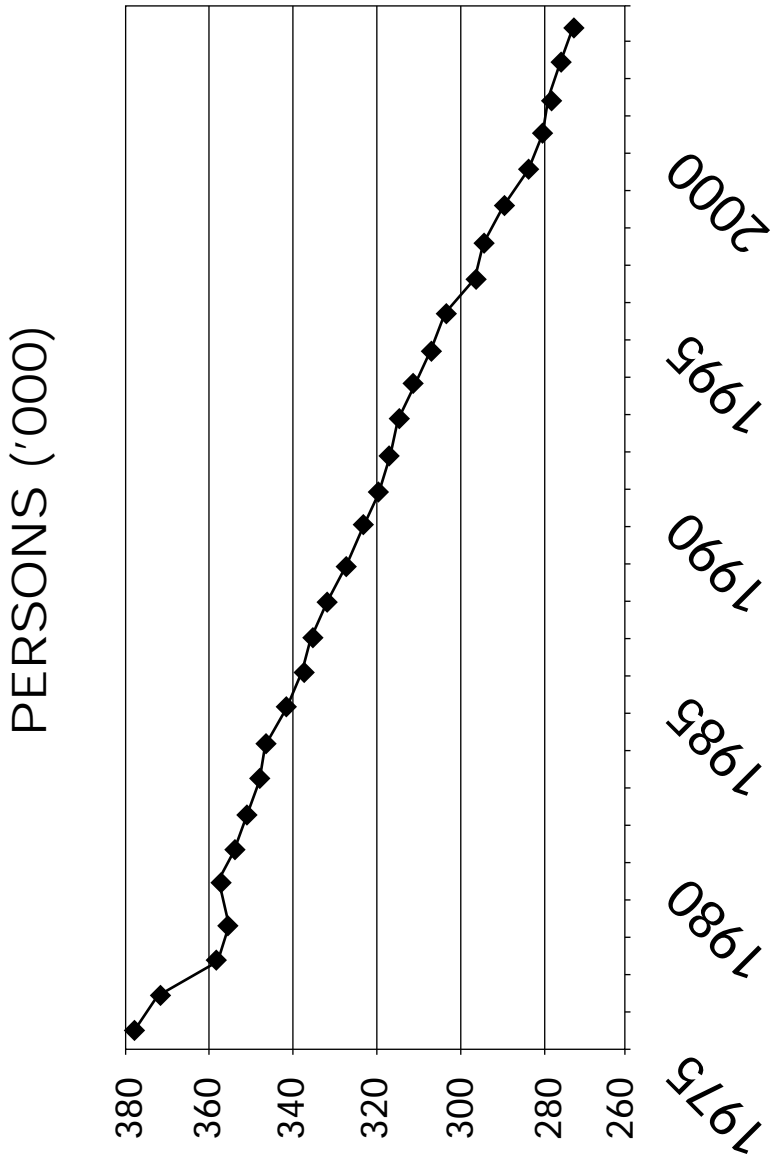
	2002		2003		% Difference N.I.	R. of I.
	£	€	£	€		
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	12,928,289	1,126,224	13,514,709	1,086,993	4.5%+	3.5%—
Payments under Assembly Assessments	4,830,808	410,752	4,991,158	413,241	3.3%+	.6%+
Building, Repairs, etc.	13,483,763	1,026,870	16,412,963	1,293,554	21.7%+	26.0%+
United Appeal Schemes	2,895,737	171,943	2,954,654	171,618	2.0%+	.2%—
Supplementary Schemes						
Other Religious and Charitable Objects	3,985,801	446,041	3,981,133	389,566	.1%—	12.7%—
General Expenses	7,261,524	866,691	7,805,921	955,444	7.5%+	10.2%+
Total Payments	45,385,922	4,048,521	49,660,538	4,310,416	9.4%+	6.5%+

**TABLE FOUR**  
**CONGREGATIONAL BALANCES**

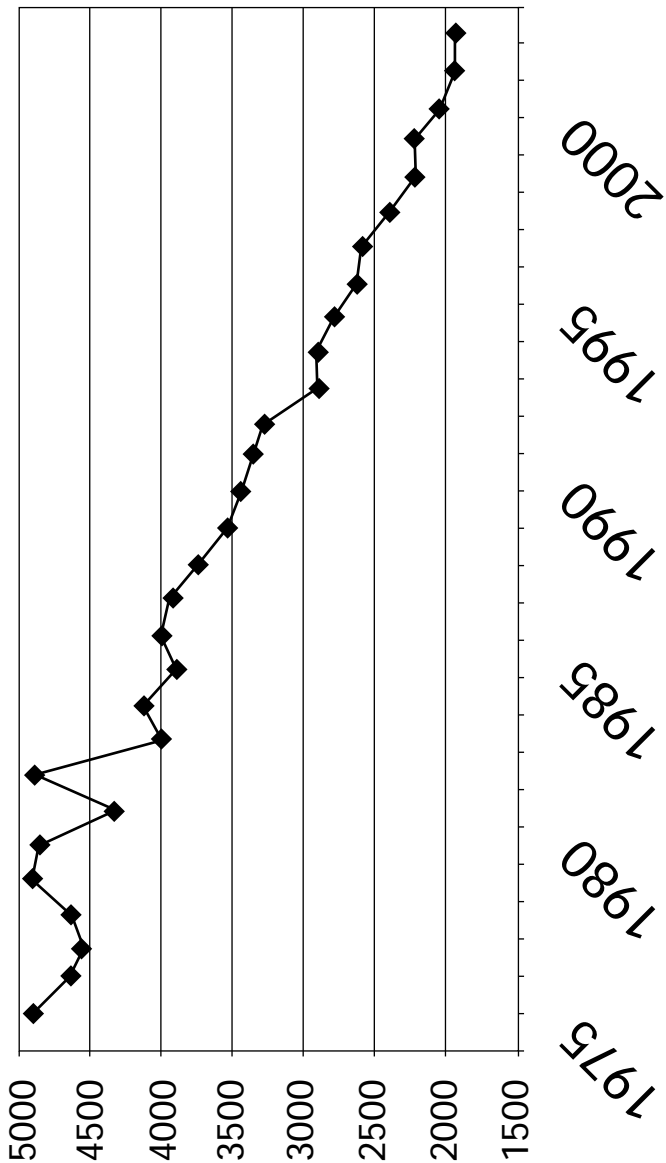
	Closing 2002		Opening 2003		Closing 2003		% Difference N.I.	R. of I.
	£	€	£	€	£	€		
Credits	26,757,889	2,915,304	26,857,956	2,841,345	28,591,989	3,331,798	6.5%+	17.3%+
Debits	2,999,029	63,078	2,846,854	48,812	2,937,393	71,011	3.2%+	45.5%+
Net Credits	23,758,860	2,852,226	24,011,102	2,792,533	25,654,596	3,260,787	6.8%+	16.8%+

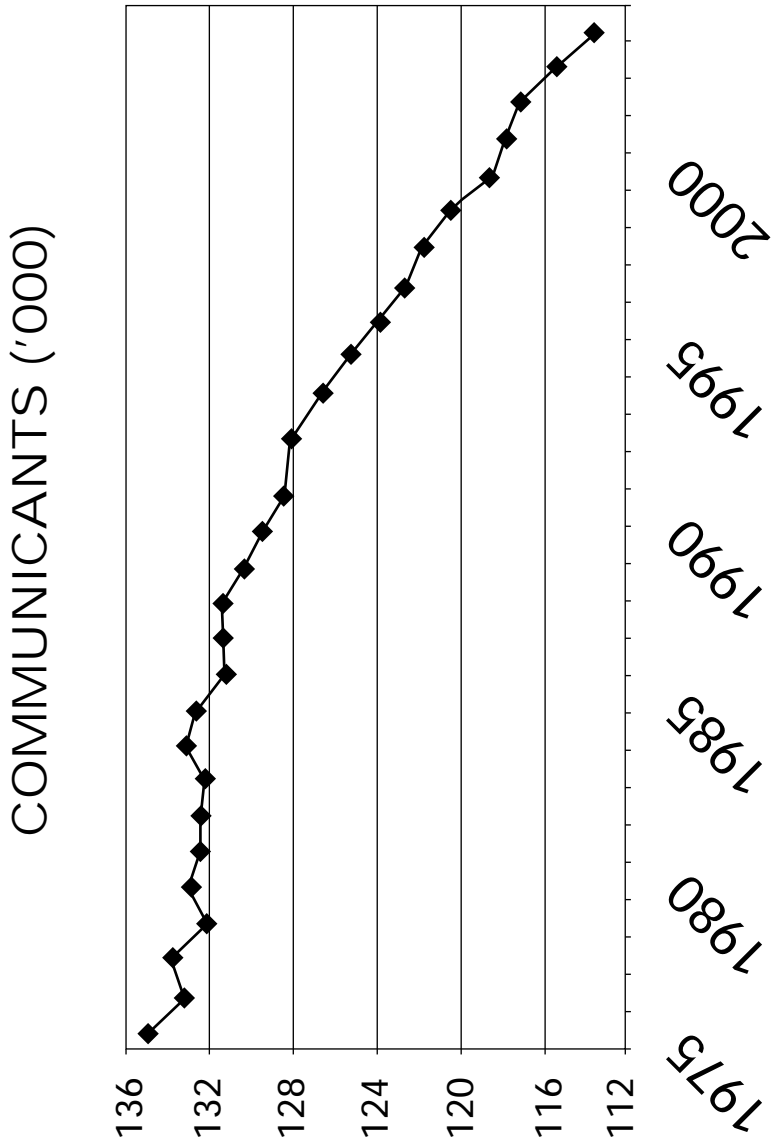






# BAPTISMS





**APPENDIX**

Salary Scales of Executive and Administrative Posts. (The undernoted figures are inclusive of a discretionary 3% increase applied as from 1 January, 2004 following the annual review).

**EXECUTIVE POSTS****Scale 1 (£18,963 - £22,693)**

Youth Development Officer  
Programme Officer  
Payroll & Assessment Manager  
IT Development & Support Manager

**Scale 2 (£21,528 - £26,070)**

Director of Nightlight  
Financial Manager  
Assistant Residential Services Manager  
Finance & Office Manager  
Project Manager, Willowbrook  
Buildings Manager & Safety Officer  
Youth Centres Director

**Scale 3 (£24,189 - £29,667)**

Executive Secretary, PWA  
Education in Mission Officer  
Personnel Officer (Overseas)  
Director of Evangelism  
Sunday School Organiser/Christian Education Secretary  
University Chaplain  
Minister & Superintendent, Kinghan Mission  
Secretary to Board of Education (pro rata)

**Scale 4 (£26,747 - £33,628)**

Director of Youth Ministry  
Superintendent of Irish Mission  
Residential Services Manager  
Head of Personnel  
University Chaplain  
Senior Financial Accountant

**Scale 5 (£29,667 - £36,338)**

Information Officer  
Director of Christian Training

**Scale 6 (£31,926 - £39,082)**

Deputy General Secretary  
Executive Secretary, Overseas Board  
Director of Social Service

**Scale 7 (£36,338 - £46,987)**

General Secretary  
Financial Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS****Scale 1 (£10,163- £12,172)**

Junior Secretary  
Telephonist/Receptionist  
Clerical Officer  
Handyperson

**Scale 2 (£11,282 - £13,182)**

Secretary  
Telephonist/Receptionist  
Information & Technology Assistant  
Clerical Officer  
Financial Assistant  
Graphic Designer  
Caretaker, Youth Centre  
Resident Warden, Youth Centre

**Scale 3 (£12,765 - £14,894)**

Senior Secretary  
Deputy Building Manager  
Senior Clerical Officer  
Wages Clerk  
Payroll & Clerical Assistant  
Administrative Assistant, Personnel BSW

**Scale 4 (£14,579 - £16,918)**

Personal Secretary  
Administrative Assistant  
Personnel Assistant  
Departmental Secretary

**Scale 5 (£16,031 - £18,639)**

Personal Assistant  
Production Manager  
Senior Secretarial Assistant  
Year Team and Volunteers Co-ordinator



Financial Assistant  
Assistant Accountant  
Regional Youth & Support Worker

**Scale 5 (enhanced) (£17,792 - £20,462)**

Personnel Officer  
Senior Administrative Officer  
Personal Secretary & Office Supervisor

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That Ernst and Young LLP be appointed as auditors for all the Committees, Boards, Trusts, Commissions and Agencies of the General Assembly for the year 2004.
3. That the assessment for the Incidental Fund for 2004 be 5.25p in the £ of stipend.
4. That the Incidental Fund be authorised to meet any liability to Customs & Excise arising from late VAT registration.
5. That no action is taken at present to incorporate the central Church structure as a company limited by guarantee but that the matter be kept under review by the Board of Finance and Personnel and that a report be brought to the General Assembly by that Board by 2008 at the latest.
6. That Presbyteries and Congregations consider
  - (a) indemnifying officers and members of decision-making bodies such as Church Committees and Kirk Sessions,
  - (b) ensuring that such persons are aware of their responsibilities as specified in the Code and their potential liabilities,
  - (c) arranging for suitable indemnity insurance cover for congregations and presbyteries,
  - (d) providing appropriate training and
  - (e) ensuring that the people appointed to carry out tasks have, or employ those who have, the appropriate skills and experience.
7. That the Board of Finance and Personnel have a Risk Assessment for the Central Church carried out and that a report be made to the General Assembly no later than 2006.
8. That the resignations of Mr Michael Fitch, Mr David Lamb and Rev RIA Allely as Conveners under the Board of Finance and Administration be accepted and that they be thanked for their services.
9. That the resignation of Mr DF Adiar as Convener of the Board of Finance and Administration be accepted and that he be thanked for his services.
10. That the Board of Finance and Administration, with its associated working committees, are thanked for their services but not reappointed in accordance with Par 286 of the Code in view of the General Assembly's decision to amalgamate the Board with the Board of Ministry and Pensions in the new Board of Finance and Personnel.

# UNITED APPEAL BOARD

Convener: Mr HAL STEWART  
Secretary: Rev Dr DONALD WATTS

1. The Board wishes to express its thanks to all congregations who supported the United Appeal in the year 2003. We are especially pleased to note that an increasing number of congregations, 277, as against 220 in 2002 and 169 in 2001, were able to exceed their target, in some cases by considerable amounts. The Board is also pleased to report that the Appeal for 2003 was £51,291 over target (£46,128 in 2002). This tremendous result was achieved in spite of the fact that 29 congregations with a target of £59,795 (28 congregations in 2002) failed to make a return in time to be included in the accounts for 2003. We are however pleased to note the continuing trend by congregations and treasurers to endeavour to file their returns in good time. You will also note the inclusion in the accounts for 2003 of contributions totalling £58,402 in respect of the year 2002.

2. The Board was pleased to be able to pay in full the proposed allocation of grants for the year 2003.

3. The requests for grants for the year 2005 were 7% higher than the amounts allocated to boards and agencies for the year 2004. After examining the budgets and accounts of each agency and interviewing representatives where necessary we have been able to reduce the amounts requested. In addition, where in previous years we requested an addition to the target to cover contingencies, this year we are able to release a further £100,000 from reserves. The net effect of all these adjustments is a target for the year 2005, as set out in Schedules III and IV, of £3,026,000 which is 1.9% higher than the previous year.

4. Following our decision to take account of Specified Sources of Income when setting Presbytery Targets, 30% of the target for 2005 has been assessed in this way, leaving 70% still based on contributing families. Over a five year period we intend to move to a position where 50% of our Target will be allocated on the basis of Specified Sources leaving 50% as to Contributing Families. We would also commend this basis to presbyteries when setting congregational targets.

5. In the year 2000 the Board commenced a process of paying grants to agencies on a more timely basis and we now pay 7.5% of grants each month (90% for the year) leaving only 10% delayed until the final accounts of the Board are prepared. This continuing improvement in the cash flow of agencies further reduces their need to hold large sums of cash or to borrow from central funds thereby reducing their interest costs.

6. The payment of grants to agencies on a timely basis has only been possible as a result of the build up of the capital of the Board. Ideally we would wish to be able to release part of this fund over a period of years to reduce the target set each year. We appreciate the efforts so far by some congregations to forward monies on a timely basis. Some have moved to monthly envelopes and others to standing orders. However last year 64% of the target amounting to

£1.8m was received after the end of November and some too late to be included in the accounts for 2003. We would again encourage congregations to forward monies on account as soon as these are available.

7. The Board is looking forward to its enhanced responsibilities as outlined in the Committee on Priorities report (2003). The Board will be setting up an Appraisals Committee for the purpose of examining all applications for new Personnel Posts and new Capital Expenditure in accordance with the General Assembly's Priorities for Mission. It is intended that this new committee will have representation from the Incidental Fund, Finance and Staffing Committee and the Union Commission.

8. As requested by many congregations, the Board is working with the Communications Department to endeavour to have the "United Appeal Briefing" available at the end of January and August each year and we can only apologise for the slippage in this past year. The "Briefings" are undated and can therefore be distributed by congregations at times most suitable to them. The Board will continue to consider how best it can improve its literature and educate and encourage members to improve their contributions to the United Appeal. Comments and suggestions, preferably in writing, would be welcomed by the convener.

**SCHEDULE I**

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2002	Specified Sources 2002 £	United Appeal 2004 £
Ards.....	9,839	2,581,997	312,706
Armagh.....	3,915	1,240,627	129,338
Ballymena.....	7,868	2,377,831	257,272
Belfast North.....	6,601	1,617,538	207,154
Belfast South.....	3,752	1,259,842	125,585
Belfast East.....	8,492	2,419,690	274,298
Carrickfergus.....	5,856	1,436,803	183,816
Coleraine.....	4,633	1,420,459	151,960
Derry & Strabane.....	3,579	939,228	113,749
Donegal.....	1,286	327,988	40,654
Down.....	4,788	1,116,087	148,941
Dromore.....	5,227	1,511,337	169,342
Dublin & Munster.....	1,264	597,692	46,297
Foyle.....	2,943	665,830	91,084
Iveagh.....	3,672	1,092,257	119,667
Monaghan.....	985	255,603	31,239
Newry.....	2,697	870,419	89,462
Omagh.....	2,593	702,111	82,910
Route.....	3,696	952,066	117,057
Templepatrick.....	4,583	1,198,233	145,556
Tyrone.....	3,964	1,193,494	129,513
	92,233	25,777,132	2,967,600

80% of the allocation for 2004 has been based on contributing families and 20% on Specified Sources. Specified Sources for congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2002 of 1.5917.

**SCHEDULE II**

	Requested 2004 £	Proposed Grant 2004 £
Home Mission .....	300,000	300,000
Irish Mission .....	275,000	225,000
Evangelism & Divine Healing .....	50,000	50,000
Education Board .....	265,000	235,000
Students Bursary Fund .....	393,000	393,000
Youth Board .....	274,000	270,000
Rostrevor Centre.....	6,500	6,500
Guysmere Centre.....	9,000	9,000
Lucan Centre .....	15,000	0
Social Witness Board .....	85,000	80,000
Social Issues & Resources Committee.....	5,000	3,000
ADE Committee .....	18,000	15,000
Thompson House.....	5,000	2,500
Carlisle House .....	15,000	15,000
Residential Trust.....	5,000	2,500
Kinghan Mission .....	70,000	65,000
Marriage & Family Project .....	1,000	1,000
Shankill Road Mission .....	20,000	2,500
Overseas Board.....	950,000	950,000
Department of Communications .....	176,000	164,000
Union Theological College .....	281,000	265,000
Chaplains Committee .....	13,600	13,600
	3,232,100	3,067,600
Allocation from reserves		(100,000)
	3,232,100	2,967,600

**SCHEDULE III**

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2003	Specified Sources 2003 £	United Appeal 2005 £
Ards.....	9,699	2,716,083	315,990
Armagh.....	4,088	1,296,093	138,272
Ballymena.....	7,839	2,501,009	265,672
Belfast North.....	6,404	1,632,838	203,242
Belfast South.....	3,631	1,260,402	126,486
Belfast East.....	8,326	2,516,001	277,457
Carrickfergus.....	5,880	1,448,517	184,907
Coleraine.....	4,561	1,476,397	155,291
Derry & Strabane.....	3,621	995,441	117,346
Donegal.....	1,282	374,173	42,277
Down.....	4,741	1,171,351	149,204
Dromore.....	5,200	1,591,357	173,958
Dublin & Munster.....	1,211	708,999	51,889
Foyle.....	2,952	702,134	91,988
Iveagh.....	3,672	1,170,061	124,399
Monaghan.....	988	312,451	33,391
Newry.....	2,699	897,117	92,683
Omagh.....	2,530	739,118	83,456
Route.....	3,643	983,309	117,448
Templepatrick.....	4,564	1,265,362	148,265
Tyrone.....	3,911	1,242,764	132,379
	91,442	27,000,977	3,026,000

70% of the allocation for 2005 has been based on contributing families and 30% on Specified Sources. Specified Sources for congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2003 of 1.44615.

**SCHEDULE IV**

	Requested 2005 £	Proposed Grant 2005 £
Home Mission .....	265,000	265,000
Irish Mission .....	380,000	380,000
Evangelism & Divine Healing .....	37,000	37,000
Education Board .....	160,000	150,000
Students Bursary Fund .....	321,000	321,000
Youth Board .....	376,000	376,000
Rostrevor Centre.....	9,000	1,000
Guysmere Centre.....	10,000	2,000
Lucan Centre .....	15,000	0
Social Witness Board .....	140,000	140,000
Social Issues & Resources Committee.....	5,000	5,000
ADE Committee .....	1,000	1,000
Thompson House.....	2,500	1,000
Carlisle House .....	0	0
Residential Trust.....	5,000	1,000
Kinghan Mission .....	65,000	65,000
Marriage & Family Project .....	1,000	1,000
Shankill Road Mission .....	0	0
Overseas Board.....	975,000	975,000
Department of Communications .....	220,000	174,000
Union Theological College .....	275,000	210,000
Chaplains Committee .....	21,000	21,000
	3,283,500	3,126,000
Allocation from reserves		(100,000)
	3,283,500	3,026,000

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received
2. That the United Appeal for 2005 be as set out in Schedules III and IV.
3. That the United Appeal Board for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 287 of the Code as follows:



# BOARD OF MINISTRY AND PENSIONS

Convener: Rev LESLIE CASEMENT

1. The Board has been dealing with a number of major concerns during the past year. The first is the merger of the Board with the Board of Finance and Administration. In agreement with that Board we set out below a brief summary of the new committee structure. If the required amendments to the Code are agreed by the General Assembly we will end up with a much smaller and, we hope, more effective Board. While the membership will be reduced, the work load will not, and we would take this opportunity to thank those who have shown a willingness to accept the additional responsibilities involved.

2. At the time of writing this report the details of convenerships had not been finalised but it is hoped that those who have been acting in this capacity will continue to share the particular tasks in which they were involved for at least another year. We would thank them for their work and express the hope that the new Board will quickly find its feet and continue the good work which has been done in the past.

3. The second matter of concern for the Board has been the problem experienced by all Pension Funds of finding that their assets have been greatly reduced due to the fall in the Stock Market over recent years. The Ministers' Pension Scheme 1978 is awaiting the outcome of the three yearly review carried out by our actuary. Preliminary figures suggest that during the past three years our assets have declined from £40 million to about £36 million. There are two ways in which this deficit can be made up – either by increasing the contributions of both employer and employee or by reducing the benefits provided by the scheme. The Board cannot make any definite proposals until it has received the report of the actuary which may be available in time for the General Assembly.

4. In order to compensate for a possible increase in assessments to the MPS, the Board has been able to reduce some of the other assessments as you will see from the following reports of the Central Ministry Fund Committee and the Committee on Retirements and Pensions.

5. Further improvements have been made this year to the working out of the Tyrone Memorial in the light of comments received. For clarification we would confirm that the increases approved by the Board are minimum amounts, and congregations may if they so wish pay their minister more than the figure set out in the return of stipend form.

## **The New Board of Finance and Personnel**

6. The new Board will consist of two representatives from each Presbytery and a reduced number of ex-officio members. It will have four Assembly committees which will assume all the functions of the present Boards. In addition it is anticipated that a number of Board Committees will be

appointed to be responsible for various day to day matters. The names of the committees are virtually self-explanatory.

(i) **Personnel** (Ministers and Staff). As well as being concerned with the implementation of government legislation with regard to the increasingly complex area of employment, this Committee will take over responsibility for the work of the Retired Ministers House Fund.

(ii) **Finance, Legal & IT**. This Committee will also be responsible for Statistics.

(iii) **Assembly Buildings**. This Committee will be responsible not only for the oversight of the Assembly Buildings but also for Health and Safety within the buildings.

(iv) **Pensions & Assessments** - this committee will take over the work of the present Incidental Fund, Central Ministry Fund, and Retirement and Pensions Committees.

### Conveners Retiring

*Rev Dr DJ Watts writes:*

7. To make way for these changes the Conveners of the Board and its working committees have stepped down at this time. They have each given concerned leadership in work which involves detailed knowledge and understanding. Their names are recorded in a resolution of thanks.

## CENTRAL MINISTRY FUND COMMITTEE

1. At year end 2003, the CMF had a retained balance of £2,829,314, a small decrease on 2002, reflecting the very significant reduction in the level of assessment from 21% to 17%.

2. The Basic Ministerial Minimum for 2004 has been increased by 4.5% to £18,500, rising to £21,275 after 30 years service.

3. Despite anticipating that the rate of CMF assessment would need to be increased from the 2003 rate, which was set at a significantly reduced level to allow for the introduction of an assessment for the Ministers' Prolonged Disability Fund, CMF is proposing that the rate of assessment remains at 17 p in £ of stipend

4. The following increases were set by the Board under the Tyrone Memorial scheme:

£0 – 20,355	4.50%
£20,356-25000	3.50%
£25,001 – 30,000	2.75%
£30,000 – 35,000	2.00%
£35,001 – 40,000	1.50%
£40,001 and over	1.00%

5. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2004:

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
(a) Ministerial Minimum	£18,500	17,700
After 5 years service	18,962	18,144
After 10 years service	19,425	18,585
After 15 years service	19,888	19,026
After 20 years service	20,350	19,470
After 25 years service	20,812	19,911
After 30 years service	21,275	20,355

<b>(b) Family Grants 2004</b>	<b>N. Ireland</b>	<b>Rep. of Ireland</b>
Birth to 10 years	£ 275	€ 825
11-15 years	420	1,300
16+ At school	630	2,400
At university	2,100	4,000

**Bands for joint incomes:**

Reduction £1 for every £5	£21,260-28,600	€ 33,025-44,420
Reduction £1 for every £2	28600+	44,420+

- (c) The grant in respect of any child who is 16 years+ falling into category (b), and who is in receipt of a maintenance or training grant shall be reduced by £1 for every £1 by which such grant or other sponsorship or scholarship exceeds £1000.
- (d) The amount a minister may earn, apart from congregational work, without the augmented grant being affected shall be £3,640 under Par 316(2)(d)(i) of the Code or £1975 under Par 316(2)(d)(ii). The maximum under the above paragraphs shall be £3,640.
- (e) Bequests: A minister may receive up to £1100 per annum from bequests received during his/her ministry without grants being affected.
- (f) Retired ministers with pre 1978 service will receive a special grant of £15 per month (Par 315(5)).
- (g) That in reckoning augmentation for 2004, the CMF shall not take account of a sum not exceeding the annual Bonus, being income from the Commutation, Sustentation and Central Ministry Funds. Code Par 316(2)(e).
- (h) Euro Differential: Under the Euro Differential scheme, the rates for 2003 were as follows: Jan.-June 2964 Euro; July-December 2570 Euro.

6. During the year the Committee became aware that in some larger congregations with an Associate Minister, the congregation was becoming a net beneficiary from CMF. Believing that CMF exists, primarily, to support the position of smaller congregations, the Committee wrote to the Union Commission to bear this point in mind when agreeing the terms of Leave to Call for Associate Ministers.

J HUTCHESON, RJA BELL, Joint Conveners.

## COMMITTEE ON RETIREMENTS AND PENSIONS

### WIDOWS OF MINISTERS' FUND

1. The Assessment for 2003 was 7.75p in the £ of Stipend and the Fund showed a surplus for the year of £ 124,631 and a retained balance of £ 492,269.

2. The Board approved the following recommendations for 2004.

- (a) Widows' Pension - £ 5,087.50
- (b) Widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension - £5,087.50 plus £ 475
- (c) Widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension or PWFA - £5,087.50 plus £500
- (d) Widows whose husbands were not eligible for Northern Ireland State Pension - £ 5,087.50 plus £4,027.40\*

\* 2004/05 rate not yet announced by Government

### Presbyterian Widows' Fund Association

All ministers join this Association at ordination.

The annual membership subscription increased on 1 January 2004 from 1.00% to 1.25% of the Basic Ministerial Minimum for active ministers and remains at 0.2% for retired ministers. An additional 0.1% is charged to ministers not under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Membership provides an annuity to widows, which is presently £ 1,164.

### RETIRED MINISTERS' FUND

1. The Assessment for 2003 was 11p in the £ of Stipend and the Fund showed a surplus of £212,238 for the year and a retained balance of £ 905,759.

2. The Board approved the following recommendations for 2003.

- (a) Basic Retirement Allowance - £ 9,250
- (b) Supplemental Grant for those living in the Republic of Ireland with no State Pension - currently £6,437.60 (married), £4,027.40 (single) (2004/05 rates not yet announced by Government).

### MINISTERS' PENSION SCHEME (1978)

1. The Trustees' Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2003, are included in the published accounts.

2. Since the last Assembly, the following were granted leave to retire by Presbyteries:

Revs Robert Derek Drysdale (Belmont), John Dunlop (Rosemary), David Joseph McGaughey (Mourne), George Moffett (Tullycarnet), George Alexander Preston (Connor), Averil Anne Stevenson (Kircubbin), William Derek Weir (Killead and Loanends) and Trevor Hamilton Wilson (Templepatrick).

3. Unanimous approval was given to Rev JM Cathcart (Waterside and Fahan) to seek the permission of the 2004 General Assembly to retire on or after his 64<sup>th</sup> birthday. (Code Par 223(3))

4. There is a concern about the Actuarial Valuation of the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) which is currently being prepared as at 31 December, 2003. In view of the probable increase in Funding Rates, due particularly to

lower market returns and increased life expectancy, it was decided to propose an increase in the Assessment of 2p in the £ (offset by a reduction in the Assessment for the Ministers' Prolonged Disability Fund) to 20.75p in the £ pending the outcome of the Valuation later in the year.

5. The Trustees did not award a discretionary increase on pensions in payment (pre 1997, in excess of the guaranteed minimum pension for the year commencing 1 April 2003).

### **MINISTERS' PROLONGED DISABILITY FUND**

The Assessment of 4p in the £ in 2003 has provided the Fund with a balance of £350,331. There have been no claims for benefits to date, and if this continues, the proposed reduced Assessment of 2p in the £ for 2004 will increase the resources of the Fund to about £500,000 by the end of the year. The Committee considers that this will be an acceptable level subject only to a considerable upsurge in claims.

The Board has accepted the Committee's recommendation that the Rate of Benefit from the Fund should increase to £9,360 per annum in 2004 (2003: £9,000).

J MILLAR, Convener

### **RETIRED MINISTERS' HOUSE FUND COMMITTEE**

1. The Committee continues to provide assistance to ministers, widows of ministers, missionaries and deaconesses who are seeking accommodation for their retirement. We normally offer help in one of three ways: (a) a loan of up to £30,000 to assist in the purchase of a house, (b) the provision of rented accommodation, or (c) an equity sharing arrangement in which the fund agrees to purchase up to 50% of the property.

2. During the year we provided loans for two ministers with a total value of £50,000. We received property by bequest in Ballycastle and Lisburn and approved a major renovation to the Ballycastle property. It was agreed to purchase a property for a widow of a minister and to enter into an equity sharing scheme for a minister south of the border.

3. Three problems cause the committee particular concern. The first is the continually rising cost of property, particularly in the South of Ireland.

4. The second is the increase in requests for equity sharing arrangements which tie up capital for an indefinitely long period of time. In future it may become essential to limit the amount and number of these arrangements.

5. The third problem is the difficulty of not knowing the number of requests we will receive in any one year. It would be a great help to the committee if anyone wanting assistance from the fund would let us know at the earliest possible stage.

6. The day to day running of the fund relies on the excellent work of Mr Ian McElhinney and his colleagues in the financial Secretary's Office and the

professional expertise of Mr Noel McLaughlin and Mr Herbert Smyth and to them we offer our sincere thanks.

7. Finally we hope that through the work of our fund our church is able to assist those who have served her well to enjoy a happy retirement in a suitable home.

N McLAUGHLIN, DC PORTER. Co-Conveners

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

### Central Ministry Fund

2. That Retired Ministers with pre 1978 service be paid, in the current year, a special grant, Code Par 315(5), of £15 per month from the CMF.

3. That the rate of assessment for CMF in 2004 be 17p in the £ of Stipend.

### Retired Ministers' Fund

4. That the rate of assessment for the Retired Ministers' Fund in 2004 be 11p in the £ of Stipend.

### Widows of Ministers' Fund

5. That the rate of assessment for the Widows of Ministers' Fund in 2004 be 7.75p in the £ of Stipend.

### Ministers' Prolonged Disability Fund

6. That the rate of assessment for the Ministers' Prolonged Disability Fund in 2004 be 2p in the £ of Stipend for Ministers, Licentiates and College Professors and of Basic Ministerial Minimum for Ministers who are Missionaries.

### Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)

7. That the rate of assessment for the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) in 2004 be 20.75p in the £ of Stipend as shown in the column 'Stipend paid to Minister' or as fixed by the Union Commission in the case of a vacancy.

8. That the General Board be authorised to act on behalf of the General Assembly during the coming year in relation to any proposed change to the assessments and contributions for the Ministers' Pension Scheme 1978.

9. That under the provisions of Code Par 223 (3) Rev JM Cathcart (Waterside and Fahan) be given permission to retire on or after his 64<sup>th</sup> birthday and that his pension be in accordance with the Code and the Rules of the Scheme.

### General

10. That the Board of Ministry and Pensions be thanked for its services and discharged.

11. That the out-going Conveners – Revs JL Casement, RJA Bell, DC Porter, Messrs J Hutcheson, J Millar, N McLaughlin – be thanked for their work in convening the Board and Committees.

12. That Mr J Millar, OBE, be appointed Convener of the Board of Finance and Personnel.

13. That Mr David Lamb be appointed Convener of the Personnel Committee; Mr Michael Fitch be appointed Convener of the Finance, Legal and IT Committee; Mr Hubert Martin be appointed Convener of the Assembly Buildings Committee; Mr Douglas Crowe be appointed Convener of the Pensions and Assessments Committee.

14. That the Board of Finance and Personnel, with its associated working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed as follows:

### **OVERTURES TRANSMITTED**

#### **Anent Par 223(3) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 223(3) of the Code the words “Ministry and Pensions” and “Retirements and Pensions” be deleted and the words “Finance and Personnel” and “Pensions and Assessments” be substituted in their place.

#### **Anent Par 268(4)(d) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 268(4)(d) of the Code the words “Finance and Administration” be deleted and the words “Finance and Personnel” be substituted in their place and the words “Board of Ministry and Pensions” be deleted.

#### **Anent Par 286 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that the present wording of Par 286 of the Code be deleted and substituted by the following:

#### **“Board of Finance and Personnel**

(1) The Board shall consist of the Moderator and Clerk, the Financial Secretary, the Convener of the Union Commission, the Assembly Conveners of the Board and the working committees under its supervision, with their members, and two persons nominated by each Presbytery, not more than one of whom shall be a minister.

(2) The Board shall:

(a) be responsible for the management of all personnel employed by the General Assembly or under the control of the Assembly whether in Church House or in other related appointments, including the approval of all contracts of employment and amendments thereto. (In the appointment of the Financial Secretary, the Board, while retaining the power of appointment shall consult with the Executive Committee of the Trustees to permit the person to be also appointed Secretary to that Committee).

- (b) ensure that all Boards and officials provide all information necessary for the review of staff matters.
- (c) ensure that Boards and officials and all staff adhere to any regulations introduced by or with the authority of the Board for the welfare or the general efficiency of the staff or the property of the Church.
- (3) It shall be the duty of the Board to:
  - (a) oversee the finances of the church, including the regulation of the systems for the control of all assets and funds of the Church, except those which are the responsibility of individual congregations or the Assembly Trustees.
  - (b) prepare and present the annual accounts to the Assembly and nominate auditors for appointment by the Assembly.
  - (c) ensure that Boards and officials follow guidelines approved by the Board for the receipt, recording, retention, and payment of monies, and that they provide financial and other information as and when the Board shall require.
  - (d) require Boards and officials to obtain the prior approval of the Board before adopting any policy or change of policy affecting the legal status of the Church, a Board, or an official of the Church.
  - (e) require Boards and officials to take all steps considered necessary by the Board, for the protection of the assets of the Church against all classes of risk.
- (4) The Board shall, directly or by committee, superintend the administration of the Assembly's Incidental Fund, as directed by the Assembly:
  - (a) for the payment of travelling expenses, postage, printing and administrative costs in connection with the work of the General Assembly or any of its Boards or Committees.
  - (b) for the payment of any other grants or expenses as approved by the General Assembly.
  - (c) to obtain the necessary funds by means of an annual assessment levied on congregations, at a rate which shall be fixed by the Assembly annually.
  - (d) but shall not be chargeable with the expenses of any committee for which the Assembly has made other provisions, as through the United Appeal; nor of members of commissions, boards and committees other than conveners or secretaries, unless by special direction of the Assembly; nor of deputations beyond the limits of the British Isles without the directions of the Assembly or its General and Business Boards.
- (5) The Board shall, directly or by committee, be responsible for the regular compilation and publication of Church Statistics as follows:
  - (a) it shall prepare and issue annually a query sheet to congregations to ascertain their numerical strength and financial condition together with any additional matters which it may decide. It is the responsibility of each Moderator, or interim Moderator, of Kirk Session, to ensure that all questions are answered and that the query sheets are submitted to Presbytery in time for examination and



certification at their stated meeting in March, after which they shall be forwarded to the Board without delay.

- (b) the information thus obtained shall be tabulated and subsequently published by the authority of the Assembly as a supplement to its annual Minutes.

(6) The Board shall, directly or by committee, superintend the management of the Church House and Assembly Hall, including the Fisherwick Buildings, caring for the fabric, effecting necessary repairs and improvements, arranging lettings of the various halls, rooms, and buildings and maintaining the order and cleanliness of the entire property and be responsible for all matters of health and safety within the buildings.

- (7) The Board shall directly or by committee:

- (a) administer The Central Ministry Fund (see Pars 313ff)
- (b) administer The Retired Ministers' Fund (see Pars 321ff)
- (c) administer The Widows of Ministers' Fund (see Pars 324ff)
- (d) administer The 1978 Ministers' Pension Scheme (see Pars 326ff)
- (e) administer The Prolonged Disability Fund
- (f) administer The Retired Ministers' House Fund
- (g) appoint a committee to consider and report to the Assembly the cases of all ministers applying for special leave to retire from active duty. The committee shall have the right to issue a schedule of queries to be answered by the applicant.

(8) The Board shall have the authority to deal with urgent matters of financial administration, outside the other powers of the Board, which may arise between meetings of the General Assembly."

#### **Anent Par 288 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that the present Par 288 of the Code be deleted.

#### **Anent Par 311(3) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 311(3) of the Code the words "Board of Ministry and Pensions and its Central Ministry Fund (ie CMF) Committee" be deleted and the words "Board of Finance and Personnel through its Pensions and Assessments Committee" be substituted in their place.

#### **Anent Par 311(6) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that the present wording of Par 311(6) of the Code be deleted and substituted by:

"(6) Two secretaries of the Fund shall be appointed annually by the Board of Finance and Personnel from among its members".

#### **Anent Par 311(7) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that sub-paragraph 311(7) of the Code be deleted.

**Anent Pars 312(2) and 316(3) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 312(2) and 316(3) the words “CMF Committee” be deleted and the words “Pensions and Assessments Committee” be substituted in their place.

**Anent Par 314 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 314 of the Code the words “Board of Ministry and Pensions” and “CMF Committee” be deleted and the words “Board of Finance and Personnel” and “Pensions and Assessments Committee” be substituted in their place.

**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 “upon application” be deleted.

**Anent Pars 318(A)2b; 319(3); 324(3) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Pars 318(A)2b; 319(3); 324(3) of the Code the words “Ministry and Pensions” be deleted and the words “Finance and Personnel” be substituted in their place.

**Anent Par 321(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 321(1) of the Code the words “Committee on Retirements and Pensions and the Board of Ministry and Pensions” be deleted and the words “Pensions and Assessments Committee of the Board of Finance and Personnel” be substituted in their place.

**Anent Par 111(6) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that the present wording of sub-paragraph 111(6) of the Code be deleted and substituted by:

“No alterations to the rules governing the Central Ministry Fund, the Retired Ministers’ Fund, the Widows of Ministers’ Fund or the 1978 Ministers’ Pension Scheme shall be made unless notice proposing the making of the rules has been on the minutes of the proceedings of the Assembly for twelve months.”

J LESLIE CASEMENT

# TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Hon Secretary: Rev Dr DONALD J WATTS

Financial Secretary: Mr CLIVE KNOX

1. The following is an extract from the Minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees at their Annual General Meeting held in Church House, Belfast, on 1 April, 2004.

2. The Report of the Executive Committee and the Statement of audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2003 of the following were laid before the Trustees, and were adopted by them:

The General Investment Fund

The Commutation Fund

The Non-Participating Trust Funds

The Magee Fund

The Tops Wilson Trust Fund

The Fire Insurance Trust Fund

The Fortune Mission Bequest

The Lindsay Memorial Fund

Trust Funds

3. Moved by Rev J McAllister, seconded by Mr W Cosgrove and unanimously agreed, that the Report and the Statements of Accounts be adopted, signed by three Trustees, inserted in the 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 Rev J McAllister, Mr W Cosgrove, and Mr A Speers, 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 2003 of the Getty Trust, Union Theological College and The War Memorial Hostel and had accepted these for inclusion in the volume of Accounts to be submitted to the General Assembly. On the proposal of Mr A L Jamieson, seconded by Rev D Clarke, 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, OBE.

6. Mr J I Bill, OBE, and Sir Eric McDowell were nominated members of the General Assembly, according to the provision of the Code Par 97 (h) (iii).

**Trust Funds**

A summary Account of the various Trust Funds is included in the Book of Accounts 2003. The following Trust Funds are distributed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Trustees.

7. **Mrs A M Davidson Trust:** The total income for 2003 available for distribution is £7,467.57. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Union Theological College	£3,225.00
Church House Repairs	£3,167.57
Youth/Sunday School	£1,075.00
	<hr/>
	£7,467.57
	<hr/>

8. **Sir Wm V McCleery Estate:** The total income for 2003 available for distribution is £38,993.61. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Central Ministry Fund	80%
Retired Ministers' Fund	10%
Widows of Ministers' Fund	10%

9. **Estate of Miss Irene Scott:** The total income for 2003 available for distribution is £8,079.18. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Alcohol and Drug Education	£3,879.18
Church House Repairs	£4,200.00
	<hr/>
	£8,079.18
	<hr/>

10. **Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown:** The total income for 2003 available for distribution is £5,184.93. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Church House Fabric Repairs	£3,084.93
Learning Disabled Project	
Willowbrook, Coleraine	£2,100.00
	<hr/>
	£5,184.93
	<hr/>

11. **Estate of Mr Victor Morrow:** The total income for 2003 available for distribution is £1,690.02. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Union Theological College	£845.01
Church House Fabric Repairs	£845.01
	<hr/>
	£1,690.02

**GENERAL INVESTMENT FUND**

12. <b>Declaration of Dividend</b>	15.4.03	15.10.03
Number of shares qualifying	4,760,997	4,810,836
	£	£

Income from investment for distribution and income tax recoverable less administrative charge and Investment Advisers' Fees	588,867	829,615
Dividend per share	12.00p	17.30p

In the year 2003 £2,660 was transferred from the Dividend Equalisation Reserve and the balance on the Dividend Equalisation Reserve at 31 December, 2003 is £663,300.

13. The combined annual Dividend of 29.30p per share is to be compared with 28.5p per share for 2002; 28.00 for 2001; 28.00 for 2000; 27.00 for 1999; 25.00 for 1998; 23.50 for 1997; 22.00 for 1996; 21.50 for 1995; 21.00 for 1994.

14. <b>Valuation</b>	15.4.03	15.10.03
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	25,098,058	24,703,144
Cash on Deposit	(130,229)	2,367,995
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	665,960	665,960
Property and Ground Rents	2,290,000	2,290,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£27,923,789	£30,027,099
	<hr/>	<hr/>

No of Shares Issued	4,768,876	4,831,445
Share Value	£5.8554	£6.2149

**General Investment Fund**

15. The advisers to the fund are NCL Smith & Williamson, the owners of Cunningham Coates. The Executive Committee of Trustees meet with the Investment Advisers to review investment performance on a regular basis. The Dividend Equalisation Reserve exceeds the permitted levels under Rule 21 (3) of the General Investment Fund Scheme. The Trustees therefore, in accordance with the rules have not made any transfer to the reserve during the year.

**Crescent Church Loan Fund**

16. No requests for loans were received during 2003. Interest is currently charged on loans at bank base rate on the average balance outstanding over the term of the loan.

**Getty Bequest**

21. The allocation of grants out of the income of the Trust Estate of John Getty for the year ending 31 December, 2003 was as follows:

Overseas – Foreign	2,800
Overseas – Jewish	1,500

Home Mission	3,700
Belfast City Mission	2,900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£10,900</b>

### **Union Theological College and Magee Fund**

22. The Trustees have agreed to provide a loan facility to Union Theological College to assist with the costs of the College refurbishment. A formal legal Loan Agreement has been completed and a loan of £300,000 was made during the year.

### **Familybooks Limited**

The accounts of Familybooks Limited for the year ended 31 July 2003 have been prepared. These reflect adjustments arising from the sale of the business to Send the Light Limited on 30 April 2003. The loss for the year ended 31 July 2003 is £72,793 and the nett assets of the business at that date are £145,305. The total amount therefore realised from the sale of the business is £190,305 including the amount paid directly to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the restrictive trading covenant. In accordance with the resolution approved at the June 2003 General Assembly the Trustees will “retain and invest the nett proceeds of the sales of Familybooks for a period of ten years against the contingency that the Church may decide at a future date to re-establish a Presbyterian bookshop”.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommendation regarding the Mrs A M Davidson Trust be adopted.
3. That the recommendation regarding the Sir Wm V McCleery Trust be adopted.
4. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Irene Scott Trust be adopted.
5. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Ida Mary McGeown Trust be adopted.
6. That the recommendation regarding the Victor Morrow Trust be adopted.
7. That in accordance with the Will of the late John Getty the following be constituted as the Committee for the “direction and management of the application” of the income from the Getty Bequest:

Very Rev Dr S Hutchinson, Revs Dr D J Watts, J McAllister, OBE, W D F Marshall, R J A Bell, W J Orr; Mr Wilson Ervin, CBE, Sir Eric McDowell, Mr David Bell, CB, Mr A T Ross, Mr John Millar, OBE, Mr J I Bill, OBE.

# 2004 ASSEMBLY CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Co-Conveners: Rev IF SMITH, Rev JH ROBINSON

1. The Committee has continued with its detailed planning for the 'GET A LIFE' Residential Conference to be held at the University of Ulster Coleraine from Monday 9 August to Thursday 12 August, with Prof Don Carson and Rev Martin Allen as our speakers.

2. The Moderator launched the process, of which the conference is part, on 24 September in Church House. We received reasonable press coverage.

3. The 'early bird' discount offer, on bookings received before 31 December, produced a good response. Since then bookings have continued to be encouraging and all residential places have been filled.

4. A series of pre-conference 'Setting the Scene' meetings for delegates was planned for April/May in 8 locations.

5. Work is proceeding on the resource materials, which will be provided for use in congregations from September 2004.

6. The Committee trusts that both the conference and the follow-up will help the wider Church to catch the vision for more meaningful worship, authentic fellowship and effective witness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the General Assembly encourage congregations to participate fully in the 'GET A LIFE' process by praying for the Conference, and by using the follow-up resource materials in Mid-weeks, Youth Groups, and other appropriate meetings.

3. That the ad hoc Committee for the Residential Assembly Conference be reappointed for a further year as follows:

# AD HOC COMMITTEE ON PRIORITIES

Convener: Rev TD GRIBBEN

1. Following an interim report in 2002, the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities submitted its substantive report to the 2003 General Assembly. That report outlined the basic principles that should guide the central work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and also brought recommendations as to the specific priorities for that central work over the following five to seven year period. It further advocated significant changes to the central Board and Committee structure to better facilitate the work that is necessary at central level.

2. Last year's Assembly received the Ad Hoc Committee's report and agreed to all of its recommendations. Whilst there was detailed and lengthy debate on several of the proposed structural changes, the recommended principles and priorities received almost unanimous support.

3. Since last Assembly, relevant Boards have been asked to take account of the priorities for central work and ensure that those that are applicable to their area of work are given precedence in that work. The central funding agencies have similarly been asked to ensure that, as far as is possible, funding allocations enable the agreed priorities of the General Assembly to be progressed. It is recognised that it will take a number of years to fully progress these priorities, and that the new Priorities Committee, under the General Board, will have a strategic role both in monitoring the progress of the agreed Assembly priorities, and also in advising the Assembly with regard to new and evolving priorities in the years ahead.

4. The agreed structural changes, designed to better facilitate the delivery of central priorities, come into place from this Assembly on. The Ad Hoc Committee would thank all involved for their hard work over the last year that has ensured that the decisions of the Assembly in 2003 are ready to be implemented this June. It is recognised that these new structures will take a few years to fully bed down, and therefore many of them will operate for an interim period by resolution of the Assembly, with the necessary changes to the Code taking place when the new structures have begun to prove themselves.

## **Internal Board structures**

1. In the light of the priorities and new structures agreed for our central work, the 2003 Assembly resolved that a review of the arrangements within each Board included in the new structures be undertaken. These reviews were to include consideration of the number and size of Assembly Committees, Board Committees and Panels that are required, as well as the clear specification of the remit of such Committees and Panels.

2. The Ad Hoc Committee, as requested by the General Assembly, received reports from most of the major Boards with regard to the outcome of the review of their internal structures. Where necessary, comments were passed



on, and each Board was requested to include information about their new internal structures in their individual reports to this year's Assembly.

3. The Ad Hoc Committee welcomes the thorough approach and creative thinking of many Boards as they have sought to ensure that their internal structures facilitate the delivery and development of the work they oversee on behalf of the Assembly.

4. The Overseas Board, in the light of the ongoing review of their entire remit, will be reporting to the 2005 General Assembly with regard to any necessary internal structural changes. Likewise the Board of Social Witness are recommending, as an interim measure for 2004/2005, the retention of their current structure and committees, (with the addition of the Chaplains and Forces Committees), to enable them to further consider the exact structure that best suits their specific needs.

### **Ensuring the structures work and the priorities are advanced**

1. In the light of the priorities and new structures agreed for our central work, last year's Assembly requested that the Ad Hoc Committee consider how co-ordination and co-operation between the Boards of the General Assembly could be further developed. Appendix 1 to this report contains the Committee's considered response and recommendations.

2. Appendix 2 of this report, entitled 'Making the system work', deals with the practicalities of ensuring a proper balance is struck between the important leadership and decision making role of individuals, Panels, Committees and Boards.

### **Outstanding matters**

1. Through its discussions with various Boards, and in light of the changes to the role of the United Appeal Board from this Assembly onwards, the Ad Hoc Committee has requested that the system for the approval of new posts and capital expenditure be clarified, and indeed refined. It is important that proper appraisal takes place, both within Boards and at a central level, before new posts come into being, or major capital expenditure is committed to. It is also important that any such system for appraisal is clearly understood, fair to all Boards and agencies, and does not impede the kind of creative thinking and development that the Ad Hoc Committee has been encouraging. The Panel on Overview of Funding, or if necessary its successor body, has been tasked with carrying forward this important piece of work.

2. Over the last two years, two further issues have come to the fore in discussions between the Ad Hoc Committee and various Boards, bodies and individuals. Firstly, that of Education in Mission, and secondly the issue of the number of magazines produced by our central structures. Many of the Mission and Ministry Boards feel that Education in Mission is an important part of their work, and some have further felt the need for executive staff posts to develop this area. Obviously the Communications Board, as the relevant Support Board, quite rightly feels that it also has an important role to play. The Ad Hoc Committee is of the view that there is need for this issue, and its implications with regard to the efficient use of resources, to be given further consideration.

As several Boards are involved, and therefore more than one view exists as to the best way forward, and recognising the General Board's remit to deal with matters affecting more than one Board, it is recommended that a Panel be set up under the General Board, to report to the 2005 Assembly on this matter. This Panel should also be asked to look at the specific issue of the number of magazines that are produced centrally by our denomination, with the related implications for the use of resources, and any other related matters.

### **Final Comments**

1. The Ad Hoc Committee would place on record its thanks to the many individuals, Committees and Boards who have worked alongside it in this process. The Convener would also express his personal thanks to all the members of the Ad Hoc Committee for their hard work and perseverance over the last three years. In particular thanks are due to the Very Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop for his chairing of the majority of the Committee's proceedings, and to Mr Clive Knox for his efficient work as Secretary to the Committee. As ever, little would happen within our central life without the co-operation and facilitation of the Clerk of Assembly. Thanks are due to Dr Samuel Hutchinson, and over the last year to Dr Donald Watts, for their wisdom and guidance.

2. The Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities is clear in the conviction that the central work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland primarily exists to resource and support the work of our local congregations in mission and ministry, and to enable the co-ordination and delivery of mission and ministry which would be beyond the ability of the local congregation. This conviction has been to the forefront of the Ad Hoc Committee's thinking from its very earliest meetings, and underpinned the principles, priorities and structural changes that it has brought forward over the last three years. Ensuring the practical outworking of much of this has involved hard decisions, but has none-the-less been a worthy aim as we seek as a denomination to better fulfil the mission that our Lord has given us in His world.

### **The Rev TD Gribben**

*The Rev Dr DJ Watts writes:*

In accepting the Convenership of the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities, the Rev Trevor Gribben was taking on an exceptionally challenging role in the life of the Church. His strength of purpose and focus enabled him to lead the Committee towards a consensus on the way forward. While not everyone has agreed with the changes which ensued, no-one would doubt Trevor's commitment and perseverance.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Co-ordination / Co-operation between Boards**

#### **The problems**

1. During the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities discussions with representatives of Boards over the last two years several have raised with the

Committee their ongoing frustration about the lack of co-ordination and co-operation in our central work. Whilst the establishment of priorities will obviously help in this matter, it is widely recognised that further thought is required in this area. Hence the Ad Hoc Committee's 2003 Assembly report included the following, which was approved by resolution:

*"..... in the light of the priorities outlined for our central work and the new structures recommended, that new arrangements be brought into being to further develop both co-ordination and co-operation between the Boards of the General Assembly."* (2003 Reports page 314, paragraph 5)

### **A way forward**

1. **It is recommended** that a meeting involving Conveners and Secretaries of all Boards should be held once, or, preferably, twice per year. This could be used as a forum for specific issues that arise from time to time, and should also be used as a forum to let Boards keep each other informed of new developments whilst they are still even at an embryonic stage. These meetings should be convened by the Clerk of Assembly, and in fact have already begun.

2. The General Board has long been recognised as a forum where all Boards are represented and where 'general' discussion and debate can take place. The role of the Clerk as both Convener of the General Board and also General Secretary of the Church is clearly significant. **It is recommended** that the General Board has a regular agenda item 'General Secretary's Business', in which the Clerk, as General Secretary, can raise any issues he desires to, and also specifically bring any useful specific suggestions for co-ordination and co-operation. This could also be one of the means whereby an internal Church House 'Heads of Department' meeting could feed any necessary issues into the system, through the General Secretary. (The Clerk should obviously be able to continue to call in representatives of different Boards to deal with new, and particularly urgent, issues as required, without having to wait for General Board meetings.)

This would have the advantage of using the General Board to reach consensus on issues that need co-ordination and co-operation, whilst also using its recognised authority to ensure that things happen.

3. With regard to specific issues relating to co-operation in mission here in Ireland, **it is recommended** that the Board of Mission in Ireland should be recognised as having 'lead responsibility' in this area. Specifically it should be given the role of bringing together representatives of Mission in Ireland, Social Witness, Youth & Children's Ministry and Studies & Christian Training, say two or three times per year. This wider forum could, as necessary, set up small inter-Board groups to carry forward specific issues on a 'time-limited project model', or agree that certain Boards should take the lead on a specific project e.g. together focussing resources and personnel on a specific geographical area or specific issue.

4. The new initiative of the Board of Communications in establishing an inter-board forum on communications is welcomed and encouraged. **It is recommended** that this should continue.

## APPENDIX II

### Making the system work

#### The problems

1. The structures for decision making at the central level of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland are marked by shared leadership and responsibility exercised through Committees, Boards and the General Assembly itself. Leadership through such corporate bodies gives the strength of shared involvement and accountability; however its disadvantages are that large numbers of people are tied up in taking what are quite often simple decisions. In addition significant numbers of hours are taken up in travel and attendance, when the decisions could often be taken by a few people, or even one person, in a matter of minutes. This often results in poor stewardship of time, with little debate actually taking place and many of the people involved feeling that they are there simply to 'rubber stamp' decisions. How do we deal with this issue, whilst still retaining proper accountability ?

2. One added problem, that large organisations of all kinds face, is that of institutional inertia. Everything is in place; the structures seem appropriate but vitality is often missing, and when that happens, inertia takes over. There is considerable energy expended in calling Presbyterian bodies together, providing the participants with minutes and agendas. The danger lies in thinking that when the meetings have been called, effective business has been done. Leadership can get swallowed up in caution. How do we encourage leadership to flourish?

#### A way forward

1. It is recognised that, even within a Presbyterian structure of church government, a vital component of leadership is that which is given by individuals. To ensure that, on an ongoing basis, priorities are both identified and progressed, there is a clear need to empower such leadership within our structures. Conveners, Secretaries and others with specific responsibilities, have to be accountable to their respective Boards or Committees, which are the bodies charged with setting policy within their area of work, under the ultimate direction of the Assembly itself. However Conveners and Secretaries should also have the clearly stated expectation that they are to be leaders and ideas people. On an ongoing basis they should be bringing before their respective bodies creative thinking and recommendations as to how the area of work in question can be developed and progressed. They should also be the people who ensure that the policies agreed by Boards and Committees are implemented, and the area of work progressed, especially between meetings. Therefore **it is recommended** that Conveners and Secretaries be encouraged to exercise such leadership, within parameters agreed by, and appropriate to, their individual Board or Committee.

2. It is also recognised that, with regard to creative thinking, often two or more heads are better than one. However it would also be fair to say that a large Board or Committee is often not the best place for initial detailed discussion to take place. Therefore **it is recommended** that Boards and

Committees should consider setting up small ad hoc groups to progress specific issues on a 'time related project model' i.e. a small group of two or three individuals would be asked to look at a specific issue, bring forward a report with clear recommendation as to the way ahead and then be wound up, the 'project' having been completed over a relatively short period of time. In setting up these small ad hoc groups, a Board or Committee would obviously have at its disposal its own membership, and could also avail of outside expertise relevant to the specific issue in question.

3. It is recognised that meetings which take place with little debate or discussion can be both ineffective and frustrating. It is likewise ineffective and frustrating to have detailed discussion of the minutiae of an issue at say a Board meeting, when an appropriate committee or other body has already carried out that work. Committees and Boards will only function as effective corporate bodies for leadership within our central structures when they are enabled to participate in such debate and discussion as is appropriate to their function. Therefore **it is recommended** that when Committees, Panels or individuals report to a Board on an issue that requires a decision, the report should, if at all possible, outline the issue concerned, highlight the possible options for proceeding, and give a clear recommendation as to the option that is favoured. This will allow the Board not only to have before it a recommendation as to the way to proceed, but also have the necessary background information and alternative options that will allow the issue to be discussed and debated. This could also be a useful procedure to follow when Panels, sub-committees or individuals are reporting to Assembly Committees.

4. In all of the above, it is obvious that to make the system work requires having the right people in Boards and Committees and indeed the right people in the right jobs within Boards and Committees. Therefore **it is recommended** that all Boards regularly provide Presbyteries, through the Clerk's office, with an outline of the expertise and skills that would be of benefit to them, and that Presbyteries take seriously their task in nominating the most appropriate people, recognising that those nominated do not always have to be actual members of Presbytery. Further, whilst recognising that each Assembly Committee and Board is different, in bringing names forward to the Assembly for appointment as Conveners, Boards should not simply be looking for individuals with experience, but also with the necessary leadership skills. Particularly in the Mission and Ministry Boards, Conveners need to be those who, along with Board Secretaries, can fulfil the role outlined above.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That a Panel be set up under the General Board, to report to the 2005 General Assembly with regard to the issues in the second paragraph of the 'Outstanding matters' section of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities.
3. That the General Assembly approve the recommendations relating to 'Co-ordination / Co-operation between Boards', as outlined in Appendix I.

4. That the General Assembly approve the recommendations relating to 'Making the system work', as outlined in Appendix II.
5. That the Rev Trevor Gribben be thanked for his diligent and committed work as Convener of the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities.
6. That the Ad Hoc Committee on Priorities be thanked for its services and discharged.

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# GENERAL BOARD



## Supplementary Report

### Panel On Church House



# REPORT OF GENERAL BOARD PANEL ON CHURCH HOUSE

## 1. THE PANEL

The General Board, in October, 2003, appointed the Panel to advise on ‘all matters relating to Church House and Fisherwick Buildings’. The membership of the Panel is as follows:- The Moderator, Clerk, Very Rev Dr DH Allen, Very Rev Dr SJ Dixon; Revs LE Carroll, JA McCaughan, FP Sellar; Mrs Z Vallely, DF Adair, David Bell, John Millar, JH Martin, WJ Cairns, Clive Knox and Jonathan Kelly.

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### a. History

The major part of the Church House complex was built between 1900 and 1905 from a sandstone that tends to be porous and prone to water absorption making it susceptible to erosion and decay. It is a listed building and the views of the Department of Environment and Heritage must be taken account of in any work proposed.

In the early 1990’s, a major refurbishment was completed, including the stabilising of the foundations and the rearrangement of the internal space, at a cost of £6.7 million. This was financed by an annual assessment of 10 pence in the £ for 10 years and the rents arising from the shops in the Spires Mall and Church House offices.

The following summary reflects the income and costs from February 1990 to December 2003:

	£
Building Costs	6,703,163
Fixtures and Fittings	201,258
Stonework Repairs	444,568
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>7,348,989</b>
Congregational Assessments	(5,546,035)
Cash Surplus from lettings (Note 1)	(1,922,548)
Bank Balance at 31 December 2003 (Note 2)	119,594

*Note 1 – This includes amounts charged to internal Church agencies over the years*

*Note 2 – Since 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2003 this balance has been utilised in completing the current phase of the repairs.*

**b. Stonework**

There was no major work done to the stonework in the 1990 project and, in 2002, following instances of stone falling off the building, a Survey and Condition Report indicated that significant work was required.

The estimated nett cost of the work was £800,000 and it was anticipated that this would be funded over a number of years by rents from the shops.

At an early stage in the work, it was discovered that the condition of the stonework was worse than expected. A further survey was requested by the Assembly Buildings Committee and this revealed that the total cost of the work required was £2.5 million (less whatever grant would be available). This was reported to the June, 2003, Assembly.

A 'Structural Panel' was set up and agreed with the contract team to bring the present contract to a close when the present phase and any necessary safety works were completed.

A Supplementary Inspection and Report was commissioned in January, 2004. The additional work, if carried out at that time, was estimated to cost £1.6 million, subject to the level of any grants. The Report states that the outstanding work will need to be addressed within about 18 months. The estimate for work under a future contract is £1.75m.

	Completed Work (Phase 2 plus Safety Work)	Work Outstanding	Total Cost of Project
Building Work	603,300	1,581,000	2,184,300
Fees	83,790	165,000	248,790
VAT	120,241	279,000	399,241
TOTAL	807,331	2,025,000	2,832,331
Grant	(184,840)	(457,000)	(641,840)
Net Cost	622,491	1,568,000	2,190,491

**c. Other Essential Work**

While the stonework is essential it is not the only work which needs to be considered.

**Fisherwick Buildings:** This part of the complex, at the Upper Queen Street end, consists of Offices leased to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The Lease expires on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2005, and there is a possibility that the lease will not be renewed. In any event, the condition of the premises is not in accordance with current legal requirements and it is professionally estimated that expenditure of around £740,000 will be required to ensure that current standards are met. The Managing Agents believe that this expenditure, whilst necessary, is not guaranteed to increase rents.

**Church House Offices:** The office accommodation is fully utilised. The lack of flexibility in room sizes does not contribute to making more effective use of the space available and means that the service costs are high. BTW Shiells comments:- "The detailed analysis of the existing floor areas in Church House, even with allowance for



the assembly hall, give a net efficiency of 54% in their current layout. Typical average office buildings produce a net efficiency of 80%”.

Substantial expenditure will shortly be required to meet new legislation regarding disability access and to extend the existing comfort cooling system.

**d. Financial**

It is estimated by BTW Shiells that the required work set out above will involve expenditure in excess of £3.4 million.

Based on the existing level of income from letting it will take approximately 35 years to pay off this amount.

It is important to realise that the cash surplus from letting (currently £210,000 p.a.) is made up both of external rents and rents paid by the various Church agencies on offices in Church House. The cash surplus from external sources is currently £40,000 and likely to decrease (see (e) below).

**e. The Spires Mall**

The Assembly Buildings Committee has been looking at the commercial viability of the Mall and has received a Report from the Managing Agents (BTW Shiells). The Agents point out that, while being successful at its initial inception, it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure and maintain lettings. This is partly due to location, as the commercial centre of the city moves towards Castle Court and Victoria Square. There are also significant, but necessary, restrictive covenants on the leases. The report states:- “The Spires Mall, occupying the ground floor level of the building, offers a niche shopping location in a pleasant mall environment. The Spires Mall, however, has not proven to be a vibrant retail destination due to its fringe location in relation to the city’s main retailing core and in part to the fact that the entrances to the scheme do not provide sufficient impact to draw footfall through the Mall. As a destination, the Spires lacks critical mass, limiting the schemes potential to provide major footfall levels, which for particular retail uses is critical.”

It then concludes:- “It is difficult to foresee any significant increase in the future income derived from the Scheme. In all probability, expenditure will escalate in terms of rent and service charge voids; tenant incentives; vacant rate liability; disabled access compliance and physical enhancements to the property, in particular, improvements to the mall entrances, signage and lighting and a refurbishment of offices to modern standards.”

**f. Assembly Buildings Committee**

At its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2004, the Committee considered the situation and, whilst recognising that the Church needs to consider other matters, e.g. the City Centre location, Presbyterian witness in the City Centre, the history and heritage of the building etc., concluded ‘that the building should be expediently sold in its entirety’.

The Agents’ Report values the entire property, ignoring the stonework liability, at £4.25 million on the basis that the Church would attach no restrictive covenants to a sale. It expresses the view:- “We believe the property would generate substantial interest in the present buoyant market and would appeal to a range of developers, private investors and owner occupiers.”

It is worth noting that the building is now valued at approximately £3m less than has been spent since 1990.

### 3. THE PANEL'S DELIBERATIONS

The Panel recognised that it had been asked to consider a vital but sensitive issue for the future life of the Church. While the financial considerations outlined above are important, they should not be the defining factor in any decisions that are made. The following issues were among those recognised as important.

- (a) There is an historic and sentimental attachment to Church House as a building, which stands on a prominent site in the City Centre. It would be unfortunate, and inaccurate, if a move from the present site was interpreted as a retreat from the life of the City. In fact the Church would wish to engage more fully in commercial and civic life.
- (b) The Committee on Priorities strongly recognised, in its 2002 Report (Reports p.307), that: "The local congregation is the primary mission unit of the Church." It follows that the administrative centre of the Church exists to facilitate and strengthen the work of mission in congregations. It must therefore do so in as effective and efficient a way as possible. The office accommodation provided can either assist, or make this task more difficult.
- (c) Church House must be accessible, both to members of the Church and to the agencies and organisations with which the Church relates. This means that car parking should be readily available, although planning restrictions in the City Centre mean that it is unlikely, on a City Centre location, to be provided on site. It is also important that Church House is accessible by public transport, especially for those coming from a distance.
- (d) The present Church House serves three main functions, providing office accommodation; meeting rooms and the Assembly Hall. It was recognised that in any move it would be unlikely that provision could be made for meetings of the General Assembly. Appropriate accommodation would need to be hired each year.
- (e) If it remains in the City Centre, Church House should make a positive contribution to the Presbyterian presence in the City, by providing information and a welcoming access to the structures of the Church.
- (f) Any suggestion of a move from the present Church House will inevitably cause uncertainty for staff and existing tenants. It is therefore important that decisions are made without undue delay.

#### 4. THE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The Panel considered five main options and commissioned BTW Shiells to prepare a report on each of them. At the time of writing the final version of the report has not been received, but an interim report gives clear guidance.

- (a) Retain the existing buildings, complete stonework and other essential maintenance, renovate Fisherwick Buildings to facilitate letting and undertake basic, essential work in Church House.

BTW Shiells comments:- “The most significant advantage to this option is the subjective benefit of retaining the existing historical location.

There are, however, a significant number of disadvantages. The refurbished building will not perform to standards of new purpose built developments and, in particular, there will be difficulties in complying with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) legislation.

The proposal would be disruptive in that there would require to be a period when the building is decanted for a period of, probably, 18 months and there is a potential problem of the availability of temporary office space for such a relocation.

This option has a fundamental financial disadvantage in respect of the potential future void areas within the building and the increasing capital expenditure required to maintain the building.”

- The cost is estimated at £3.4m., including VAT and nett of anticipated grant.

- (b) Retain the façade of the existing building but build new behind it.
- The cost is estimated at £12.8m., assuming no liability for VAT.

- (c) Relocation to a City Centre site.
- BTW Shiells recognises that this should be a significant site where the Presbyterian Church would be a visible presence.

- The cost is estimated at £5.025m. If the present buildings are sold at the estimated £4.25m., there would be a cost to the Church of £775,000.

- (d) Relocation to a site along the “M1-M2 corridor”.
- The cost is estimated at £4.275m. If the present buildings are sold at the estimated £4.25m., there would be a cost to the Church of £25,000.

- (e) Leasehold
- BTW Shiells comments:- “The option to move to leased accommodation and, in particular, a speculative office development which may have already been constructed would give you less control over the occupation and future use of the building. This would also limit your financial control on expenditure, particularly in respect of service charges which would be landlord driven.” It should be noted that the normal lease also makes the tenant responsible for repairs deemed necessary by the Landlord during the tenancy.

- Estimate cost over 21 years £10.39m. (including VAT).

If interest of 5% is earned on the proceeds from the sale of Church House, but subject to any rent reviews, the proceeds would only cover 10-11 years rental payments. Thereafter the annual rent (£493,500 at current levels) will be a charge to the Church in full. Of course with this proposal the Church is left with no asset, and an on-going requirement to lease property.

## **5. A FURTHER POSSIBILITY**

During the preparation of this Report, the Panel became aware of an exciting possibility to re-locate to the car-park site adjacent to May Street Church. This site has been bought by a development company – Barnabas Ventures – which was set up to encourage projects which facilitate Christian mission, especially in the City. The Managing Director had felt led to purchase this site and was in discussion with May Street Congregation as to how a development might assist their outreach. On hearing that there was discussion of the re-location of Church House, he offered to discuss whether the needs of Church administration could also be met from a new building on this site, but linked into the existing and historic May Street Church. The Panel are convinced that this is a proposal which should be seriously considered. It retains a very visible presence for the Presbyterian Church on an historic site in the City Centre. Indeed the previous Church House was across May Street in the present Ross's Auction Rooms. It also brings together in a creative way a centre of worship, outreach and administration. The synergy which this may provide should not be ignored. It is also encouraging that May Street Congregation would welcome the interest of the wider Church. While at present this is no more than a possibility, and there would be much detailed work to be done, the Panel believes the possibility must be fully explored, to determine if this is the direction the Spirit is leading us.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel fully accepts that much detailed work has still to be carried out, but it is also convinced that certain decisions need to be taken now. The report on the stonework only gives an eighteen month period before further work may be needed, and the possibility of the May Street site cannot be held open indefinitely.

In general, the Panel cannot see how further substantial expenditure on Church House would ensure that the needs of the Church are met. There is no guarantee that the required further expenditure on stonework would be the last. The commercial aspects of the property present ongoing concerns and act as a distraction from the ongoing work and mission of the Church. Work to the offices would deal with statutory requirements but is unlikely to create an environment capable of being easily altered to accommodate any reorganisation of staff that might be required from time to time.

There would, understandably, be a sense of sadness and disappointment if the Church decided to move from Church House and the loss of the Assembly Hall as a venue for the General Assembly would present significant, but not insurmountable, difficulty in obtaining an alternative. In spite of these, the Panel believes that, before further substantial sums of money are expended, the opportunity should be taken to seek to relocate to a modern setting that will reallocate resources to provide a new more flexible, efficient and adaptable setting for the Church's administration.

It is recommended that:-

- a. a decision is made, in principle, to sell the Church House complex in its entirety and without the attachment of restrictive trading covenants
- b. a suitable alternative site and accommodation is sought. This should provide accessibility and capacity to meet the needs of the Church
- c. plans for the new location are drawn up
- d. plans are put in place for interim accommodation, if necessary
- e. regard is had for the interests and concerns of the staff during the decision, planning and execution stages
- f. proposals are made as to the location for General Assemblies etc.
- g. detailed financial estimates are prepared for all aspects of the recommendations.

DONALD J. WATTS

## APPENDIX A

### SUMMARY OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

(from BTW Shiells Report)

#### OPTION 1 - STAYING IN PRESENT BUILDINGS

##### Advantages

- Capital investment is retained, albeit subject to further capital expenditure and reduced revenue
- Subjective benefit of remaining in the existing historical location
- Income from conference facility

##### Disadvantages

- Decanting costs and disruption on two occasions in decanting and reoccupying the building
- Availability of appropriate space for temporary relocation
- High life cycle costs
- Functional suitability and space utilisation of existing building in respect of the proposed use
- Relatively poor performing building with a low lettable ratio in relation to the gross area
- Poor functional suitability and difficult to comply with DDA
- Increasing financial liability in respect of:
  - Major building repairs
  - Potential vacant space, both retail in The spires and offices in Fisherwick Buildings

#### OPTION 2 - RELOCATION

##### ACQUISITION

##### Advantages

- Occupation of building bespoke to specified requirements
- Lower life cycle costings
- Less disruption – only one relocation
- No decant costs
- Longer term improved investment value
- Improved ratio of gross to net lettable area
- Potentially improved car parking provision
- Reduced financial liability

### **Disadvantages**

- Requires further capital investment
- Loss of historical location and historic building
- Loss of income from conferences
- Difficulty in identifying suitable site for development

### **OPTION 3 - RENTAL**

#### **Advantages**

- Flexibility to relocate in the future with no capital investment and expenditure
- Capital investment not limited or restricted

#### **Disadvantages**

- Ongoing annual rent and service charge payments for the property
- Lack of control over service charge expenditure which is dictated by the landlord
- Liability in respect of any repairing obligations that may be imposed by the landlord
- The building would not necessarily be bespoke to your requirements
- Lack over control over common parts if building is not occupied 100% by one user.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the General Assembly agree that the Church House complex be sold and a suitable alternative site and accommodation be acquired.
2. That the Church House Panel of the General Board be tasked with bringing to the General Board a definite proposal for the sale and resiting of Church House, with detailed reasons and costings.
3. That the General Board be authorised to make all necessary decisions regarding the sale and move of Church House to an alternative site, including financial arrangements.

