

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
of
The Presbyterian Church
in Ireland

1997

ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

Luncheon adjournment at 1.00 p.m. each day.

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

References to the Minutes of Assembly are given in full.

NOTES

MONDAY, JUNE 2

Within Church House

7.00 p.m.—

Divine Service
Constitution of Assembly
Memorial Roll
Election of Moderator

TUESDAY, JUNE 3

Within May Street Church

9.30 a.m.—

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

Within Church House

11.00 a.m.—

1. BUSINESS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (80-87).
Arrangements Committee
2. Mission Assembly (1997) Committee: Report and Resolutions (311-312).
3. Reports of Synods and Presbyteries (70-79).
- (11.30) 4. Reception of Corresponding Members and Delegates.
Church of Scotland: Right Rev. Alexander McDonald, Rev. Charles Heriot, Rev. John Campbell.
United Reformed Church: Dr. David Thompson, Mrs. Doreen Courtney.
Presbyterian Church of Wales: Rev. Arthur Winne Edwards.
Church of Ireland: Very Rev. J. Dinnen, Rev. Canon W. A. Lewis, Mrs. R. Bailey.

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

NOTES

The Methodist Church in Ireland: Rev. C. G. Walpole, Rev. S. D. Anderson, Dr. D. E. Robb, Mrs. Lynda Neilands.

Irish Council of Churches: Dr. David Stevens.

Other Delegates and Visitors: Christian Church in Sumba: Rev. David Umbu Dingu, Rev. Johanis Jusuf Radjah. Eglise Réformée de France: Spanish Evangelical Church:

5. UNION COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (50-66).
Personnel/Planning, City Area Committees
6. Memorial of First Londonderry Kirk Session (66).
7. Memorial of the Carrickfergus Presbytery (66).
8. Memorial of Cloughey and Portavogie Kirk Session (67).
9. Memorial of the Tyrone Presbytery (68).

Lapsed Business.

2.00 p.m.—

10. NOMINATION BOARD: Report and Resolutions (101-103).
11. BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS: Report and Resolutions (88-100).
Publications, T.V., etc., Public Worship, Church Architecture, Historical Society Committees.
- (3.30) 12. BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND CHRISTIAN TRAINING: Report and Resolutions (169-202).
Evangelism, Irish Mission, Christian Training, Divine Healing, Christian Marriage, National and International Problems Committees.
- (4.00) Intermission (15 minutes).

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

NOTES

13. HOME BOARD: Report and Resolutions (136-146).

Assignment, Home Mission, Church Extension.

14. Overture on the Books anent Par. 73(d) of the Code (146).

Lapsed Business.

(6.30) Close of Business.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4

9.30 a.m.—

15. TRUSTEES: Report and Resolutions (279-285).

16. FORTUNE MISSION TRUST: Report and Resolutions (286).

17. COMMISSION ON TRUSTS: Report and Resolutions (242).

18. GENERAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (1-33).

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

(10.45) Intermission (15 minutes).

GENERAL BOARD (Continued)

19. Memorial of the Armagh Presbytery (33).

Lapsed Business, if any.

12.15 p.m.—

Worship.

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

NOTES

2.00 p.m.—

20. PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION: Report and Resolution (147-152).
21. OVERSEAS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (116-134).
22. Overture anent Pars. 289-299 of the Code (134-135).

(3.30) Intermission (15 minutes).

23. INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (104-114).

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

24. Memorial of the Synod of Dublin (114).

25. Memorial of the Tyrone Presbytery (114).

(4.15) 26. Strategy for Mission Committee: Report and Resolutions (287-310).

Lapsed Business.

Close of Business.

Meeting of the General Synod of Ulster.

7.45 p.m.— Evening Rally.

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

NOTES

THURSDAY, JUNE 5

9.30 a.m.—

27. BOARD OF EDUCATION: Report and Resolutions (213-227).

Church Education, State Education, University Education Committees.

(10.45) Intermission (15 minutes).

28. BOARD OF STUDIES FOR THE MINISTRY: Report and Resolutions (228-240).

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

29. UNITED APPEAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (264-269).

Lapsed Business, if any.

12.15 p.m.—

Worship

2.00 p.m.—

In Private

30. Recognised Ministries Committee: Report and Resolutions (35-36).

31. Committee on Reception of Ministers and Licentiates: Report and Resolutions (240-241).

32. Ad Hoc Commission: Report and Resolutions (37)

33. JUDICIAL COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (38-43).

34. Overtures on the Books anent Pars. 11, 13, 85(6), 205(2)(b), 205(4) VI, 212(3) of the Code (44-45).

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

NOTES

35. Overtures anent Pars. 137, 176(2)(b)(ii), 340(1) of the Code (45).
36. Memorial of Kirk Session of High Street, Holywood (45).
37. Memorials of Richard Boucher and Others (46-47).
38. Appeal of Mr. R. Boucher and Others (47).
39. Appeals of Second Dromara Kirk Session (48-49).

(3.45) Intermission (15 minutes).

In Public

40. BOARD OF MINISTRY AND PENSIONS: Report and Resolutions (270-276).
Central Ministry Fund, Committee on Retirements and Pensions.
41. Overtures anent Pars. 313(1), 315(3), 316(1)(a) of the Code (276).

Lapsed Business, if any.

(6.00) Adjournment.

Meeting of Secession Synod at Adjournment.

7.00 p.m.—

Lapsed Business, if any.

FRIDAY, JUNE 6

9.30 a.m.—

42. YOUTH BOARD: Report and Resolutions (203-212).
Youth Events, Youth Training and Resources, Youth Home Mission, Youth Overseas, Youth Centres, Committee.

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

NOTES

43. SHANKILL ROAD MISSION COMMISSION:
Report and Resolutions (277-278).

(10.45) Intermission (15 minutes).

44. BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS: Report and
Resolutions (153-168).

Social Services, Alcohol and Drug Education, War
Memorial Hostel, Kinghan Mission, Social Witness
Centres, Presbyterian Residential Trust, Retired
Ministers' House Fund Committees.

45. Overtures anent Pars. 281(2)(g), and 288(2)(e)
of the Code (168).

Lapsed Business.

(12.15) Worship.

2.00 p.m.—

46. BOARD OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION:
Report and Resolutions (243-263).

Finance and Staffing, Incidental Fund, Getty Bequest,
Church House and Assembly Hall, Statistics
Committees.

Late Business, if any.

Lapsed Business.

BUSINESS BOARD, Final Report.

CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY.

7.45 p.m.— YOUTH NIGHT

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

NOTES

BUSINESS BOARD

A Guide to Assembly Procedure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Presenting a group of reports and resolutions 10 minutes

Seconding a group of reports and resolutions 7 minutes

All other speeches 5 minutes

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

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

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

13. An amendment, if seconded, must be dealt with before further debate on the original resolution or consideration of any further amendment. If passed, the amendment is then put as a substantive motion, when one more amendment may be considered. If the first two amendments are rejected, one more amendment may be considered before reverting to the original resolution.

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

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

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

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

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

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND ACCOUNTS 1996 — 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.

1995 Column is period to 31 December 1995.

1996 Column is year to 31 December 1996.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME

	Grand Total		Contributions from Congregations		Congregational Assessments		United Appeal	
	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995
	General Board	15	18	7	8	—	—	8
Business Board	8	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Publication Board	271	245	—	—	—	—	94	79
Inter-Church Relations	369	385	352	368	—	—	—	—
Overseas Board	1,364	1,307	14	17	—	—	660	730
Home Board	694	405	14	39	4	4	420	243
Social Witness Board	3,798	3,855	13	13	—	—	138	161
Evangelism & Christian Training	462	460	14	12	—	—	215	210
Youth Board	572	554	1	2	—	—	212	203
Education Board	147	142	1	2	—	—	135	130
Board of Studies	747	740	6	10	—	—	303	313
Finance & Administration	1,107	1,017	—	—	918	872	—	—
United Appeal	58	38	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ministry & Pensions	3,808	3,653	—	—	3,167	3,021	—	—
Presbyterian Women's Association	723	708	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sundry Other	63	62	—	—	—	—	—	—
Grand Total	14,206	13,597	422	471	4,089	3,897	2,185	2,078

EXPENDITURE

	GRAND TOTAL		Employee and Ministry Costs		Printing Stationery, etc		Administration	
	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995
	General Board	25	24	16	17	—	—	2
Business Board	8	6	—	—	4	4	—	—
Publication Board	380	309	120	108	227	163	28	33
Inter-Church Relations	357	334	—	—	16	19	1	1
Overseas Board	1,401	1,226	86	74	35	37	60	60
Home Board	389	540	58	48	2	3	64	59
Social Witness Board	4,601	3,694	2,381	2,203	370	339	151	179
Evangelism & Christian Training	504	486	327	309	79	81	27	27
Youth Board	657	491	141	116	24	96	29	30
Education Board	200	186	104	91	28	13	27	26
Board of Studies	772	706	311	282	127	106	5	5
Finance & Administration	1,080	954	371	334	172	155	111	111
United Appeal	13	12	—	—	13	12	—	—
Ministry & Pensions	3,756	3,414	3,512	3,181	12	12	146	134
Presbyterian Women's Association	773	703	509	440	51	51	27	37
Sundry Other	77	37	—	—	1	1	—	1
Grand Total	14,993	13,122	7,936	7,203	1,161	1,092	678	704

— MEMORANDUM CENTRAL INCOME

1996 Per Board £000's

Trust, Investment Income and Bank Interest		Rental Income (net)		Donations and bequests		Loan Repayments		Sales: Periodicals & Property		Grants and Fees	
1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995
—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	2	3	—	—	—	—	6	5
(4)	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	180	163	1	1
11	9	—	—	6	8	—	—	—	—	—	—
127	127	—	—	563	433	—	—	—	—	—	—
69	67	15	—	73	33	16	19	83	—	—	—
56	62	2,752	2,655	148	285	56	38	80	74	555	567
23	26	—	—	114	119	—	—	96	93	—	—
5	12	100	58	236	140	—	—	—	—	18	139
7	10	—	—	1	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
223	202	6	6	93	84	—	—	—	—	116	125
(178)	(194)	344	312	10	11	—	—	13	16	—	—
56	37	—	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
610	577	—	—	31	55	—	—	—	—	—	—
95	101	—	—	584	558	8	5	36	44	—	—
16	12	—	—	—	—	47	50	—	—	—	—
<u>1,116</u>	<u>1,051</u>	<u>3,217</u>	<u>3,031</u>	<u>1,863</u>	<u>1,730</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>112</u>	<u>491</u>	<u>390</u>	<u>696</u>	<u>837</u>

Travel Expenses etc		Building Costs		Upkeep of Property		Loans Issued		Home and Over- seas Projects and Grants		Missionaries Field Costs	
1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995	1996	1995
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	6	—	—
4	4	—	—	4	2	—	—	1	1	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	340	314	—	—
18	18	—	—	20	8	—	—	634	495	548	534
5	5	46	197	19	6	16	16	179	206	—	—
27	22	848	409	589	454	231	81	4	7	—	—
30	32	—	—	4	3	—	—	7	7	30	27
17	20	273	21	63	52	—	—	110	156	—	—
7	6	5	17	17	22	—	—	12	11	—	—
6	7	17	—	52	48	—	—	254	258	—	—
60	62	—	—	267	216	—	—	99	76	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
83	83	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	4
13	11	—	—	4	2	32	13	122	136	15	13
—	—	—	—	—	—	75	35	1	—	—	—
<u>270</u>	<u>270</u>	<u>1,189</u>	<u>644</u>	<u>1,039</u>	<u>813</u>	<u>354</u>	<u>145</u>	<u>1,773</u>	<u>1,673</u>	<u>593</u>	<u>578</u>

REPORTS: JUNE, 1997

BELFAST

GENERAL BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The General Board met three times during the year.

RESIGNATION

2. On 27 February the General Board, acting on behalf of the General Assembly, accepted the resignation of Miss Pamela Lockie from the post of Adviser in Social Service with effect from 30 April, 1997, and asked the Board of Social Witness to include a suitable tribute to her in its report to Assembly.

PRIORITIES

3. The 1996 General Assembly resolved that 'during the ensuing year the General Board exercise a co-ordinating role for the Church's work and submit a report to the 1997 Assembly on the general work of the Church and possible priorities' (Mins p42 res 32).

4. The General Board appointed a panel to consider this matter. It soon discovered, however, that the Strategy for Mission Committee was working along similar lines. At time of writing its report is awaited so, to avoid the risk of the same matters being raised twice in one Assembly, the Panel submits only a brief interim report, but recommends that its remit be renewed.

5. While numbers do not in themselves necessarily equate directly with spiritual vitality, recent statistics give some cause for concern and demonstrate the need for a comprehensive examination of all that our Church seeks to do both at Assembly and congregational levels against the background of membership trends. Amongst other things they call for a review not only of the Church's priorities but the mechanisms, if any, by which the priorities are established.

6. In setting priorities it would seem that the most fundamental relates to stabilising the base, ie congregational life and witness, as in the absence of a strong base personnel and finance are not available for mission at home and abroad.

7. In establishing a culture which takes decisions on the basis of priorities and the mechanisms/process which facilitate this the following need to be borne in mind:

- (a) priorities should be determined first and then the allocation of funds;
- (b) means must be found to allow congregations to retain adequate finance to arrest decline, and meet the challenges on their doorsteps through

increased personnel and imaginative team ministries in the larger conurbations;

- (c) church members must be trained and mobilised for effective local outreach and pastoral care;
- (d) a mind-set change is required to reverse the unthinking priority often given to property over personnel, leading to rationalisation of under-used church property with consequent release of financial resources;
- (e) the plans of the centrally administered mission agencies must be carefully monitored to ensure that, for the time being, development is limited to projects whose essential worth is proven;
- (f) the ordering of General Assembly business must allow for strategic decisions on priorities to be taken.

OVERVIEW OF FUNDING

8. The Panel on the Overview of Funding met periodically during the year.

9. One meeting was attended by representatives of the Trustees. A discussion took place on the circumstances in which agencies might realise investments to help defray expenses. It emerged that there are dangers involved in this strategy, including

- (i) the loss of future income; and
- (ii) the fact that new equipment or buildings would in due course incur maintenance or replacement costs.

10. It was agreed that in future, proposals for the realisation of investments should be

- (a) referred to the Trustees for their advice, and for confirmation that the capital is available under the terms of trust; and
- (b) referred to the Panel on the Overview of Funding for approval of the contemplated expenditure.

11. The Panel is contemplating a Visitation of committees and agencies, rather like a Visitation of Presbytery, to examine their systems of financial control and the continuing need for their various projects. If we proceed with this idea then Findings could be drawn up for submission to the General Board and the General Assembly, which would then have the information on which to take any necessary action.

12. Other points arising included the following.

- (i) First estimates for the post of Director of Ministerial Students seriously underestimated its true cost. Steps should be taken to ensure that the full costs of any new proposals are accurately researched in future.
- (ii) Agencies should explore alternative sources of funding for new projects rather than simply expecting the United Appeal to meet the entire cost, provided such sources are acceptable to the Church.
- (iii) The target for the United Appeal should not rise faster than inflation.
- (iv) Thought needs to be given as to how spending is to be prioritised. One criterion could be not to tie up capital in building or buying premises if it is possible to rent them.

- (v) Some agencies have a higher profile than others, so there is a need for an informed and impartial assessment of their effectiveness.
- (vi) The College Management Committee was asked to consider the likely funding requirements of Union College over the next 10-15 years, including major repairs and renovations.
- (vii) In view of the escalating costs being incurred by Union College, there should be a major review of the training of students, the role of the College, Magee House, the Director of Ministerial Students and related matters.
- (viii) The suggested sale of the War Memorial Hostel buildings in Howard Street and Brunswick Street was noted pending a decision by the Trustees.
- (ix) In view of the resignation of Miss P.A. Lockie as Adviser in Social Service and a request for a Junior Secretary in the Social Witness Office, the Committee on Finance and Staffing was asked to review the staffing requirements of that office.
- (x) The Committee on Finance and Staffing was also asked to review the staffing requirements of the Communications office.
- (xi) Where an agency receives public money, the United Appeal Board should not be expected to make up the shortfall if the public funding is reduced.
- (xii) Work undertaken by the Information and Publications Office for other agencies of the Church should be charged at economic rates rather than the office being subsidised by a grant from the United Appeal.
- (xiii) The costs of the new proposals for licentiate training, approved by the Assembly (Mins 1996 p60, res 6) without any financial provision, should be referred to the Magee Fund Scheme.

13. The Panel also noted three major proposals:

- (i) the Youth Board's planned appointment of a Programme Director based at Lucan and funded by the Delors package of European Funding;
- (ii) the proposed extension to the Lucan Youth Centre (£455,000), on the understanding that there is no funding required from the United Appeal;
- (iii) the proposed provision of Sheltered Accommodation at Lucan by the Presbyterian Residential Trust.

14. The Panel received a request from the Presbytery of Tyrone for a re-consideration of the system of paying ministers, as the present system is perceived to have certain disadvantages. It can be embarrassing for a minister to appeal for increased generosity, knowing that a portion of the increase will go to his stipend, and that some of the increase in specified sources will disappear because assessments will go up proportionately.

15. It is not, of course the first time that such questions have been raised (see Reports 1975, pp 282-283; Minutes 1982, p76; Reports of the ad hoc Committee on Church Finance 1983-1990; Memorial of the Tyrone Presbytery (Mins 1994, p46; Reports 1995, pp9-10). The Panel came to the conclusion that the fraction system is a tried and tested one and that other systems (eg stewardship), while initially attractive, ultimately tend to produce greater

problems. However the Panel is fully aware of the widespread concern throughout the Church about this matter and is prepared to consider any suggestions that may be put to it.

16. The Panel is pleased to note that, allowing for some late returns, the United Appeal target for 1996 was met, that increases in its target are being kept in line with inflation, that assessments for the Ministry Funds this year will drop by 1.9p per pound of stipend, that the Incidental Fund Assessment for 1997 is reduced by 1p and that the 10p assessment for Church House Re-Development is likely to finish in 2000. However, the Strategy for Mission Committee's proposals for ministerial in-service training/sabbaticals would cost 1.13p per pound of stipend in 1999, rising to 1.7p by 2001 (or else a cut of 25% in supply fees). The financial implications of establishing a Training Council and a Central Training Unit, and a new mission agency are not clear.

PANEL ON BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

17. The Panel noted with approval the proposal that the present Committee on National and International Problems be disbanded. Some of the work previously done by this Committee is now being done by the Committee on Peace and Peacemaking, the Committee on Social Issues and Resources, etc, while the General Board can appoint specially selected panels to deal with other topical issues that arise (eg as happened with the Toronto Blessing).

18. The Panel also noted with approval the proposal to transfer the Retired Ministers House Fund from the Board of Social Witness to the Board of Ministry and Pensions.

19. At the time of writing the report of the Strategy for Mission Committee on the possible restructuring of some Boards is awaited.

20. During the year the two ad hoc Committees of Assembly reported to the General Board. It is recommended that this experiment be continued for a further year.

REV Dr W W PORTER

21. Rev Dr Warren Porter served as a Chaplain in the Royal Air Force from 1965 to 1981. Throughout those years and subsequently he became a well known figure in the Church, often speaking from the rostrum in Assembly debates, so when a vacancy arose in the convenership of the Forces Committee in 1992 he was an obvious choice for the post.

22. Dr Porter discharged the duties of this convenership with zeal and efficiency. He maintained close links with our full time chaplains in the Army, the Royal Navy and the RAF, and was proud of the fact that during his tenure of office Rev Dr Victor Dobbins MBE was appointed Chaplain General.

23. Dr Porter also concerned himself with the chaplains in the Reserves, with Officiating Chaplains and those serving with the Army Cadet Force. In addition he assiduously promoted the Poppy Day Appeal, the RAF Wings Appeal and the UDR Benevolent Fund and prepared meticulously for the Remembrance Day services.

24. The Church gratefully records its sincere appreciation of all that Dr Porter achieved during his convenership.

VISITATIONS OF PRESBYTERY

Rev J I Davey reports:

1. Even though much time and effort had been put into the production of new questionnaires, which, at the time of the last Assembly, it was planned to send down to Presbyteries for consideration and comment, the Committee on reviewing its work in September decided that a more radical approach was required.
2. Training sessions organised through the Christian Training Centre were consequently cancelled.
3. A paper was presented to the General Board in October outlining the weakness of the present scheme and the principles behind the proposed new pattern.
4. The General Board gave the outlined scheme its whole-hearted support.
5. The membership of the sub-committee was strengthened due to the non-attendance of some who had been originally appointed.
6. The Convener met with a representative of Evangelical Ministries to discuss their "Clearing our Vision" programme.
7. The Committee has not met for some time but will have returned to its task before the Assembly meets. It is hoped a detailed scheme will be presented to next year's Assembly.

STATEMENTS

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

GENERAL BOARD RESOLUTIONS 24 October 1996

1. The General Board of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland welcomes the renewed emphasis on the importance of loving, stable family relationships and of good parenting.
2. The Board deplores the decision that there should be an additional midweek national lottery in the United Kingdom, since the official promotion of a gambling culture is gravely damaging to society.
3. The British and Irish Governments are asked:
 - (a) to recognise the desperate need for peace to be established in the Sudan and to press for peace initiatives that would bring to its thirteen year civil war.
 - (b) through additional aid programmes to help relieve the suffering of the thousands of people, mainly women and children, who are without the basic necessities of life in the displaced persons' camps in the North of Sudan.
4. Since God's plans are for the good of all the people of this island, the General Board warns of the dangers of being trapped on the narrow ground of sectional self interest and calls instead for people to live within wider horizons which encompass the concerns and well-being of all the people of this island.

5. We commend the loyalist paramilitaries for maintaining their ceasefire and would encourage the IRA to reinstate theirs. We do not believe there is any justification for paramilitary violence from either quarter.

6. Serious political negotiation is an urgent priority and necessary accommodation must take the stated convictions of different parties seriously.

7. Recognising the disastrously damaging few months through which we have passed, and the knife edge on which many of our community relationships currently exist, we believe that no one should act or speak in ways which widen divisions or deepen mistrust. We call upon all those involved in boycotts of businesses and the picketing of churches to desist forthwith. We also call on Irish League Football clubs to encourage fans to display only club emblems at matches and we call on those organising protests outside football matches to desist forthwith.

8. We hope that the search for a resolution of the disputes about parades will be marked by both sensitivity and tolerance, recognising that "if we are to build a new kind of society, then it must be a genuinely multicultural society where the traditions of both communities are not only recognised, but affirmed and even celebrated". (1996 General Assembly resolution)

9. The disastrous events of the last few months have unleashed anger and intolerance and demonstrated that there is much prejudice and bitterness lying close to the surface in all of us. It remains important for us to seek peace and pursue it in whatever way is possible, personally and at congregational and community levels.

10. Since the policy of taking the law into our own hands is the way of anarchy, we call upon people to co-operate with the properly constituted authorities of the state and to support them in the difficult judgements which have to be made.

GENERAL BOARD RESOLUTIONS 27 February 1997

1. The General Board urges Loyalist paramilitaries to maintain their ceasefire and the IRA to declare a permanent ceasefire immediately. The Board also urges both sides to move away from the violence of punishment beatings and intimidation.

2. The Board reiterates its call for an end to the sectarian based and politically motivated sinister boycotting of businesses. This organised practice whereby people are encouraged, pressurised or intimidated into boycotting either Roman Catholic, Protestant or other businesses should be abandoned.

GENERAL BOARD RESOLUTION 10 April 1997

1. The General Board deplores recent arson attacks on churches. Orange Hall, public buildings and private homes. It extends its sympathy to all who have been upset and adversely affected by these attacks. In this tense time in which we live, it calls upon the members of the church to do all in their power to uphold the rule of law, to resist the use of words or the deployment of strategies which would further polarise different parts of the community and, in addition, to support those who foster love and understanding in the service of a future marked by co-operation and respect.

INTER CHURCH COMMITTEE ON NORTHERN IRELAND

Very Rev Dr A W G Brown reports:

1. The Inter Church Committee on Northern Ireland met in Belfast on 18 October, 1996.

2. Very Rev Dr Godfrey Brown reported on the civil unrest that had taken place in Northern Ireland during the summer, and introduced four speakers who then addressed the Committee on the subject of "The Marching Season".

3. Rev Dr Henry Postel reported that the Business Education Initiative was proving very successful. A total of 90 Church-related colleges are now offering 150 places in the USA to students from Northern Ireland. An evaluation of the scheme is being undertaken.

4. Dr Postel reported that Very Rev Dr John Ross and Father John McManus would undertake a "Rev Tour" in February 1997.

5. Mr John Carr reported on the assistance given to the Fair Employment Review currently being undertaken in Northern Ireland by the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights. A Seminar was organised in Washington for US Government officials and others. A submission to the Fair Employment Review had proved helpful, and the results of the Review would be considered next year.

6. The Call for Fair Employment and Inward Investment issued by the Four Church Leaders was still proving valuable.

7. Dr Postel reported that there had been a "Summer Institute" in 1996 but one is not planned for 1997. The aims and content of the Summer Institute are being re-examined by the Northern Ireland Working group of the PCUSA, which might also provide advice to many other US groups visiting Ireland.

PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Rev J T Magowan reports:

1. Environmental issues are not going to go away. They will increasingly impinge upon our lives in a multiplicity of ways - from the air we breathe, the water we drink, the furniture we sit on, the car we drive, the roads we build, the countryside we live and work in, the forests we cut down, the sea we bathe in, the fish we net and the world we spoil. We are in danger of selling off "the family silver" and failing to sustain our "goodly heritage" for our children.

2. The existence of the Environment Panel highlights our Church's concern for "the peace, harmony and healing of God's creation." Panel members have been environmentally involved. Messrs David Boyd, Joe Furphy and Jack Gault have all worked in the Environmental and Heritage Service while Mrs Liz Sheppard and the Revs Dr Gordon Gray, Sam Millar and Gilbert Young have also expressed their fervent commitment. Yet the Panel is aware that we are a very small boat - though possibly a tug in a sea of apathy and, like so many other facets of the Church's work, we feel under-resourced.

3. However, we have appreciated those Executives in different government departments who have come to meet us and informed us of their

role in the community. We have made them aware of the Church's concern. Mr Henry Plester (Director of the Northern Ireland Water Service) and then Mr Jim Lamont (Director of Environmental Protection) gave us updates on their services. They honoured us with their presence - an appreciation of the role of the Church in countering ignorance in environmental matters.

4. The Panel also hosted two representatives from the Ulster Farmers' Union, Mr Trevor Lockhart and Mr Ian Mark who answered some of our questions on the BSE crisis. This highlights the inter-connection between environmental and economic considerations, not least the unacceptability of cattle eating their own "kine". The Panel welcomes the banning of all offals since August 1996. It notes the low incidence of BSE in Ireland, North and South compared to Great Britain.

5. Indeed a key issue in modern agriculture is the Environment, not least in the use of certain chemicals and a greater awareness of food safety, human health together with the conservation of the countryside and the welfare of animals. The whole nature of modern farming techniques is under the environmental microscope.

6. We have been encouraged by other denominations co-operating with us in seeking to promote a greater awareness of crucial issues. A small ad hoc committee of representatives from the Society of Friends, the Church of Ireland, the Reformed Presbyterian and the Methodist Church has been set up and is seeking to implement a Five Year Plan to promote greater environmental awareness in the churches in Ireland.

7. We believe that there is enthusiasm and expertise among our membership which has yet to be tapped.

CONCILIATION PANEL

Rev R F S Poots reports:

1. The Committee reported last year that a group of trained conciliators was available to facilitate reconciliation in the Church. It is encouraging that, during the last year, members of this group have been active at the request of several Clerks of Presbyteries. While not all difficulties were resolved satisfactorily, those involved appreciated the opportunity to share in this ministry of reconciliation.

2. One important lesson has been learned. The earlier in a crisis conciliation begins the better is the likelihood of the difficulties being resolved.

3. Packs of Bible study materials have been distributed to all ministers which could provide a basis for pulpit ministry or could be used to increase awareness of the biblical emphasis on reconciliation through the use of the packs at mid-week services or in group Bible study.

4. The Committee hopes that increasing use will be made of this service and that God will make it a means towards greater harmony throughout the Church.

CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

1. The Church and Government Committee met as required during the year.

2. Last summer will long be remembered for its disputes about parades and protests, its raw sectarianism, its anger, bitterness, disillusion, suffering and fear. Whatever cautious partnerships and understandings may have been developing across the divisions of our fractured society, many were blown away when residents' groups and some segments of the loyal orders, claiming mutually exclusive absolute rights for themselves, were determined to force their will on the other group.

3. As the newsletter of the Christian Renewal Centre in Rostrevor put it "The demons of division danced to the ancient tunes of bigotry, hatred, pride and prejudice."

4. During the summer it appeared that the two parts of our community walked away from one another in anger, dismay and bitterness. Many people believe that community relationships became as tense and fragile as they have been for a long time. It was an occasion when sectional interests were ruthlessly pursued at the expense of economic interests. The politics of pluralism, which would have demonstrated an overriding concern for the common good, were abandoned in the service of sectional preoccupations.

5. This crisis developed a few short weeks after last year's General Assembly through controversy surrounding a proposed parade by the Portadown District of the Orange Order on Sunday 7th July from Drumcree Parish Church down the Garvaghy Road into Portadown. The proposed route of the parade was opposed by the Garvaghy Road Residents' Coalition. The RUC issued an order preventing the parade from passing beyond the church. The Orange Order and loyalists engaged in a campaign of protest and civil disorder which forced the RUC to reverse the decision. These extraordinary scenes were televised worldwide and did enormous damage to the credibility of christian witness in this country.

6. The Moderator was involved with the Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic Archbishops of Armagh and the President of the Methodist Church in attempting to mediate the dispute, sadly without success.

7. The controversy precipitated widespread public disorder throughout much of Northern Ireland, first among Unionists and Loyalists and then among Nationalists and Republicans.

8. The disorder resulted in major costs to Northern Ireland.

- two deaths and many injuries
- very serious polarisation between the two parts of the community
- damage to relationships between the police and both parts of our community
- public expenditure costs which would appear to be in excess of £30 million
- losses to business, trade, tourism and investment
- anguish and fear due to threats and intimidation as homes, schools, churches and businesses suffered arson attacks

9. The Church and Government Committee met and issued a statement on 23rd July (Appendix A) which was widely circulated. The Committee sought to give reasoned christian leadership in a situation of crisis.

10. The Parades and Protests controversy remained a worrying and damaging feature of much of the rest of the year.

11. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland established an "Independent Review of Parades and Marches" in August. The Report was published on 30th January, 1997. The Church and Government Committee's response to the 265 page report of the Review is printed at Appendix B.

12. At the time of going to press it was still not clear what the Government's final response to the recommendations of the Review was going to be. Surveys show the majority of people wish the groups involved to reach some kind of accommodation with one another. Failing this some other legally empowered person or body will have to take the decisions. Given the present situation, the Committee believes those decisions ought to be obeyed.

13. The controversy about parades and protests spread to the boycotting of businesses, mainly, but not only, by nationalists and republicans of protestant businesses, and to the picketing of Roman Catholic Churches by loyalists. These sectarian based and politically motivated practices are enormously damaging and dangerous to society in general and catastrophic to some traders. In some areas there is intimidation and social pressure being exerted on people who have no personal desire to be associated with boycotting. Both the Church and Government Committee and the General Board have condemned these sinister practices throughout the past year.

14. Continuing its policy of consultation and discussion with influential people in public life, the Church and Government Committee met with:

- (a) the front bench team of Fianna Fail
- (b) some Presbyterian Chaplains in the Orange Order
- (c) Mr Tony Worthington re the Labour Party's statement on policing
- (d) Mr Alan Elliott, Permanent Secretary in the DHSS re the Government's policy on Health Care, a matter which is also of concern to the Board of Social Witness and the Presbyteries of Coleraine, Iveagh and Tyrone
- (e) the recently appointed Chief Constable, Mr Ronnie Flanagan
- (f) the Independent Review of Parades and Marches and the Northern Ireland Forum's Committee on Parades

15. The Committee has also considered the report and recommendations of Dr Maurice Hayes' review of the police complaints system in Northern Ireland. Dr Hayes has produced a very thorough report into a very important and often controversial aspect of policing. We welcome his main recommendation that there should be a police Ombudsman, responsible to Parliament, with the duty to investigate complaints and to report his/her findings. Dr Hayes has tried to be fair both to complainants and to the police in the suggestions he makes, and puts great emphasis on the need for independence, openness and speed in dealing with complaints.

16. The Committee has continued its study of the issue of prisoners and a report is presented to the Assembly (Appendix C).

17. One of the responsibilities of this committee is to convey concerns of Presbyteries and Boards to either or both Governments. This has been done on issues about the Sudan, hospitals and health care, licensing laws, boycotting, the national lottery, Sunday trading and the protection of employees who do not wish to work on Sundays.

18. Legislation is in place to protect employees in the retail trade who do not wish to work on Sundays. The General Assembly has protested strongly to the Government about the commercialisation of Sunday and the detrimental effects which it has on many aspects of our shared life. It is important that people know that the legislation exists to protect shop workers who do not wish to work on Sundays. Persons who feel they have been less favourably treated on religious grounds by indicating an unwillingness to work on Sundays could have recourse under the Fair Employment legislation to the Fair Employment Tribunal for resolution of their complaints.

19. It is likely that the legislation which permits the commercialisation of Sunday would not have been passed by a Devolved Assembly in Northern Ireland. Commercialisation will result in the gradual erosion of the distinctive ethos of Sunday as a shared day for rest, worship, and the consolidation of family relationships. The British Government opposed a proposal in the European Union's "Working Time Directive" that Sunday in principle be included in the weekly rest period throughout the Union. The commercialisation of Sunday also gives cause for concern in the Republic, despite the representations made to the Government last year by the Four Church Leaders.

20. As this report goes to print, the political talks at Stormont have been suspended, at least until after the election which will be held before the General Assembly meets. Very little progress has been made, the principal sticking point having to do with the issue of the decommissioning of arms by paramilitary groups which are associated with some political parties.

21. The report of last year declared that "God is giving us a crucial opportunity to deal with the long-standing problems of our divided society". It must be reported that little advantage has been taken of that opportunity. If God provides opportunities and we do not take advantage of them, one can only conclude that the consequences may well be serious.

22. At the time this report was being prepared, while the Loyalist ceasefires were largely intact, there was concern about their stability. The Provisional IRA followed the bombing of Canary Wharf with a massive bomb in Manchester, the killing of a soldier in Bessbrook and numerous unsuccessful attempts to kill members of the RUC. So called "punishment beatings" continue to be widespread and result in suffering and sometimes death. This is another aspect of unacceptable lawlessness as self-appointed groups of people attempt to control what happens in certain localities.

23. Most people are aware that the people of the Republic of Ireland are undergoing rapid and far reaching change which has implications for people in both parts of Ireland and for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. A report about this is at Appendix D.

JOHN DUNLOP, GEORGE McCULLAGH, Conveners

APPENDIX A**STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
- 19 June, 1996**

1. It is imperative that the "All Party" talks succeed. It is time for all of us to look seriously into our hearts and do all we can to be generous and responsible in this moment of opportunity.

2. We deeply regret the outrage of the Manchester bomb and the murder of Detective Garda Jerry McCabe and the attempted murder of Detective Garda Ben O'Sullivan. We express our sympathy to their families.

3. While it is desirable for Sinn Fein to be involved in the talks, we do not see how that party can be involved in serious negotiations without an IRA ceasefire and a commitment to taking the Mitchell Principles seriously. We hope that the IRA will make it possible for Sinn Fein to take part in the talks.

4. In a tense situation, it is a time for carefully measured speech. Intemperate language does not persuade and may inflame. Since these negotiations will require flexibility, we welcome the flexibility which saved the 'All Party Talks'. The resolution of such impasses will continue to require all round flexibility.

5. Since arms can be replaced, decommissioning is an issue primarily related to the building of trust and confidence, rather than only a matter of security.

6. The Church and Government Committee has found Senator Mitchell to be a man of sensitivity and integrity.

7. We re-affirm our conviction that it is the responsibility of the security forces to defend people and their communities. No other group can take this responsibility upon themselves.

8. We hope that the loyalist paramilitaries will hold steady to their ceasefire and continue to allow the politicians associated with them to exercise political leadership.

9. The peace process is not exclusively in the hands of elected politicians. Congregations should be involved in facilitating understanding and building trust across the deep, and frequently hidden, lines of rupture in their local communities.

10. There is no solution which is purely a 'Strand One' solution internal to Northern Ireland. This means that unionists must address themselves seriously to the substantive challenges of North-South relationships under Strand Two and build confidence with the nationalist community on this issue.

11. There is no solution which does not include Strand One. Nationalists need to address themselves seriously to the substantive challenges of Strand One and build confidence with the unionist community on this issue.

12. East-West relationships to be addressed in Strand Three are relevant to everyone and need the imaginative input of all the parties. (This is not a private inter-governmental affair).

13. We seek accommodation. We do not want killing, bombing, funerals, dislocation and grief. There is no way that we want to return to that.

STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
- 23 July, 1996

1. There are widespread feelings of fear, pain, confusion and stress throughout Ireland caused by the events of the last few weeks.

2. The General Assembly has recognised that “the whole subject of traditional parades is a highly emotive one, that draws out the strongest of reactions from the people of Northern Ireland ... We need to recognise that the right to parade is a part of the culture of both traditions in Northern Ireland.”

3. The recent disastrous events have unleashed forces of intolerance and anger and deepened the divisions in this society. These are in serious danger of driving us back into the destructive and inappropriate luxuries of uncritical self-righteousness from which we were slowly emerging. Such one-sidedness has unfortunately been evident in some media coverage.

4. There are fears and anxieties in both communities which must be spoken about, heard and addressed. The articulation of one story does not eliminate the integrity of another. We are paying an awesome price for our failure to listen to each other and to accommodate diversity. However difficult it may be, Protestants have to listen to Roman Catholics and Roman Catholics to Protestants; Nationalists and Republicans to Unionists and Loyalists and vice versa. All kinds of people need reassurances about what is happening.

5. The present situation required the political process to be pursued positively which will involve courage and the taking of risks.

6. The events of the last few weeks have seriously damaged the credibility of Christian witness in Ireland and abroad. There are Christian and biblical principles which can challenge and guide us.

7. We read in Romans 13 and 1st Peter 2 vrs 13-17 that the constituted authorities of the state are to be obeyed. Only under the most extreme circumstances can this obligation be refused. We do not believe that such obtained in recent times.

8. Jesus taught his disciples (Matthew 5 vrs 23-24) that reconciliation was so important that, if necessary, even an act of worship should be interrupted to facilitate the making of peace. People from all traditions should “make every effort to live in peace with everyone” (Hebrews 12 vr 14)

9. Jesus is the head of the church and he regularly demonstrated his Lordship over traditions. Tradition must serve the purposes of the gospel and of the Kingdom of God. When either is compromised by the demands of tradition, it is a reformation principle that tradition must be modified or reformed. Failure to do so turns tradition into a false god.

10. Christians should not use language which distorts and abuses the opinions of other people. (Matthew 5 vrs 21-22). The Apostle James warned us that even the spark of an inappropriate word can set the whole place on fire with fire from hell. (James 3 vrs 5-12)

11. Murder, destruction, intimidation, the hijacking of vehicles, the burning of homes, schools and businesses were done in the wake of Drumcree, the Garvaghy Road and the Lower Ormeau Road by people who were fired up by what happened there. We condemn that scandalous behaviour which cannot

be justified. However, those who initiate actions in volatile situations cannot evade total responsibility for the consequences of what they begin.

12. We recognise the impossible task which the police faced and the difficult decisions which the Chief Constable had to make. We are dismayed at the threats of even greater violence which led to the actions taken by the police on the Garvaghy Road and on the Lower Ormeau Road. These were, understandably, perceived by our Roman Catholic neighbours as a lack of even handedness in contrast to the apparent sensitive policing of most Protestant civil disobedience.

13. There has to be accommodation and compromise on the marching issue. Honourable compromises must be sought at the local level and we urge all christian people to give their support to the wider community and local church leadership to encourage movement in this direction.

14. We commend the efforts of the leaders of the four largest churches for their efforts at mediating the recent dispute. We would hope that politicians might also be facilitators and encouragers of necessary compromise. We also commend local priests and ministers, community leaders and those people in the Orange Order and the political parties who tried to calm passions.

STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE - 11 September 1996

1. Church and Government Committee encourages political representatives at the Stormont talks to make every effort to reach an honourable accommodation quickly. Delay deepens despair while progress builds hopefulness. We pledge our prayerful support for courageous leadership.

2. The Church and Government Committee strongly supports the call of the Four Church Leaders for an immediate end to boycotting which is not only wrong in itself but harms those places where business people belong to a minority. We commend those communities where boycotting has been resisted.

STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE - 25 November 1996

1. The Committee calls for all picketing of churches to be abandoned and asks that members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland take a lead in this matter.

2. We profoundly regret the continuing arson attacks on churches and schools. Escalation of civil conflict is only in the interests of those who do not wish to see the creation of a peaceful and just society.

APPENDIX B

RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW ON PARADES AND MARCHES - BY THE CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

1. The Church and Government Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland places on record its appreciation of the Report of the Independent

Review of Parades and Marches chaired by Dr. Peter North. We commend the Commission on the comprehensive nature of the report, and thank them for the patience, courtesy, and painstaking work that have gone into the gathering of evidence and the production of the final report.

2. The problem of contested parades and marches, and protests against them is undoubtedly one of the most difficult and potentially dangerous problems facing Northern Ireland at this time. We believe this Report has made a significant contribution to the analysis of its many aspects, and offers in its recommendations an approach to solving these problems that may well be the only remaining chance to do so in a just and sustainable way.

3. The issue of parades and marches escalated last summer to a dangerous and highly costly level. In our view it must never be permitted to do so again. Northern Ireland simply cannot afford to give way again to the blatant prejudice and sectarian conduct that disfigured community relations, and damaged our economic infrastructure so significantly. The background to all of this, and the nature and extent of the problems have been carefully analysed in the Report.

4. We share the opinion of the Review Body that while mediation is by no means the panacea for all ills (12:41), nevertheless it is of great importance in helping to resolve potential conflicts. (12:44) It is essential however that such mediation should be entered upon at the earliest possible juncture. Christians in particular should remember the Lord's injunction to seek peace face to face (St. Matthew 18 15-17). It is also imperative that those representing the various parties should have the ability to speak with some authority on behalf of their respective groups. (12:42e) We believe an important insight into this process is the suggestion that mediation may often be widened to include representatives of other sections of the community (12:43) and not simply the particular groups that are in contention with one another.

5. Neither the 'right to parade,' nor 'the right for residents to withhold consent' is absolute (9:1). It is sometimes right not to exercise a right in the interests of other people, or of the society of which we are a part, than to insist on exercising it regardless of the consequences. A major challenge facing our society is in learning to judge what are the legitimate limits upon perceived 'rights.' In a democracy we must learn to put up with things that are less than what we ourselves might desire in order to recognise the rights of others and build a peaceful and diverse community. (9:9) We are particularly grateful for the splendid summary of the legal framework of such rights and freedoms in other democratic societies in chapter 9. This analysis informs a valuable set of fundamental principles set out in 11: 16 - 19.

6. The key recommendation of the Report is the establishment of a new body, designated the Parades Commission with wide-ranging powers to educate, to initiate mediation, and ultimately to adjudicate, though subject to appeal by the Chief Constable, and the ultimate overruling power of the Secretary of State.

While broadly supportive of this idea, there are a number of concerns we would want to express.

- (a) We are concerned at the creation of yet another Quango, necessary though it may be as an interim measure. There is an urgent need to

affirm the political process. It is too easy to shelter behind the police, or any number of other scapegoats, including a body of this kind!

- (b) While aware of the 'political correctness' expressed in the composition of the new body (12:33) we believe that in a small group of people of this kind it is more important to choose people who will command respect and show innovation and insight than to be overly concerned about gender and geographical location!
- (c) We share the concern of the Review Body that 'Mediation' and 'Determination' could militate against one another. (12:44,46) Nonetheless we feel it is important to note the role of the Commission in making 'determinations' in disputed cases only comes should a process of education and mediation fail. (12.111)
- (d) We believe it is of real importance that some body should adjudicate on these matters. There can be no doubt that the people of Northern Ireland want these problems solved. While the determinations will certainly not satisfy everyone on every, or indeed any occasion, it is surely more important for the good of the body politic that public order is preserved, especially in these troubled times, than that all parties feel that they have got the last iota of their rights. Imperfect order is better than no order at all.

7. We are certain that the extension of notice for parades and marches to 21 days is a real improvement. We note that the Commission would have the responsibility of recommending mediation very much earlier (12:57).

8. While the question of cost may have to be looked at, we are wholly in sympathy with the idea of a registration scheme for bands (14:41), but believe this must be drawn tightly enough that defaulting bands and their members will not be able to re-group quickly under another name.

9. The ultimate effectiveness of whatever is proposed depends greatly upon the spirit and attitudes of those who are involved in parades or protests. We applaud the idea of a code of conduct such as is outlined in the Report (13:39ff), and believe that it is a most useful standard to set before all who participate in parades, and/or protests against parades.

10. We particularly note and welcome the guidelines outlined in Part II of the Code relating to behaviour in the vicinity of sensitive locations, including Churches and cemeteries.

11. The recommendations on the control of alcohol (14:53-5) would be in line with the general thinking of our Church.

12. The problem of parades and protests raises many sensitive and potentially dangerous issues in our divided community. Since many of these arise out of one or other interpretations of the Christian tradition, we feel it is important to make the point that, for the Christian, 'culture' must always be secondary to our obedience to Christ. His way of love and forgiveness transcends our human insistence upon rights and traditions. It is the duty of all who profess to be Christians to obey Christ's teaching, and to recognise that He stands in judgement over all our traditions and cultures.

13. Some might think this Report has about it a degree of academic detachment that perhaps fails to do justice to the strong passions and unyielding determination that have marked the divergent political traditions in our

community. Nevertheless the recommendations could be made to work, given the will to do so on the part of society as a whole. In the absence of any better package we believe that this represents the best way forward at this time. Failure on our part to build a genuinely multi-cultural and tolerant society does irreparable injury to the good name of Northern Ireland and untold harm to the possibilities of tourism, inward investment, greater prosperity, and indeed the whole quality of life for us all.

14. Accordingly, we urge upon the Government the need to take this Report seriously, and put in place as a matter of urgency whatever mechanisms are necessary to ensure that the marching season can be carried through in a more peaceful manner this year and in the future.

15. We also plead with all those who are involved in parades, and any protests against such parades, to give thoughtful and generous consideration to viewpoints other than their own, and to enter into whatever processes of mediation are available to them, so that genuine agreements can be reached.

APPENDIX C

REPORT ON PRISONERS

1. During the period of the ceasefires, the Church and Government and Peace and Peacemaking Committees jointly set up a working group to consider the possibility of the early release of prisoners involved in paramilitary crimes, and other related issues. Clearly the situation has changed since the ending of the IRA ceasefire. The continuing use of intimidation through punishment beatings, and other violent activity by both republican and loyalist paramilitary groups, would also indicate that a cautious approach to these issues is appropriate. However, there are underlying principles which need to be considered.

2. In any discussion of the early release of prisoners responsible for paramilitary violence the understandable reaction of those who have been the victims of that violence must be clearly recognised and respected. While there have been many examples of genuine forgiveness over the years, the real hurt and anger of many victims of violence should not be ignored. Indeed any thought that the perpetrators of violence may be released early could increase the pain of some who have already suffered too much. However, consideration must also be given to the possibility of ending violence, and building a new society in which victims are not being continually added to the number of those who already suffer.

3. Society must clearly show that violence is wrong and will be punished as an unacceptable evil. Legitimate anger must be given expression through the criminal justice system, or else people may be led into a descending spiral of retaliation. Justice must be seen to be done, and punishment should include an element of deterrence. Naturally the courts should always ensure that everyone is treated equally under the law.

4. However, it must also be recognised that those who have been responsible for paramilitary crimes have often “acted out of the aspirations, fears, angers, hatreds and hurts of much larger groups who would not allow themselves to become involved personally in violence”¹. This is not to excuse

the crimes but to recognise that the paramilitaries have grown out of a society which is not functioning normally.

5. In an important report entitled "Release and Integration of Politically Motivated Prisoners in Northern Ireland", published by the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (March, 1995), a comparison is made with other situations of conflict. The report concludes that "no political conflict which we have studied has been resolved, or moved towards resolution, without an engagement with the issue of the early release of politically motivated prisoners"².

6. The research of NIACRO has also shown that the incidence of re-offending among those who have been released on licence is very low. This of course means that great care must be taken to ensure that any being considered for release on licence have shown a genuine change of heart and attitude, and totally cut themselves free from all paramilitary links. Signs of real remorse would indicate a new attitude of respect towards the injured person.

7. During discussion it became clear to the working group that there are other issues relating to prisoners accused or convicted of paramilitary crimes which also cause concern. The conditions under which such prisoners are held in Great Britain can differ radically from the conditions pertaining in Northern Ireland, and that situation needs urgent review. The group would also hold the view that wherever possible prisoners should be held close to their families.

8. In any discussion of the release of prisoners it must be recognised that people are not released into a vacuum. The society into which they are released is important. It is therefore important to ensure that skills training is provided and job creation encouraged. The working group recognise the good work which is being done by a number of organisations in this field.

1 "Liberty to the Captives?" (Interchurch Group on Faith and Politics, 1995), p.4.

2 "Release and Reintegration of Politically Motivated Prisoners in Northern Ireland" (NIACRO 1995), p.11.

APPENDIX D

PRESBYTERIANS AND THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

"A CHANGING PEOPLE IN A CHANGING PLACE"

1. For many Protestants living in Northern Ireland their traditional perception of the Republic of Ireland was of a place of bogeys.

2. The Roman Catholic Church was thought to totally dominate the society, and that church's teaching was in turn supported by and reflected in the Constitution.

3. Traditional Nationalist ideology, with its pursuit of a United Ireland and its hostility and insensitivity to Unionist convictions, dominated most political thinking.

4. The number of Protestants living in the Republic fell and many churches had to be closed.

5. The economy was seen to be miserable and many of the people very poor and it was thought that this would never change.

6. The people were thought to be happily priest-ridden, given to having large families and were thought to lack the work ethic of, for example, Northern Presbyterians.

7. Given these widespread perceptions, which were not entirely without substance, Presbyterians in Northern Ireland thought they could come to only one conclusion which was that they should keep apart from and be protected from that society, meanwhile doing whatever they could to act as supporters and protectors of the Presbyterian minority trapped in such an alien culture in the Republic of Ireland.

BUT TIMES ARE CHANGING

8. Practically everyone who now lives in the Republic of Ireland describes it as a place which is undergoing very significant and extraordinarily rapid change.

9. The Republic of Ireland has, since 1973, grasped the hand of Europe and has prospered economically as a result. Agricultural incomes have improved enormously through the Common Agricultural Policy, changing the attitude of the rural citizens, both of farmers and of residents in small towns. Having benefited enormously from the input of capital from the European Union and inspired by a wider vision of being a part of a wider European society, the rural people have become more independent and modern. This has happened at a rate never contemplated or known in Irish history.

10. The majority of the population no longer live on farms, but are found within the cities.

11. The Republic has increasingly found its identity within a wider European context, rather than in its sometimes fraught relationship with its immediate neighbour, Great Britain.

12. There has been substantial modification of traditional nationalist thinking about a united Ireland to be imposed against the will of the majority in Northern Ireland. Many people speak about a "post nationalist" Ireland.

13. Additionally, business and companies, their trade organisations, their distribution networks, as well as more and more members of their staff are giving effect to a realisation of the economic facts that Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are linked together economically. These people are also experiencing the common needs and habits of the entire population of both parts of Ireland.

14. Sporting and professional organisations have, of course, been doing this for a longer time in a consistent but non-political manner.

15. On the macro level the national infrastructure has benefited from European money. This is evident in the improved road system, in new motorways, in faster modern trains to all the main cities. Much of this is already in place and more change is planned for the immediate future. Telephone, water and electricity supplies have improved; some have been partly privatised and all are equal to world standards.

16. The Republic of Ireland has benefited enormously from outside investment. The imaginative taxation legislation has helped to attract this

investment which has provided employment opportunities for the well educated and largely young population. This has, in turn, both stemmed emigration and encouraged many well qualified citizens to return. The investment which the Government made in second and third level education has produced a very well educated and young work force.

17. The society nevertheless faces acute problems of extensive social deprivation and, in some places, a pervasive drug culture.

18. The consequence of Ireland's enthusiastic involvement in the European Union has meant some loss of national independence but also a considerable diminution of the feeling and consequences of insularity.

19. The vision of a pluralist society and the need to be open in state and social affairs has required constitutional changes which have been made, albeit reluctantly by the old establishment in some instances. Laws, from labour issues to divorce, have been enacted. The consequence of all of this is both cultural and religious change and a growth in economic prosperity and a widespread feeling of confidence about the future. This has been epitomised in both style and substance by President Mary Robinson during her term in office.

20. Not all the changes have been driven by economics or by the outside influences of Europe or North America. As self confidence and feelings of self worth have developed, change has been generated from within the society.

21. This process presents challenges to all the churches. These rapid changes invite serious discussion about the value systems which will inform this emerging society. As the authority and influence of institutional churches diminishes, and the society becomes more secular, from where are the values to come and upon what foundations are they to be based?

22. The Roman Catholic Church which Presbyterians encounter today is different from the past. Most of our members have experienced a real generosity of spirit from that church. By and large our leaders are respected and befriended as colleagues and our members are affirmed for their distinctive witness.

23. The Roman Catholic Church has seen its world shaken by legislative and social attitude changes. In addition, the hidden past of many of the church's institutions has been revealed in child abuse, inappropriate teaching habits and the treatment of orphans. This has been mercilessly exposed by the media, which exposure continues with no let up.

24. Churches other than the Roman Catholic Church have also got problems and have suffered from the changes but not in the same way or with the same negative effects on numbers.

HOW SHOULD WE AS PRESBYTERIANS RESPOND TO THIS CHANGING SITUATION?

25. There is in the Republic of Ireland a greater openness to change and a greater willingness to look at options than has ever obtained in the past. This means that there are increasing opportunities for Presbyterian witness and open loving interaction with people and churches outside the Presbyterian Church.

26. The whole church, and the Presbyterian Church in particular, needs to recognise the extent of the changes that are taking place and the reality which lies behind them. As a Church operating in the whole island, the Presbyterian Church can probably say that our ministry has always been, not unnaturally, a

ministry focused where the greatest number of Presbyterians live. As a result, many people in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland have tended to see the Presbyterian Church as being a Church with an almost exclusive Northern Ireland and Unionist orientation. Perhaps indeed the Presbyterian Church has from time to time been captive to such thinking.

27. It is time to recognise and welcome many of the changes which are taking place in the Republic of Ireland and see the opportunities for the greater good of the whole population of this island. It does not assist the mission of the Presbyterian Church in a changing Ireland to be seen to be some kind of ally of thinking which does not recognise and welcome many of changes taking place in Ireland.

28. The experience of Presbyterians in the Republic is that we owe it to ourselves to show trust in our Roman Catholic neighbours, not naively but a reasoned trust, and additionally to build relationships within and between people and communities in both parts of this island. This is the only basis for real security and lasting peace.

29. By contrast, it is alarming that many people see the reason for disaster being avoided in Northern Ireland as belonging to a group of Loyalist paramilitary leaders, many of whom have themselves little commitment to or concern for the Church.

30. Surely there is a vocation for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to address itself to the opportunities which exist in a changing Ireland and not to be overcome by feelings of anxiety and fear which would cause the Church to become reactive, insular and conservative, doing the opposite of building constructive relationships in an Ireland whose people are undergoing such significant and such rapid change.

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

1. The Doctrine Committee met with the Conveners of the Strategy for Mission Committee to consider further the Remit concerning the eldership.

2. After considerable discussion it was agreed that there is no doctrinal or theological objection to elders being ordained for life but serving on a Kirk Session for a fixed period.

3. In the course of discussion it emerged that there was a general feeling that there is need for an examination of the theological foundations of ministry and we are willing to undertake this if requested to do so by the General Assembly.

T S REID, Convener

FORCES COMMITTEE

1. Although our denomination has never had the status of an Established Church we have thus far not succumbed to a merely sectarian mind-set. If not the church “of” a nation, we have set ourselves to be a church “for” a nation. Our

wide-ranging ministry is a witness to that, and part of that witness is borne by the Forces Committee.

2. Presbyterian theology has always seen it as a Christian and churchly duty that at least some form of pastoral care should be provided for those of our members and adherents who have joined the country's armed forces. This was resisted by various vested interests in years gone by, but was eventually admitted by the state as a legitimate concern. Our chaplains in the Navy, Army and Air Force are an expression of our concern.

The Army

3. Apart from the very welcome addition of the Reverend Norman McDowell to the Royal Army Chaplains' Department, there have been no changes in personnel in our list of chaplains. Mr McDowell is presently serving at Edinburgh. Our other full-time Army chaplain is of course the Rev Dr Victor Dobbin MBE, Chaplain General, who continues in his oversight of chaplains of all denominations within the Army.

4. In addition to our Regular Army chaplains we also have four Territorial Army chaplains whose valuable contribution to the RACHD is increasingly recognised. The Revs J I Thompson at Cookstown, D Latimer at Londonderry, S van Os at Lurgan and Professor J P Taylor at Belfast are currently serving.

In another category we have the Revs R L Craig, Kilfennan, T J Hagan, Donacloney, T. Pollock, Duneane and First Randalstown, and J. Tolland, First Donegore, serving as chaplains to the Army Cadet Force. The Rev R Herron of Trinity, Omagh, and the Rev. J. Andrews of Ballee serve as Officiating chaplains to the garrisons in their respective areas.

The Royal Air Force

5. Our chaplain in the Royal Air Force, the Rev David Edgar continues to serve at RAF Halton, in a delightful area of England. Halton is a highly-regarded training centre for young airmen and women, and service as a chaplain there provides an inestimably important opportunity to influence young lives for Jesus Christ. Much of an Air Force chaplain's ministry is 'Manse-based' and the chaplains' wives therefore have a vital and much appreciated role to play in the work of the church in the RAF. Indeed this applies in all three services.

6. At Royal Air Force Aldergrove the Rev Derek Weir continues his faithful service as our Officiating chaplain. As with his full-time colleagues Mr Weir has to cope with a continuously changing personnel list, a factor which militates against stability in church-relationships.

The Royal Navy

7. The Senior Service, as the Royal Navy likes to style itself, has recently seen the implementation of a new administrative structure for its chaplaincy services. A similar re-organisation has taken place in the Royal Air Force. This brings both of these services into line with the system that has long prevailed in the Army. The change will not affect a chaplain's theological or denominational position but it ought to minimise waste in merely administrative

matters. An interesting by-product of the reform is seen in the fact that the present Administrative Head of the Royal Navy Chaplaincy Service is a Church of Scotland minister. This is the first time in history that such an appointment has been made.

8. The Rev Terry Maze, who represents our church in the Navy, still serves at Portsmouth and fulfils a rewarding if by no means easy ministry to Naval men and women stationed at that major base. In an increasingly secularised society it grows ever more difficult to capture the attention of young people or bring them within the church. Our chaplains nonetheless are doing just that, and in groups as well as in one to one situations, they are setting out the claims of a Sovereign Saviour on the hearts and lives of young men and women serving their country.

Republic of Ireland Defence Forces

9. We have no information at present regarding numbers of Presbyterians serving in the Defence Forces of the Republic. Even if there were such, the day is far off when their numbers would warrant the State's establishing a Presbyterian Chaplain. However, we would encourage all ministers serving in the Republic to keep in touch with any of their members who may have joined the Irish Armed Forces, and indeed to let our committee know of their whereabouts.

Pensions for TA Chaplains' Widows

10. The Committee has been considering the implications of the new Reserve Forces Bill, which has now become law. The sharpest of the problems thrown up by this Bill concerns the financial position of the widow of any minister killed on active service with the Territorial Army. Preliminary discussions have shown that the problem is complex. A resolution is therefore appended asking the Committee on Retirements and Pensions to investigate further and report with recommendations to the 1998 Assembly. In the unlikely event of urgent action being required before then the General Board could be requested to act for the Assembly under the provisions of Par 272 (2) of the Code.

Forces Help Organisations

11. Each year we encourage the members of our church to support the main Benevolent Organisations which assist needy ex-service members and their dependants. The largest of these, the Royal British Legion, embraces all three services and again we urge that the Poppy Day Appeal should be well supported in our congregations. The other two large appeals which we gladly sponsor are somewhat more specialised but are nevertheless in very great need of any financial help we can bring. These are the 'Wings Appeal' of the Royal Air Force and the UDR Benevolent Fund. Each of these, and the last particularly, has a very strong claim on our loyalty. Those whom they support, either in their own persons, or in the persons of their loved ones, stood between us all and the forces of a very great evil.

12. From our small budget each year, and as a token of appreciation of a fine work which deserves to be more widely known, we as a committee, send small subscriptions to the Sandes' Homes and to the Naval, Military and Air Forces' Bible Society. Each of these in different ways ministers to the spiritual needs of members of the Forces and they welcome our support.

W W PORTER, Convener

CHAPLAINS COMMITTEE

1. The Chaplains Committee met on three occasions since the last Assembly and continued the business of administering and overseeing the duties and responsibilities of our part-time Hospital Chaplains and full and part-time Prison Chaplains.

2. Hospital Chaplaincy work remains a priority. Although the delivery of health care has changed dramatically during the last few years the Chaplaincy Service in hospitals, especially the larger establishments, remains unaltered.

The establishment of Trusts and the consequent policy and administrative changes arising from this re-organisation will require a more detailed re-examination of the role of our Chaplains and Deaconesses. As a first step in this process the Committee's working paper on a 'team' approach was accepted by the General Board and distributed to large hospitals. Ministers, who under the present system also have responsibility for their Church and Parish, cannot be expected to offer the service which many patients, relatives or staff now expect; ie catering for all the 'spiritual' needs of each. The Committee believes that the Church will, therefore, be pressured into moving from its traditional perception of the Chaplain's role to accepting that Trusts will build up their own broadly based in-house teams to provide spiritual, pastoral, emotional, and religious support for the whole hospital community resulting in Chaplains becoming less denominational in their role. This is a challenge which must be accepted thereby ensuring that the Presbyterian Church becomes part of and not apart from the process.

3. We acknowledge the devoted and resolute Ministry of Hospital Chaplains and those Deaconesses who work alongside them. Despite the difficulties and frustrations they have continued to provide a valued service to members of our Church.

4. Our full and part-time Chaplains working within the Prison system continue to provide a vital service to those living and working within that environment.

The closure of HMP Belfast during 1996 and the transfer of prisoners to HMP Maghaberry has increased greatly the workload there. Rev Stephen Neilly continues as full-time Presbyterian Chaplain in Maghaberry but retains an interest at Maze while Rev Ken Simpson concentrates on Maze and Hydebank YOC.

Our Chaplains understand the complexity of prison life and by adopting a confidential, personal and caring approach, they regard prisoners as individuals deserving of dignity and respect.

5. The Chaplains Committee records its appreciation of the dedication of all those who work in Prison and Hospital Chaplaincy, and we are grateful to those staff involved at Prisons, Hospitals, DHSS, and NIO, who willingly expedite their work.

The prayers of the Church are vital as our men and women seek, through faith, to counsel staff, patients, prisoners and families in a role which can be stimulating but also frustrating.

JOHN SCOTT, Convener

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. The Moderators Advisory Committee met three times during the year.

2. Advice was given to a Presbytery which had sought guidance on a matter concerning a divorced minister.

3. Assessors were appointed under the provisions of Par. 63 of the Code to assist Presbyteries which had requested help in dealing with matters arising.

4. The Committee also considered the programme of Moderatorial visits to Presbyteries. It was agreed that there should continue to be four such visits per year, but that there should be as much flexibility as possible. Moderators should be consulted at an early stage and visits to small or remote Presbyteries could be shortened.

5. It was also suggested that a wider range of holiday resorts could be visited during the summer.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON, Convener

PEACE AND PEACEMAKING COMMITTEE

1. The Peace and Peacemaking Committee continues to build its work on the principles of the Peace Vocation Statement adopted by the General Assembly in 1994. It is recognised that in some ways it is more difficult to put these principles into practice now than it was then, especially with the events of last summer and the continuing community tensions. Nevertheless the Committee believes it is all the more important that the work of peacemaking should be strongly built on firm foundations. As the Vocation states - "We believe that the same evangelical faith in Jesus Christ which emboldens us to pray to God as our heavenly Father, challenges us to develop radically new attitudes and relationships with our neighbours in Ireland".

2. To encourage further discussion of the Vocation Statement, and allow members the opportunity to affirm it as their own, the Committee circulated copies in a petition form and invited signatures. At the time of writing returns have been received from 86 congregations and some more are expected. While this is clearly only a minority of congregations in the Church, the Committee has been encouraged by the response. It was always recognised that this form of approach would not be appropriate in every situation, but some have clearly

found it helpful. The aim is to encourage discussion of the issues as widely as possible throughout the Church, and in whatever ways are appropriate to each particular situation.

3. The Committee has continued to encourage the appointment of Peace Agents at Presbytery and Congregational level. Two successful Conferences for agents were held at Bannside, Banbridge and Terrace Row, Coleraine. These created good opportunities to exchange ideas and be encouraged by the experiences of others. Some of the heartening stories told were of the setting up of prayer meetings in North Belfast as an immediate response to last summer's crisis. This group is now developing further initiatives of study and prayer together. Several congregations told of working together in economic and social projects, while a course had been set up in the North West to raise awareness and encourage greater cross-community contact. The South Belfast Presbytery has an ambitious programme in place to encourage peacemaking. While there is much still to be done, the Committee sees an important part of its role as encouraging those who are already taking steps forward in peace to continue on their journey. At the same time it would wish to assure those who lack confidence in taking the first step forward that the journey is worthwhile, and an essential part of our Christian pilgrimage.

4. The Committee has continued to work with the Church and Government Committee on some critical issues facing the community. The report of a joint working-group on prisoners has been submitted as an Appendix to the Church and Government report.

5. A major conference on "Identity" was held in November, 1995, and this was found to be helpful by many who participated. A similar Conference is planned for April, 1997 on the theme - "Sectarianism in Ireland and the Presbyterian Church". The Committee believes that this is a theme of great importance at the present time, and looks forward to a good response. It is hoped that some of the material from this Conference will be made available through the Peace and Peacemaking Newsletter, which will continue to be published twice a year.

6. On the world scale, the Committee has continued to follow up last year's report on "Landmines". It has also noted the recent advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legal status of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. Such major world issues are of course immensely important, but the Committee continues to believe that at present the main thrust of its work should be to encourage work for peace in Ireland. In carrying out that work the sensitive situation of many of our members is recognised and appreciated. Above all else it is surely vital to pray together, and for one another, as "we reassert the Church's own proper calling to speak peace, and the things that make for peace in our day".

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Priorities

2. That the General Assembly agree that strengthening congregational life and witness, and allowing congregations to retain adequate finance to arrest decline be regarded as a priority.

3. That the General Board continue to exercise a co-ordinating role for the Church's work, and report further to the Assembly on the general work of the Church and possible priorities.

4. That the plans of centrally administered agencies be monitored by the General Board to ensure that new development is limited to projects whose worth can be proven.

Overview of Funding

5. That the General Board be authorised to undertake an experimental visitation of one or more Assembly agencies during the ensuing year, and report thereon to the next General Assembly.

6. That the General Board, in consultation with the Board of Studies, arrange for a major review of the training of students, the role of Union Theological College, Magee House and the Director of Ministerial Students, and report thereon to the General Assembly.

Boards and Committees

7. That the General Assembly record their continuing appreciation of the faithful service given to the Church by those who serve on Commissions, Boards and Committees.

8. That during the ensuing year Ad Hoc Committees of Assembly report to the General Board.

Church and Government Committee

9. The General Assembly broadly welcome the publication of the Independent Review on Parades and Marches. They are grateful to the Review Body for its thorough analysis and wide-ranging recommendations, and commend the Report to our people for careful study.

10. The General Assembly urge upon the Secretary of State as a matter of urgency to put in place mechanisms along the lines put forward by the Review Body to resolve the tensions over forthcoming marching seasons.

11. The General Assembly remind everyone of their calling to obey lawfully constituted authority. Even should processes of mediation break down, it remains the duty of Christians to respect authority, and in the present circumstances in Northern Ireland to abide by decisions lawfully taken.

12. The General Assembly are acutely aware of the continuing grief of those people who have been bereaved through the activities of paramilitary violence, the suffering of those who have been injured and the distress caused to thousands of others whose lives have been radically dislocated.

13. As an encouragement to the Peace Process, the General Assembly recommend that consideration be given to the possibility of increased remission of the prison sentences imposed upon those who have been involved in paramilitary crimes short of murder in the event of:

- (a) credible ceasefires which would include an end to punishment beatings and targeting, and
- (b) evidence that any such prisoners would not be further involved in paramilitary activity.

14. The General Assembly are concerned at the conditions under which some prisoners are being held in prisons in Great Britain and call for an urgent review of procedures, especially in cases of serious illness and certain medical conditions.

15. The General Assembly encourage the continuing transfer of prisoners to serve sentences near to their families.

16. The General Assembly welcome the Hayes Report on police complaints and the recommendation about the appointment of a Police Ombudsman.

17. The General Assembly welcome the increased prosperity of the Republic of Ireland, note the many rapid changes taking place and hope that every effort will be made to share these material benefits with the poor and marginalised.

18. The General Assembly appreciate the ever deepening sense of belonging experienced by Presbyterian citizens of the Republic, the increased openness of the society and the wider horizons within which people live their lives.

19. The General Assembly call for the consistent building and exercise of trust among people whose relationships have traditionally been marked by suspicion.

20. The General Assembly, deploring the passing of legislation which will result in increasing commercialisation of Sunday, which legislation was imposed, without consensus, on the people of Northern Ireland, and which will result in the destruction of the ethos of a day set apart for worship, rest and opportunities for the consolidation of family relationships, call on the Government to rethink this policy and additionally to ensure that legislation is adequate to safeguard the rights of any citizen who does not wish to engage in Sunday work on grounds of conscience.

21. The General Assembly urge members of the Church to maintain the significance of Sunday as a day which is different in character from the other six days.

22. That a grant of £4,100 be paid to the Church and Government Committee from the Incidental Fund.

Chaplains Committee

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

Doctrine Committee

24. That the Doctrine Committee undertake an examination of the Biblical foundations for ministry and report to the General Assembly in 1999.

Forces Committee

25. That the General Assembly send greetings and good wishes to all our commissioned chaplains in the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force, and express appreciation for the service they carry out on our behalf.

26. That the Assembly express gratitude to those ministers who serve as Officiating chaplains and to those who serve as Officiating chaplains and to those whose work is within the Army Cadet Force.

27. That the Committee on Retirements and Pensions investigate the financial implications of the Reserve Forces Bill for Ministers and report with recommendations to the 1998 Assembly.

28. That the General Assembly cordially commend the following Appeals to the Christian liberality of our people and recommend that collections be taken on their behalf on the relevant Lord's Day or other convenient date.

- (a) The Royal Air Force 'Wings Appeal' on Battle of Britain Sunday, 21 September, 1997.
- (b) The Royal British Legion's Poppy Day Appeal, on Sunday, 9 November, 1997.
- (c) The Ulster Defence Regiment Benevolent Fund on Sunday, 26 April, 1998.

29. That the resignation of Rev Dr W W Porter as Convener of the Forces Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that Rev S van Os be appointed in his place.

Peace and Peacemaking Committee

30. That the General Assembly continue to strongly encourage the appointment of a Peace Agent in each congregation.

31. That a grant of £2,400 be paid to the Peace and Peacemaking Committee from the Incidental Fund.

General

32. 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:-

MEMORIAL TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet at Belfast on 2 June, 1997.

The Memorial of the Presbytery of Armagh Respectfully Showeth:

That "The Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the supreme standard of the Church" (Code, Par 10);

That the statement of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's understanding of the Biblical teaching about Divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons, which is contained in the Report of the Committee on Christian Marriage presented in 1983 (Reports p 164), was consciously reprinted in toto from a

section of the Report of the Committee on National and International Problems presented in 1957;

That considerable study and research has been undertaken on the relevant Biblical material since 1957; and

That marriage breakdown is reaching alarming proportions.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Court to ask the Doctrine Committee to examine afresh the Biblical material on divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons, and report to the General Assembly of 1998.

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

Adopted by the Presbytery of Armagh at its meeting in Richhill on Tuesday, 4 February, 1997.

M G McCLELLAND, Moderator
JOSEPH THOMPSON, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted by the Synod of Armagh and Down with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted at its meeting in Annalong on Tuesday, 11 March, 1997.

STUART FINLAY, Moderator
SAMUEL MATTHEWS, Clerk
GENERAL BOARD
Galley 4

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.
North Belfast	Rev W M Smyth	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev C R J Brown	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev N J Linkens	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev J D Mark	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev C I McKnight	To be retained as Minister without Charge for a further year.
Belfast South	Mr. W.C.A. McIlwaine	Not to be retained as a Licentiate.
	Rev P A J McBride	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Belfast East	Rev R A Crooks	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Brian Hughes	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev Dr Eliz Jamison	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev H E Lewis	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev Dr Samuel Scott	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Rex Pedlow	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Carrickfergus	Rev D R Byers	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Coleraine	Rev Wm Morrison	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev B A H Wilson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Derry/Strabane Down	Mr Thomas Mulholland	To be retained as Licentiate
	Mr Ernest Smyth	To be retained as Licentiate.
	Rev R N Stewart	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired)
Dromore	Rev W N Duncan	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev R J Mattison	To be retained as Minister without Charge.

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

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

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

4. Following the decision of the General Assembly to approve Scripture Union for purposes of the Recognised Ministries Scheme the Committee met and granted the Education Board leave to call a minister to a recognised ministry with that organisation.

5. Leave was also granted to the Education Board to call a minister to a school chaplaincy in Donegal under the provisions of Par 284 of the Code.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly adopt the recommendations of the Recognised Ministries Committee on Ministers and Licentiates without Charge.

AD HOC COMMISSION

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The Appeal of Dr D J Swallow against the decision of the Foyle Presbytery not to nominate him as a student for the ministry came before the General Assembly on 6 June, 1996. The Assembly referred the Appeal to an ad hoc Commission to hear and to issue (see Mins 1996 p 65).

2. The ad hoc Commission met on 21 June, when Dr Swallow and representatives of the Foyle Presbytery appeared before it.

3. The Clerk of Assembly read the decision appealed against and presented the reasons of Appeal and the whole record of the Presbytery proceedings and all the relevant documents.

4. Dr Swallow addressed the Commission and answered questions. The Presbytery representatives addressed the Commission and answered questions. After the Appellant had made a closing submission he and the Presbytery representatives withdrew.

5. After a discussion the ad hoc Commission resolved that the Appeal be dismissed on the grounds that the Commission could not find any error in the way the Presbytery dealt with this application.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the ad hoc Commission be thanked and discharged.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: REV S HUTCHINSON

1. The Judicial Commission met as necessary during the year to deal with matters arising.

Solicitors and Barristers

2. Last Assembly resolved "... that the Judicial Commission review Par 340 of the Code regarding the role of Solicitors and Barristers in church courts and also the possibility, merits and procedure whereby members of the legal profession would act only in an advisory capacity and not as serving members of the Commission, and report back to the 1997 Assembly". (Mins p63).

3. Members of the Judicial Commission who are lawyers have been appointed following their nominations as Elders of our Church by Synods or by the Business Board, and are present at meetings of the Commission primarily as Elders, and secondly as lawyers. There is nothing in the Code which would prevent the nomination and appointment of members of the Commission who have no legal qualifications, but all members must be ordained Ministers or Elders.

4. The principles of natural justice are of fundamental importance during that part of the business of the Commission which involves the consideration of evidence in the course of hearing Appeals and References, and the experience of lawyers reduces the likelihood of inadvertent transgression. The members who are Ministers are not trained in or equipped for the application of rules of procedure and practice of natural justice which are essential to reduce the possibility of challenge through the Civil Courts by judicial review of Commission decisions. All members of the Commission, Ministers and lawyers alike, always strive to act pastorally, and the Commission acts judicially only in the sense that interim and interlocutory decisions in the course of hearing any matter, and the final Decision, must always be made in accordance with the rules of natural justice.

5. It is the consensus of opinion of the Ministerial members of the Commission that the contribution of lawyers as serving members of the Commission is essential to the work of the Commission, and that timely interventions of lawyer members have on some occasions helped both the Commission and those appearing before it to avoid errors which could otherwise have occurred.

6. The work of our Church as a whole should be considered as deserving of the specialised input of which lawyers are capable as serving members of our Church courts and Commissions. The work of our Church through the Financial, Educational, and Trustee Boards is not deprived of the expertise of members of professions which is relevant to the recommendations and decisions of such Boards, and the work of our Church through the Judicial Commission should continue to benefit from similar advantages derived from the membership of lawyers.

7. If lawyers are excluded from membership of the Commission, or from participating in the decision making processes other than in an advisory capacity, consistency demands the same exclusion should apply to membership of Kirk Session, Presbytery, Synod and Assembly. This would be equally undesirable and contrary to the wider interests of the Church. Exclusion of lawyers would create an undesirable precedent by disenfranchising a section of the membership of Elders from the government of our Church on the sole ground of relevant professionalism, and would be discriminatory.

8. The exclusion of lawyers as serving members of the Judicial Commission, other than in advisory capacities, could create the impression that the function of the Commission was in effect to look after the interests of Ministers, when in fact lay church members often appear before the Commission.

9. The concept of lawyers acting only in an advisory capacity and not as serving members of the Commission would be unworkable in practice, and the distinction cannot be readily identified in the course of business of the Commission. The contribution of a lawyer in the course of hearing an Appeal or Reference, or drafting a Decision, or in the course of discussion of the form and content of legislation, or of correspondence, for the purpose of giving advice in the capacity of an advisor to the Commission would in reality and in effect be indistinguishable from the purpose and effect of an identical contribution in the capacity of a member of the Commission.

10. The Commission has a legislative function the exercise of which requires the drafting skills of lawyers to promote consistency and to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity, which is of importance to all members of our Church, and which is also of importance should The Code become subject to interpretation in the Civil Courts.

11. There are no alternative valid criteria which could be applied for the selection of Elders as members of the Judicial Commission if lawyers are excluded.

12. Of the 22 members of the Judicial Commission there are at present only 8 Elders who are lawyers.

13. The Code permits an “accused” before any Church Court to be assisted by a member of the Church not qualified as a lawyer, with the leave of the Court (Par 340). Having met with and heard the Proposer and Seconder and a supporter of the Remit under consideration, the Commission recommends in the light of their submissions:

- (a) a right to have such friend to assist should be available to all persons who appear before the Commission, and any other Court, and should not be confined to an “accused”. The right should not be subject to leave of the Commission or Court;
- (b) all persons appearing before the Commission or Court should be informed by the Commission or Court, at the same time as notification is given of the date of any hearing, of the right to the assistance of such person.

The Exclusion of Lawyers from Prosecuting and Defending

14. The prohibition imposed by Par 340 of The Code applies to a barrister and to a solicitor acting as a legal representative in a professional or quasi-professional lawyer/client capacity. Such capacity is clearly different from the capacity in which an Elder who is a lawyer participates as a member of a church court or Commission. The prohibition is not inconsistent with the presence of lawyers as serving members of the Judicial Commission.

15. The prohibition does not disadvantage either party to an appeal; it has an equal effect on all parties, and has the advantage of speedier hearings which are conducted in a pastoral rather than in a judicial setting, and at minimal, if any, cost, which would not otherwise be possible.

16. The prohibition is consistent with regulatory, grievance, and disciplinary procedures governing many trades and professions which do not permit legal representation of members in the course of such procedures.

17. A person appearing before the Commission, and any Church Court, should be informed before the hearing of the right to have a member of the Church not qualified as a lawyer to act and assist in the hearing.

APPEAL OF MR C GARNHAM AND MR S F A KINKAID

18. The Appeal of Mr Charles Garnham and Mr S F A Kinkaid against a decision of the Foyle Presbytery, which was referred to the Judicial Commission by the General Assembly (Minutes 1996 p65), came before the Commission on 21 June, 1996.

19. The following appeared before the Commission:

Appellants: Mr Charles Garnham and Mr S F A Kinkaid;

Respondents: Rev S J Gray and Mr J A E McFarland (representing the Presbytery of Foyle).

20. Rev K G Patterson and other persons from the congregation of Glendermott also attended.

21. The Clerk of Assembly read the decision appealed against. The Presbytery of Foyle at its meeting on 19 February, 1996 heard an Appeal from a decision of the Glendermott Kirk Session to dismiss objections originally lodged with the Kirk Session against the selection of a certain member of the congregation as an elder. The Presbytery of Foyle dismissed the Appeal and affirmed the decision of the Kirk Session.

22. The Clerk of Assembly also submitted the reasons of Appeal, the whole record of the proceedings of the Presbytery Commission and all the relevant documents.

23. The Appellants read opening submissions and answered questions thereon.

24. Rev S J Gray (Presbytery of Foyle) and some members of Glendermott addressed the Judicial Commission and answered questions.

25. After closing submissions were heard the Judicial Commission continued in private and decided that the Appeal of Mr Charles Garnham and Mr S F A Kinkaid be dismissed and the decision of the Foyle Presbytery affirmed.

26. The following Finding was approved:-

“The decision of the Judicial Commission is that the Appeal of Mr Charles Garnham and Mr S F A Kinkaid be dismissed and the decision of the Foyle Presbytery affirmed. The Judicial Commission acknowledges that the issues raised in this Appeal were matters of importance. The fact they were so seriously considered at Presbytery and Judicial Commission level should be beneficial to the whole membership in its understanding of leadership in a congregation. It is the Christian duty of members of Glendermott to go forward now in harmony, working together for the Glory of God.”

APPEAL OF MR WILLIAM STEWART

27. The Appeal of Mr William Stewart against the Finding of the Newry Presbytery adopted on 5 December 1995 following its visitation of the Dundalk congregation, which was referred to the Judicial Commission by the General Assembly (Minutes 1996 p65), came before the Commission on 26 August.

28. The following appeared before the Commission:

Appellant: Mr William Stewart, accompanied by three other elders from Dundalk;

Respondents: Revs M A Barry, R I A Allely, A K Duddy and S A Finlay (Clerk), representing the Presbytery of Newry.

29. The Clerk of Assembly submitted the Finding appealed against, the reasons of Appeal and other relevant documents. The Appellant read an opening submission and answered questions thereon. Rev S A Finlay responded on behalf of the Presbytery and answered questions.

30. The hearing of the Appeal was then adjourned to allow the Presbytery to consider other matters arising in Dundalk. On 6 December the Judicial Commission resumed its consideration of the Appeal and decided to amend certain parts of the Presbytery’s Finding. It then resolved:

- (i) that the Appeal be allowed in part.
- (ii) that the Finding as now amended by the Judicial Commission be approved.

UNION COMMISSION

31. The Judicial Commission was consulted by the Union Commission about special financial arrangements under Par 226(b) of the Code for a minister who had resigned his charge. The proposals of the Union Commission were found to be in order.

CONGREGATIONAL RECORDS

32. The Memorial of the North Belfast Presbytery to the 1996 Assembly (Reports p92) stated that “whereas congregational records are normally in the form of minute books, ledgers, etc, the increasing use of computers by congregations means that such records are increasingly to be found in an electronic format. The status of such records is unclear to the Presbytery.” The Assembly asked the Judicial Commission, in consultation with other relevant bodies, to consider the matter and report back.

33. A member of the Judicial Commission approached various custodians of records, whose opinion was that permanent records are not safe on anything but "hard copy".

34. The conclusion of the Judicial Commission is that while electronic records provide easy and speedy access to information, hard copy should be used for definitive documents. Consequently no change is proposed to those sections of the Code which deal with minute books and official records.

CONGREGATIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

35. The Memorial of the North Belfast Presbytery also raised the question of congregational announcements required under Par 176(2)(b) of the Code.

36. The Memorial stated that "many congregations now publish announcements in printed form as part of their Order of Service which is made available to all worshippers present at Sunday services. In such congregations the printing rather than the reading of the above requirements of the Code might be more beneficial". The 1996 Assembly asked the Judicial Commission to consider this matter.

37. The Judicial Commission accepts that the printing of certain announcements on an Order of Service or Announcement Sheet would be beneficial, especially those involving complex matters such as the provisions of Par 175 or Par 176 (2) (c), (d) and (e) of the Code.

38. The Commission believes, however, that where the Code requires any official announcement to be made to a congregation and it is printed on an Order of Service or an Announcement Sheet, attention should also be drawn to it by means of a brief oral announcement from the pulpit.

39. A resolution is appended to test the mind of the Assembly on this matter.

THE CODE

40. Because of heavy sales stocks of the present Code are likely to be exhausted in a few months. The Judicial Commission therefore recommends that it be reprinted with amendments to date, and that the costs of reprinting be borne initially by the Incidental Fund pending the receipt of income from sales.

RESTRICTION OF APPEALS?

41. A member of the 1996 General Assembly commented on the number of relatively minor matters which had been appealed or referred to the General Assembly or its Judicial Commission in recent years and suggested that the matter might be examined.

42. While this was not a formal remit from the Assembly, the Judicial Commission did give this suggestion some thought during the year.

43. There are ways by which appeal to the General Assembly could be restricted. In the Church of Scotland, for example, it used to be the law of the Church that "Synods shall adjudicate finally in all cases of appeal, with the exception of cases involving doctrine, worship, or censure of a minister or other

office-bearer, the licensing of students, and cases of Union and Readjustment” (Act 1962, xv).

44. Another option would be for the Judicial Commission to give an Appeal or Reference a preliminary examination and advise the Assembly on whether there was any issue at stake that really merited consideration at General Assembly. However, the Commission concluded that the present number of appeals coming before it would not warrant the introduction of such restrictions at the present time. If the amount of trivial or vexatious business should increase significantly a further report will be made to the Assembly.

45. While it may be argued that on a few occasions relatively minor disputes are referred rather too quickly to the Assembly and the Judicial Commission, there are other occasions when responsible people have felt that the process was too slow, with the result that a deteriorating situation was allowed to fester for months until first the Assembly and then the Judicial Commission could meet and deal with it.

46. While undue haste is to be avoided and the rights of Church members to take their case to the Assembly must be safeguarded and the role of the Assembly fully respected, nevertheless there could be situations where the interests of all concerned would be better served by a quicker resolution of a problem. At times the Judicial Commission has been saddened by the fact that, because of the present law (which may entail a delay of up to a year), it was unable to accede to the earnest entreaties of a Presbytery or Synod to proceed promptly to a hearing.

47. While there will always be cases which by their very nature ought to be placed before the Assembly, there could be other cases where there would be no impropriety involved if, with the consent of the parties, the matter were disposed of sooner. A resolution is therefore appended to see whether the Assembly would wish this matter to be explored further in the coming year.

Barrier Act Voting on Overtures

Par 11 For: 21 Presbyteries (559 votes), Against: 0 Presbyteries (66 votes)

Par 13 For: 20 Presbyteries (537 votes), Against: 1 Presbytery (84 votes)

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Judicial Commission explore ways and means whereby suitable cases could be finally dealt with more expeditiously than at present and report to the 1998 Assembly with any appropriate recommendations.
3. Where the Code requires an official announcement to be read or made to a congregation it may be made by printing it on an Order of Service or Announcement Sheet distributed at public worship, provided attention is drawn to it by means of an oral announcement from the pulpit.
4. That the Code be re-printed with amendments to date, the initial costs to be a charge on the Incidental Fund.

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS**Anent Par 11 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 11 of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place.

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

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

Anent Par 13 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 13 of the Code the word “men’s” be deleted

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

LICENSED AMENDMENT**Anent Par 13 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 13 of the Code the word “men’s” be deleted and that the word “anyone’s” substituted in its place.

A R RODGERS

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS**Anent Par 85(6) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 85(6) of the Code after the words “such action” there be added an additional sentence “In the case of a divorced minister wishing to remain in office after re-marriage the approval of Presbytery shall be obtained”.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

Anent Par 205(2)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 205(2)(b) of the Code the words “who giveth gifts unto men” be deleted and that the words “who gives gifts” be substituted in their place.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

Anent Par 205(4)VI

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 205(4)VI of the Code the words “among men” be deleted from line 5 and line 10.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

Anent Par 212(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 212(3) of the Code the words “who giveth gifts unto men” be deleted and that the words “who gives gifts” be substituted in their place.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 137 of the Code**

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

R W ALCORN

Anent Par 176(2)(b)(ii) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 176(2)(b)(ii) of the Code the word “read” be deleted and that the word “announced” be substituted in its place.

R W ALCORN

Anent Par 340(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par. 340(1) of the Code the words “he may seek leave from the court for a member of the Church” be deleted and that the words “he may ask a member of the Church” be substituted in their place.

R W ALCORN

MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet at Belfast on the 2nd day of June, 1997.

The Memorial of the Kirk Session of High Street, Holywood Respectfully Showeth:

That the Code states that “Voting members in the Church are communicants on the roll of the congregation who are listed, whether by name or number, as having contributed to the stipend or weekly FWO of the congregation in the last financial year” (Par 175(1)).

Whilst recognising the value of the weekly FWO as a means of regular giving and an expression of a genuine financial commitment, Memorialists believe such means can sometimes be purely nominal;

Since the intention of the Code is to give voting rights to communicants who accept financial responsibility, a more appropriate financial requirement might be a simple commitment to give as the Lord has prospered rather than necessarily by "listed" giving;

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Court to instruct the Judicial Commission, in consultation with the Doctrine Committee, to reconsider Paragraph 175(1) of the Code and to report to the next meeting of your Venerable Assembly.

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

JOHN ROSS, Minister
NORMAN ROBB, Clerk of Session

Licensed and transmitted by the Presbytery of Ards, meeting at Bangor on Tuesday, 4 February, 1997.

WILLIAM HASLETT, Moderator
D J WATTS, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted by the Synod of Armagh and Down, meeting at Annalong on Tuesday, 11 March, 1997, with the recommendation that its prayer be not granted.

STUART FINLAY, Moderator
SAMUEL MATTHEWS, Clerk

* * * * *

To the Venerable the General Assembly to meet in Belfast on 2 June, 1997.

The Memorial of Richard Boucher, Maureen J McClenahan, Donald McDowell, Robert A Smyth, William Stewart, Respectfully Showeth;

That whereas many members and adherents of the Dundalk congregations feel deeply hurt and alienated from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and that Newry Presbytery recognising that there has been and continues to be great hurt within the congregations has not accepted the sensibilities of those so alienated. Emergency pastoral care is not meaningful in the Dundalk situation.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Court to provide proper pastoral care for all the people in the Dundalk congregations.

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

RICHARD BOUCHER, MAUREEN J McCLENAHAN
DONALD McDOWELL, ROBERT A SMYTH, WILLIAM STEWART

Licensed and transmitted by the Presbytery of Newry, meeting at Kilkeel on 21st May, 1996, with the strong recommendation that its prayer be not granted.

ADAM L KIRK, Moderator
STUART FINLAY, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted simpliciter by the Synod of Armagh and Down, meeting at Annalong on Tuesday, 11 March, 1997.

STUART FINLAY, Moderator
SAMUEL MATTHEWS, Clerk

* * * * *

To the Venerable the General Assembly to meet in Belfast on 2 June, 1997.

The Memorial of Richard Boucher, Maureen J McClenahan, Donald McDowell, Robert A Smyth, William Stewart, Respectfully Showeth:

That whereas the Dundalk congregations are currently within the bounds of the Newry Presbytery

That the Dundalk congregations being wholly within the Republic of Ireland would have a greater affinity with the Dublin Presbytery and the Synod of Dublin.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Court to transfer the Dundalk congregations to the Dublin Presbytery.

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

RICHARD BOUCHER, MAUREEN J McCLENAHAN
DONALD McDOWELL, ROBERT A SMYTH, WILLIAM STEWART

Licensed and transmitted by the Presbytery of Newry, meeting at Kilkeel on 21st May, 1996, with the strong recommendation that its prayer be not granted.

ADAM L KIRK, Moderator
STUART FINLAY, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted simpliciter by the Synod of Armagh and Down, meeting at Annalong on Tuesday, 11 March, 1997.

STUART FINLAY, Moderator
SAMUEL MATTHEWS, Clerk

APPEALS

R Boucher, M J McClenahan, D McDowell, R A Smyth, W Stewart (Appellants) -v- The Presbytery of Newry/Dundalk Commission (Respondent)

The above appellants appeal from the decision (received by us on 15 January, 1997) of the Dundalk Commission of Newry Presbytery not to grant the request of our Petition dated 5 May, 1996.

We believe:

1. That the matters brought before the Commission were of such a nature that warranted the granting the request of our Petition. We feel aggrieved by the decision not to grant the request of the Petition.

2. That the Commission was biased and partial in its attitude to the Petition.

3. That in refusing to grant the request of the Petition the Commission appears to be condoning the matters which were the subject of the Petition without hearing all the evidence in support of the Petition.

4. That in not resolving the matters (to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned) relating to the Petition the Presbytery, through its Commission, is:

- (a) allowing further problems to cement the divisions in the Dundalk congregations.
- (b) failing to address the fundamental question of trust which exists.

R BOUCHER, M J McCLENAHAN,
D McDOWELL, R A SMYTH, W STEWART

The Synod of Armagh and Down refers this Appeal to the next superior court under Par 21(1) of the Code.

At Annalong
11 March, 1997

STUART FINLAY, Moderator
SAMUEL MATTHEWS, Clerk

* * * * *

The Kirk Session of Second Dromara (Appellant) -v- The Presbytery of Dromore (Respondent)

The Kirk Session hereby appeals to the Synod of Armagh and Down from the decision made by a Commission of the Presbytery of Dromore on the 23rd Day of October, 1996.

At First Lisburn Presbyterian Church, whereby the Presbytery did uphold the appeal of Mrs Karen Carson

“Whereby the Kirk Session did ask me to step down from my role as Sunday School Superintendent with immediate effect.”

The reasons for this appeal are as follows:

The Commission concluded the Proceedings of Kirk Session relating to appeals No 1 and 2 were fatally flawed. However, the Commission has failed to recognise the Kirk Session’s concern for the life of the congregation of 2nd Dromara relating to the work of the Sunday School, for which Session has overall Stewartship. The Commission has also failed to recognise the attempts, by the Session, to resolve a matter that had occupied the majority of the Interim Kirk Session’s and the New Kirk Session’s time over the last 18 months. Indeed the Submission to the Commission by the “Interim Kirk Session” recognised this complex and difficult pastoral matter, ie “In some cases meetings lasted 3 hours and more, reflecting the amount and complexity of business” ... “The overall situation is very complicated and at times extremely difficult to follow.”

D BRIGGS, Clerk of Session

4 November, 1996

The Synod of Armagh and Down refers this Appeal to the next superior court under Par 21(1) of the Code.

At Annalong

STUART FINLAY, Moderator

11 March, 1997

SAMUEL MATTHEWS, Clerk

* * * * *

The Kirk Session of Second Dromara (Appellant) -v- The Presbytery of Dromore (Respondent)

The Kirk Session hereby appeals to the Synod of Armagh and Down from the decision made by a Commission of the Presbytery of Dromore on the 23rd day of October, 1996.

At First Lisburn Presbyterian Church, whereby the Presbytery did uphold the appeal of Mrs Karen Carson.

“Against Kirk Session’s decision to adopt “The Amended Report of the Interim Kirk Session”.”

The reasons for this appeal are as follows:

That the Commission initially indicated, on the night of the Appeals Hearing, that a Kirk Session has a right to adopt any report it considers has merit. The Commission did not choose, on the night, to put any qualification on the Kirk Session’s right to accept the “AMENDED REPORT OF THE INTERIM KIRK SESSION”.

The Commission then moved from the decision of Kirk Session, taken on 22 April, 1996, to draw its conclusion. However, Kirk Session explained to the Commission, at the Hearing, the purpose of adopting the Amended Report was not for the reasons put forward by the Commission at that time but rather was to provide a more ... “accurate report reflecting better the factual situation surrounding the allegations made by Mrs Browne and her family”. Indeed it is to be noted the Clerk of Presbytery read this portion of the appropriate minute, from the Minute Book of Kirk Session, to the appeals Hearing.

It is also noted that Mrs Carson’s appeal was simply against the decision of Session to adopt the amended report and not subsequent Kirk Session decisions as referred to by the Commission.

D BRIGGS, Clerk of Session

4 November, 1996

The Synod of Armagh and Down refers this Appeal to the next superior court under Par 21(1) of the Code.

At Annalong

STUART FINLAY, Moderator

11 March, 1997

SAMUEL MATTHEWS, Clerk

UNION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev D CLARKE
Secretary: Rev T J STOTHERS

INTRODUCTION

1. The routine work of the Union Commission has been supplemented in the past year by the detailed attention given to three important areas. These are: ongoing discussions with two Belfast Presbyteries concerning the best use of resources in the inner city; the appointment of additional pastoral personnel; and the production of guidelines on vacancy procedures.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

2. The Union Commission places on record its deep indebtedness to the Rev David Clarke who has served as Convener for the last seven years. A demanding responsibility at any time, Mr Clarke's Convener'ship has seen particular changes and developments in, for example, the pattern of assistantships, grants payments and manse property. With a legal training, and a good business head, Mr Clarke has proven himself very sure footed, and a wise guide in all the complicated affairs of the Commission. While able to convey the mind of the Commission to deputations, a ready wit and warmth of personality meant that he always conducted meetings with a grace and courtesy. While appreciative of the case made by others, Mr Clarke also acted out of a clear vision of what lay in the interests and mission of the wider Church. That Church owes much to his devoted and selfless service.

3. The Rev John Davey, who has been in charge of Fractions for the past two years, and the Rev Allen Sleith, who has been in charge of Manses for the past year leave the Commission at this Assembly. Thanks are due to them both for their important contribution to its work.

LEAVE TO CALL

Ministers

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

Congregation	Stipend	Expenses	Fraction
Kilbride	£23,000	£5,000	to be considered after 1997
Garvaghy	£7,000	£2,300	37.5%
Anaghlonge	£6,250	£2,300	37.5%
Aughnacloy	£6,750	£2,700	37.5%
Ballymagrane	£4,600	£1,900	37.5%
Wexford	IR£500	IR£320	
Enniscorthy	IR£2,500	IR£1,500	
Gorey	IR£2,500	IR£1,500	
Leckpatrick	£16,000	£5,200	35%
Roseyards	£15,750	£5,000	37.5%

Warrenpoint	£6,000	£3,000	37.5%
Rostrevor	£3,330	£1,500	37.5%
Castlecaulfield	£9,000	£3,000	37.5% with review after 1997
English	£6,120	£2,000	37.5% with review after 1997
Second Derry with invested income	£9,500	£3,500	37.5%
	IR£1,500	IR£500	
Burt	IR£3,000	IR£1,500	37.5%
Maze	£14,500	£4,800	37.5%
Donagheady	£10,000	£4,400	37.5% restricted list
Dunlop Memorial	£4,250	£1,500	24%
First Rathfriland	£16,500	£4,800	35%
Brookside, Ahoghill	£23,500	£5,000	30%
Buckna	£20,500	£5,000	35%
First Kilraughts	£15,750	£5,000	37.5%
Muckamore	£19,500	£5,000	33½%
First Holywood	£23,500	£5,250	30%
Ballyhenry	£20,000	£4,800	33½% with review after 1998
Dungannon	£27,000	£6,000	to be set after 1998
Tullamore	IR£450	IR£75	30%
Mountmellick	IR£450	IR£75	30%

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

As from 1st February, 1997:

Tullylish	£9,000	£3,350
Gilford	£4,600	£1,050

Associate Ministers

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

Congregation	Salary	Expenses	Housing Allowance
Belmont	£14,316	£4,280	£1,500
First Lisburn	£14,316	at least £2,500	£1,500
Glengormley & Dunlop	£14,316	£3,300	House provided
Ballyclare	£15,000	£4,200	£1,500
Carnmoney	£15,000	£4,200	£1,500
Second Comber	£15,000	£3,500	£1,500

CONGREGATIONS UNITED

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

Second Derry (Strand and Buncrana) and Burt

- (a) That the congregations of Burt and Second Derry (Strand and Buncrana) be united as from 1st June, 1996, or at other such date as may be agreed.
- (b) Each congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and Finance.
- (c) Each congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the superior courts of the Church.
- (d) In the choice of minister the two congregations shall act as one congregation and the two Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.
- (e) The stated services shall be (i) Burt at 10.00am, (ii) Second Derry at 11.30am, or at such other times as the two Kirk Session acting together shall determine.
- (f) That the Stipends be (i) Burt IR£3,000 with fraction of 37.5%, (ii) Second Derry £9,500 with fraction of 37.5%, and IR£1,500 from the interest on the invested income from Buncrana, and initial ministerial expenses per annum (i) Burt IR£1,500, (ii) Second Derry £3,500, together with IR£500 from the interest on the invested income from Buncrana. Holiday Supplies, Telephone Rental, Rent, Rates, Taxes and maintenance of Second Derry Manse to be borne in the proportions 80% Second Derry and 20% Burt.
- (g) That the Minister shall reside in Second Derry Manse.
- (h) That the directions of the Union Commission be observed in connection with the invested income from the Burt Manse capital fund as follows: 40% to capital, 20% stipend, 20% expenses , and 20% towards the upkeep of the Second Derry Manse.

Dunlop Memorial and Glengormley

- (a) That the congregations of Dunlop Memorial and Glengormley be united as from 31st July, 1996, or other suitable date.
- (b) Each congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and finances.
- (c) Each congregation shall continue to have the right to appoint representatives to the superior courts of the church.
- (d) In the choice of ministers the two congregations shall act as one congregation and two Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.
- (e) The stated services shall be (i) Dunlop Memorial at 11.30am and 7.00pm (evening Service twice per month from September to June) (ii) Glengormley at 11.00am and 7.00pm.
- (f) That the ministerial remuneration be as follows:

	Dunlop Memorial		Glengormley		TOTAL	
	Stipend	Expenses	Stipend	Expenses	Stipend	Expenses
Minister	£4,250	£1,500	£19,500	£3,400	£23,750	£4,900
Associate	£1,700	£1,600	£7,800	£1,700	£9,500	£3,300

The fraction in each case to be 24%. In any case the total stipend paid to the Minister by Glengormley for 1996 will not fall below £20,750, and the financial arrangement will be reviewed once the figures for 1998 are available.

- (g) The Minister shall reside in Glengormley Manse. Dunlop Memorial will provide a suitable house for the Associate Minister. Each congregation will be responsible for the upkeep and for the telephone rental and business calls of its own manse.
- (h) Holiday supplies will be borne in the proportion 20% Dunlop Memorial and 80% Glengormley.

CONGREGATIONS AMALGAMATED

7. Following the resolutions of the General Assembly last year (Minutes, page 54), terms for the amalgamation of the following congregations were set:

Buncrana with Second Derry (Strand)

- (a) That the congregation of Buncrana be amalgamated with the congregation of Second Derry from 1st July, 1996, or other suitable date under the name 'Second Derry' (Strand and Buncrana) on terms to be agreed by the Union Commission.
- (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.
- (d) That any expenses accruing through failure to dispose of the Buncrana property, or through having to make the buildings secure and insured, be the responsibility of the amalgamated congregation.
- (e) That interest from the Buncrana investments for stipend and expenses be paid to the minister over and above all other sums fixed for these purposes by the Union Commission.

Claremont with First Derry

- (a) That the congregation of Claremont be amalgamated with the congregation of First Derry from 1st January, 1997 under the name 'First Presbyterian Church, Londonderry (First Derry and Claremont).
- (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.
- (d) That any expenses accruing through failure to dispose of the Claremont property or through having to make the buildings secure and insured, be the responsibility of the amalgamated congregation.
- (e) That the interest accruing from the sale or letting of Claremont Manse be disbursed in accordance with the Union Commission guidelines.
- (f) That the Stipend of the new congregation be £16,500, with initial ministerial expenses of £5,000 and a fraction of 33⅓%.

RESTRICTED LIST STATUS

8. The charge of Donagheady, with Strathfoyle Stated Supply was given restricted list Status from 18th of June, 1996.

SEPARATION OF CLOUGHEY AND PORTAVOGIE

9. The Congregation of Cloughey and Portavogie will bring a Memorial to this Assembly seeking a separation into two congregations within a union. The Union Commission has been monitoring the situation and will support the prayer of the Memorial.

FRACTIONS

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

Ballyclare: The Stipend for 1996 to be £24,000 with £5,400 expenses.

High Kirk, Ballymena: The fraction to be reduced to 21% provided that the stipend be not less than £33,175.

Ballysillan: The fraction to be increased to 33.3%.

Shore Street, Donaghadee: The fraction to be set at 30% provided that the stipend be not less than £22,000.

First Ahoghill: The fraction to be set at 32.5%.

Ballygilbert: The fraction to be reduced to 25% provided that the stipend be not less than £23,831. A further review to take place when the 1997 statistics are to hand.

First Ballynahinch: The fraction to be set at 35%.

Low Memorial, Finaghy: Stipend for 1996 to be £25,656 with £5,330 expenses.

Lisnabreen: The fraction to be set at 33.3% with a further review when the 1998 statistics are available.

First Lurgan: The fraction was set at 32% with a further review when the 1998 statistics are available.

Ballycarry: A fraction of 37.5% was set.

Mersey Street: A fraction of 35% was set with a further review when the 1997 statistics are available.

Saintfield Road: A fraction of 30% was set.

Orangefield: The stipend for 1996 to be £22,380 with £4,836 expenses.

Bloomfield: The stipend for 1996 to be £21,700 with £5,200 expenses.

McQuiston Memorial: The stipend for 1996 to be £21,000.

Gilnahirk: The fraction to be reduced to 32% provided that the stipend be not less than £21,113.

Ballyclare: The stipend for 1997 to be £25,000 with £5,600 expenses.

Bloomfield: The stipend for 1997 to be £22,800 with £5,200 expenses.

Richill: The fraction to be reduced to 35% provided that the stipend paid be not less than £21,398.

Correspondence from the congregation of Brigh has been referred to the Presbytery of Tyrone.

A sub-committee has been appointed to consult with the congregations of Bloomfield and Orangefield over current arrangements with regard to stipend.

STATED SUPPLY

11. The Rev J Mattison's nomination as stated supply to Tassagh congregation has been renewed for a further period.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

12. Special arrangements were made for a minister and a licensed assistant who resigned, and for a licentiate assistant whose first assignment terminated.

DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESBYTERIES

13. The Union Commission appreciates continuing co-operation with Presbyteries. Discussions have taken place with South Belfast and North Belfast concerning the most effective use of resources in particular areas; with Donegal concerning difficulties that arose in a union over a Manse; and with Derry and Strabane concerning unions and amalgamations in and around Londonderry City.

HOME MISSION

14. The Union Commission continues to work closely with the Home Mission through the Allocation Committee. Agreement was made that the proposed Home Mission Development Scheme in the Fermoy/Cahir area be funded up to £11,000 per year, for three years, from the Central Ministry Fund.

MANSES

15. It was decided that Carnone Manse be no longer retained as a Manse. Permission was given to Poyntzpass to use income from the sale of the Old Manse Garden for the replacement of pews.

Advice was given to Ballyshannon concerning the sale of a portion of glebe land.

The former property of Carrigans (Emyvale) congregation now belongs to Glennan congregation. Permission was given to sell the Manse property at Carrigans and use the proceeds for repairs to Glennan Church building.

Advice was given to Drumlegagh concerning the use of a portion of the Manse Fund towards the building of a new porch at the front of the Church and the replacement of the Church floor.

Advice was given to Drumbo concerning the exchange of some Manse Land with land owned by another party which adjoins the Church for the provision of additional car parking and a graveyard.

Advice was given to Seskinore concerning the rebuilding of the Manse.

Permission was given to First Limavady to sell the Manse providing the capital released be used to build a new Manse and any surplus be put into a Manse Fund.

The sale of the Garvaghy Manse was noted. No decision has been taken between building or buying a new Manse.

Advice was given to the congregations of First and Second Boardmills and Killaney concerning the sale of a portion of Manse land for conversion into a football pitch for the Boys' Brigade Company.

Permission was given to First Saintfield concerning the sale of a portion of Manse land.

Permission was given to Edengrove concerning the replacement of the Manse and the sale of a portion of Manse Land.

Advice was given to Ardglass concerning the sale of the Manse.

THE APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL PASTORAL PERSONNEL

16. Responses from Presbyteries and other interested groups to the 1995 General Assembly Report indicated a positive attitude to the potential of such non-ministerial staffing developments.

However they also recognised and supported the need for a proper framework within which these developments might take place, and there was general acceptance of the proposals and guidelines put forward in the 1995 report.

There was also a recognition of, and a fundamental concern about, the possible implications of these developments for the more traditional patterns of additional congregational staffing i.e. Assistant Ministers and Deaconesses.

In producing this revised report and its recommendations, further detailed consideration has been given to this whole area of additional pastoral personnel and careful note taken of the many helpful comments received.

Funding

17. This is obviously a crucial aspect in considering the appointment of additional members of the pastoral team in any congregation.

The Code, Par 235, requires that, as with the Assistantship/Associate Ministry and Deaconess schemes, the financing of such appointments from congregational funds should always come from 'Specified Sources'.

The Commission felt that it was not within its remit or powers to deviate from this basic financial principle. However, in seeking to give very serious and sympathetic consideration to the obvious financial challenges of additional congregational staffing, the Commission would wish to emphasise that the mechanisms do exist, and have been regularly used, whereby the Fraction operating in any particular congregation may be reviewed and, where appropriate, may be set at a new level which is more in keeping with the membership and financial strength of the congregation, and with consideration of its staffing needs.

The appropriate use of this Fraction review process may be an important means of releasing finance for the funding of additional staff in the congregation.

Proposals

18. The Commissions proposals are as follows:

- (i) All proposed arrangements for the appointment of additional pastoral personnel shall be agreed by the Kirk Session and submitted to the Presbytery and to the Union Commission for approval in principle.
- (ii) The selection and appointment of personnel shall be by the Kirk Session with the approval of the Minister, and of the Presbytery who shall ensure that the person to be appointed is in sympathy with the doctrines and practices of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
- (iii) Guidelines for the appointment of additional pastoral personnel should be provided as follows:

Guidelines

19. The Commission also submits the following guidelines:
 - (a) Persons appointed should normally be Communicant members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
 - (b) The spiritual nature of, and the responsibilities attached to, the appointment should be clearly defined, and should include the structure of accountability to the minister and Kirk Session.
 - (c) The spiritual and educational qualifications, together with relevant experience, required for the appointment should be clearly defined.
 - (d) Appropriate attention should be given to all the financial arrangements including, for example, issues such as arrangements for annual leave, illness etc.
 - (e) Appropriate attention should be given to current legislation pertaining to employment, child protection and other relevant areas.
 - (f) All such appointments should be for a period of up to 12 months, with the possibility of annual renewal.
 - (g) Appointments may be terminated at any time by mutual consent, or by 2 months notice given by the Minister of the congregation, the Kirk Session, or by the person in the post, subject to the approval of the Presbytery.

PERSONNEL AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Extraparochial Work:

1. Five ministers have received permission for extraparochial work, up to six hours per week.
2. All ministers are reminded that they should seek the consent of Presbytery, and of the Union Commission, for any extraparochial work undertaken.

Locomotory Expenses:

3. The 1997 Recommendations for locomotory allowances were set, taking into careful consideration the results of a locomotory questionnaire which was circulated to all ministers, and which received a widespread response. The information gained, compiled by an Accountant with that obtained from the

Motoring Organisations etc, led to the following locomotory figures, based upon an average ministerial mileage of 13000 miles in a car of 1400cc.

	N. Ireland (£)	Rep. of Ireland (IR£)
<u>Standing Charges:</u>		
Insurance	330	380
Road Tax	140	175
Depreciation	1,995	2,211
Loss of Interest	429	485
<u>Running Costs:</u>		
Petrol	1,177	1,212
Repairs and Servicing	519	541
	4,590	5,004
Total Costs	4,590	5,004

Recognising that these calculations produced figures which were a very substantial increase from 1996, the committee therefore recommended the following minimum locomotory allowances:

N Ireland:	£ 4,200 (1996: £3,960)
R O I	IR£ 4,452 (1996: IR£4,200)

Inadequate Expenses Grant Scheme

4. Applications for grants towards inadequate expenses were approved for 30 ministers, the total amount of grant support, approximately £47,700 being very similar to the previous year's figure.

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

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

N Ireland:	£4500; Republic of Ireland: IR£5100
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Vacancy Guidelines

6. The Committee has completed its work on what, it is hoped, will be a 'user-friendly' guide to vacancy procedures, gathering together all the relevant legislation and guidelines and presenting them in a chronological and practical progression, and in a form which allows the booklet to be used as the Minute Book of the Vacancy Commission.

It is our hope that this booklet will prove helpful to all who have responsibilities in a vacancy situation. It will be available from Presbytery Clerks and from the General Secretary's Office, and it is our suggestion that the booklet should be placed in the hands of the Convener of the Vacancy Commission, immediately upon appointment.

Par 235 of the Code

7. The interpretation of some phrases in Par 235 of the Code has been disputed by some. The term 'Specified Sources' has usually been regarded as referring to income for the maintenance of the ministry and the general running

expenses of the congregation, while Par 235 (3) lists various other objects, income for which has been regarded as falling outside Specified Sources

8. Included in Par 235 (3) is the phrase 'other designated objects'. The context in which this phrase occurs would tend to imply that it refers to collections for objects other than the maintenance of the ministry and general congregational purposes, which are dealt with under Par. 235 (1). That is the normal, but not unanimous, interpretation of that phrase.

9. Individual contributors have, of course, the right to allocate any contributions they may give to any of the funds a congregation may have. That is not in dispute. However, where a congregational committee authorises a 'collection', perhaps with weekly envelopes, may they remove all such income from Specified Sources by the simple expedient of saying we 'designate' this income for the minister's expenses, for additional pastoral personnel, or for any other specific object that may appeal to them?

10. Other phrases in Par 235, such as 'repayment of debts' can also give rise to more than one interpretation.

11. The Union Commission therefore believes that it would be helpful to all concerned to have the meaning of Par 235 (3) clarified and any ambiguities removed. An appropriate resolution is appended.

R J A BELL, Convener

**ASSESSMENTS ON FULLY CONSTITUTED CHURCH EXTENSION
CHARGES — 1997**

Under Par. 234 3(a) of the Code

	<i>Fully Constituted</i>	<i>Families (†)</i>	<i>Assess 1997 £</i>	<i>Spec. Sources £</i>	<i>Income £</i>
Kilcooley	1983	268 (215)	323	27,610	117,996
Elmwood	1982	486 (316)	474	65,351	132,737
Ballykeel	1982	166 (121)	182	27,163	55,782
Ballee	1986	229 (186)	279	39,118	63,968
Tullycarnet	1990	248 (167)	251	24,396	44,332
Downshire	1993	222 (182)	273	34,668	52,649
Lisnabreen	1993	292 (230)	345	39,314	62,448
Scrabo	1994	227 (155)	233	27,394	44,211
Burnside	1995	183 (152)	228	35,263	60,063

† Families contributing at least £5.00 per annum

ASSESSMENTS ON CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES — 1997

<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*	3,232	14,780	3,695	1,774	1,182	739	7,390
Ballysally*	3,845	18,924	4,731	2,271	1,514	946	9,462
Strathfoyle	—	2,748	824	412	275	165	1,676
Taughmonagh	2,205	16,365	4,909	2,455	1,637	982	9,983
Movilla	9,231	19,177	5,753	2,876	1,918	1,151	11,698

* Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES — 1997

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £11,070 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, 1997

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licentiate</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i>	<i>Congregations Contribution</i>	<i>C.M.F.</i>
Ist Lame	J. K. A. McIntyre†	21.6.96	23,901	7,521	4,251
McQuiston Memorial	D. Rankin*	16.6.96	21,000	6,801	5,271
Ist Cookstown	R. K. Graham†	21.6.96	23,946	7,535	4,237
Ballyclare	J. R. Lambe*	29.5.96	24,000	7,701	4,371
Malone	R. D. Cameron*	23.6.96	24,475	7,844	4,228
Fisherwick	A. J. Boal*	16.6.96	24,050	7,716	4,356
Dungannon	J. R. Burnett‡	23.6.96	26,000	7,800	3,270
Railway Street	A. J. Thompson*	12.6.96	22,240	7,173	4,899
Trinity, Bangor	M. Henderson†	16.6.96	22,476	7,094	4,678
Ballygowan	A. A. Cole*	16.6.96	23,756	7,628	4,444
Stormont	D. J. Montgomery‡	23.6.96	26,886	8,066	3,004
Ist Antrim	R. D. Gregg*	16.6.96	24,601	7,881	4,191
Belmont	J. A. Curry*	9.6.96	23,781	7,635	4,437
Ballyholme	A. J. A. Rosborough†	7.6.96	22,506	7,103	4,669
Bangor West	R. A. Liddle*	23.6.96	34,948	10,985	1,087
Ballygomartin	N. Patrick*	31.5.96	10,095	s/a	12,072
Wellington St., Ballymena	S. Stewart*	31.5.96	27,432	8,731	3,341

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance

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

LICENTIATES — 1997

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £11,070 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, 1997

Congregation	Assistant	Date of Licentiate	Ministers		Congregations Contribution	C.M.F.
			Stipend	Contributions		
Carmonny	J. C. Teeney*	14.6.95	29,049	9,216	2,856	
Hamilton Road, Bangor	Dr. J. G. Millar*	11.6.95	30,565	9,671	2,401	
1st Portadown	N. J. McCullough*	18.6.95	27,016	8,606	3,466	
Randalstown O.C.	S. Simpson*	18.6.95	22,482	6,122	5,950	
Harmony Hill, Lambeg	C. J. Aitcheson*	26.6.95	22,329	7,200	4,872	
1st Ballymena	A. M. Bates*	25.6.95	23,000	7,401	4,671	
Ballyloughan	M. J. R. Neilly†	14.6.95	20,791	5,549	6,223	
Glengormley	P. E. Dickinson*	2.6.95	20,750	6,726	5,346	
Regent Street, N'ards	A. W. Carson	23.6.95	23,912	7,675	4,397	
Oldpark	S. Mawhinney*	21.6.95	16,860	4,716	7,356	
Abbot's Cross	G. W. M. Glasgow*	16.6.95	20,049	6,516	5,556	
Terrace Row, Coleraine	R. M. Murray*	16.6.95	25,807	6,953	5,119	
Newtownbreda	A. T. F. Johnston*	4.6.95	23,500	7,551	4,521	
Rosemary	S. A. McCracken*	4.6.95	22,600	7,281	4,791	
Mourne, Kilkeel	R. I. Abraham†	11.6.95	35,840	10,752	318	
Elmwood	D. J. Hutchinson*	18.6.95	21,783	5,947	6,125	
Greenisland	J. C. Simms*	28.5.95	18,933	5,234	6,838	
Newcastle	W. A. McCully*	18.6.95	21,582	5,897	6,175	
2nd Comber	W. M. Brown*	28.5.95	23,723	7,618	4,454	

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance

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

ORDAINED ASSISTANTS — 1997

FIRST YEAR — From 1st January, 1997

<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Date of Ord.</i>	<i>% Min.</i>	<i>Salary</i> £	<i>House Allow.</i> £	<i>Total</i> £	<i>Cong.</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
A. J. M. Smith	Ballywillan	22.9.96	90	13,284	1,002	14,286	9,296	4,990

THIRD YEAR — From 1st January, 1997

<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Date of Ord.</i>	<i>% Min.</i>	<i>Salary</i> £	<i>House Allow.</i> £	<i>Total</i> £	<i>Cong.</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
W. J. P. Bailie	Greenwell Street	5.2.95	95	14,022	1,002	15,024	10,593	4,431
E. J. Hyndman	Knock	29.1.95	95	14,022	1,002	15,024	11,510	3,514
T. J. Lavery	West Church, Bangor	29.1.95	100	14,760	1,002	15,762	15,354	408
J. A. Gordon	Kells, Eskylane	2.4.95	95	14,022	702	14,724	10,255	4,469

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance

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

FOURTH YEAR — From 1st January, 1997

<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Date of Ord.</i>	<i>% Min.</i>	<i>Salary</i> £	<i>House Allow.</i> £	<i>Total</i> £	<i>Cong.</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
E. P. Gamble	West Kirk	2.2.94	100	14,760	1,002	15,762	7,293	8,469
W. J. Henry	Whiteabbey	28.1.94	100	14,760	1,002	15,762	10,064	5,698
P. Jemphey	Ballysillan	24.2.94	100	14,760	702	15,462	s/a 351	15,111
J. D. McGaughey	Immanuel	26.1.94	100	14,760	1,002	14,762	9,001	6,761
D. H. Thompson	Bloomfield	28.1.94	100	14,760	1,002	15,762	9,724	6,038
T. H. McWhirter	Dundonald	31.1.92	100	14,760	1,002	15,762	10,064	5,698
Lesley Carroll	Macroy Memorial	4.2.88	100	14,760	702	15,462	s/a	
Marlene Taylor	Cooke Centenary	11.1.85	100	14,760	1,002	15,762	7,949	7,813

* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance

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

CITY AREA COMMITTEE

1. The City Area Committee has been consulting with the North Belfast Presbytery and South Belfast Presbytery regarding their strategy for mission in their respective areas.

2. Deputations have met with various congregations affected by proposed development schemes.

3. The Committee continues to examine the issue of the most effective use of resources for the city area and is exploring plans which will involve innovative arrangements for ministry and the possibility of some congregations sharing a minister.

J N I McNEELY, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the resignation of the Rev D Clarke as Convener of the Union Commission be accepted, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev W J Orr be appointed in his place for five years.

3. That funding from congregational finances for additional pastoral personnel should come from 'Specified Sources', as defined and required by Par 235.

4. That all proposed arrangements for the appointment of additional pastoral personnel shall be agreed by the Kirk Session and submitted to the Presbytery and the Union commission for approval.

5. That all additional pastoral personnel appointments shall be made by the Kirk Session with the approval of the Minister and the Presbytery.

6. That the Guidelines for the appointment of additional pastoral personnel (Report Par 19) be approved.

7. That the CMF be authorised to pay grants towards expenses incurred by ministers in congregations, up to a limit of £4500 in N. Ireland, and IR£5100 for ministers residing in the Republic of Ireland, within the terms of Resolution 3, Page 70, General Assembly Minutes 1988, as reviewed in the 1995 Report, Pages 58f.

8. That the General Assembly authorise the printing and distribution of the Vacancy Guidelines Booklet as required, up to a maximum of 100 copies annually, expenses to be charged to the Incidental Fund.

9. That the Union Commission review Par 235 (3) of the Code and report to the 1998 Assembly with any recommendations they deem appropriate.

10. That the Union Commission, with its associated working committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 128 of the Code as follows:

LICENSED AMENDMENT**Resolution**

5. That the selection and appointment of additional pastoral personnel shall be made by the Kirk Session with the approval of the Minister, and of the Presbytery, who shall ensure that the person to be appointed is in sympathy with the doctrines and practices of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

T J McCORMICK

MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly to meet in Belfast on 2 June 1997.

The Memorial of the Kirk Session of First Presbyterian Church, Londonderry (First Derry and Claremont) Respectfully Showeth:

That a successful amalgamation of First Derry and Claremont Churches has taken place and the Session has had an opportunity of considering carefully the appropriate name for the amalgamated Congregation.

The Kirk Session considers that the appropriate name should now be First Derry and Claremont Presbyterian Church.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Assembly to approve the change of name from First Presbyterian Church, Londonderry (First Derry and Claremont) to that of First Derry and Claremont Presbyterian Church, and Memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Adopted by the Kirk Session at its meeting in Upper Magazine Street, Londonderry, on Sunday, 2 March 1997.

DAVID LATIMER, Moderator
J SCOTT, Clerk of Session

Licensed and transmitted by the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane at its meeting in Strabane on Tuesday 4 March, 1997 with the strong recommendation that the prayer of the Memorialists be granted.

G P YOUNG, Moderator
J FELL, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted by the Synod of Derry and Omagh at its meeting in Orritor on 12 March 1997 with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

IVAN J WILSON, Moderator
J B McCORMICK, Clerk

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To the Venerable the General Assembly to meet in Belfast on 2 June 1997.

The Memorial of the Presbytery of Carrickfergus Respectfully Showeth:

that the period a Licentiate will normally serve before Ordination has been increased to two years;

that Licentiates are invited to sit and deliberate in Presbytery meetings in the area where they are serving, but remain under the discipline of the licensing Presbytery;

that it might be beneficial to have Licentiates transferred to the Presbytery in which they are serving.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Court to instruct the Union Commission to review the issues thoroughly and to report with recommendations to the General Assembly in 1998.

And Memorialists as in duty bound will ever pray.

At their meeting in Woodburn on 3 December, 1996 Presbytery unanimously adopted the Memorial and agreed that it be transmitted to the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine.

R J McCULLOUGH, Moderator
R V A LYNAS, Clerk

Transmitted by the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine at its meeting in Cullybackey on the 11 March, 1997 to the General Assembly with the strong recommendation that the prayer of the Memorial be granted.

11 March 1997

W J HOOK, Moderator
W J LAMONT, Clerk

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To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet at Belfast on the 2nd day of June, 1997.

The Memorial of the Kirk of Session of Cloughey and Portavogie respectfully sheweth:

That the Congregation of Cloughey was formed in 1841.

That in 1927 a Memorial from the Congregation of Cloughey to the General Assembly, setting forth that a new Church Hall had been erected at Portavogie in which their minister regularly conducted services, and asking that the name of the Congregation be changed to 'Cloughey and Portavogie', was received and its prayer granted.

That it had initially been hoped that the Portavogie 'meeting-house' would develop into another congregation, but it did not do so.

That in recent times it has become apparent that there are 'de-facto' two congregations in Cloughey and Portavogie, with separate services of worship, Sunday Schools, and other organisations, but with one Kirk Session and one Congregational Committee.

That Memorialists, believing that the best interests of the Congregation are not being served by the present arrangements, made a unanimous recommendation to the Congregation of Cloughey and Portavogie at a meeting duly called for the purpose on 15th November, 1996 that the Congregation divide into two separate units, namely the Congregation of 'Cloughey' and the Congregation of 'Portavogie', each with its own Kirk Session and

Congregational Committee, but continuing as a joint charge unless and until the Union Commission determine otherwise.

That at that meeting 71% of those who voted, expressed their agreement with the unanimous recommendation of the Kirk Session.

That agreement as to an equitable distribution of all assets at present pertaining to the Congregation of Cloughey and Portavogie is being researched.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Assembly:

- (a) to authorise the Presbytery of Ards
 - (i) to reconstitute the present congregation of Cloughey and Portavogie into two separate Congregations named 'Cloughey' and 'Portavogie', with effect from 1st July, 1997 (or other date agreed by the Union Commission);
 - (ii) to place the elders presently serving on the Kirk Session of Cloughey and Portavogie whose names appear on the Commission Roll of 'Cloughey' on the Kirk Session of 'Cloughey', and those whose names appear on the Communion Roll of 'Portavogie' on the Kirk Session of 'Portavogie';
 - (iii) to ensure that each congregation elects a new Congregational Committee, as soon as may be convenient;
- (b) to ask the Union Commission to fix terms of union for the two congregations;
- (c) to place both congregations in the Synod of Ulster.

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

JAMES GORDON, Moderator
WILLIAM MIDDLETON, Clerk of Session

Licensed and transmitted by the Presbytery of Ards, meeting at Bangor on 4th February 1997, with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

WILLIAM HASLETT, Moderator
DONALD J WATTS, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted by the Synod of Armagh and Down, meeting at Annalong on Tuesday 11th March 1997 with the recommendation that its prayer be granted.

STUART FINLAY, Moderator
SAMUEL MATTHEWS, Clerk

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To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet in Belfast on Monday 2 June, 1997.

The Memorial of the Presbytery of Tyrone Respectfully Showeth:

That there exist difficulties within the Presbyterian Church regarding the system of paying ministers; and so Memorialists pray your Venerable Assembly to appoint an ad hoc committee to look into the method whereby ministers are paid and to produce an alternative scheme or schemes, and report back to the next Assembly.

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

Adopted by the Presbytery of Tyrone at its meeting in First Cookstown on Tuesday, 4 March, 1997.

D A MURPHY, Moderator
J B McCORMICK, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted by the Synod of Derry and Omagh at its meeting in Orritor on Wednesday, 12 March, 1997, with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

IVAN J WILSON, Moderator
J B McCORMICK, Clerk

REPORTS OF SYNODS AND PRESBYTERIES

SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN

The **SYNOD OF ARMAGH AND DOWN** report that Rev. Stuart Alexander Finlay is their Moderator, and that their next stated meeting is appointed to be held at Trinity, Bangor, on Tuesday 10th March 1998 at 11.30 a.m.

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. S. A. Little, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator, that the Rev. Cecil Courtenay died on 12th May, 1996; that the Rev. G. E. Best, M.A., B.D., resigned as Assistant Minister at Greenwell St., Newtownards, on 16th April 1996, having accepted a call to Newmills, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; the Rev. J. H. Robinson, B.Sc., B.D., resigned as Minister of First Holywood on 31st August 1996, and was received as a Minister without Charge before being installed as Director of Ministerial Students on 10th October 1996; The Rev. W. J. Murdock, B.Mus, P.G.C.E., Dip.M.T.A., B.D., was installed as Minister of Trinity, Greyabbey, on 9th May 1996, having presented credentials from the East Belfast Presbytery; the Rev. W. P. Addley, B.A., B.D., M.Th., D.Min., Ph.D., was installed as Minister of Conlig on 27th September 1996, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane; that they licensed Mr. A. A. Cole as a probationer for the Christian Ministry on 16th June 1996; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs. C. D. Mawhinney, D. J. Templeton; as Licentiates the Revs. W. M. Brown, C. J. Aitcheson, A. A. Cole; as Students for the Ministry Messrs. M. C. A. Gray, W. R. B. Martin, J. Wylie, C. J. Gamble, C. A. Grant, K. S. Jeffrey, S. Henning, M. M. Stewart; that they have visited the Congregations of Kilcooley, Ballywalter and St. Andrew's, Bangor; that Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately; that voting on the Overtures anent Code paras 11 and 13 was 52 for and none against in each case.

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. T. A. McNeely, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that they furnished Mr. D. J. Hutchinson, B.A., B.Th., a licentiate of the Presbytery, with credentials to the Presbytery of Strabane upon his acceptance of a call to Leckpatrick; that they have under their care as a Licentiate Mr. R. I. Abraham, B.A., B.D.; that they have under their care as a student for the ministry Mr. J. E. Jones, B.A.; that during the year they visited the congregations of First Lurgan, Waringstown and Belville; that Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately.

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. D. J. Kane, B.Sc., is their Moderator; that the Rev. S. R. Conkey, B.A., was installed as Minister of Raffrey Congregation on 19th June 1996, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev. J. L. Blair, B.Sc., resigned as Assistant Minister of Ballygowan on 10th September 1996, having received a Call from the Congregations of Clogher and Glenhoy on 31st May 1996 and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Omagh; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs. W. N. Duncan, B.D., M.Th., and R. N. Stewart, B.A., B.D.; that they have under their care as a student for the Ministry Mr. Mervyn Gibson; that during the year they visited the congregations of Clough/Seaforde and Edengrove; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; that the voting for the legislation sent down under the Barrier Act was: 17 for. 4 against. 2 abstentions.

Installed
Resigned

Visited

The **DROMORE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. D. J. Bruce, B.S.Sc., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. R. S. McMullan, B.A., B.D., M.T.S., H.Dip.Ed., Minister of Maze, demitted his charge on 31st May 1996 and was received as a minister without charge under the care of the Presbytery; that the Rev. P. A. McBride, B.Ed., B.D., Assistant Minister in First Lisburn, demitted her charge on 31st July 1996 and was received as a minister without charge under the care of Presbytery; that the Rev. W. L. Elliott, B.Sc., B.D., Minister of Second Dromara, demitted his charge on 17th September 1996 and was received as a minister without charge under the care of Presbytery; that Rev. Dr. R. M. Crooks, B.A., B.D., D.Min., Minister of First Dromore, demitted his charge on 27th February and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that Rev. W. J. Henry, B.Sc., B.D., having presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast, was installed as minister of Maze on 24th January 1997; that on 28th June 1996 Rev. R. S. McMullan, B.A., B.D., M.T.S., H.Dip.Ed., was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that on 3rd December Rev. P. A. McBride, B.Ed., B.D., was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Donegal; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs. R. J. Mattison, B.D., J. Honeyford, B.A., B.D. and W. L. Elliott, B.Sc., B.D.; that they have under their care as licentiates Dr. J. G. Millar and Mr. A. T. F. Johnston; that they have under their care as a student for the ministry Mr. Samuel Castles; that during the year they visited the congregations of Maze and First Dromore; that Financial Statements are being published separately by each congregation; and that, under the Barrier Act, 38 members voted for and 0 voted against the Overture anent paragraph 11 of the Code, while 36 members voted for and 0 voted against the Overture anent paragraph 13 of the Code.

Resigned

Installed

Visited

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. R. J. Greer, B.Sc., M.Phil, B.D., C.Chem, M.R.S.C., is their Moderator; that the

Died Resigned Rev. D. Hamilton, B.A., Senior Minister of Tandragee, died on 29th December 1996; that the Rev. A. S. Smyth, B.A., B.D., resigned as the Minister of First Rathfriland on 14th June 1996, having received a call from the congregation of Carryduff; that the Rev. G. E. Best, M.A., B.D., presented Credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was Installed as the Minister of Newmills on 17th April 1996; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge (Retired) the Rev. E. G. McAuley, B.A., B.D., M.Sc., as a Licentiate Rev. W. A. McCully, B.S.Sc., B.D., and as students Mr. E. S. McDowell, B.Sc., B.D., Mr. R. D. McDowell, B.Sc., Mr. T. D. Hagan, B.A. and Mr. J. A. Peacock, B.A.; that during the year they visited the congregations of Bannside, Tandragee and Drumlee; and that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

Installed Licensed Visited The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. J. A. Noble, B.D., B.A., is their Moderator; that the Rev. B. McMillen, B.A., was installed in Warrenpoint and Rostrevor on 6th December 1996, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Donegal; that they licensed Mr. Jonathan A. Curry, B.Sc., B.D., as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 9th June 1996; that they have under their care as students for the Christian Ministry Mr. Robert J. Stevenson, Mr. William J. A. Moody, Mr. Kenneth W. J. Hanna, and Mr. Kenneth Henderson; that during the year they visited the congregation of Sandys Street; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately; and that the voting on the Overtures anent pars 11 and 13 of the Code was 5 for and 3 against.

SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE

The **SYNOD OF BALLYMENA AND COLERAINE** report that Rev. W. J. Hook, M.A., B.D., is their Moderator and that the next stated meeting is to be held in Hazelbank Presbyterian Church, Coleraine, on Tuesday 10th March 1998 at 10 a.m.

Died Resigned The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that Rev. R. S. Hetherington, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that Rev. S. D. McCaughey, M.A., Senior Minister of High Kirk, died on 22nd October 1996; that Very Rev. Robert Dickinson, M.A., B.D., D.D., Ph.D., D.Theol., Senior Minister of Newtowncrommelin, died on 13th December 1996; that Rev. I. A. McKay, B.A., B.D., Minister of Brookside, demitted his charge on 21st June 1996, having received a call to Dundonald and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that Rev. T. V. Patterson, B.A., B.D., Minister of Buckna, demitted his charge on 27th June 1996, having received a call to Immanuel and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that Rev. N. G. McDowell, B.A., M.A.R., resigned as

Assistant Minister in Cuningham Memorial, Cullybackey and was installed in the Royal Army Chaplains' Department on 27th September 1996; that Rev. R. A. McLernon, B.Sc., resigned as a missionary in Spain on 12th December 1996, having received a call to Castlecaulfield and Eglisli and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that they licensed Mr. Richard D. Gregg, B.Sc., on 16th June 1996 as a probationer for the Christian Ministry and that he continues under the care of the Presbytery as a licentiate; that they have under their care as students for the ministry Mr. Lee Henry Eagleson and Mr. Stephen Richmond; that the congregations of High Kirk, Third Portglenone and Killymurriss were visited; that Financial Reports for congregations are being printed separately.

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that Rev. David Murphy, M.A., Dip.Th., is their Moderator; that Rev. Desmond J. Paul resigned his charge as Assistant Minister in Craigy Hill on 12th September 1996 on receiving a call from Ballykelly and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Foyle; that they installed Rev. Robert John Beggs, B.D., in Raloo congregation on 21st May 1996, having received credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast; that they licensed Mr. Robert Alexander Liddle, B.Ed., B.D., on 23rd June 1996 as a probationer for the ministerial office; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge Rev. D. R. Byers, as Licentiates Messrs. James C. Simms, Robert A. Liddle and Stephen A. McCracken, and as students for the ministry Messrs. Colin Burcombe, Ian Carton, Stephen J. Lockington and Philip W. Patterson; that they visited the congregations of Ballycarry and Cairncastle; and that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately.

The **COLERAINE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. John A. Kirkpatrick, B.Sc., Dip.Th., is their Moderator; that the Rev. George Moore demitted the charge of Ballysally on 9th September 1996 upon his call to Kilbride congregation and was furnished with credentials to the Templepatrick Presbytery; that the Rev. D. Stewart MacKay, B.Sc., B.D., having presented credentials from the Tyrone Presbytery, was installed to the oversight of Second Kilrea and Boveedy congregations on 22nd May 1996; that the Rev. John Coulter, B.D., having presented credentials from the East Belfast Presbytery was inducted to the oversight of Ballysally congregation on 13th December 1996; that the Rev. Andrew J. M. Smith, B.A., M.Div., having presented credentials from the Northern New England Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., was inducted as Assistant Minister in Ballywillan Congregation on 22nd September 1996; that on 21st June 1996 Mr. J. Keith A. McIntyre, M.Sc., B.D., was licensed as a probationer for the ministerial office; that on 13th December 1996 they issued credentials to the Rev. Samuel G. Anketell, M.A., B.D., upon his call to Enniscorthy, Wexford and Gorey congregations in the Dublin and Munster Presbytery; that they have under their care as students for the

ministry Messrs. Geoffrey D. Allen, Philip B. Wilson and Jonathan P. Moxen; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs. W. J. Morrison, B.A., and Brian A. H. Wilson, M.A., B.D., and as a Licentiate without Charge Mr. Thomas Mulholland, B.Sc., B.Th.; that during the year they visited the congregations of 1st Garvagh and Macosquin; that Financial Statements of congregations are being printed separately.

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. J. T. McCullough, B.A., is their Moderator; that the Rev. R. McC. Bell, B.A., retired on 30th June 1996; that the Rev. R. J. Gilkinson, B.Sc., M.Div., was installed at Dunloy and Garryduff on 9th May 1996; that the Rev. G. Cunningham, B.A., was installed at Armoyn and Ramoan on 28th May 1996; that Mr. M. Henderson was licensed on the 16th June 1996 and continues as a licentiate under their care; that they have also under their care as students for the ministry Mr. G. Aitchison and Mr. D. Steele; that during the year they visited the congregation of Ballycastle; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

The **TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. W. J. Sleith, M.A., is their Moderator; that the Rev. L. S. Kirkpatrick, B.A., B.D., M.Th., Ph.D., having been appointed to the Chair of Church History in Union Theological College, demitted the charge of Muckamore on 31st August 1996; that on 12th September 1996 the Rev. Dr. L. S. Kirkpatrick was installed as Professor of Church History in Union Theological College; that on 19th September 1996 the Rev. G. Moore, B.A., B.D., having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine, was installed as Minister of Kilbride; that on 23rd June 1996 Mr. R. D. Cameron, B.D., was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry; that they have under their care as Licentiates Messrs. A. M. Bates, B.A., R. D. Cameron, B.D., S. Mawhinney, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.C.H., M.R.G.C.P., S. Simpson, B.Sc.; that they have under their care as Students for the Christian Ministry Mr. C. M. Glover, B.A., Miss L. J. Robinson, B.A., Miss A. E. Tolland, B.Sc., P.G.C.E., B.D., M.Th.; that during the year they visited the congregations of Muckamore, Duneane, Greystone Road, Antrim, and Killead; that voting on Overtures anent paras 11 and 13 of the Code remitted to the Presbyteries was as follows: para 11, for 22, against 0; para 13, for 5, against 18; that the Financial Reports of the congregations are being printed separately.

SYNOD OF BELFAST

The **SYNOD OF BELFAST** report that the Rev. W. McB. Campbell, B.A., B.D., Dip.Ed., M.Sc., is their Moderator and that the

stated meeting of Synod will be held in Townsend Street Presbyterian Church on Tuesday 10th March 1998.

The **NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. Thomas Irvine Harte, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. Robert John Beggs, B.D., Ordained Assistant Minister in the congregation of Rathcoole, demitted his charge on 20th May 1996 on receipt of a call from the congregation of Raloo and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that the Rev. Samuel Conkey, B.A., Minister of Newington, demitted his charge on 18th June 1996 on receipt of a call from the congregation of Raffrey and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that the Rev. John Douglas Mark, M.A., B.D., Minister of Ballyhenry, demitted his charge on 31st August 1996 to take up an appointment with Open Doors; that the Rev. William John Henry, B.Sc., B.D., Ordained Assistant Minister in the congregation of Whiteabbey, demitted his charge on 24th January 1997 on receipt of a call from the congregation of Maze and was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that the Rev. Trevor Gribben, B.Sc., Dip.Th., was installed in Whiteabbey on 22nd March 1996, credentials having been received from the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane; that the Rev. Thomas James Wilson, B.Sc., B.D., was installed as Associate Minister in Rosemary on 12th June 1996, credentials having been received from the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that the Rev. Robert Love, B.A., was installed in Duncairn and St. Enoch's under the Home Mission on 20th June 1996; that the Rev. Thomas Victor Patterson, B.A., B.D., was installed in Immanuel on 28th June 1996, credentials having been received from the Presbytery of Ballymena; that the Rev. James Leslie Casement, B.A., B.D., was installed in Dunlop Memorial on 30th July 1996; that Mr. Johnston Rea Lambe was licensed as a Probationer for the Ministry in Sinclair Seamen's on 29th May 1996; that Mr. Noel Patrick was licensed as a Probationer for the Ministry in Whiteabbey on 31st May 1996; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs. C. R. J. Brown, B.A. (Retired), N. J. Linkens, B.D., J. D. Mark, M.A., B.D., C. I. McKnight, B.A., W. M. Smyth, B.A., B.D., M.P.; that they have under their care as Licentiates Messrs. A. W. Carson, G. W. M. Glasgow, J. R. Lambe, W. C. A. McIlwaine, M. J. R. Neilly, N. Patrick, J. C. Teeney; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry Messrs. W. H. G. Crawley, R. Gaston, A. McCullough, D. Murphy; that on 1st October 1996 a vote was taken on the Overture anent Par. 11 of the Code with 28 for and 5 against and on the Overture anent Par. 13 of the Code with 30 for and 4 against; that they have visited the congregation of Crumlin Road; and that congregational Financial Reports are being printed separately.

Resigned

Installed

Licensed

Visited

The **BELFAST SOUTH PRESBYTERY** report that Rev. W. P. Erskine, M.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that Mr. Alan Boal, B.D., was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 16th June 1996;

Licensed

that Mr. Andrew Thompson, B.A., B.D., was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 12th June 1996; that Mr. J. Burnett, B.A., M.Phil., M.A., was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 23rd June 1996; that they have under their care as a Minister without Charge Rev. P. A. J. McBride, B.Sc., B.D.; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry Ian Harbinson, Peter McDowell, Cheryl Aedeen Reid, Philip Thompson; that they have visited the congregations of Malone and McCracken; that Financial Statements are being printed separately.

The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. W. J. H. McKee, B.A., Ph.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. Thomas Fitch, M.A., B.D., Ph.D., Senior Minister of Ravenhill, died on 4th July 1996, and the Rev. A. Malcolm Park, M.A., Senior Minister of Orangefield, died on 12th August 1996; that the Rev. L. P. McClenaghan, B.A., resigned as a Minister without Charge on 27th June 1996 and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Buchan, Church of Scotland; that the Rev. A. S. Smyth, B.A., B.D., presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh and was installed as Minister of Carryduff on 14th June 1996; that the Rev. I. A. McKay, B.A., B.D., presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was installed as Minister of Dundonald on 21st June 1996; that the Rev. R. M. Crooks, B.A., B.D., D.Min., presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was installed as Minister of Belvoir on 28th February 1997; that the Rev. I. T. McKee, B.Ed., B.D., having been appointed as the General Assembly's Secretary for Christian Education and Sunday School Organiser, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Edinburgh and was installed to that Ministry on 18th June 1996; that the Rev. D. J. McCarthy, B.Sc., B.D., presented credentials from the Presbytery of Belfast South, and having been called by the Inter-Church Relations Board to a recognised Ministry as General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, was installed to that Ministry on 18th June 1996; that Mr. Daniel Rankin was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 16th June 1996; that the Rev. D. R. Baker, B.A., M.Div., presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route and was received as a Minister in Recognised Service under the Inter-Church Relations Board; that they have under their care as Ministers without Charge the Revs. R. A. Crooks, M.A., B. R. Hughes, B.A., B.D., E. Jamison, B.A., M.Ed., M.Th., Ph.D., H. E. Lewis, B.D., Dip.Ed., L. R. Pedlow, M.A., S. Scott, B.D., Ph.D., Th.D.; that they have under their care as Students for the Ministry Messrs. M. N. Davidson, G. J. Kennedy and A. N. Kerr; that the congregations of Mersey Street, Mountpottinger, and St. John's, Newtownbreda, were visited during the year; 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. Ivan J. Wilson, M.B.E., M.A., Ph.D., is their Moderator; that their next stated meeting is appointed to be held in Upper Cumber Presbyterian Church on Wednesday 11th March 1998 at 2.30 p.m.

The **DERRY AND STRABANE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. G. P. Young, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Rev. R. C. Graham, M.A., Minister of Carlisle Road and Crossroads, retired on 28th February 1997; that Mr. D. J. Hutchinson, B.A., B.Th., having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh, was Ordained and Installed as Minister of Leckpatrick on 3rd January 1997; that Mr. R. K. Graham, B.A., was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 21st June 1996; that the Rev. D. K. McCrory, B.Sc., B.D., a Minister without Charge, having received and accepted a call to become "Youth Development Officer and Dublin Colleges Chaplain", was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster on 6th January 1997; that they have under their care as Licentiates Mr. R. K. Graham, B.A., and Mr. E. A. Smith, B.A.; that they have under their care as students for the Ministry Mr. M. Dunn, B.Sc., and Mr. D. S. Gilmore, B.Sc., C.Q.S.W., M.S.Sc.; that the congregations of Ballyarnett and Knowhead, and 2nd Castleberg and Alt, were visited during the year; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately.

The **FOYLE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. K. G. Patterson, B.A., Dip.Th., is their Moderator; that the Rev. Desmond J. Paul, B.Eng., B.D., was installed as Minister of Ballykelly Congregation on 13th September 1996, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that they licensed as Probationers for the Ministry Mr. S. Stewart, B.Sc., D.A.S.E., Dip.Th., on 31st May 1996 and Mr. A. J. A. Rosborough, M.A., B.D., on 7th June 1996; that they have under their care, as a Minister without Charge, the Rev. K. Campbell, B.D.; that during the year the congregations of Second Limavady and Dungiven were visited; that the voting on the Overture anent para. 11 of the Code was for 22, against 3; that the voting on the Overture anent para. 13 of the Code was for 22, against 3; that the Financial Statements of the congregations are being printed separately.

The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. A. C. Rankin, B.Sc., B.D., Minister of Seskinore and Edenderry, is their Moderator; that the Rev. R. P. G. Reilly, B.D., demitted his charge of the congregations of Dromore and Drumquin on 31st August 1996 and was furnished with credentials upon receiving a call from the Westminster Presbyterian congregation near Brisbane, Australia; that on 11th September 1996 they installed the Rev. J. Lindsay Blair, B.Sc., as Minister of Clogher and Glenhoy; that on 19th September 1996 they installed the Rev. Jonathan J. Currie, B.D., as Minister of Aughnacloy

Retired
 Ordained
 Installed
 Licensed
 Resigned
 Visited
 Installed
 Visited
 Resigned
 Installed

and Ballymagrane; that they have under their care as a student for the Ministry Mr. David William Reid; that they visited the congregations of Cavanleck and Gillygooley during the year; that voting on the Overture anent par 11 was for 24, against 1, voting on the Overture anent par 13 was for 24, against 0; that the Financial Statements of the congregations are being printed together in booklet form.

The **TYRONE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. David A. Murphy, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that the Very Rev. Dr. Andrew R. Rodgers, M.A., retired from the duties of the active ministry in Dungannon on 31st October 1996; that the Rev. Philip G. McCrea, B.A., B.D., resigned his charge as Minister of the congregations of Castlecaulfield and Eglish on 6th March 1995, having received a call from the congregation of Maghera and was installed as Minister of that congregation on 7th March 1996; that the Rev. D. S. Mackay, B.Sc., B.D., Ordained Assistant Minister of Dungannon, resigned on 24th May 1996, having received a call from the congregations at 2nd Kilrea and Boveedy and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine; that the Rev. Robert Adrian McLernon, B.Sc., was installed as Minister of the congregations of Castlecaulfield and Eglish on 12th December 1996, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena; that they have under their care as a Licentiate Mr. Peter E. Dickinson, B.A., B.D.; that they have under their care as Student for the Ministry Mr. Adrian T. S. McAlister, B.Sc., M.Sc.; that during the year they visited the congregations of 1st Magherafelt and Cunnady and Swatragh; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being published separately; that the voting on the Overture anent Para. 11 of the Code was for 24, against 5, that the voting on the Overture anent para. 13 of the Code was for 24, against 5.

SYNOD OF DUBLIN

The **SYNOD OF DUBLIN** report that the Rev. K. J. C. McConnell is their Moderator and that the next stated meeting is appointed to be held in Ballybay, Co. Monaghan, on Monday, 9th March 1988 at 7 p.m.

The **DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that Rev. N. E. Dorrans, B.Sc., is their Moderator; that on 5th December 1996 Rev. Brian McMillen, B.A., resigned his charge as Minister of Carnone and Convoy congregations, having accepted a call to Rostrevor and Warrenpoint congregations, and was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Newry; that on 21st February Rev. Patricia Anne McBride, B.Ed., B.D., was installed as School Chaplain in the Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore; the congregations of Donoughmore

and Ballylennon were visited during the year; that the Financial Statements of the congregations are being published in a Year Book. Visited

The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev. Mervyn R. Burnside, B.Sc., is their Moderator; the Rev. Brian A. H. Wilson, M.A., B.D., Minister without Charge, was furnished with credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine on 3rd September 1996; that they have no students for the Ministry; that they voted in favour of the Overtures anent paragraphs 11 and 13 of the Code by 21 votes to one against, with four abstentions; that during the year the congregations of First Ballybay and Drumkeen were visited; that the congregational Financial Reports are being printed in booklet form. Visited

The **DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** report that Rev. Frank Sellar, B.A., B.D., is their Moderator; that on 8th September 1996 Rev. Robert McMullan, B.A., B.D., was installed as General Director of the Scripture Union in the Republic of Ireland; that on 10th January 1997 Rev. Samuel Anketell, B.A., B.D., was inducted as Minister of Enniscorthy, Gorey and Wexford congregations; that on 12th January 1997 Rev. Keith McCrory, B.Sc., B.D., was inducted as Youth Development Officer and Chaplain to Dublin City University and the Dublin Institute of Technology; that on 23rd June 1996 Mr. David Montgomery was licensed to preach the Gospel publicly as a probationer for the ministerial office; that the Presbytery has under its care as a Licentiate Mr. David Montgomery and the following students — Mr. Ken Gibson and Mr. Brian Colvin; that during the year the following congregations were visited — Sandymount, Galway, Drogheda and Ervey; that the Financial Statements of all congregations are being published in a limited edition of a Year Book. Installed
Licensed
Visited

BUSINESS BOARD

Convener: The Clerk

1. As an experiment this year a backdrop is being provided for the Assembly platform which will incorporate a screen and equipment for the visual presentation of information through pictures in slides or video, or through words by computer. This supersedes the Alternative Presentation recently used for some items of business. Words appearing on the screen are an informal aid to the House, but the official and definitive record of Assembly decisions is to be found only in its attested Minutes.

2. At its pre-Assembly meeting on 31 May, 1996 the Business Board received a letter from the Synod of Dublin asking that the Board "consider sending invitations to the opening night of the General Assembly to a larger number of Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, and report to the next General Assembly".

3. The Board consulted the Inter-Church Relations Board, which debated the matter and prepared a paper setting out the various issues involved. The Business Board also decided that other Boards and Committees, and all Presbyteries, should be free to comment.

4. In the event few Boards or Committees commented, though the Committee on Peace and Peacemaking submitted a thoughtful paper.

5. Of our 21 Presbyteries 3 made no comment, 3 supported the Synod of Dublin's proposal and 15 voted to leave arrangements as they are. In view of that vote the Business Board did not feel justified in proposing any change.

6. However, as the Committee on Peace and Peacemaking and a number of Presbyteries made reasoned and detailed comments, and as the issues involved are beyond the remit of the Business Board, copies of all submissions received are being forwarded to the Inter-Church Relations Board for its consideration (in consultation with any other Boards or Committees it may deem appropriate).

7. In the meantime it should be pointed out that other Churches are normally invited to send corresponding members and delegates to all meetings of the Assembly during the week (except the private session), whereas invitations to the opening night only are for civic dignitaries, such as the Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Mayor, the Chief Constable, etc. The original proposal did not clearly distinguish these two categories.

8. The Synod of Dublin subsequently decided to bring this matter to the General Assembly directly by means of a Memorial. As any issue can be debated and decided only once in the course of an Assembly, the Business Board recommends that all debate on this issue should take place when the Synod's Memorial is submitted.

9. Copies of the Annual Accounts are available to members of Assembly upon request to the Cash Office.

Other Churches

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

Church of Ireland Synod 1997: Very Rev. Dr. John Ross, Rev. Dr. R.W.J. MacDermott, Mr. F. Newell, Mrs. P. Colvin.

Methodist Conference 1997: Very Rev. Dr. D.H. Allen, Rev. Dr. J. Fell, Mr. J.C. Grant, Mr. A. Gregg.

Presbyterian Church of Wales: Rev. J.B. Moore.

French Reformed Church: The Clerk of Assembly.

Presbyterian Church of East Africa: Rev. W S. Marrs.

Uniting Church in Australia: Rev Prof J C McCullough.

Board Membership

The Business Board is appointed in accordance with the provisions of Par 275 of the Code to take office on the 15 March preceding the Assembly. The Board for the year 1996-1997 together with the associated Arrangements Committee, is as follows:-

- (a) The Moderator, and Clerk of Assembly, the Moderator-Designate, the former Clerks, preceding three Moderators, all Assembly Conveners and Secretaries of Commissions and Boards, Financial Secretary, Youth and Information Officers.
- (b) Rev. W.T. Cordner; W.J. Moorhead — Rev. Dr. J. Thompson; W.H. Scott — Rev. J. Harper; S.B. Cunningham — Rev. A.W. Boyd; John Connor — Rev. R.J. Greer; B. Crosier — Rev. D.C. Scott; I. Bloomer.
- (c) Rev. J.J. Andrews; W. Matthews — Rev. J.W. McAuley; J. Wallace — Rev. T.J. McCormick; P. McGonigle — Rev. J.A. Thompson; J. Christie — Rev. F.J. Kelly; J. McIlroy.
- (d) Rev. T.C. Morrison; A.W. Marshall — Rev. Ruth Patterson; S. Nelson — Rev. Dr. W.J.H. McKee; Miss V.J. Wilson.
- (e) Rev. M. Bolton; F.L. Hood — Rev. J. McWhirter; K. Garrett — Rev. B.A. Hunt; J. Cochrane — Rev. T.J. Conway; R. Kyle.
- (f) Rev. N.E. Dorrans; L. Tinney — Rev. J. Carson; John Rowland — Rev. D.T. Moore; S. Sharpe.

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

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

The Methodist Conference 1996

The Very Rev Dr John Ross reports:

1. The 227th Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland took place in Wesley Centenary Church, Bangor from 12 to 16 June.

2. The Presbyterian delegates were Dr R J Hamilton, an elder in Clough (Co Down), Rev W L Haslett, Moderator of the Ards Presbytery, together with the immediate past Moderator of the General Assembly, the Very Rev Dr John Ross.

3. The outgoing President, Rev Christopher Walpole from Lisnaskea handed over to the new President, Rev Kenneth Best from Londonderry who preached at length to a Conference which was greatly challenged by his winsome, forthright speaking.

4. Conference proceedings were well chaired by the President of the British Conference, Rev Brian Hoare. Though 'an outsider' in a sense, one felt that his breadth of experience in IVF work, in Cliff College and in the work of evangelism in British Methodism enabled him to relate well to the Irish Conference.

5. The delegation found the Conference thoroughly interesting, comparing and contrasting issues and concerns for church and society, and the Methodist traditions and general ethos. In some respects the Conference was more informal and yet the business was well ordered and the timing was remarkably efficient.

6. The delegation was warmly received and welcomed the opportunity to express appreciation of the co-operation between our churches not least in theological education and in alternating ministries. It was pointed out that our system does not make it easy for us to fit neatly into such schemes.

7. The debating, if it could be called that, was, on the whole very different from what would be normal in the General Assembly. There was little of the cut and thrust which is normal many a time with us, where we thrash out issues and vote. The 'ayes' or 'no's' or indeed applause were virtually absent. On the other hand, P R voting was held for the sort of matters which, with us, would go through 'on the nod'.

8. The National Lottery issue left no one in any doubt about the Methodist Church's abhorrence of the evil. Speeches were personal and passionate. A recommendation was that the British Government should establish a Gambling Research Unit without delay as recommended by the 1978 Royal Commission, and should publish its findings within twelve months.

9. An overall impression was of a church fellowship seeking to face up to the realities of the modern world with faith and hope and love. It was a heart warming experience to observe and participate with the Methodists.

The URC Assembly 1996

The Very Rev Dr John Ross reports:

1. The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church met residentially, as it does biennially on the campus of York University, from 6-9

July 1996. The workload for members of Assembly was heavy with no breaks in the programme of business. I represented our Church along with my chaplain, Rev D T Moore, and Rev Jim Waring, who was a voting member of the Assembly. The URC extends this right to a number of sister churches in the British Isles.

2. Many of the issues discussed were familiar to us in Ireland, Finance, Ministerial Training, Discipline, etc. In various areas of the church there was decline, in others growth, notably on one housing estate of 5,000 people near London, where a new congregation was established of 14 members, a courageous step of faith.

3. There were, of course, some significant differences. For instance, their Moderator was not a minister, and there was some debate about whether the post should carry the title "Right Reverend" when the holder was not styled "Reverend" in the first place! Representation was not from each congregation, but by "provinces" akin to our Presbyteries. This led to a very different age and gender profile, though interestingly not that of race; there were few black or Asian members. Of particular interest was the high number of young people, who were full members of Assembly and who were deeply involved in the business. Their ability to participate meaningfully was enhanced by having met together the week prior to Assembly to study the book of reports!

4. I was glad to be invited to take part in the Sunday morning Communion service, leading in prayer for our country, which in those early days of July 1996 was in some considerable turmoil. I was also asked to speak to the Assembly later in the week on the same issue, and was heard with much sympathy. Thanks to the staff in Church House I was able to distribute copies of the report of the Sub-Committee on Parades (Reports 1996 pp29f) to those who were interested.

5. It was good to greet a number of Irish Presbyterians who were members of Assembly, though the welcome we received from everyone was warm and sincere. As a union of three different denominations the URC is a very different church from our own, not only in structure but also in emphasis. Next year it celebrates its 25th Anniversary, and engages on a major debate on Human Sexuality. Amidst the challenges of their particular context I am sure the URC would value our prayers for the days that lie ahead.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly 1996

The Rev Samuel Hutchinson reports:

1. The 208th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) met from 29 June to 6 July 1996. The Assembly visits different Synods in turn, and in 1996 the Synod of the Southwest hosted the meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A Local Arrangements Committee helps to give each Assembly its own distinctive ethos; in Albuquerque the Church's work among Hispanics and native Americans (ie "Indians") was specially highlighted.

2. The voting membership of the US Assembly is smaller than that in Ireland. While the Church has a membership of 2,700,000, there were only 568 commissioners, who were appointed by the 171 Presbyteries in proportion to

their size. About one minister in 60 attends, accompanied by a representative elder, for both of whom a visit to the Assembly may be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. 74% were attending their first Assembly.

3. There is, however, a large entourage of advisers, youth delegates, staff persons, Presbytery and Synod Clerks, theological college presidents, consultants, etc so that the attendance at most meetings ran into several thousand with 3,500 at the communion service and similar numbers at the plenary sessions. 85% of all participants arrived at the Assembly by air.

4. Three commissioners had previously announced their candidature for the Moderatorship, all of them having been approved by their Presbyteries. During the morning of the opening day of the Assembly commissioners had an opportunity to meet the candidates informally in a committee room. At the evening session the Assembly heard nomination speeches and an address from each nominee. Commissioners then asked questions of each candidate before voting electronically and electing Rev John M Buchanan, minister of Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago.

5. Much of the business was transacted, not in plenary sessions but in the 17 Assembly Committees that met for one evening and two full days in the early part of the week. Visiting delegates were free to choose their committees, so I visited several, including the one on Peacemaking and International Justice, where I had the opportunity to speak and answer questions on Fair Employment in Northern Ireland, a topic which proved to be of even greater interest than the Peace Process.

6. The various Committees eventually returned to the full Assembly and reported on the Reports. Because of the pressure of business, speeches from the floor were cut from three minutes to two, and could be made from any one of several microphones strategically placed throughout the hall. Coloured signals indicated to the rather remote Moderator whether a waiting commissioner wished to support the motion, oppose it, ask a question or move an amendment.

7. A key decision was election of a new Stated Clerk in succession to the patriarchal figure of Rev Dr James E Andrews, who retired after a total of 23 years service, first as Clerk of the former PCUS and then of the re-united Church. The new Clerk is Rev Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick, Director of the Worldwide Ministries Division of the General Assembly Council since 1981.

8. The agenda was crowded with many important and some potentially divisive issues, including the vexed question of whether Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries may ordain to office in the Church those who are “self-affirming, practising homosexual persons”. In recent times the Judicial Commission had ruled in the negative in particular cases, but such judicial interpretations could not be regarded as having the force of a general law of the Church. An overture clearly requiring faithfulness in marriage and celibacy outside it was therefore sent down to Presbyteries for consideration. (They have now passed it).

9. The Assembly also heard that the role and responsibility of duly commissioned lay pastors needs to be expanded, a pressing issue in a denomination largely made up of a great number of small congregations.

10. There was concern that unrestricted (ie undesignated) giving by congregations to the Mission Budget has dropped. Nevertheless the annual

Mission Budget is over \$110,000,000 and in a solemn and moving ceremony the Assembly commissioned about 500 new missionaries and other workers.

11. Beside the main Assembly Hall an equally large Exhibit Hall housed 50 different stalls providing a wealth of colourful information about the work of various agencies and the opportunity to meet representatives from a wide variety of organisations.

ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS

1. The Arrangements Committee congratulate the Rev S Hutchinson, Convener of the Business Board and a regular Chairman of its Committee meetings, on his nomination as Moderator-Designate and offer our prayers for his period in office. We continue to be grateful for the efficient helpfulness of the Church House staff in all departments and especially in the General Secretary's Office, the Reception desk, and through Mr H Orr, Building Manager.

PLATFORM PRESENTATION

2. The Committee is initiating a visual presentation system and backdrop on the Assembly platform. We hope that this will assist the business of the Assembly and we are indebted to Mr Stephen Lynas, Information Officer, for his guidance and advice. Members should note that, while resolutions or amendments may appear on the screen, the only correct wording is that which is held by the Moderator and the Clerk. Any information for visual display must be approved by the Convener and all advertising must be previously approved by the Business Board.

CATERING

3. We encourage members to use the catering facilities provided by the Arrangements Committee. Lunches are available in the Minor Hall and tea/coffee snacks throughout the day. The Friends of Church House provide a snack lunch on Tuesday in aid of the World Development Appeal.

DUKE OF ARGYLL

4. The invitation extended to the Duke and Duchess of Argyll, having previously been accepted to attend the 1997 General Assembly, has been declined by the Duke due to increased commitments at that period. The Duke sends greetings to the Assembly together with sincere apologies and regret at his being unable to attend. The Committee is indebted to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for his making available Hillsborough Castle to accommodate the Duke and Duchess. An ancestor of the Duke officially opened the Assembly Buildings in 1905.

DAILY PRAYERS

5. The Moderator-Designate has invited the Rev James Philip, MA, Holyrood Abbey Church, Edinburgh to address the Assembly at Daily Prayers, Wednesday to Friday from 12.15 p.m. These devotions are open to the General Public and we know that all will be blessed during this time of ministry and worship.

ASSEMBLY RALLY

6. On the Wednesday evening at 7.45 p.m. the praise at the Rally will be led by the popular Ballyclare Male Choir conducted by Mr William Thompson, OBE. The Guest Speaker will be the Rev Dr Clifford Hill, MA, BD, PhD, who is Editor-in-Chief of the magazine Prophecy Today and is a gifted preacher, lecturer, writer and broadcaster. Dr Hill has been used as a consultant to the British Government on Inner City affairs.

VOTING CARDS

7. 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 Finance Office. Admission to the Private Session is only for those who have and show their own voting card.

EXPENSES

8. All members may claim a daily allowance and travel expenses to cover the cost of one return journey. Claims should be made on the appropriate form obtainable from the Reception at the Wellington Street entrance.

GUESTS

9. We warmly welcome our Assembly Guests and visiting delegates and we encourage all our members to make their stay within our Presbyterian family a happy and memorable one. Our thanks to all who so willingly provide hospitality, transport and accommodation for our guests.

AMPLIFICATION

10. A professional amplification controller is being engaged to operate the public address system. In view of previous problems it is recommended that this person be also admitted to the private session for this purpose.

CONCLUSION

11. We trust that our 1997 General Assembly in the midst of the necessary business will be a time to make and to recreate friendships. We hope that all the arrangements will help towards that end.

ROY VALLELY, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommended Order of Business be adopted.
3. That the professional amplification controller be admitted to the private session.
4. That a grant of £6,500 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Committee.
5. That the Business Board, with its associated working committee, for the ensuing year beginning 15 March 1998 be appointed in accordance with Par 275 of the Code.

BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS

Convener: Rev IVOR SMITH
Secretary: Mr STEPHEN LYNAS

1. The process of development and change in the communications world continues at frightening speed and we are seeking to make as full use as possible of the latest technology to help get our message to the world outside the church, and to improve our communications around the church. Our relationship with the media will be improved by our membership of the Churches Media Council for Northern Ireland, which has been formed by the four main churches to develop closer links with broadcasters and journalists. The increasing use of the internet and e-mail by ministers and congregations has been encouraged by Stephen Lynas and is resulting in inquiries for information from around the world.

2. We bid farewell at this Assembly to Mrs Ruth McConnell from our staff and to three of our conveners. All have served the Church well and we pay them warm tribute.

Mrs Ruth McConnell

3. Mrs Ruth McConnell has worked in the Department for over 26 years and is a vital part of our team. She will be greatly missed, not only by her colleagues, but also by a succession of Board and Committee conveners, members of the Church and the wider public, who in seeking her help always found someone who could supply a vast range of information in a very warm, friendly and pleasant manner.

Rev Dr Donald Patton

4. Rev Dr Donald Patton was appointed convener of the Historical Society Committee in 1990. During those years he was personally involved in the administration and development of the work of the Society. He has earned the respect of colleagues in the Committee and the Board for his scholarship and efficiency and we thank him for a job well done.

Rev W L Haslett

5. For the past six years Rev W L Haslett has served as convener of the TV, Broadcasting and AVA Committee. His good humour and ready wit, together with his relaxed manner and interest in broadcasting have impressed his colleagues in the Committee and the Board. We are grateful to him for all he has done.

Rev H Barkley Wallace

6. Since 1990 Rev H Barkley Wallace has been responsible for the Memorial Record. He has shown great care, sensitivity and thoroughness each year in compiling suitable tributes to deceased ministers, and in reading the

Memorial Record on Opening Night of the General Assembly. The Board and the whole church is once more indebted to him for his work.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

1. Due to illness during the past year our staff have been working under much pressure, yet they have managed to maintain their high standards of expertise for the work of the Department. Mrs Ruth McConnell who intends to retire after this year's General Assembly will be greatly missed.

Information

2. Mr Stephen Lynas has shown initiative in developing the methods of communication within our Church and in benefiting from our relations with the media. Last year's General Assembly received considerable media coverage.

Publications

3. Projects undertaken by the Departments include Union Theological College Corporate Identity and Prospectus, Child Protection Guidelines Handbook, Logo designs for 2020 Vision and Life 2, PWA/YWG Membership Cards, Elders' Visiting Cards and 'Get Real', a drug resources pack produced by the ADE Committee. The Committee pays tribute to the staff for the production and distribution of the Points for Prayer Handbook and the Update leaflets.

4. Many agencies and individuals of the Church benefit from the design and production skills of the Department. Its wide use is to be commended throughout the Church.

Herald

5. The redesigned Herald has been rewarded with a favourable response. The editor, Rev Arthur Clarke, and his team continue to refine the format to maximise the potential of the magazine.

W J CARLISLE, Convener

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

The Bulletin. 1994

Robert Blair of Bangor by Rev Dr John W Lockington.

Helen Waddell: Presbyterian Mediaevalist by Professor R Norman C Vance.

Rev Dr Robert Allen by Rev Dr J Thompson.

2. The Society has arranged the following meetings for the year 1997-1998:

1997

June, Saturday 14th - Field Trip

A coach trip to places of Presbyterian and Historical interest in the Ballymoney area, led by Mr S Alex Blair.

October, Thursday 16th at 8.00 p.m. - Cregagh Road Reformed Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

Lecture: The Society People: when the Covenanters had no Ministers, by Rev Knox Hyndman, Lecturer in Church History, Reformed Theological College, Belfast.

November, Thursday 20th at 8.00 pm - First Carrickfergus Presbyterian Church. Rev L S Kirkpatrick, Professor of Church History, Union Theological College, Belfast.

1998

March, Thursday 5th - Conlig Presbyterian Church.

7.15 pm Annual General Meeting.

8.00 pm Lecture: 'The Famous Five' in Foreign Fields: Irish Student Volunteers and Overseas Missions, by Rev Dr W P Addley, Minister of Conlig Presbyterian Church.

3. We would appreciate the assistance of Presbytery agents and ministers in the task of publicising the work of the Society and encouraging congregations to support the lecture programme.

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

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

W J H McKEE, Acting Convener

FAMILYBOOKS LTD

1. We have carried the title 'BEST CHRISTIAN BOOK SHOP OF THE YEAR 1996 IN THE UK AND IRELAND' with great satisfaction and encouragement, not only for the efforts of the past but for the standards for the future.

2. There is a marked increase in the number of customers coming into the shop, whose interest and support are appreciated.

CLIFFORD BOYD, Chairman

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE

1. Since our last Report to the General Assembly in June, 1996, the Committee has met on seven occasions.

2. Sixty-three submissions were received and considered during these meetings. Most were granted direct approval, but several were returned to Congregational Committees for further consideration. Some requests involved on-site visits, and we express our appreciation of the hospitality and welcome accorded to Committee members on such occasions.

3. The work of the Committee is facilitated if its opinion and approval are sought early in the process of a scheme. At that stage any amendments or changes which the Committee might suggest are more easily incorporated into design plans and working drawings.

4. The Committee would acknowledge the help given by Miss Rosemary Jack as a voluntary adviser in stained-glass window design. Her comments are always pertinent, and her enthusiasm in co-operating with the window manufacturers and designers as well as with local congregations puts the whole Church in her debt.

5. The Convener and a lay expert have represented the Church in the continuing work of the 'Ulster Historic Churches' Trust. A seminar was held in the month of February, 1997, giving some indication from experience in Belgium and Holland, how the Trust might be of help to parishes and congregations in their work of monitoring and maintaining the fabric of their buildings.

6. The Committee, with the permission of the Communications Board, gave a further grant of £200 to the Trust. The application for grant from the Incidental Fund includes this amount.

7. The Committee would wish to alert the Assembly to the possibility of changes being made to the planning laws with regard to buildings listed for architectural and historic interest and value. These changes may make them more amenable to modern worship needs and to accommodating modern facilities. There is also the possibility that new laws with regard to the needs of the disabled will require some detailed thought in the planning of alterations to all public buildings. This category would include churches and halls.

J T WILLIAMSON, Convener

TV, BROADCASTING AND AVA COMMITTEE

1. The religious advisers continue to have an important role within the structure of the media.

2. There is a tremendous response to the BBC programme, 'Sunday Sequence', where Miss Etta Halliday's skill and expertise as presenter are greatly appreciated.

3. Downtown Radio reports increased audience figures for 'First Day' which contains a wide variety of information and weekly reviews of the religious life of the community.

4. RTE continues to be generous in its allocation of Sunday services, with one radio broadcast each month, and a televised service from the studio at two-monthly intervals. ICTRA researches the on-going relationship between the churches and the media.

5. At UTV religious items are slotted in to current affairs programmes thereby reaching larger audiences. Anglia TV is responsible for Sunday morning worship and Northlands for 'Witness'.

6. It is hoped that before long the increasing number of independent and local radio stations will be represented on the Committee.

7. For the Overseas Board, the Video Unit has produced programmes on Malawi; and is assisting the Board on the presentation of aspects of its work in Indonesia, Pakistan and Jamaica.

8. A programme for the ADE Committee on the problems associated with drug, alcohol, and tobacco dependency among young people is also being prepared.

9. It is intended that the new proposed committee structure within the Board of Communications should provide more opportunities for the monitoring of the output of the media.

W L HASLETT, Convener

PUBLIC WORSHIP COMMITTEE

1. Much of our attention during the past year has centred around the 1996 General Assembly's Remit to 'investigate the options concerning the future of the Hymnbooks in the Church and report to the General Assembly 1997'. Initially it was felt by the Committee that it would be beyond the limits of our Church to proceed towards the compilation of a new hymnbook. Members of the Committee were thus asked to investigate hymnals already in existence which might be adopted to become the official hymnbook of our Church, and to let the Convener have a list of these by the meeting of the Communications Board in October. Several hymnals emerged and when examined were thought, for one reason or another, to be unsuitable. The Convener was then requested to go through the two hymnals currently in use throughout our Church i.e. the Revised Church Hymnal and the Church Hymnary Third Edition, and select which hymns he would include/exclude with the recommended tunes for an envisaged new hymnal. This selection is then to be examined at a special meeting of the Committee, to be held on 27 March, the purpose of this exercise being to accumulate as much information as possible and be in a position to ascertain the feasibility of producing a new hymnal for our Church - should the General Assembly so decide.

2. Regarding the reprint of the Revised Church Hymnal, it emerged that the 'batch of sheets' for binding by Oxford University Press were of the large print edition and not the pew edition as originally thought, the recommended retail price being £10.99. It further emerged that this had not been a popular

edition and may not be the answer to the Church's present requirements. Due to the fact that the Church Hymnal Trustees only meet annually, and that being some time in March, it was not clear at the February meeting of the Committee if the Trustees/Oxford University Press would agree to the reprint of the pew edition. It is hoped that by the meeting of the General Assembly in June we will be in possession of all the information needed and know how best to proceed in this matter.

3. The Committee noted that competent organists are becoming increasingly difficult to find and discussed ways this problem might be dealt with.

W T J RICHARDSON, Convener

MEMORIAL RECORD

The Rev Thomas Fitch, MA, BD, PhD, senior minister of Ravenhill, died on the 4th July 1996, in the 91st year of his age and the 62nd of his ministry.

Born at Paisley, Renfrewshire, on the 2nd May 1906, he received his early education at Falkirk High School, and worked with the Falkirk Iron Co Ltd from 1920 till 1927. Enrolling at the University of Glasgow, he graduated MA in 1930, and BD in 1933. He was awarded a PhD in 1949 by the University of Edinburgh. Licensed by the Presbytery of Falkirk in 1933, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Ayr at St Meddan's, Troon, on the 25th April 1935. Installed by the Presbytery of Belfast at Ravenhill on the 6th March 1952, he retired on the 31st May 1972.

Dr Fitch served for some years as warden and lecturer at the Bible Training Institute in Glasgow: and was a chaplain with the Army from 1943 till 1946. He was the author of a book 'Straight Talks', published by Marshall, Morgan & Scott; and of several articles in religious and theological periodicals.

Dr Fitch was essentially a parish minister. Of strong character and determined personality, he attended carefully to every aspect of his parochial work. During his ministry a suite of halls was built, and a pipe organ installed in the Church. A genial companion with a good sense of humour, he found relaxation in music and golf.

He was predeceased by his wife: and survived by a son and two daughters.

The Rev Arthur Malcolm Parke, MA, senior minister of Orangefield, died on the 12th August 1996, in the 88th year of his age and the 61st of his ministry.

Born at Ballykelly on the 19th July 1909, he was educated at Methodist College Belfast; Magee University College Derry, and Trinity College Dublin, where he graduated BA in 1931 and MA in 1955. He completed his theological studies at Princeton Theological Seminary and the Presbyterian College Belfast. Licensed by the Presbytery of Clogher on the 30th May 1933, he was ordained at Castlecaulfield by the Presbytery of Dungannon on the 15th October 1935; and installed at Orangefield by the Presbytery of Belfast on the 10th February 1941. He retired on the 31st October 1975.

Orangefield was a Church Extension cause from 1935 till 1941, when it was erected to the status of a Congregation. Mr Parke was its first minister, and presided over the building of the Church opened in 1957, and the completion of the halls in 1971. He was dedicated to the work of his parish. Forthright in the pulpit and caring in the home, he is remembered with respect in the congregations he served. His deep interest in mission and service to the world is seen in his work with the Leprosy Mission, the Cripples' Institute, the China Inland Mission, and the Irish Evangelisation Society. He also served as an evangelist of the General Assembly from 1948 till 1949.

He is survived by his widow, two sons and a daughter.

The Rev Samuel David McCaughey, MA, senior minister of High Kirk, Ballymena, died on the 22nd October 1996, in the 86th year of his age and the 51st of his ministry.

Born at Ahoghill on the 26th September 1911, he was educated at Magee University College Derry, and Trinity College Dublin where he graduated BA in 1942 and MA in 1948. He completed his theological studies at the Presbyterian College Belfast. Licensed by the Presbytery of Dromore on the 4th June 1944, he was ordained at High Kirk by the Presbytery of Ballymena on the 27th February 1946. He retired on the 30th September 1981.

Mr McCaughey had a keen interest in the welfare of young people, and served on the County Antrim Education Committee, the Board of Governors of Ballymena Academy, and the Northern Ireland Youth Employment Committee. His administrative skill was put to good use as a member of the Union Commission and the Board of Missions; and as Convener of the Incidental Fund Committee from 1983 till 1986. He was Moderator of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine in 1962.

Mr McCaughey served the Church with a singleness of purpose which made him impatient of half measures and highly conscientious in everything he did. A hardworking Presbyterian, he never evaded difficult or unpopular issues. At a time when many ministers were grossly underpaid, he addressed the question of Ministerial Stipend in his Presbytery with notable success. A fine parish minister, his preaching and pastoring were of a high order, and made lasting impressions on his people in High Kirk. Under his leadership, the Congregation moved from the centre to the edge of Ballymena in 1975, when the present impressive Church and Halls were built.

Predeceased by his wife, he is survived by a son.

The Very Rev Robert Dickinson, MA, PhD, ThD, DD, senior minister of Newtowncrommelin, died on the 13th December 1996, in the 72nd year of his age and the 44th of his ministry.

Born at Belfast on the 25th April 1925, he was educated at Methodist College Belfast, Magee University College Derry, and Trinity College Dublin, where he graduated BA in 1948 and MA in 1951. He studied theology at the Presbyterian College Belfast and Queen's University Belfast, where he graduated BD in 1951. He was awarded the degree of DD in 1985 by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty Ireland; the degree of PhD in 1992 by Queen's

University Belfast; and the degree of ThD in 1996 by Greenwich University School of Theology.

Licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on the 26th May 1950, he was ordained by the same Presbytery at Argyle Place on the 20th January 1953. He was installed at Ebrington by the Presbytery of Derry on the 27th October 1960; at Tobermore and Draperstown by the Presbytery of Tyrone on the 27th September 1973; and at Newtowncrommelin by the Presbytery of Ballymena on the 12th April 1989. He retired on the 30th April 1994.

Dr Dickinson was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1985; and of the Synod of Derry and Omagh in 1988. His administrative gifts were recognised in his appointment as Clerk of the Presbytery of Tyrone from 1976 till 1989; and Clerk of the Presbytery of Ballymena from 1994 till his death.

Dr Dickinson served in a wide variety of parishes, and was equally at home in them all. He held strong opinions on various ecclesiastical and political issues, and expressed them with vigour and conviction, yet he saw his main task in a preaching and pastoral ministry. Eloquent in the pulpit, and caring in the home, especially in time of illness or bereavement, he selflessly devoted his gifts of mind and spirit to the duties of his calling as a minister of the Gospel.

He is survived by his widow, three sons, all of whom are ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and a daughter.

The Rev Douglas Hamilton, BA, senior minister of Tandragee, died on the 30th December 1996, in the 71st year of his age and the 41st of his ministry.

Born at Drumbeg, Lisburn, on 29th June 1926, he was educated at Magee University College Derry and Trinity College Dublin, where he graduated BA. He completed his theological studies at the Presbyterian College Belfast. Licensed by the Presbytery of Dromore on the 21st November 1953, he was ordained at Magheramorne by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus on the 22nd March 1956. He was installed at Richview by the Presbytery of South Belfast on the 25th May 1966; and at Tandragee by the Presbytery of Iveagh on the 26th February 1970. He retired on the 31st December 1992.

Mr Hamilton was a warm and kindly man who gave his friendship generously to colleagues and parishioners alike. A loyal Churchman and a good Presbyter, the esteem in which he was widely held was marked in 1984 by his appointment as Moderator of the Synod of Armagh and Down. In each congregation he served he had a strong ministry of preaching and pastoring which reached out to his people with the grace and compassion of the gospel.

He is survived by his widow, a daughter and a son.

The Rev Herbert Campbell Spence, MA, senior minister of Kirkcubbin, died on the 6th March 1997, in the 90th year of his age and the 64th of his ministry.

Born at Fahan, Co Donegal, on the 25th February, 1908, he was educated at Foyle College Derry, Magee University College Derry, and Trinity College Dublin where he graduated MA. He completed his theological studies at the Presbyterian College Belfast. Licensed by the Presbytery of Derry on the 7th July 1931, he was ordained at Second and Third Rathfriland by the Presbytery

of Rathfriland on the 2nd May 1933. Installed at Kirkcubbin by the Presbytery of Ards on the 8th September 1949, he retired on the 7th May 1973.

Mr Spence was thorough in preparation for the pulpit and a thought provoking preacher. Deeply interested in children, his talks to them in public worship were imaginative and attractive. A good minister, he lived close to his people, sharing their hopes and fears, joys and sorrows. A practical man, he could, and did, turn his hand to anything. His orderly mind and administrative gifts were put at the disposal of the Church, as Clerk of the Presbytery of Rathfriland from 1940 till 1949; and of the Presbytery of Ards from 1971 till 1978.

He was predeceased by his wife; and is survived by a son and a daughter.

The Rev Professor Edward Augustine Russell, BD, MTh, DD, Professor Emeritus of New Testament Language, Literature and Theology in the Presbyterian College Belfast, died on the 20th March 1997, in the 81st year of his age and the 50th of his ministry.

Born at Belfast on the 29th November 1916, he was educated at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, and the University of London, where he graduated BA in 1943, BD in 1953, and MTh in 1960. He studied theology at Magee University College Derry, the Presbyterian College Belfast, and New College Edinburgh. Licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on the 23rd May 1946, he was ordained at Donaloney by the Presbytery of Banbridge on the 5th February 1948; and installed at Mountpottinger by the Presbytery of Belfast on the 10th December 1953. Appointed to the Chair of New Testament Language, Literature and Theology at the Presbyterian College Belfast in 1961, he retired in 1987.

Professor Russell's ecclesiastical career ranged over a wide field. He served as minister in two parishes, the first rural and the second urban. He held the Chair of New Testament for 26 years; and was appointed Principal of the College in 1981. During these years he served on the translation committee of the Revised English Bible, and founded the journal *Irish Biblical Studies*. His work for Biblical Studies in Ireland was recognised when he was made a life member of the Irish Biblical Association. He also worked tirelessly to promote dialogue and understanding between Jews and Christians both in Ireland and abroad. He contributed various articles to the *Presbyterian Herald* and *Biblical Theology*; and wrote a history of the Congregation of Oldpark.

His work under the General Assembly was no less varied. An Assembly Evangelist from 1951 till 1952, he was Convener of the Jewish Mission from 1969 till 1977; of the Belfast College Board from 1976 till 1978; and the Doctrine Committee from 1981 till 1987. His service and achievements in Church and College gained recognition when the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on him by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland, in 1966. A genial personality, dedicated to his calling, he is remembered by many of his students whom he encouraged and inspired.

Predeceased by his first wife Emily, he is survived by two sons and a daughter, and by his second wife, Joan.

The Rev David John Templeton, BA, MDiv, MTh, a minister under the care of the Presbytery of Ards, died on the 24th March 1997, in the 43rd year of his age and the 12th of his ministry.

Born at Larne on the 3rd June 1954, he was educated at Larne Grammar School and the University of Ulster, where he graduated BA. He studied theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he graduated MDiv, Queen's University Belfast, where he graduated MTh, and at the Union Theological College Belfast. Licensed by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus on the 2nd June 1985, he was ordained as Assistant Minister at Duncairn and St Enoch's by the Presbytery of North Belfast on the 12th February 1986; and installed at Greyabbey by the Presbytery of Ards on the 28th May 1987. He resigned on the 31st October 1995.

Mr Templeton was a memorable personality. As a parish minister he was meticulous in preparation for Public Worship, and compassionate in pastoral care. In the wider sphere he was, for some years, a valued religious adviser to Downtown Radio. A keen student of theology, with a special interest in writings of Christian mystics, he loved good conversation and revelled in lively discussion and debate. His untimely death is a loss to the Church, and is lamented by many friends.

Mr Templeton was unmarried.

The Rev John Charles Faulkner, MA, senior minister of Moy, died on the 30th March 1997, in the 87th year of his age, and the 50th of his ministry.

Born at Belfast on the 10th May 1910, he was educated at Magee University College Derry, and Trinity College Dublin where he graduated BA in 1942 and MA in 1954.

Licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on the 26th May 1944, he was ordained at Weoley Hill, Birmingham, in the Presbyterian Church of England on the 15th November 1947. He was installed at Croaghmore by the Presbytery of Route on the 3rd August 1949; and at Moy by the Presbytery of Armagh on the 20th June 1957. He was appointed Stated Supply at Benburb in 1966. He retired on the 31st March 1976.

Mr Faulkner had a lifelong interest in the sea. Before studying for the ministry he enrolled as a student at Captain Boomer's Navigation School in Sinclair Seamen's Church Hall for the session 1927-28. He sailed as a Cadet with the Head Line; as a Second Officer with the Port Line; and served in the North Atlantic, Australian, New Zealand, and Near East Trades. In retirement he spent many hours sailing around Ballintoy on the Antrim Coast. His other great interest was writing. For some years he was editor of the Lombard News; and Convener of the Publications Committee from 1974 till 1981. He contributed many articles to the Presbyterian Herald which observed many aspects of Church life with a penetrating eye and a kindly humour. He was also Clerk of the Presbytery of Armagh from 1958 till 1976; and Convener of the General Purposes Fund from 1965 till 1978.

Mr Faulkner's ministry was marked by two things: a sympathetic care and compassion for his people, especially those in trouble; and a winsome, simple presentation of the Gospel in which the message of reconciliation to God and neighbour was ever foremost.

He is survived by his widow, two sons and a daughter.

REPORT BY THE CHURCH HYMNARY TRUSTEES

TO

The General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church of Wales and the United Free Church of Scotland in respect of the year ending 31 December, 1996.

CHURCH HYMNARY THIRD EDITION

1. Sales of the Church Hymnary Third Edition in the year to 31 December, 1996 were not as low as perhaps might have been anticipated with 16,228 copies being sold, producing a royalty of £5,722.50 compared to 20,497 copies and a royalty of £6,569.58 in 1996. It is however expected that progress with the new edition of the Hymnary will inevitably affect sales, which are expected to continue to decline.

REVISED CHURCH HYMNARY

2. There were no major orders for the Revised Church Hymnary in 1996 and 1,875 copies were sold, bringing in a total royalty of £239.25. This compared with 5,482 copies in 1995 and a royalty of £1,800.66. Following on the decision to cease publication of the Revised Church Hymnary, representations were received from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland that the words only edition continued to be made available. The Trustees have resolved to authorise a further print run of 4,000 copies of the words only edition of the Revised Church Hymnary to be made available so as to meet the request of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland that the words only edition continue to be available for a further year.

SCOTTISH PSALTER 1929

3. In total, only 1,385 copies of the Scottish Psalter bound in the various editions of the Hymn Book were sold in the year 1996 compared with 2,391 the previous year. This shows a continuing decline in sales of the Scottish Psalter.

IRISH PSALTER

4. The sales of the Irish Psalter do seem to fluctuate. In 1996 3,715 were sold which was very similar to the figure in 1994 but well down on the 1995 figure of 7,386.

STATE OF FUNDS

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

DISTRIBUTION OF ROYALTIES

6. With the decline in royalties and the amounts received being comparatively small, it was decided that the royalties would not be distributed this year.

W R GRIEVE, Chairman
JOHN M HODGE, Secretary and Treasurer

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly note with appreciation the work of all the staff in the Communications Department, and commend to the Church's prayers and support the work of the Information Officer, the Video Unit Director and the editor of the Presbyterian Herald.
3. That the resignation of the Rev Dr W D Patton as Convener of the Historical Society Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his contribution to the work of the Committee, and that the Rev Dr W J H McKee be appointed in his place.
4. That the resignation of the Rev W L Haslett as Convener of the TV, Broadcasting and AVA Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his contribution to the work of the Committee, and that the Rev R Hill be appointed in his place.
5. That the resignation of the Rev H B Wallace as Convener of the Memorial Record be accepted, that he be thanked for his work, and that the Rev J F Murdoch be appointed in his place.
6. That the TV, Broadcasting and AVA Committee be renamed the Media Committee with responsibility for monitoring all aspects of mass communication and reporting and making comment as appropriate.
7. That the day to day administration of the Video Unit be transferred to the Publications Committee, and that the Publications Committee be renamed the Communications Administration Committee.

Publications

8. That the Boards and Agencies of the Church involve the Department in the development of communications strategy and in the design and production of materials.

Public Worship

9. That a copy of the book of Public Worship and Experimental Revision be presented to first year students at Union College.
10. That a Praise Grant of £50.00 be made to every congregation of not more than ten families.
11. That a grant of £800.00 be paid from the Incidental Fund to the Public Worship Committee.
12. That the General Assembly, recognising that competent Organists are becoming increasingly difficult to find, encourage congregations to look out for

interested musicians and encourage them financially and in every other way to take up the organ as an instrument.

Historical Society

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

Church Architecture

14. That a grant of £1,350 be paid to the Church Architecture Committee from the Incidental Fund.

General

15. That the Board of Communications, with its associated working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 277 of the Code as follows:

NOMINATION BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. In recent times Nomination Board procedures have been under continuing review.

2. The 1995 General Assembly approved the introduction of independent assessors and “authorised contact persons”, and the preparation of a leaflet giving general guidance to enquirers on the processes involved. Procedures were also approved to deal with situations where a nominee (or second candidate) withdraws before the Assembly.

3. In 1996 a further modification was introduced requiring applicants to demonstrate their active involvement in Church life. That Assembly also resolved that the Nomination Board continue to review its procedures, which it is now doing, taking note of suggestions received from various sources (including a Presbytery and an independent assessor) on two matters in particular.

4. The **interviewing procedure** could be improved. An interview should thoroughly probe a candidate’s academic or professional prowess. There obviously should be some introductory questions asked uniformly of all candidates in interviews of roughly equal length, but a rigid uniformity has only a limited value. It should be possible for the initial answers given and any major issues arising in the course of an interview to be followed up at length and in depth, rather than simply passing on to the next set question.

5. A solution could be one interview as at present but conducted at two levels, with a small panel of suitably qualified and experienced specialists seated at the front asking a wide range of searching supplementary questions in the presence of the whole Board, after which it would be open to other members of the Board to put questions. In the case of academic appointments one member of the College Faculty (other than the retiring post-holder) should be included among the four specialists. The Moderator or other chairman would, of course, continue to be in over-all charge of the interviews. There would be a time limit (eg 45 minutes) on all interviews.

6. The second matter that merits consideration is the question of whether the **confidential referees** or the writers of published testimonials should take any further part in the process of selection and appointment in either the Nomination Board or the General Assembly. In some public bodies referees are asked to withdraw from an appointment panel.

7. The real value of the traditional published testimonials, which are generally rather bland, was questioned two years ago, but at that stage no change was made. Published testimonials do have some value, however limited. However, if the writers of testimonials are now likely to be disqualified from further participation in the appointments process, the Nomination Board believes that it would, on balance, be simpler if such public testimonials were no longer requested. Candidates should, of course, include as much relevant material as possible in their applications for the information of the Board and the

General Assembly. The alternative would be to retain the published testimonials but ask those who have written them to take no further part in the appointment process in either the Nomination Board or the General Assembly.

8. The confidential reference is likely to be of more help to the Nomination Board. It is meant to be different from the traditional published testimonial, as its writer is not necessarily a “supporter” of the candidate in question. In the case of academic appointments the same professor has sometimes reported on two or more candidates, all of whom he has previously supervised. The writer of the “confidential” reference may also feel freer to express a candid opinion, even if absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

9. We suggest that confidential references should not normally be sought from members of the Nomination Board, and if that does happen (eg because a candidate’s minister happens to be a Board member) then that member should not act on the Board for that particular appointment. In any event the names of confidential referees will be published with the rest of the application.

10. If

- (i) testimonials for publication are no longer required;
- (ii) the number of confidential referees is tiny compared with the large numbers who vote in the Assembly (often exceeding 700);
- (iii) at least some of the referees are obliged to act ex officio or in a professional capacity (eg as Clerk of Presbytery or academic supervisor);
- (iv) their assessments are of an objective nature,

then it might seem over-zealous to exclude confidential referees from participating in the final Assembly vote, so no change in current practice is proposed at present.

11. All applicants should include their minister or Clerk (or Moderator) of Presbytery among their confidential referees.

12. The Clerk of Assembly has been authorised to obtain any necessary professional advice about the wording of advertisements and other procedures in order to ensure compliance with current employment law.

13. In the present rather litigious atmosphere it would be prudent for the Church to consider the lessons to be learned from public bodies. On the other hand the Assembly would probably wish to retain its independence in not being rigidly bound by all the complicated procedures demanded by secular agencies. While members of the Church are required to follow these procedures in the secular appointments they make elsewhere, the Assembly may feel that a movement too far in that direction would not be appropriate for Church appointments.

14. The Nomination Board plans to monitor the working of these amended procedures and will, if necessary, bring further recommendations to the Assembly in due course. However, in view of the wide range of different appointments handled by the Board it aims to retain a measure of flexibility in its procedures rather than adopting numerous detailed regulations rigidly applicable to all posts.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That testimonials for publication be no longer sought from applicants to the Nomination Board.
3. That confidential references be sought for all candidates invited for interview.
4. That confidential referees shall not act as members of the Nomination Board for the appointment in question.
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 R HERRON

1. The Board met on three occasions during the last year. Items of business included:

Invitations to the Opening Night of the General Assembly

2. The following resolution was received from the Business Board: "That the Business Board consider the issues involved in sending invitations to the opening night of the General Assembly to a larger number of Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, in consultation with the Inter-Church Relations Board, and that a report be presented to the February 1997 meeting of the Board." The Inter-Church Relations Board debated the resolution and the Convener of the Board sent a summary of the issues raised to the Business Board.

Application for Recognised Ministry

3. An application was received from a minister requesting 'Recognised Ministry' under the care of the Board. At the time of writing no decision has been made.

Ministers in Recognised Service

Rev David Campbell reports:

1. One of the highlights of the past year, with the Bible Society in Northern Ireland, was attending the World Assembly of the United Bible Societies (UBS) in Mississauga, Canada. The theme of the Assembly was 'Gods Word - Life For All'

2. The Assembly had a total of 346 participants representing Bible Society work in 135 countries. We were a very diverse group of people with a rich variety of language, colour of skin, culture and religious background - a real microcosm of the peoples of the world. In a packed programme, delegates participated in plenary sessions, workshops and discussion groups, as well as in meetings for prayer and Bible study. We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the UBS. We also worked together to plan for the future of each of our national Bible Societies and our global organisation as we move towards the third millennium.

3. Attending the World Assembly was a memorable experience and has given me tremendous enthusiasm as I plan the way ahead for our Bible Society work in Northern Ireland.

Rev Andrew Gibson reports:

1. During the past year I have continued to teach at Belfast Bible College, concentrating on Theology, mission and New Testament. There have been no major changes in the college but we are still going through the process of readjustment necessitated by the doubling in full time student numbers in the past five years. Despite this growth we still endeavour to offer all students the facility to grow in their relationship with the Lord; to develop their critical faculties as they interact with the real world and to find their niche in the mission of God for His world.

Rev Desmond Maxwell reports:

1. Belfast Bible College continues to provide a stimulating and satisfying environment to work. My teaching covers a broad range from Hebrews to Hermeneutics, Old to New Testament History and my administrative responsibilities cover the annual field term placements and our rather unique week of outdoor pursuits and team building exercises. Both the college and my home congregation of Elmwood have encouraged my teaching ministry in Ukraine where I work with the Ukrainian Association of Bible Training Centres who have presently about sixty instructors and about 5,000 students on their roll. From January through August of this year I am on study leave and one of the highlights of this time has been three months at Tantar Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies in Israel.

Rev Dr John Morrow reports:

1. The events of the summer of 1996 have resulted in a deeper polarisation of our society. This has made the task of promoting dialogue more difficult but also more necessary than ever.

2. I continue to be responsible for the Certificate course in Ecumenics in Belfast and Londonderry. There are currently approximately twenty students in total on the course. Shorter term courses have been organised in Belfast and Armagh and one term courses in Newry and Enniskillen. We are happy to cooperate with local ministers in setting these up in local areas. We ask ministers to encourage their members to participate in these programmes.

3. I am also responsible for a course in Dublin 'Conflict and Peace in Ireland' and for the organisation of field work.

4. Other involvements include: the Faith and Politics Group (New pamphlet on 'Parity and Esteem'), Chairperson of Peace and Peacemaking Committee (PCI), ad hoc one day events on request and the Council of Christians and Jews (NI branch).

5. An International Conference organised by the 'Moving Beyond Sectarianism' project will be held at Stranmillis College on 11-14 June 1997, entitled 'Boundaries and Bonds'.

Rev David McCarthy reports:

1. 1996 was the 150th anniversary of the Evangelical Alliance (UK). During the year EA hosted a series of gatherings to celebrate evangelical unity and evangelical truth.

2. In November it organised a National Assembly of Evangelicals. The National Assembly has three main aims:

- (i) to take an honest look at the society in which God has called us to serve Him;
- (ii) to take an honest look at the church in the UK;
- (iii) to try to understand more clearly how we should live as God's people in His world.

3. In Northern Ireland, during 1996, we have been clarifying our strategy for the next four years. This has helped us focus our work, both in terms of content and process.

4. At a personal level may I express my gratitude to the Inter-Church Relations Board for their interest and support during the past year.

Rev Ian McDowell reports:

1. I continue to serve as National Secretary for Ireland of Christian. Rev S J Campbell and Mr Alf McCreery are members of the Board, appointed by its sponsoring churches, which runs Christian Aid.

2. My work includes the support of fund-raising, especially in Christian Aid Week, so that support may be given to projects which enable poor and oppressed people tackle their own poverty. It is exciting to hear success stories and to meet people whose lives have been given new hope. Other projects support refugees and people in urgent distress as in Rwanda, Burundi and Zaire.

3. Equally important is education, helping church and other people here to understand the causes of oppression, misery and injustice, and campaigning. More church people need to be involved in expressing their disapproval of the way richer nations, including Ireland and UK, run the world to their own benefit. Fairly traded goods need to be promoted and governments encouraged to tackle issues of debt. Christian Aid works with the churches, including the Presbyterian Church, in this (for example discussing issues with Irish supermarkets) and also in the promotion of the Christmas Appeal.

4. My role is to see that Christian Aid enables the churches and their members respond in an adequate way to all the challenges which face any one in our rich society trying to live out the gospel of Christ in a world so divided between rich and poor. I receive much encouragement from the warm hearted and generous support received from the Presbyterian Church.

Rev Ruth Patterson reports:

1. The events of the past year have served to highlight even further the great need for the healing of hurts and the building of relationships. Through prayer ministry on a confidential basis, and the more public running of many seminars and courses, we in Restoration Ministries seek to play a small part in this crucial process.

2. This year the theme for our monthly meetings has been 'Makes of Peace', and the attendance at these and other events has been encouraging. Many visitors pass through Restoration House. A residential week-end in June, attracting people from all over Ireland, based on the Beatitudes, was a memorable occasion, as was our 'Restoring Christmas' week in December.

3. I continue to travel widely throughout the country and am grateful for many opportunities to speak about the ministry and point to signs of hope.

IRISH CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. In the past year the business of the Irish Church Relations Committee has focused on the work of the Irish Council of Churches, the Irish Inter-Church Committee and relating to other churches outside of the formal councils of churches.

Irish Council of Churches

2. The Autumn Gathering took place in the Church of Ireland Training College in Rathmines, Dublin on 25 September 1996. Cecilia Clegg and Joe Liechty spoke on the Beyond Sectarianism Project.

3. Rev David Nesbitt has been President of ICC during the past year and Mrs Maureen Irwin is President of Women's Link. 1998 will be the 75th anniversary of ICC.

4. ICC has prepared a consultation paper on casinos, gambling, betting, lotteries and amusements. In connection with the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, the ICC Executive has written a letter to the Churches entitled 'Women and the Church'. A copy of the letter is included in the ICC Annual Report. The Child in the Church Group organised a conference on the theme 'Children Grieve Too'.

5. The AGM is planned for 12-13 April in Emmaus House, Swords. Joe Liechty will lead a further discussion on the Beyond Sectarianism Project. The Celtic Catholic Church of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch, Malibar rite has sought admission to ICC membership. The Executive will recommend to the AGM that the application is not accepted.

Irish Inter-Church Meeting

6. The Board has appointed Dr Trevor Morrow to replace Dr John Thompson on the Department of Theological Questions. It records thanks to Dr Thompson for his dedicated work with IICM over many years. The Department of Theological Questions has published a paper entitled, 'Freedom, Justice and Responsibility in Ireland Today'.

7. The IICM continues to look at the question of Sunday Trading in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

8. The next Irish Inter-Church Meeting is planned for November 1997. The business will include reports from participating churches on the subject of church renewal and from those who attended the Second European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz. A discussion is also planned on the document 'Freedom, Justice and Responsibility in Ireland Today.'

9. A review group has been appointed to examine the future of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. The Committee continues to monitor and note discussions as to the best way forward in Irish Church Relations. Any change or agreement reached will require the approval of the participating churches.

Relating to other churches

10. The Congregational Union have declined an invitation to meet representatives of the Board. They have sent us a copy of their constitution and a history of their origins and development. They did indicate that we should feel free to keep in touch!

11. In researching how we might relate to the House Church Movement, the Committee discovered the 'Christian Fellowship Church' in Belfast would be interested in meeting representatives of the Committee. Our conversations are ongoing.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Evangelical Alliance World Prayer Week

12. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity literature will be made available from the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. Evangelical Alliance World Prayer Week leaflet can be received directly from EA.

TONY DAVIDSON, Convener

APPENDIX

INTER-CHURCH CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met in January, 1997. The members of the Committee are:

Church of Ireland	Methodist	Presbyterian
The Bishop of Limerick (Chairman)	Rev. P. Kingston	Rev. A.D. Davidson
Rev. I.J.E. Knox	Rev. T.M. Kingston	Rev. R. Herron
Ven. G.A. McCamley	Rev. E.T.I. Mawhinney	Mrs. E. Cobain
	Miss D. Blake	Rev. R.F.S. Poots

2. No further information was available about exchanges between students for the ministry of the three Churches. The Committee hopes to receive reports from time to time.

3. The Committee welcomed the fact that a Call had been issued to Rev. S.G. Anketell and that he had been Inducted to Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford under the Alternating Ministries Scheme.

Presbyterian/Methodist Federal Scheme

4. The scheme was established by the General Assembly and the Methodist Conference, whereby one Church building serves both Presbyterian and Methodist communities in the two localities with a Presbyterian minister serving at Taughmonagh and a Methodist at Braniel.

5. **Taughmonagh:** Revs. W.D. Moore and S. McGuffin reported. Taughmonagh is a working class, strongly loyalist housing estate in which the stand of the Church for reconciliation and the condemnation of the use of violence for political ends has resulted in the Church building being attacked by

extreme loyalist elements, although the Minister is well received when he pays bridge-building visits to the local loyalist club. Not surprisingly, Church activities are more strongly supported by women than men. Social problems abound with 70% unemployment and a high number of unmarried mothers living with their partners.

6. Good relationships exist between the denominations. Ministers meet to discuss community schemes, pulpit exchanges take place, there is a joint Good Friday Service and the annual Methodist Covenant Service is honoured.

7. **Braniel:** Rev. D. Johnston reported and a written report, from Rev. J. McVeigh, was read.

8. There is little para-military influence within the Braniel estate and social problems are less marked than in Taughmonagh.

9. The Church has increasingly taken on a local community identity as the Church for the estate and would see itself as having little significance in relation to congregations outside its own locality. The minister is subject to Methodist Church structures and his role of observer at meetings of Presbytery is largely irrelevant.

10. In earlier days, a list of children baptised as Presbyterians was sent, annually, to the Presbyterian minister of Gilnahirk and Presbyterian Marriage Registers recorded wedding ceremonies conducted by the minister of Gilnahirk in accordance with Presbyterian form and discipline. No Presbyterian marriage has been so recorded for over fifteen years. 'Nil' returns are made quarterly to the Registrar.

11. However, the hymn books of the two denominations alternate weekly and the form of Communion Services also alternates. The Presbyterian Minister conducts one session in the course of preparation for new communicants.

12. The Churches of the area are marked by great goodwill, joint worship services on significant occasions and inter-Church action.

13. It is generally accepted that Braniel has matured as a Church in its own right, primarily Methodist in orientation though respecting the Presbyterian tradition. As such it is a vibrant congregation which would be likely to suffer by changes which could effect its identity.

RACE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. Race relations issues in Ireland and the need for greater awareness and action on the part of both government and our own church members have been particular concerns of the Committee during this past year. Racial graffiti, verbal and physical attacks on members of racial/ethnic minority communities in Ireland and various subtler forms of discrimination are evidence of the need to provide more education for the majority population on race relations issues and stronger legal protection for minorities.

2. One-day training workshops on Race Awareness and Anti-Racism Training, led by Fee Ching Leong from the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre, were held in Ballyrashane for Coleraine and Route Presbyteries and in Belfast for those from Dromore and the three Belfast Presbyteries. Participants found these to be very practical and useful events. The Committee is indebted to the

Multi-Cultural Resource Centre for the leadership of these events and for regularly supplying helpful information and advice to the committee. MCRC has moved to new premises at 12 Upper Crescent and continues to provide valuable assistance to both minority and majority ethnic communities. The Committee bring a resolution through the Board to continue our financial support for this centre.

3. The Committee welcomes the fact that Race Relations legislation for Northern Ireland has now been passed by Parliament and will be operational very shortly. The Committee looks forward to liaising with the new Commission for Racial Equality once appointed and will continue to monitor the implementation and adequacy of this legislation.

4. In spite of a resolution from our 1996 General Assembly and efforts by many church and voluntary groups to urge the United Kingdom government to cancel or modify the Immigration and Asylum Bill, this legislation was enacted during the past year. One effect has been removing or severely restricting asylum seekers entitlement to benefits while appealing their cases. This is causing considerable hardship. The Committee is bringing a resolution through the Board to financially support the Karibu Day Centre in London, which is operated by the Refugee Council and provides emergency food, clothing, medication and other assistance to asylum seekers who now have no other access to resources.

5. Finally, the Committee continues to be concerned about the development of positive race relations in South Africa during this time of transition from the Apartheid years to a new democratic and non-racial South Africa. To that end the Committee brings a resolution through the Board to support the Leadership Exposure Programme of the Diakonia Council of Churches in Durban South Africa, which takes clergy and lay leaders from member churches to settlements, hostels for migrant workers, township schools and rural areas to become better informed about the conditions under which many are living and to motivate the wider church to work for structural changes required for positive relations and healthy development.

DOUG BAKER, Convener

WORLD CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. During the past year the committee has continued to relate to the international bodies to which PCI either belongs or has a direct relationship. These include the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), The Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Leuenberg Church Fellowship. We also continue to develop our relationships with the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church.

World Alliance of Reformed Churches

2. WARC has been facing a number of problems recently as a result of financial constraints. Last year WARC had a deficit for the first time. The

Executive Committee of WARC has pledged to work more closely with other Ecumenical bodies and Mission Societies, not least to cut down costs.

3. Arrangements were finalised for the PCI delegation to attend the 23rd General Council of WARC to be held in Debrecen, Hungary in August 1997. Mrs Liz Shepherd and the Rev Richard Graham have replaced Rev John Kirkpatrick and Miss Pamela Lockie on the PCI delegation.

Conference of European Churches

4. Arrangements were finalised for the PCI delegations to attend the 2nd European Ecumenical Assembly to be held in Graz, Austria, 23 - 29 June 1997 and the 11th Conference of European Churches also at Graz from 30 June - 4 July 1997. PCI has been allocated an additional place at the 2nd European Ecumenical Assembly on the condition that it be filled by a woman. Through the channel of ICC Women's Link, Mrs Maureen Irwin has been appointed and will join the PCI delegation making a total of four members.

5. A Sub-Committee answered a questionnaire on the work of CEC and its priorities during the period 1998 - 2003.

United Reformed Church (URC)

6. The Rev Jim Waring attended the URC Assembly at York University in July as a voting delegate. The Rev David Campbell attended a meeting of the Ecumenical Committee of the URC at Yardly Hastings, from 28 - 29 January 1997.

7. The Rev Jim Waring has had to stand down as the PCI representative at the URC. His work in the past two years has been greatly appreciated by members of the Ecumenical Committee.

Leuenberg Church Fellowship

8. Professor Cecil McCullough continues to serve as a member of the Executive Committee of the Leuenberg Church Fellowship. He attended the 5th meeting of the committee which met at Tallin, Estonia from 31 January - 2 February 1997. The Executive Committee members were the guests of the Lutheran Archbishop of Estonia, Bishop Kiviit. Highlights of the meeting included discussion of the document on 'Justification by Faith' prepared by the Lutherans and the Roman Catholic Church and a request by the European Baptist Federation for formal talks about a possible link with the Leuenberg Church Fellowship. Professor McCullough referred to the Communion service held on the Sunday morning in the United Methodist Church. In his report he wrote, "It was an intensely moving ceremony and during the actual partaking there were few dry eyes as we joined with people who had suffered so much for their faith".

Church of Scotland

9. The Rev Robert Herron and the Rev David Campbell visited 121 George Street, Edinburgh on 25 October 1996 to have a meeting with Rev Sheilagh Kesting and the Rev Duncan McClements. Various links between the two churches were discussed and ideas were shared as to how this could be

developed. Some members of the Church of Scotland Ecumenical Affairs Committee may visit Belfast later this year.

General

10. The Rev S Hutchinson attended the General Assembly of the European Ecumenical Commission on Church and Society (EECCS) as a representative of the ICC. He reported that EECCS is to be integrated into the main structure of the CEC in 1998.

11. The Convener had the opportunity to preach in West End Presbyterian Church, New York on 6 October 1996, World Communion Sunday, and convey greetings from the Inter Church Relations Board.

DAVID CAMPBELL, Convener

WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. As well as raising money for projects in the Two-thirds World, world development involves us in education and advocacy. While we might regard the raising of money as the main priority, many in the Two-thirds World see advocacy, speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves and campaigning to change the systems that make, and keep, people poor, as even more important.

2. That is certainly not to say that the raising of money for projects is not important. Such money makes a vital difference to the quality of life of some of the world's poorest people. Our current level of giving, and the fact that more than 150 congregations do not contribute to the Appeal, is a matter of some disappointment. The figure of £388,000 (up to 19th March 1997) may look impressive but it represents only a little over £1 for each Irish Presbyterian.

3. Christian Aid launched a 'Change the Rules' Campaign which sought to get supermarkets in Great Britain to adopt a code of conduct safeguarding workers in Two-thirds World countries. The World Development Committees of the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church and our own church have begun to work closely together on development issues. There are regular meetings between the three world development conveners and a joint approach has been made to the major supermarkets in Ireland. This has met with a positive initial response. Some aspects of the supermarket business, such as sourcing products, are different in Ireland from Great Britain, but we are hopeful of making progress towards a meaningful code of conduct for supermarkets in Ireland.

4. Christian Aid and Tear Fund, together with many of the churches, are supporting Jubilee 2000 which seeks to get the wealthy industrialised nations, including our own, to wipe out, or at the very least substantially reduce Two-thirds World debt as a way of marking the Millennium. This is based on the biblical idea of the Year of Jubilee. Our church will be asked to support the Jubilee 2000 campaign.

5. We have arranged for a group of young people, who will be funding themselves, to visit India in August to see development work in and around

Madras and Calcutta. This is part of our attempt to get young people more involved in development issues. Those chosen to go to India have gone through a rigorous selection programme and will be available to share their experience on their return.

6. Christian Aid continues to seek a closer co-operation with its sponsoring churches. As well as representatives on the Irish Committee of Christian Aid, Alf McCreery and Rev Jim Campbell serve on the main Christian Aid Board. We thank those who serve on the boards and committees of the aid agencies.

ROGER PURCE, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

World Development

2. That the Presbyterian Church in Ireland actively support Jubilee 2000.

Race Relations

3. That the importance of Race Relations in a universal church with a gospel for all be brought before congregations on Sunday 11th January, 1998 or on some other suitable occasion.

World Church Relations

4. That Rev D J Campbell be appointed as a voting delegate at the 1997 General Assembly of the United Reformed Church (URC) and that Rev G Ellis be appointed to serve for the next three years as the PCI representative on the Ecumenical Committee of the URC and as a voting delegate at the URC General Assembly.

Irish Church Relations

5. That the following appointments be made:

To the Irish Council of Churches - Revs W Bingham, S J Campbell, M Cathcart, Mrs P Crossley; Revs A D Davidson, G Ellis; Miss D Gilmour; Revs Dr R J G Gray, R Herron, S Hutchinson; Mrs M Irwin; Revs J G Johnston, D Mark, C McClure, C J C McMullen; Miss C McRoberts; Rev D Nesbitt; Mr J A Patterson; Mrs E Shepherd; Mr D Whitcroft.

To the Irish Inter-Church Meeting - Revs M Cathcart, A D Davidson, J Dunlop, R. Herron, S Hutchinson; Mrs M Irwin; Revs Dr T Morrow, Dr C McCullough.

To the Irish Inter-Church Committee - Revs A D Davidson, R Herron.

General

6. That the following grants be made from the Incidental Fund

Irish Council of Churches

£25,600

Irish Inter-Church Meeting	£3,200
Conference of European Churches	£3,000
Leuenberg Consultation	£480
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	£7,610
World Alliance of Reformed Churches Partnership Fund	£760
Race Relations Grant:	
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre, Bryson House, Belfast	£1,500
Diakonia Council of Churches, Durban	£1,500
Karibu Centre in London	£300
General Work of the Board	£4,500

7. That the Inter-Church Relations Board, with its associated working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 278 of the Code as follows:

MEMORIALS TRANSMITTED

To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet at Belfast on Monday, 2nd June, 1997:

The Memorial of the Synod of Dublin Respectfully Showeth:

That on 23rd October, 1996, Presbyteries were invited to comment on the suggestion that a wider range of Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, be invited to the Opening Night of the General Assembly;

that the Synod of Dublin believes that more in-depth discussion of such an important issue is needed throughout the Church;

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Court to refer the matter to Presbyteries for a fuller discussion of all the issues involved, taking into account not only the deliberations of the Inter-Church Relations Board in November 1996, but also the Coleraine Declaration, the Mission Statement of 1992, the Peace Vocation and other relevant Assembly statements;

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

Adopted by the Synod of Dublin at its meeting in Blackrock on 11th March, 1997.

KENNETH J C McCONNELL, Moderator
R W J MacDERMOTT, Clerk

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To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to meet at Belfast on Monday, 2nd June, 1997:

The Memorial of the Presbytery of Tyrone Respectfully Showeth:

That there exists within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland a strong body of opinion that our church ought not to be represented at certain ecumenical functions; that the views of this body is at times expressed in the election of a Moderator of similar convictions; and, that due to the current practice of the

church sending a deputy to these functions when the Moderator is unwilling to attend, this opinion is not properly represented.

Memorialists therefore pray your Venerable Court that in the event of the Moderator being unwilling to accept an invitation to any function on grounds of personal conscience, the church will not be represented by any other person, unless requested by the Moderator.

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

Adopted by the Presbytery of Tyrone at its meeting in Cookstown on Tuesday, 4 March, 1997.

D A MURPHY, Moderator
J B McCORMICK, Clerk

Licensed and transmitted by the Synod of Derry and Omagh at Orritor on Wednesday, 12 March, 1997 with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

IVAN J WILSON, Moderator
J B McCORMICK, Clerk

OVERSEAS BOARD

Convener: Rev S J CAMPBELL
Secretaries: Rev R J T McMULLAN
Miss E BRIAN

THE CALL TO MISSION IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

1. In 1988 we set out to discover 'The Way Ahead' for our Overseas Mission as we moved into the last decade of this millennium. This process resulted in the developing of a policy and a strategy, the listing of our resources and the setting of a broad range of objectives for our mission into all the world.

2. In view of the rapidly changing circumstances in the world at large, we reviewed last year the fulfilment of these objectives and decided that we should identify further steps to be taken in world mission in the last years of this decade and into the twenty-first century. We recognised that the pace of change in society in Ireland, throughout the world and in our Church had increased rapidly and that we ignored it at our peril.

3. We discovered that the core membership in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is steadily declining with a consequent rise in the unchurched; that we have a surplus of Ministers; that the strongly held traditions of our Church are disappearing; that we are becoming increasingly aware of our social responsibilities; that there is more, though not necessarily better, organisation within our Church; that more information is available in our multi-media society and particularly through our Overseas Mission; and that we have lost contact with those who remain outside our Church in terms of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

4. The question raised was this: "Are we, as a Church, ready to take further steps in world mission?" We believe that we are, or rather that we must be, if we are to move forward in the mission of Jesus Christ in our very needy world. In our Church there is an increasing number of committed, older and younger, men and women willing to serve Jesus Christ and we believe that God will release the resources to enable them to be obedient to their Lord and Master.

5. Over the coming year we will be determining these further steps in world mission under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is our prayer that God will enable us to release the resources in personnel and finance which are abundantly present in our Church, so that we may engage in a vital way in the mission of Jesus Christ in our global village.

EUROPE

6. It is now over seven years since the revolution in Eastern Europe brought change to many peoples and countries which for almost fifty years had lived under totalitarian regimes. In these seven years some countries have developed more democratic forms of governments; others have not been so successful in doing so. In Yugoslavia and more recently Albania, ethnic and

nationalistic convictions have led to civil war and to near anarchy with great loss of life and destruction of institutional and community life. Many of our members and congregations continue to work and pray for peace and harmony in Eastern Europe and seek to help to relieve the very real suffering experienced by men, women and children in these situations, and at the same time speak a word of Hope in Jesus Christ which comes to us all through the Gospel.

7. We have continued to establish relations with the Church of the Brethren in the **Czech and Slovak Republics** and we have rejoiced to see new congregations being established. High Kirk, Ballymena congregation has had a growing relationship with the congregation in Levice in Slovakia. Exchange visits have taken place and several personnel have received training at Belfast Bible College and all has been for the mutual benefit of both congregations in their life, witness and service.

8. Congregations of our Church continue to share in the establishing of the Prague 6 congregation and also in the work and witness of the congregation in Ostrava. Rev Pavel Cerny, President of the Church of the Brethren, spent a week visiting our Church earlier this year and we expect to send a delegate to the General Assembly of the Church of the Brethren in the Czech and Slovak Republics meeting in Bratislava in May. We continue to relate to the Czech Brethren Church whose President, Rev Pavel Smetana, visited our Church in 1988.

9. Over the past year we have maintained our relations with several districts of the **Reformed Church in Hungary and Romania**. Prof Cecil McCullough attended the centenary celebrations of the Seminary of Cluj and Rev John Kirkpatrick visited the district of Bishop Laszlo Tokes. Several of our congregations have relationships with congregations in Hungary and Romania and it is important that these are maintained in the coming days. We are in the process of reviewing the congregational twinning programme and would like to see further relationships established at local level either through congregational or Presbytery links.

10. Good relations have been established with the Presbytery in the area around Zalau and with Rev Kalman Molnar, the Moderator. A team from Cookstown, which included a number of young men on probation, under the leadership of Mr Derek Short, took building materials to Zalau to refurbish the sanitary facilities at the Reformed Church College and are to be commended for their practical help in this needy situation. This summer another all-age team will spend three weeks in camps connected with the Reformed Church teaching English and sharing their faith in Jesus Christ.

11. We have continued to seek new ways of developing our partnership with the **Reformed Church of France** (ERF) over the past year at congregational and Presbytery levels and we are concentrating on the exchange of personnel as the best way to move the relationship forward. We are moving towards the establishment of more formal relationships with the ERF and the Clerk of our General Assembly will be a delegate to the National Synod of the ERF this May.

12. An all-age group from Marseilles South East Parish under the leadership of Pasteur Pascal and Helene Geoffroy visited Lowe Memorial congregation last summer and this proved to be a good relationship-building

visit which will be beneficial in the future. Many of the people of Israel live in France and we continue to support the work of Jews for Jesus who proclaim Jesus as Messiah in various ways.

13. Our involvement with the **Spanish Evangelical Church (SEC)** goes back to the 1800's but in the last decade we have re-established relationships with the SEC and particularly with the Presbytery of Andalucia. Strong links have been established and we continue to support the congregations as they reach out to their neighbours with the Gospel. The work among the English-speaking residents continues and we hope to send another Minister to pastor the small congregation of Torre del Mar.

14. Daniel Reyes Martin completes his BD in May, is to be married to one of our members in July and returns to his Church in Spain as a probationer for the ministry probably in the Presbytery of Andalucia. We have benefited greatly from having Daniel Reyes in our midst and he returns to Spain well prepared to engage in the ministry of Word and Sacraments. We are seeking a person who has a good knowledge of Spanish to offer to the SEC to set up a Christian Education programme for the whole Church.

15. We continue our relationship with the **Jerusalem Church in Hamburg** where Rev Arnold Frank ministered for over fifty years and where Rev Dr Siegfried Bergler is responsible for the Church, the hospital and the Deaconess House. Avenues are being explored whereby 'Dienst an Israel' (Service to Israel) might be recognised officially by the Lutheran Church as the responsibility of the Jerusalem Church. The Board wishes to be involved in a ministry to the people of Israel in this part of Germany in the coming days.

THE MIDDLE EAST

16. We continue to monitor the Middle East Peace Process which is moving forward at a painfully slow pace for many in the Arab and Israeli communities. We have been kept informed about the document 'Towards Justice and Peace in the Holy Land' produced by British and Irish Churches which seeks to give a balanced view on the way forward for the peoples of **the Holy Land**. We have also been made aware of the suffering and persecution of Christian minorities in several middle-eastern countries, though we have not been able to take any positive action to influence these situations. We are however encouraged to believe that prayer is the only effective way of changing situations for the glory of God and the good of His people.

17. We have been encouraged to hear of a growing desire for unity among Jewish and Arab believers in Israel/Palestine and a number of joint activities have taken place as a result. We have maintained our contact with the work in Christ Church Jerusalem, Immanuel House Tel Aviv, Stella Carmel and the Bible Society and it is encouraging to note that there have been unprecedented inquiries for Messianic literature and New Testaments.

18. The King of Kings College has an English campus in Jerusalem and also a number of Hebrew courses at Immanuel House, Tel Aviv. We have continued to support the work of the College over the past year and this has been greatly appreciated by Ilan Zamir, its President. The first print-run of the Hebrew/English Bible has just been completed and high sales are expected. The

Israel Association for the Dissemination of Biblical Writings (IADBW) has authorised the planning for a Hebrew/Amharic Bible.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

19. In Latin America today, and particularly in the vast country of **Brazil**, the Churches are seizing the opportunities for the spread of the Gospel and the establishing of Christ's Church among people who have never heard of Jesus Christ. In the past year the Independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil (IPI) accepted twenty missionary candidates to be prepared for mission work in Central and Northern Brazil, including a young missionary couple from our Church.

20. The task confronting the National Mission Board of the IPI is two fold: to enable the more established congregations in the southern part of Brazil to catch the vision and support the work of the missionaries going into these new areas and also to address the need to engage in urban mission in two of the sprawling conurbations - Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. There is a continuing desire to engage in outreach and ministry to ethnic minorities in Brazil and we are privileged to share in the work among the Indian peoples.

21. We have had renewed contacts with the Presbyterian Church in Brazil (IPB) and discussions are taking place which may lead to a partnership in mission with this the largest of the Presbyterian Churches in the country.

22. On the other hand the Churches in the island of **Jamaica** face very different problems and challenges. Many of the rising generations are emigrating, temporarily in some cases, to North America where they are better able to provide for their families. The Churches have lost contact with many young people in the educational institutions and in the vast city of Kingston where more than half of the island's two and a half million people live. A Chaplaincy team has been formed to reach out to the vast student population in the name of Jesus Christ.

23. Last October partner Churches met with leaders of the United Church in Kingston to consider together how we can share our resources in Jesus Christ and catch the vision of what God wants to do in the rural and urban societies in Jamaica in the coming days. Many of the questions we addressed are similar to those being asked in our Church in Ireland.

24. The United Church is a caring Church, which is concerned to help and minister to the most vulnerable groups in society: the children, the elderly and the many thousands of unchurched people trapped in downtown Kingston where it is a matter of 'every community looking to its own interests' and where violence, robbery and murder are common. The United Church is facing up to these realities of life in their island home and is seeking to provide spiritual and material help for the children and the elderly through their Homes and other programmes and for the needy communities in Kingston through the Mel Nathan Institute which is a ministry of the Church. We gladly share in these very important aspects of the Church's mission in Jamaica through our personnel and the sharing of the resources entrusted to us by Jesus Christ.

ASIA

25. It is difficult to imagine what is going through the minds of Christian people in Hong Kong as they await the take over of the Colony by the People's Republic of China on the 1st July 1997. For some it must be fear of the unknown; for others it will be a quiet confidence that God is in control and that they cannot be separated from the love of Christ. Throughout Asia to-day there are threats against and problems for the Christian Church but these are not new to those who belong to a minority religion. Despite these threats and problems there are many opportunities for witness to the saving grace found in Jesus Christ and these opportunities are being taken.

26. Because of visa difficulties the number of young people able to come from **India** on an exchange visit last year was reduced to six, but they were six excellent ambassadors for the Church of North India (CNI) who reflected the enthusiasm for outreach being experienced among Christian young people in India today.

27. Norman and Joan Duncan, associated with the Overseas Board and ministering through OM India, have found the same enthusiasm as hundreds of young people come for training in evangelism and Bible knowledge. Norman has been used in churches in the Gujarat Diocese of the CNI through the good offices of Bishop Vinod Malaviya. Relationships between the Diocese and the Gujarat Christian Service Society have improved greatly as Bishop Malaviya has worked for reconciliation and unity.

28. No fewer than five members of our Church are serving this year in Woodstock School, Mussoorie, providing students with an education which gives them opportunity of being future leaders in the societies where they eventually find themselves and, more importantly, providing them with the opportunity to meet with Christ and nurturing those who have taken the step of faith. An invitation has been extended to the our church to send a women's worker to the Diocese of Agra of the CNI.

29. Dr David and Mrs Sheila Burke represented Hamilton Road congregation at the opening of a new Church and pastor's accommodation at Thaltej, Ahmedabad in March. Hamilton Road congregation helped finance this project as part of their Centenary celebrations.

30. A few years ago the **Presbyterian Church of Pakistan** was formed by two Presbyterian Churches uniting, but tensions have continued to exist. Reconciliation between the opposing parties seems to be forthcoming with the acceptance of a single group of office-bearers. Our most recent support for the Church has been through our Young Women's Groups project for the provision of bicycles and other assistance for pastors. We continue our search for a couple to be involved in evangelism and Bible teaching and, in addition, a technical teacher for the Christian Technical Training Centre

31. In **London**, the slow, patient work among Gujarati speaking Asians continues in the Wembley area through befriending, helping and witnessing to Jesus Christ in a variety of ways. For the most of the time it is with small numbers of people but at Christmas and Easter, through the Gujarati press and radio, there are opportunities to reach thousands with the Christian message.

32. A highlight of each year is the visit of a Youth Team from Ireland to work at two Holiday Bible Clubs and to experience something of the culture. As

part of the Youth & Sunday School 'Namaste' Project this year much needed office equipment has been provided. This will be useful in the production of literature and also for the programme of translating Braille material into Gujarati.

33. Also benefiting from the 'Namaste' Project was an old people's home in Kathmandu, **Nepal**, in connection with Gyaneshwor Church. The church in Nepal continues to grow and in 1996 a new fellowship of churches was established with a view to working together in outreach and evangelism. Twelve of our personnel are working in the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) - in administration, education, health services and hydro development.

34. A major dilemma for the UMN is the future of the hospitals it has established. Originally it was envisaged that these would gradually be taken over by Government, but because of lack of finance this is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future. The poor of the country are unable to pay for medical treatment and because of the reputation of the UMN hospitals more and more people are using them. This increases the financial burden on the mission, and as one of the member bodies of UMN we are committed to the support of the hospitals and our personnel working in them.

35. An even greater problem is the future shape which UMN will take as more and more Nepalis are trained for key roles in the projects. There is a determination that the Christian ethos and witness of the Mission will be maintained whatever the organisational structure. The search for an Executive Director to lead the mission into the future continues; in the meantime Ed Metzler, the present director, has agreed to continue in post until 1998.

36. This year the '**Lamp of Thailand**', a Bible correspondence ministry of the Church of Christ in Thailand which we support, celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. This is a ministry which has been instrumental in bringing many to faith in Christ and building up members of the Church in their understanding of the scriptures and the purposes of God for their lives and their nation.

37. The visit of Dr Jack Weir to **China**, undertaken at short notice, to attend the centenary celebrations of the Shenyang Theological Seminary has been widely reported. His vivid descriptions of what it was like for him to return 'home' and to find the Christian Church there growing and developing, despite problems, has been a great encouragement as we seek to maintain our links with China and the Christian Church.

38. The Rev Terry McMullan also made a visit primarily to attend the conference of the Amity Teachers but also to see some of the projects our church has been supporting and to learn more of the situation of the Christian Church in China today. He had the opportunity of visiting our short-term teacher at Shangrao who has settled in well and is enjoying the work. There has been renewed interest in the Teachers' programme and this year no fewer than eight people from Great Britain and Ireland will be going to various teaching posts in China through the Amity Teachers programme.

39. It is too soon to know how the changes in leadership of the People's Republic of China following the death of Deng Xiaoping will affect the work and witness of the Church in China. The China Forum of the CCOM, on which the Rev John Dixon is now our observer, will continue to monitor the situation and keep information flowing.

40. The Administrative Secretary of the **Presbyterian Church in Myanmar** visited Ireland briefly last July and shared with us the plans and problems of the Church. Our continued support of their scholarship and literature programme is much appreciated and during the past year has enabled the Rev Lal Tin Hre to continue studies at Trinity Theological College, Singapore.

41. There has been little change in the political situation in the country during the past year with the military government continuing to exercise strict control. The Christian Churches, representing less than 10% of the population, have not felt strong enough to take an obvious pro-democracy stand.

42. The All Age Group, which visited **Indonesia** last July, has produced a very comprehensive report of their visit to the island of Sumba and has been engaged in deputation and the preparation of educational material since their return. The group is commended for its work which will be invaluable in progressing our partnership with the Christian Church in Sumba (GKS).

43. A number of requests for teachers for Christian Universities in Indonesia have been publicised and a response to them would enable our links with the Churches to be maintained.

44. In parts of Indonesia tensions between Muslims and Christians have resulted in violence and a number of Churches have been destroyed. The Communion of Churches has made representations to government and these have been reported to the meetings of Eukumindo, a group of Protestant Missionary Societies and Churches in Europe having partnerships with Churches in Indonesia. In April the group met in Dublin and was hosted by the Methodist Church Overseas Division and our Overseas Board.

AFRICA TODAY - CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

45. In those countries in Africa where we engage in the mission of Jesus Christ with our partner Churches, the past year has been one of difficulties, problems, challenges, opportunities and achievements. The difficulties and problems have related to the situation of our partner Churches in rapidly deteriorating political and economic circumstances, the breakdown of the social fabric of society and the devastation of communities through continuing disease, in particular the AIDS virus.

46. The challenges and opportunities have come to our partner Churches as, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they have addressed the spiritual, moral, social and development needs of their communities and taken up the opportunities to enable the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be heard and received by their people.

47. They have proved the truth of God's word as it comes from the lips of the Apostle Paul "My God will supply all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). They have experienced God's rich blessings in the life, witness and service of their Churches and institutions, overcoming the problems and difficulties along the way by the grace and power of a loving Saviour.

KENYA, MALAWI, SUDAN AND TOGO

48. One of the great challenges facing the Christian Church in Africa today is to enable people from different ethnic and tribal backgrounds to work together for the good of all and for the building up of their communities. Political tensions in Sudan, Kenya and Malawi and a continuing civil war in Sudan, which now affects the whole country, could very easily lead to a complete breakdown in government and eventually to anarchy. Let us pray and work for PEACE - SHALOM to become a reality in Africa today and in the coming days.

49. In every age the Church of Jesus Christ is called to engage in mission and outreach to every segment of society, and our Partner Churches in Africa are doing so through the preaching of God's word, through the personal witness of their members and through the various ministries in which they are engaged. They are also concerned to see their members established and built up in their faith and united together as worshipping, witnessing and serving communities of faith in local congregations. We are privileged to share in the ministry of our partner Churches as we provide help through personnel and grants for theological education and the training of Ministers and Evangelists.

50. The ministry of healing is a very important aspect of the Church's witness and service in Kenya, Malawi and Sudan and those who serve in the hospitals, health centres and clinics have given their all over the past year to maintain this ministry to their people. In spite of shrinking resources they have gone the extra mile as they have served their people and enabled the Gospel to be heard through the spoken word and through their lives.

51. Our doctors and nurses have been privileged to share in this healing ministry and our Church has supported the work through prayer and giving. We have been conscious of the great pressure that all hospital staff work under in these difficult circumstances and many have been exposed to the very great risks which result from their contacts with AIDS patients.

52. In the deteriorating economic circumstances which affect all of our partner Churches, the need to enable men and women to develop their abilities and to support and provide for their families and communities has assumed a new importance. We are privileged to share with our partner Churches through our personnel, our support of projects and by prayer, in their rural and community development. This involvement enables the Church to demonstrate the care and concern of a God who in Jesus Christ loves all of His creation with an everlasting love.

53. The reality for the people in Kenya, Malawi, Sudan and Togo is that they have to struggle very hard to provide daily bread for their families and increasing numbers of dependants, with hunger, malnutrition and ill health always hovering in the background.

54. In Ireland the education of our children for life has always been very important and the same is true of the communities in which our partner Churches are found in Kenya, Malawi, Sudan and Togo. Because they are still involved with the schools they established, they have the opportunity, not only to provide education for their children, but also to share the Christian message with the rising generation.

55. Our teachers have tremendous opportunities to share their faith with many young people in personal and more formal ways and they have been privileged to see God at work in the hearts and lives of young people in Africa today. Most of these young men and women will have to forget about the possibilities of self advancement for themselves and their families, which is very much part of the ethos in Africa today inherited from western capitalism, and learn how to use their education and acquired skills to serve the people in their own communities.

56. Twenty-two of our personnel served in these various ministries during the past year in Kenya and Malawi with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) and we give thanks to God for their faithfulness.

EDUCATION IN MISSION

57. No-one can complain about the lack of education in mission material - videos, slide sets, prayer material, information packs, leaflets and photographs. The question to which it is difficult to get answers is "Are the materials doing the job?" We know that all of these are only resources and that the real work of promoting mission must be done by committed people. Without enthusiasts in Presbyteries and congregations no amount of material will produce lasting results. A number of Presbyteries hold regular courses for Congregational Mission Agents but more could be done.

58. A major production this year has been the six Malawi Video programmes. We have come to expect a high standard from the PCI Video Unit and we were not disappointed. In between filming and final production the Video Unit was in action again when, for the annual October Rally, the Assembly Hall was turned into a television studio and a magazine-type programme was recorded live. Every Presbytery Mission Agent received a copy and was asked to make sure it was fully used in congregations.

59. Numbers using the Overseas Prayerline have continued to rise and each week this service is transferred to the Church's world wide web page (<http://www.PresbyterianIreland.org>) so that it is possible for the information to be down loaded and printed out by anyone linked to the 'web' by computer. Most congregations will have someone in their membership who will have access to the web. Why not recruit them to provide this service each week?

60. Presbytery Deputation Tours, well organised and well run, are still an excellent way of motivating people to take an interest in overseas mission. Sadly the lack of enthusiasm in some Presbyteries denies many people the opportunity of fully benefiting from these events. On the other hand some Presbyteries find the Tours an excellent opportunity for drawing the congregations together and helping them to catch the vision of being part of a worldwide fellowship. An allocation of tours up to the year 2002 has been made with seven Presbyteries each year being covered.

THE HOME BASE

61. The Overseas Office, situated on the second floor of Church House, is the administrative centre of the Mission and we record our thanks to our

dedicated staff who, with the staff of the Presbyterian Women's Association, work extremely hard to ensure the efficient functioning of the office. We work very closely with the Youth and Sunday Schools Departments, especially in youth exchange visits and projects undertaken for the benefit of our partner Churches, and we receive much valued advice and encouragement from the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of Assembly. The servicing of the accounting aspects of our work is efficiently carried out by the Financial Secretary and his staff and is greatly appreciated. We thank God for all the co-operation we receive in these ways.

62. We will say farewell to Mr Stewart McCullough who retires on 31 July 1997 after almost five years as Officer responsible for Education in Mission and Partnership Relations. Mr McCullough brought to the post his many years of experience of our Church, of missionary work and of the Church in Malawi where he worked for fourteen years, along with his experience in many parts of the world through his long involvement with the World Conference of Boys' Brigade, seven years of which were spent as its Secretary. He has been for many years totally committed to the task of educating the Church for mission and informing the Church about the world mission task through publicity and prayer materials. The Board is greatly in his debt and we convey to Stewart and his wife Jean our prayerful good wishes that they will enjoy a long and happy retirement from this full-time involvement in the mission of the Church.

63. We are grateful to members of the Board who take a keen interest in the work of our mission overseas and those who give their time and talents to carry out the work of our seven committees - Steering, Education, Finance and Personnel and the three area committees. We are thankful to God for the support in prayer and finance generated throughout our Church and in the branches of the Presbyterian Women's Association and the Young Women's Groups.

64. We are continually amazed at the support and encouragement we receive from the congregations of the General Assembly and many individuals in the following ways:

- the quality of those offering to serve overseas;
- the enthusiastic support of our missionaries and their colleagues serving in our partner Churches in prayer and finance;
- enabling the Board to offer scholarships and give grants to partner Churches for leadership training through the United Appeal and in 'extra mile' giving.

65. Over the past year discussions have been held to move towards closer co-operation with the Presbyterian Women's Association and we welcome the progress that has been made thus far. Miss Elizabeth Brian and the officers of the Association have been fully involved in the work of the Board through its various committees. Miss Brian has assumed responsibility for all of our personnel in Nepal and has been appointed to represent the Board at the annual meeting of the United Mission to Nepal. We record our thanks to the Presbyterian Women's Association for all their support and encouragement over the past year.

66. During the year the following missionaries passed to higher service: Rev Cecil Courtenay (India) 1950-65, Miss Beattie Burns (India) 1954-71, Miss Hester Stewart (China and Malaya) 1937-62, Mrs Anna Moles (India) 1947-60

and Mrs Marion McReynolds (India) 1951-60. After a brief illness, Rev Praful Harry, a Minister of the Gujarat Diocese of the Church of North India serving in Alperton Baptist Church in Wembley, passed away on 18 July 1996.

67. We give thanks to God and record our appreciation for the faithful witness and service of Rev Adrian and Mrs Judith McLernon (Spain) 1994-96 who resigned on 11 December 1996 upon Adrian's installation to the congregations of Castlecaulfield and Eglisli. Overseas visits were made by Rev John Kirkpatrick to the Czech Republic and Hungary; by Rev Dr Bill Addley to Spain, Portugal and Brazil; by Rev Jim Campbell to Malawi and Kenya; by Rev Terry McMullan to Sudan, Kenya, Jamaica, China and Brazil; and by Miss Elizabeth Brian and Rev Jim Campbell to India and Nepal, for the purpose of attending meetings and consultations with partner Churches and united missions and to give pastoral care to our missionaries and their colleagues.

68. During the past year God has called eleven missionaries to serve in long or short term capacities in Brazil (2) China (1) Hungary (1) India (3) Kenya (1) Malawi (1) and Nepal (2). Also four volunteers went for periods of up to one year to serve in Jamaica (1) Malawi (1) and Nepal (2). Last summer young people served for up to three months as volunteers in India, Jamaica, Kenya and Malawi and medical, nursing and physiotherapy students went on electives for up to two months to several countries. A team was sent to Romania for summer camps, through the Youth Board a team went to Wembley for Holiday Bible Clubs and there was the final exchange visit with the Church of the Brethren in the Czech Republic. We rejoice in the positive experiences enjoyed by these enthusiastic young people and the way in which God has used them in deputation meetings throughout our Church to enthuse all age groups for world mission.

69. Those whom God calls He also equips for service and we realise that we need to prepare our missionary candidates thoroughly before they go to very different and challenging cultural situations. During the past year we have been reviewing how we prepare our candidates for overseas service, how we care for our missionaries both overseas and at home and how we enable them to re-enter the home context at the end of their missionary service. We have been helped greatly by the conferences relating to 'Care of Missionaries' organised through the Evangelical Missionary Alliance. We continue to be grateful to the Principal and staff at Belfast Bible College for their helpfulness and advice in the preparation of our missionary candidates.

70. Rev Samuel Muriguh, a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, who was called by the Board to minister in Orangefield Presbyterian Church for two years, returns to Kenya with his family in July. Mr & Mrs Muriguh have involved themselves fully in the life and work of the congregation and have helped the people of Orangefield and the Church at large to understand more of the enthusiasm and commitment of Christians in Africa to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We pray God's blessing upon them as they return to minister in the PCEA.

71. Over the past year we have received visits from Rev Gibiel Kachaje, Senior Clerk of the Nkhoma Synod in Malawi; Rev Dr Overtoun Mazunda, General Secretary of the Livingstonia Synod in Malawi; Rev John Gatluok, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan; Pasteur and Mrs Andre

Honegger, Reformed Church of France; Rev Barnabas Balogh, Home Mission Secretary of the Oradea District of the Reformed Church in Romania; Rev Dr Lalengzaua, Administrative Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (Burma); Rev Matiya Nkhoma, Deputy General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia; Rev Dr Augustine Msopole, General Manager, Christian Literature Association In Malawi; Mr Alfred Mwenifumbo, General Secretary of Scripture Union Malawi, also visiting Scripture Union in Northern Ireland; Mr Sandress Msiska, General Secretary, Student Christian Organisation of Malawi; Rev Pavel Cerny, President, Church of the Brethren in the Czech Republic; and Rev Daniel Heczko, Minister of Dejvice congregation in Prague.

72. We have been greatly encouraged by the work of the United Appeal Board and were glad to learn that the full allocation of £660,000 for 1996 had been made, for which we thank all who gave sacrificially to make it possible for us to do the work entrusted to us. We also thank congregations, individuals, children and young people, the Junior Boys' Brigade, the Presbyterian Women's Association and the Young Women's Groups who have contributed well over £200,000 for special projects and work overseas in connection with our partner Churches and mission. Their generosity has brought hope and encouragement to many people who struggle to provide for their families in the two-thirds world.

73. In 1995 the General Assembly agreed that an application be made to the High Court for an order allowing the application Cy Pr_s of the Trust funds of the missions and former missions of the Assembly. We are pleased to report that the application was granted last November and that this will release further funds annually to be used for the general purposes of the overseas mission as listed in the Scheme.

74. Last summer Dr Jack Thompson left Edinburgh for his sabbatical in South Africa where he engaged in research for a proposed book on the part played by a number of Xhosa Christians from the Eastern Cape in helping to establish Christianity in Malawi in the period between 1876 and 1888. He then visited Malawi with his wife and was able to see many of our missionary personnel and encourage them in their work. Dr Thompson has continued his lecturing and research work in the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World and he gave the major address at our Residential Conference last October on 'Mission into the Twenty-first Century'.

75. During the year a revision of the Mission Rules (Paragraphs 289-299 of The Code) was undertaken and an overture to effect the changes is appended.

76. We continue to receive much information through our contacts with Mission Boards and Societies which are members of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EMA) and the Church's Commission On Mission (CCOM), and staff and Board members have attended meetings of the EMA and the forums of the CCOM where appropriate over the past year. We are members of the British and Irish Association of Mission Studies (BIAMS) and their bi-annual conference has kept us informed of mission issues, thinking and practice. We have valued our contact with over one hundred Presbyterians who are serving in about forty countries with thirty missionary societies and agencies, and have encouraged our people to pray for them by including their names in the 'Points for Prayer' handbook published annually.

77. In this report we have recorded all that God the Lord has caused to be done through the Overseas Mission of our Church over the past year. We are conscious of our inadequacies and yet we acknowledge the graciousness of our loving God who has enabled His will to be accomplished through His servants. It is our prayer and the prayer of our Church that all that has been done in the name of Jesus Christ over the past year will be used for the extension of His Kingdom and the building up of His Church in all the world.

APPENDIX

In this report we have not mentioned the names of long or short term missionary or volunteers in mission, but their names and years and spheres of service are listed below and are to be taken together with this report

BRAZIL

Mabel Colson	1990	Caiua Indian Mission
Lynn & Heather Cochrane	1996	Independent Presbyterian Church National Mission

INDIA

James & Willi Barton	1966	Woodstock School
Linda Jackson	1996	Woodstock School
Norman & Joan Duncan	1994	Associate Director of Training, OM India

INDONESIA

John & Joan Hanna	1982	Final Furlough
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JAMAICA

Claire Trueman	1962	Christian Education Co-ordinator, United Church
James & Pat Cameron	1990	Directors, Children's Homes, etc
Mark McMullen	1992	Boys' Brigade Skills Training Programme
Leonora Wasson	1994	Personal Development Co- ordinator, Cornwall Council

KENYA

Stephen & Angelina Cowan	1985/9	Outreach & Development Work, PCEA
Norman & Pauline Kennedy	1989	Final furlough
Uel & Gill Marrs	1989	Theological Education by Extension and teaching at Pastoral Institute
Deborah Ford	1996	Teaching at Pastoral Institute
Kate Warnock	1996	Kiriani Community Centre

MALAWI

Freda Algie	1969	Principal, Wives School, Zomba Theological College
John & Betsy Mann	1989	Chaplaincy, teaching and pastoral work
Richard & Brenda Kerr	1991	Livingstonia, rural development & teaching
Naomi Martin	1991	On study leave
Paul & Athena Carnaghan	1992	Final furlough
Elma Harkness	1993	Final furlough
Margaret Young	1995	Midwife, Ekwendeni Hospital
Diane Cusick	1995	Wives School, Zomba Theological College
Dick & Moreen Gordon	1996	Zomba Theological College & Medical work
Colin Dick	1996	Doctor at Ekwendeni Hospital

NEPAL

Linda McKee	1985	Assistant to Executive Director, UMN
Max Watson/Alison Rodgers	1990	Medical Officers, Tansen Hospital
Joy Gowdy	1992	Tutorial teacher, Okhaldhunga
Pauline Orr	1993	Nurse/Tutor, Tansen Hospital
Amanda Christie	1995	Kathmandu International Study Centre
David & Sandra Rodgers	1995	Medical Officer, Amp Pipal
Sharon Creighton	1996	Tutorial Teacher, Amp Pipal
Helen Johnston	1996	Personnel Officer, UMN
Peter Lockwood	1996	Khimti Hydrel Project
Richard & Denise Ross	1997	Gandaki Boarding School

ROMANIA

Ilona Walsh	1993	Teaching & Church work, Zalau
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FRANCE

Gordon & Sandra Campbell	1989	Marseilles South East Parish, Eglise Reformee de France
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GREAT BRITAIN

Jack & Phyllis Thompson	1970	New College, University of Edinburgh
Christopher & Nevidita Macwan	1989	Working among Asians in Wembley

Short term missionaries serving for a minimum of two years, are supported in overseas locations. Their names and spheres of service are as follows -

CHINA

Stephen Graham 1996 Teacher, Shangao Teachers' College

INDIA

Sheena McKean 1996 Teacher, Woodstock School
 Brian Wilson 1996 Librarian, Woodstock School and
 ministering in the Church of North
 India

MALAWI

Joy Williamson 1995 Teacher, Livingstonia Secondary
 School

HUNGARY

Trevor Purvis 1996 Teacher, Papai Reformed College

Volunteers in Mission are sent into overseas locations for up to one year and their names and spheres of service are as follows:

NEPAL

Margaret Neill 1996 Teacher, KISC

JAMAICA

David Simpson 1997 Chaplaincy Team

MALAWI

Evanne Frazer 1997 Domasi Secondary School

We work together with partner churches and united missions and we list below those in leadership and their respective positions:

BRAZIL

Rev Mathias Quintela de Sousa President, Independent Presbyterian Church
 in Brazil

Rev Abival Pires da Silveira International Relations, Independent
 Presbyterian Church in Brazil

CHINA

Bishop K H Ting Hon. President, China Christian Council
 Dr. Wenzao Han President, China Christian Council
 Rev. Su Deci General Secretary, China Christian Council

CZECH REPUBLIC

Rev Pavel Cerny President, Church of the Brethren
 Rev Karel Taschner, General Secretary, Church of the Brethren
 Rev Pavel Smetana President, Evangelical Church of the Czech

Brethren

FRANCE

Pasteur Marc Richalot

General Secretary, Eglise Reformee de France (ERF)

Pasteur Yo Ludwig

Secretary for International Relations & Mission, (ERF)

HUNGARY & ROMANIA

Bishop Laurent Hegedus

Presiding Bishop, Hungarian Reformed Church

Bishop Kalman Csiha

Transylvanian District of Reformed Church, Romania

Bishop Laszlo Tokes

Extra Transylvanian District of Reformed Church, Romania

INDIA

Rt Rev D K Mohanty

Moderator of the CNI Synod

Dr V S Lall

General Secretary of the CNI Synod

Rt Rev V M Malaviya

Bishop of the Gujarat Diocese of the CNI

Rt Rev M Andrews

Bishop of the Agra Diocese of the CNI

INDONESIA

Rev Dr Beni Fobia

Moderator, Evangelical Christian Church in Timor

Rev J C Widje

General Secretary, Evangelical Christian Church in Halmahera

Rev D Umbu Dingu

General Secretary, Christian Church in Sumba

JAMAICA

Rt Rev J Oliver Daley

Moderator, United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands

Rev Maitland Evans

General Secretary, United Church in Jamaica & the Cayman Islands

KENYA

Rt Rev Dr. Jessie Kimau

Moderator of Presbyterian Church of East Africa

Rev Patrick Rukenya

Secretary General of Presbyterian Church of East Africa

MALAWI

Rev A M Mfune

Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP)

Moderator, Synod of Livingstonia

Rev Dr O P Mazunda	General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia
Rev L J Chinthenga	Acting Moderator, Synod of Blantyre
Rev M E Kansilanga	General Secretary, Synod of Blantyre
Rev S P Chalera	Moderator, Synod of Nkhoma
Rev G A Kachaje	Senior Clerk, Synod of Nkhoma

MYANMAR (BURMA)

Rev Dr Lalengzaau	Administrative Secretary, Presbyterian Church in Myanmar
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NEPAL

Rev Edgar Metzler	Executive Director, United Mission to Nepal
Pastor Robert Khartak	Senior Pastor of the Church in Nepal

PAKISTAN

Rev Arthur James	Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan
Dr Ernest Lall	Executive Secretary, Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

SPAIN

Rev Enrique Capó	President, Permanent Commission of the Spanish Evangelical Church
Rev Alfredo Abad	Secretary, Permanent Commission of the Spanish Evangelical Church

SUDAN

Rev John Gatluok Chol	Moderator, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan
Rev Peter Odok	General Secretary, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan
Rev Paul Bol Kuel	Associate Moderator, Presbyterian Church Of Sudan

THAILAND

Mrs Supaporn Insaeng	Director, Lamp of Thailand (a ministry of the Church of Christ in Thailand)
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TOGO

Pasteur Fatsema Amiou	Moderator, Presbyterian Church in Togo
Pasteur Cephas Dovi	General Secretary, Presbyterian Church in Togo

ZAMBIA

Rev David Chiboboka	General Secretary, Synod of Zambia of the CCAP
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RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly encourage the Overseas Board to determine in the coming year, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what further steps need to be taken in world mission as we approach the end of the millennium.
3. That the General Assembly encourage our partner Churches in the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary and Romania to continue to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ among their people and to work for the building up of the body of Christ, the Church, to be salt and light in every community.
4. That the General Assembly rejoice in the living faith of Arab and Jewish believers in the Middle East, encourage the continued witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the growing desire for greater unity within the body of Christ and pray that a just and lasting peace will be established in the region.
5. That the General Assembly give thanks, in this the fiftieth anniversary of India's independence, for the encouraging signs of growth in the Church throughout India, and pray that its initiatives in the spread of the Gospel will result in many coming to a living faith in Jesus Christ.
6. That the General Assembly encourage the United Mission to Nepal to continue to bear witness to Jesus Christ throughout Nepal as it engages in the healing ministry, in education and rural development and in standing with and supporting the Church in these days of opportunity.
7. That the General Assembly thank the All Age Group which visited Indonesia in 1996 for its valuable and enthusiastic contribution to the developing relationship with the Christian Church in Sumba, encourage the Board to develop partnership in appropriate ways and congregations to use the audio-visual resources which have been produced.
8. That the General Assembly rejoice in the rapid growth of the Presbyterian Churches in towns, cities and in rural communities in Brazil, and pray that our partnership in the Gospel will grow and develop to our mutual benefit in the coming years.
9. That the General Assembly give thanks for the practical application of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands as it ministers to children, the elderly, the unchurched, the marginalised and poor in society in the Name of Jesus Christ and rejoice in the opportunity afforded to our personnel to share in its mission and outreach.
10. That the General Assembly encourage the whole Church to pray for the Chinese Nation and the Church of Jesus Christ in these days of uncertainty following the death of Deng Ziaoping, and urge all Christians to work together for the spread of the Gospel and the building up of the Church in rural and urban communities throughout China.
11. That the General Assembly call upon all of our people to pray earnestly for peace - Shalom - to be established in the Sudan and request the governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and the international community to urge, through diplomatic channels, the Government of Sudan and the liberation movements to take positive steps towards the establishment of peace in the land for the sake of its suffering people.

12. That the General Assembly, recognising the importance of our partnerships with the Churches in Kenya, Malawi, Sudan and Togo, pray for leaders and people as they endeavour to address economic, health, social and moral problems in their societies and as they grasp the opportunities for the spread of the Gospel and the growth of the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

13. That the General Assembly rejoice in the faithful and dedicated witness and service of our missionary personnel and their families in many different and challenging situations and encourage the whole Church to pray for and support them and their national colleagues as they endeavour to proclaim the Gospel in our ever-changing world.

14. That the General Assembly request the Overseas Board to continue to review the effectiveness of its deputation and education in mission programmes and to seek new ways of communicating the challenges and opportunities for mission in our global village.

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

OVERTURE TRANSMITTED

Anent Pars 289-299 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Pars 289-299 of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in their place.

289 Mission Overseas

(1) **The missionary enterprise** is to be regarded as an integral part of the life and nature of the Church. The policy of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is to fulfil this purpose by working in association with Churches and Societies round the world, as mutually agreed from time to time.

(2) Individual missionary service springs from personal experience of the love of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which in obedience to the Lord's command desires to make this love known to others, win them to faith in Christ and to his service and, by his grace, to enlarge and build up some part of the universal Church.

290 (1) Candidates for appointment to service overseas shall make application to the Overseas Board to be considered by its Personnel Committee, or by other appropriate means, such application to be accompanied by a commendation from the candidate's Presbytery.

(2) Candidates when so accepted by the Overseas Board normally shall be required to have an appropriate period of training and preparation as determined by the Overseas Board before taking up an appointment.

(3) Appointments normally shall be made only in response to the request of an overseas partner Church or Society, and in the first instance for a single term of years. Such appointments may subsequently be extended, after consultation with the Overseas Board and the partner Church or Society. The Overseas Board may also make short term appointments.

(4) After approval by the Personnel Committee or other agency of the Overseas Board and completion of any necessary training and preparation, the candidates shall be eligible for call by the Overseas Board, and for appointment as missionaries of the Church by the Presbytery with which they are connected in a service of ordination, installation or commissioning as the case may be. The appointment shall commence at the date of such service.

(5) In the case of a missionary couple, where the spouse does not receive a call, but desires to be recognised as participating in the work of mission, the Presbytery shall arrange that, at the service of ordination, installation or commissioning, the spouse shall also be commissioned.

(6) All missionaries of the Church are appointed on the understanding that they accept the policy set out in Par 289 (1) above and are willing to implement it in the place where they are appointed to serve.

291 (1) While overseas, the location and work of missionaries shall be the responsibility of the partner Church or Society under which they are serving, in consultation with the missionaries and the Overseas Board.

(2) Missionaries normally shall serve as members of the local Church concerned, and under its direction, discipline and control, but without prejudice to their relationship with the Overseas Board or to their continuing membership in a Presbytery of the Church in Ireland; and no decision of any Church court overseas affecting their ecclesiastical status shall take effect in the Church until confirmed by the General Assembly.

(3) The ordination, installation, commissioning, resignation or retirement, and any investigation of a complaint or action affecting the ecclesiastical status in Ireland of missionaries or full-time workers of the Church serving overseas, shall rest with the Presbytery in whose membership or under whose care they have been placed, after full consultation with the Overseas Board.

292. Conditions of service, including length of tours, furlough arrangements, remuneration and allowances, retirement and pension arrangements and similar matters shall be determined by the Overseas Board from time to time.

293. In exceptional circumstances the Overseas Board shall have power in any matter to take emergency action outside these rules; but every such action shall be reported to the following meeting of the General Assembly.

S J CAMPBELL

HOME BOARD

Convener: Rev J B MOORE
Secretaries: Rev R F S POOTS
MISS E BRIAN

1. The Home Board endeavours to assist the Church to maintain a viable witness to Jesus Christ both in the Republic and in the North of Ireland.

2. In the Republic 'everything is booming ... the economy is booming ... the culture is booming ... everything, except the Church' writes Mary Kenny. Her reference, of course, is to the Catholic Church but it could hardly be claimed that the Presbyterian Church is booming, either. Indeed its congregations are, with a few notable exceptions, small and scattered and need prayer, commitment, support and finance.

3. In the North congregations in provincial towns and rural areas are fairly strong but in the cities secularism is the mood of the day and the Church and its message are treated with indifference. The deteriorating political situation with its polarisation and bitterness, violence and brutality, and threat of worse to come adds to the mix and requires courage, leadership and, of course, prayer.

4. Undoubtedly Ireland today needs a new spirituality not 'free floating' settling on 'everything from Buddhism to Scientology to New Age crystal gazing and tree hugging' but born of an encounter with God in Jesus Christ informed and shaped by the Bible's teaching and creating through the Spirit congregations of people committed to Jesus Christ and his service. And therefore the Board decided to co-operate in principle with the Strategy for Mission proposals for a New Mission Board for Ireland which will give our witness as a Church a more unified direction and thrust.

5. Church Extension with its Conveners leading the way attempts to meet the challenge of new areas in our towns and cities with varying degrees of response. Movilla, Newtownards, is thriving and outgrowing its building and will soon require active financial support from the wider Church.

6. The Nightlight ministry continues to confront the crowds of mainly young people who throng the Shaftesbury Square area of Belfast on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights with a message of love, forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ. This frontier work, under the dedicated leadership of Mr John Luke, also needs prayer support and encouragement.

7. As always the Board is indebted to Rev Derek Poots, its Secretary, for his deep involvement, wise guidance and extensive travels throughout Ireland on its behalf, and to Rev Alistair Bill for his labours, unsparing and committed. The Board is grateful, too, to Miss Elizabeth Brian, PWA Secretary, for her quietly effective leadership and guidance.

8. The Church owes a huge debt to its Deaconesses for their different ministries in the service of Christ. And thanks, also, to Rev Walter Herron for unstinting efforts to promote the work of the Presbyterian Mutual Society during his period as its chairman.

ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE

1. Interviews for fifth year students and some others who are taking courses outside Ireland were held on 23 December, 1996.

2. This year 22 requests for assistants were received. The main reason for this exceptional demand seems to be that this is the main changeover year to the new system. 21 licentiates who would otherwise have served until January 1998 become eligible for call on 15 May, and one more becomes eligible on 19 June. 15 students were assigned and 2 licentiates were re-assigned.

3. 15 licentiates are likely to become eligible for call in 1998, after which it is hoped that the situation will stabilise.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON, Convener

HOME MISSION COMMITTEE

PWA HOME DEPARTMENT

Miss E Brian reports:-

1. PWA continues to work in association with the Home Mission Committee to “provide for the recruitment, training, organisation and support of deaconesses and woman workers in various areas of the Church’s life and interest”. There are 28 deaconesses, 2 woman workers and 1 probationary deaconess serving the Church. In addition there is 1 student in training.

2. Dr Robin MacDermott, Miss Nancy Donnell and Miss Jean Patterson completed their service on the PWA/Home Board Personnel Committee in June 1996. Rev D Bannerman agreed to serve on the Committee from September 1996.

PERSONNEL

3. Following recommendations made by the PWA/Home Board Personnel Committee the following appointments and decisions were made.

Personnel Changes

4. The Home Board renewed the appointment of Miss Jean Gwyn to Whiteabbey following the Installation of Rev Trevor Gribben and Miss Carole Cathcart to Duncairn & St Enoch’s following the Induction of Rev Robert Love.

5. Miss Eleanor Drysdale was Commissioned and Inducted to First Holywood in November 1996 and Miss Kathleen Spence to New Mossley in December 1996.

6. Miss Carol McRobert’s appointment in Armagh Road, Portadown terminated in August 1996. Following a few months in Garnerville congregation Miss McRoberts began a year’s placement in East Belfast Friendship House in March 1997.

7. During the year the development work in East Belfast Friendship House will be monitored and the outcome of a review to be held early 1998 will determine the way forward for the Friendship House.

8. Permission was granted for a one year extension of service to Mrs Leta Halliday, McQuiston Memorial, Miss Anne Burrows, Belvoir Park Hospital and Miss Sarah Swindle, Musgrave Park and Forster Green Hospitals.

9. Mrs Elizabeth Matthews has been received as a candidate for missionary service in India and has resigned from deaconess service.

10. Miss Mary Henderson resigned as deaconess in September 1996.

Probationary Deaconess

11. Mrs Sharon Heron commenced probationary training in Strand, Belfast, in August 1996.

Deaconess in Training

12. Mrs Jacqueline O'Neill entered her second year of training at Belfast Bible College. She spent the second term at Glasgow Bible College.

13. PWA will not be recruiting any students for September 1997 but will be keeping the situation under review.

14. Miss Evelyn Whyte's work within the Donegal Presbytery terminated on 28th March 1997. From April until June she is pursuing a course of study at Glasgow Bible College.

15. Discussions are ongoing with representatives from Donegal concerning the future role of a deaconess within the Presbytery.

Hospital Chaplaincy

16. The Home Board approved the outline structure for hospital chaplaincy as agreed by representatives of the PWA/Home Board Personnel Committee and of the Chaplains' Committee.

Christian Drama

17. After a careful review of the Role of Christian Drama within the Church, and following lengthy discussions with Miss Hilary McDowell, the Personnel Committee set up a sub-group to formulate three new job descriptions which would encompass drama and resources. This sub-group included representatives from PWA Executive Committee. These job options were given to Miss McDowell for her consideration on 6th December, 1996. Miss McDowell met with PWA Executive Committee on 9th January, 1997 during which time she proposed a fourth option. To date no details of this option have been received. On 30th January, 1997 a letter was received from Miss McDowell in which she tendered her resignation as Director of the Multi-Media Workshop while retaining her status as deaconess.

PRESBYTERIAN MUTUAL SOCIETY LIMITED

Mr J W Russell reports:

1. The Directors are pleased to report very encouraging results achieved during the past twelve months with new investment reaching almost £2 million lifting the capital value of the Society in excess of £5 million.

2. Interest rates have remained low during most of the year and consequently a dividend of 5.5% was declared on shareholdings in respect of the financial year ended 31st March, 1997. This still compares very favourably with rates of interest offered elsewhere and the total dividend amounted to £230,000 which was distributed to over 1,300 shareholders.

3. Congregations and individual shareholders continue to make use of the competitive borrowing facilities available with £1.5 million being advanced by way of new loans this year and a further £800,000 approved and yet to be taken up.

4. We have recently undertaken a major review of the way in which the Society conducts its business and this has pointed the way to changes which will result in a more efficient and timely response to applications for loans.

5. We conclude with our thanks to God for His guidance over the year and pray for His continued blessing in the future.

HOME MISSION GENERAL

1. The Home Mission does not often make the headlines, but it is constantly at work as a supportive agency throughout the length and breadth of the island in the following ways :

- encouraging the work in areas where Presbyterians are thin on the ground;
- assisting with grants for the maintenance of buildings in small congregations;
- giving travel grants for ministers;
- in more difficult urban areas, assisting with the salaries of deaconesses and assistant ministers;
- summer assistants, usually students for the ministry, are provided for a range of situations.

Home Mission is also committed to expand in areas of new opportunity as in the experimental ministries and Nightlight.

2. The Home Mission family is as diverse as the totality of cultures on this island, yet there is a common bond. At the time of the General Assembly we take the opportunity to send greetings to all who share that bond, whether ministers, their families, or the leaders in congregations. May each and every one know the blessing of our God in their life and work for his Kingdom.

PERSONNEL

3. The Rev Girvan McKay retired from the congregations of Tullamore and Mountmellick on 31 August 1996, having served there since 1983 and in the

Home Mission since 1977. We thank him for his service and wish him a long and peaceful retirement.

4. The Rev S G Anketell was called to the Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford group of congregations and inducted at the beginning of January this year. He is settling in well to these congregations, which are in the Alternating Scheme.

5. In order to facilitate the Presbytery of North Belfast leave to Call was issued to the congregation of Duncairn & St Enochs under the Home Mission Development Scheme and, following the Induction of the Rev Robert Love, a ministry began which will be reviewed after a 5 year period from 1 January, 1997.

HOME MISSION EXPERIMENTAL MINISTRY

6. The Rev Stephen Johnston has been involved in this work for four years. During each week he continues to travel from Kilkenny north-east to Carlow and south-west to Cahir and Fermoy, spanning some 90 miles to the two extremities. Over the years he has covered many miles and we are grateful to God for safety in all his journeys.

7. In Fermoy the Thursday children's club is still encouraging, with over 20 attending in the local Resource Centre in the Main Street. The Thursday Bible study has continued in a local hotel with numbers in the range 6 to 8. The twice-monthly worship service has had to be moved to an old Church of Ireland schoolroom, due to the unsafe state of the Presbyterian property, which cannot be repaired at present. We are grateful to the Church of Ireland for the use of their building. In all his work there, Mr Johnston is glad to have the assistance of Mr Keith Preston of the Irish Mission, Mr John Corcoran having left the mission to go to other work in California.

8. Mr Johnston also spends most Tuesday evenings in Cahir, helping Mr Preston with the Children's Club and leading the Bible Study/prayer meeting.

9. In Carlow the attendances (over forty) each Sunday afternoon continue to give encouragement, as do the various other meetings that are arranged for Bible study and special occasions.

10. Given that this experimental ministry was planned to last for five years, the Committee has been faced with a major decision this year. As reported in 1996, we sought to pursue the double option of moving the Johnston family to Carlow to allow Mr Johnston to concentrate on the work there and also of setting up a further fixed term `experimental` ministry to concentrate on Cahir and Fermoy. In our minds the former depended on the latter. The Home Board agreed with the Committee's decision that the latter ministry should, in the first instance, be for three years with review at the end of that time. Discussions with the relevant financial bodies brought an agreement for the funding of this experimental ministry. The vacancy was advertised, but at the time of writing there has been no application.

11. Accordingly, the decision was taken at the February meeting of the Board to request the Johnston family to move to Carlow when suitable accommodation has been found. We are delighted that they are willing to do this and indeed see it as a natural progression in their work. We will continue to seek a minister for the Fermoy/Cahir situation.

12. Home Mission continues to be grateful to God for the work that is being done to consolidate the openings that exist. We remind ourselves that any development in this work depends on the prayers of God's people and thus we would encourage prayer support for all our Home Ministers.

ALTERNATING MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

13. This committee, which is composed of equal numbers of representatives of the Home Board and the Methodist Home Mission, met once during the year, in Church House. The meeting as usual gave opportunity to exchange information about what is happening in areas of common concern, both within the formal Scheme and in other places where Presbyterian and Methodist congregations have any sort of a link.

14. With a number of problems having been resolved in recent years the overall Scheme is running smoothly at present and it is not anticipated that the frequency of meetings will need to be increased.

15. The next meeting is planned to be in Galway in September, when representatives of the various congregations will be invited to give reports.

NIGHT MINISTRY

16. This is now known as Nightlight, with Mr John Luke continuing as Director. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from 11 pm to 2-30, 3-30 or sometimes even 5am, Mr Luke, and volunteers working on rota, go out on the streets of south Belfast's 'entertainment area'; which used to be known as the Golden Mile, then the Golden Triangle, but now is spatially indeterminate, as it extends from Ormeau Avenue, up the Dublin Road and Great Victoria Street, to Tate's Avenue and the Malone Road. Meaningful contacts are made with many folk on the streets as the team goes about caring, listening, befriending, building relationships, counselling and referral for counselling, giving first aid, summoning emergency services, and generally being involved with people for the sake of Christ, who walked the streets for all our sakes.

17. The General Committee continues to give oversight and support, meeting twice-yearly, with the smaller Executive Committee meeting more regularly and being involved in day-to-day decisions with Mr Luke. There are at present 18 active volunteers, with several others who work on an occasional basis. The quality of these volunteers is excellent, with two teams of three normally going out each night, and additional volunteers are always being sought. After acceptance as a volunteer there is a period of on-the-job training and a set of guidelines has been agreed for the work.

18. The premises on the Donegall Road, as a base for the work, proved unsatisfactory and so an offer of alternative premises in the Kinghan Church was gratefully accepted. These premises, while excellent for a team base, would not be suitable for the envisaged drop-in facility and it is necessary to keep a watch for other suitable premises becoming available.

19. Mr Luke receives numerous invitations to speak to congregations, to such an extent that the Executive Committee has decided that he should limit engagements to three per month.

20. We are delighted that this work has touched a chord with so many in the Church and we would express grateful appreciation for the many individuals, congregations and organisations who have contributed financially to the work. We commend the ministry and the workers to the prayers of God's people.

FINANCE

21. Yet again the Church as a whole has made a generous response to the United Appeal so that agencies were able to receive all their budgeted allocation. For Home Mission this meant some £220,000 at the close of the year. We say a big "thank you" to all who contributed and thus have a part in our work.

22. During 1996 both income and budget were close to the budgeted figures, with the balance at the end of the year on the Home Mission General Account showing a slight decrease on the previous year. With respect to the Home Mission Repairs Account, the figures appear to show a healthy credit balance of £61,000. However, when funds allocated in 1996 and not yet drawn down are included, this account shows a debit of £4,550.

23. Nightlight has generated substantial interest and sufficient donations to end 1996 with a surplus of £18,500. However, a personal donation of £10,000, which was given for each of two years to support the launch of this ministry, has now ended. There are too many donors to mention all, but as there is no extra money given from the United Appeal for this ministry, we are grateful for gifts from every source.

24. Home Mission Repairs' Grants were paid in 1996 for repairs or improvements to church property at Boyle, Co Roscommon; Carndonagh and Carrigart, Co Donegal; Wexford and Enniscorthy, Co Wexford; Killeshandra, Co Cavan; 1st Bailieborough and Smithborough, Co Monaghan; Kells, Co Meath; Tullamore, Co Offaly and to Carlow. A recent review of grants paid to Home Mission congregations since 1989 shows that 46 (out of 74) congregations have benefitted from this support.

25. With respect to the giving of Repairs' Grants, we are grateful to those congregations who assist our budgeting and planning by making applications known at an early stage and to Presbyteries who monitor the completed applications.

PROPERTY

26. The sale of the church property at Nun's Island, Galway, was agreed at a price of £100,000, 40% of which will go to the 'owners' and 60% to the Presbyterian Church. The Board agreed that this 60% will be split 1/3 to the local congregation and 2/3 to the Home Mission. This sale has not yet been processed.

CONSULTATION

27. Two meetings have taken place between representatives of the Home Mission, the Irish Mission and the Strategy Committee of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery in order to develop understanding and also to determine further ways of developing our common mission in its various aspects.

OFFICE-BEARERS

28. The Secretary, the Rev Derek Poots, has been a regular traveller to all corners of the island in order to bring personal encouragement to those in Home Mission situations. The committee is in his debt for the wide knowledge and experience that he brings to our discussions and for the energy that he expends so readily in the cause of our Lord's Church.

29. It is a matter of delight to us that Mr Poots' predecessor as Secretary, the Rev S Hutchinson, has been elected to the Moderatorial chair. We extend our congratulations to him and assure him of our prayerful support as he fulfils an even more demanding role.

30. During his year of office (and indeed prior to it) Mr Poots will be Acting Clerk of Assembly. This will entail him setting aside most of his work in Home Mission. At the time of writing arrangements are being worked out for others to take over his Home Mission responsibilities for the year. Fuller details will be given in due course.

31. We conclude with our thanks to God for all that He has enabled us to do over the past year, and pray the blessing of God on all involved in Home Mission work.

ALISTAIR R BILL, Convener

CHURCH EXTENSION COMMITTEE

1. There are two distinct aspects to the work of the Church extension Committee. (1) Assisting Church Extension Charges and some former Church Extension charges with the upkeep and maintenance of their property. This is an ongoing work making constant demands on funds. (2) The provision of buildings in new areas of housing development. In this aspect of the work the Committee relies on information from Presbyteries regarding housing development within their bounds.

2. The following is a summary of the work of the committee during 1996.

Newtownards Area*Movilla*

3. In 1996 Movilla has continued to grow and develop with now 180 families claiming connection. Specified Sources for 1996 were £19,177 and a further £9,229 was raised for buildings.

4. The present accommodation is no longer adequate to meet the needs of this expanding congregation.

5. The Committee has agreed to consult an architect and set the process in motion to provide a new building for Movilla.

Belfast Area*Taughmonagh*

6. The kitchen in the manse at Taughmonagh has been re-fitted and the sitting room extended.

New Mossley

7. A new church heating boiler has been installed and representatives of the congregation have asked for some renovations to be considered.

Coleraine Area*Ballysally*

8. In September 1996 Rev George Moore, on receiving a call from the congregation of Kilbride, resigned his charge at Ballysally. The Committee records its thanks to Mr Moore for his dedication and faithful work in this congregation.

9. In December 1996 Rev John Coulter was inducted as minister in Ballysally. We pray that John will know God's guidance and blessing in the years that lie ahead.

10. Refurbishment work was carried out in the Ballysally manse prior to the induction.

Londonderry area*Strathfoyle*

11. Strathfoyle continues to have a stated supply.

Sites*Ballymacoss, Lisburn*

12. Dromore Presbytery has been requested to look again at the development in this area.

Antrim

13. The Templepatrick Presbytery considers that this site at Springfarm is unlikely ever to be used.

Carrickfergus

14. This site is being kept under review.

Sunday School Support

15. Sunday School contributions to Church Extension totalled £2,057. We thank Sunday School teachers and children for their regular and valued support.

United Appeal Allocation

16. The Committee requested an allocation of £480,000 for 1997 from the United Appeal Board but only £225,000 was received.

The application made in 1997 reflected the additional finance required to progress the provision of a permanent building at Movilla.

Bequesets

17. Bequesets received during the last financial year amounted to £16,917.

12 Coolmoyne Park

18. A former Manse at 12 Coolmoyne Park occupied by the late Rev D and Mrs Gillies was, by the terms of an old agreement, made available for as long as required by them personally. Mrs Gillies has now moved into residential accommodation and, following the sale of the house, an annual grant of £3,000 has been made to her.

The sale realised £83,160 of which £80,000 has been invested in the Presbyterian Mutual Society Ltd, available on demand.

Conclusion

19. The Committee thanks all who regularly support the work of Church Extension through the United Appeal, earmarked contributions, covenants and private donations and all the other support that comes from Church organisations.

20. Grateful thanks is expressed to all who work in Church Extension Charges and to those who serve on Interim Kirk Sessions and Committees.

G MOFFETT and H TAGGART, Conveners

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Presbyterian Mutual Society Limited

2. That the General Assembly commend and encourage support for the work of the Society as it seeks to provide investment and loan facilities to individuals and congregations.

Home Mission

3. That the General Assembly thank God for the development of Nightlight and call upon the Church to give continued support in both prayer and donations.

4. That the General Assembly appoint the Home Board Convener, Home Mission Convener, Home Mission Secretary, Revs D C Caskie and Dr R W J MacDermott to the Alternating Ministries Scheme Committee.

Church Extension

5. That the General Assembly give thanks for the steady growth of Movilla Church Extension Charge and encourage the Committee to continue planning for the provision of a permanent church building there.

General

6. That the Home Board, with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 280 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURE ON THE BOOKS**Anent Par 73(d) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 73(d) of the Code the words “ensure that a minister in active duty shall not accept any paid public appointment” be deleted and that the words “ensure that a minister or licentiate in active duty shall not accept any paid public appointment” be substituted in their place.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Executive Secretary: Miss ELIZABETH BRIAN

Theme for the year: "Serve the Lord with Gladness"

(This report should be read in conjunction with the reports of the Home Board and the Overseas Board.)

1. The challenge of the Psalmist to "serve the Lord with gladness" was taken up by the PWA in its theme for 1996/97. Evidence of the outworking of this challenge can be seen at all levels of the Association and also within personnel both at home and overseas.

Serving on the PWA Executive Committee

2. The Executive Committee met on 10 occasions during the year.

3. Members for 1996/97 were:

Mrs M Russell (Ards)	Mrs G Irwin (Foyle)
Mrs M Thompson (Armagh)	Mrs M Patterson (Iveagh)
Mrs A Erwin (Ballymena)	Mrs A Elliott (Monaghan)
Mrs H Murdock (North Belfast)	Mrs C Finlay (Newry)
Mrs D McMullan (South Belfast)	Miss J Patterson (Omagh)
Mrs L Robinson (East Belfast)	Mrs M Binnie (Route)
Mrs N Johnstone (Carrickfergus)	Mrs P Sleith (Templepatrick)
Mrs H Hull (Coleraine)	Mrs M Smith (Tyrone)
Mrs E McLaughlin (Derry/S'bane)	Mrs C Stevenson (YWG C'tee)
Mrs E Montgomery (Donegal)	Mrs A McCaughan (Wider World)
Mrs M Boggs (Down)	Mrs R Thompson (co-opted)
Mrs M Boyd (Dromore)	Mrs R Robinson (ex officio)
Mrs C Poynton (Dublin/Munster)	Miss E Brian (ex officio)

4. Members for 1997/98 are:

Mrs M Russell (Ards)	Mrs G Irwin (Foyle)
Mrs M Thompson (Armagh)	Mrs M Patterson (Iveagh)
Mrs A Erwin (Ballymena)	Mrs G. Drennan (Monaghan)
Mrs H Murdock (North Belfast)	Mrs C Finlay (Newry)
Mrs D McMullan (South Belfast)	Mrs H Greer (Omagh)
Mrs L Robinson (East Belfast)	Mrs M Binnie (Route)
Mrs N Johnstone (Carrickfergus)	Mrs P Sleith (Templepatrick)
Mrs H Hull (Coleraine)	Mrs P Orr (Tyrone)
Mrs E McLaughlin (Derry/S'bane)	Mrs C Stevenson (YWG C'tee)
Mrs P Johnston (Donegal)	Mrs A McCaughan (Wider World)
Mrs M Boggs (Down)	Mrs R Robinson (ex officio)
Mrs M Boyd (Dromore)	Miss E Brian (ex officio)
Mrs C Poynton (Dublin/Munster)	

5. Office-bearers 1996/97

President:	Mrs Margaret Boyd
Home Vice-President:	Mrs Cherry Poynton
Overseas Vice-President:	Mrs Phyllis Sleith
Home Treasurer:	Mrs Rosemary Thompson
Overseas Treasurer:	Mrs Gwen Irwin

6. Office-bearers 1997/98

President:	Mrs Phyllis Sleith
Home Vice-President:	Mrs Cherry Poynton
Overseas Vice-President:	Mrs Margaret Thompson
Home Treasurer:	Mrs Marbeth Russell.

7. Mrs Margaret Boyd has served as Central President 1995/97. During these two years she has given generously of her time in attendance at meetings of Boards and Committees and has travelled extensively throughout Ireland to fulfil her many speaking engagements. PWA would take this opportunity to thank her for her dedicated service during her period in office.

8. Mrs Mabel Smith will be retiring from Executive Committee this year. As Convener of the Arrangements Committee she has been responsible for the planning of Annual Meetings, Conferences and other activities. PWA is indebted to her for her quiet efficiency in dealing with many practical matters.

9. Mrs Doreen McMullan represents PWA on the Management Committee for South Belfast Friendship House and at "Women's Forum".

10. Mrs Annie Erwin represents PWA at "Women's Link".

Serving as PWA Home Treasurer

11. Mrs Rosemary Thompson retires, having served as PWA Home Treasurer for 10 years. The financial affairs of the Home Department of the Association were in the hands of a very efficient Treasurer, and PWA acknowledges with gratitude the many hours of service given to the on-going task of home finance.

12. As well as being Home Treasurer she also worked in a temporary capacity for 14 months in the PWA office. In this work she extended her role to include many other aspects of the oversight of deaconesses and woman workers.

Finance

13. PWA continues to be encouraged by the generous financial support of its members.

Bequests

14. PWA acknowledges with thanks the following bequests:-
 £500 from the estate of the late Margaret Montgomery.
 £3,000 from the estate of the late Sarah Simpson.
 £500 from the estate of the late Margaret S Dorman.

Birthday Thank Offering

15. During 1996 a decision was taken that the Birthday Thank Offering should run from 1st May until 30th April in each ensuing year. The 1996/97 Birthday Thank Offering will run from 1st January 1996 until 30th April 1997, and the amount raised to date has exceeded any previous total.

16. The 1996/97 Birthday Thank Offering is being shared between a home and overseas project.

(i) Home - the production of a video on drug abuse for the Alcohol and Drug Education programme.

(ii) Overseas - the provision of education materials for Church Schools for refugees in the Sudan.

17. Two launches are to be held for the ADE Video - Tuesday 13th May 1997 in Belfast and Tuesday 20th May 1997 in Dublin.

18. The 1997/98 Birthday Thank Offering, to be launched at the Annual Meetings on 8th May 1997, will be used for the complete refurbishment of Flat 3 in Marlborough Park North and also to provide some refurbishment of Flats 1 and 2.

Events

19. The Annual Prayer Meeting was held on 2nd May 1996 at 2.00pm in the Chapel, Church House.

20. The Annual Meetings were held on 9th May 1996 and once again the Assembly Hall was filled to capacity. The main speaker, Mrs Dian Hunt, gave a challenging address on the theme "Serve the Lord with Gladness".

21. On Saturday 14th September 1996 the PWA Annual Conference was held in Lowe Memorial. Missionaries and deaconesses shared the challenges of service today and representatives of the General Committee examined the role of the Presbyterian Committee. The Conference ended with a Review of 25 Years and members were delighted to have most of the former PWA Presidents in attendance for this part of the programme.

22. On 16th October 1996 members of Executive Committee attended a conference in Hillsborough Castle. The "Women of Faith" Conference was organised by Lady Mayhew and provided an opportunity for women from very different backgrounds and theological traditions to meet together and to share concerns, encouragements and hopes for the future within Ireland, both North and South.

23. A follow-up Conference was held on 19th February 1997.

Faithful Service

24. The dedicated service given daily to PWA by Mrs Rita Robinson, Miss Margaret Young and Miss Naomi Campbell through the office ensures the efficient administration of the Association and PWA acknowledges this with a deep sense of gratitude.

25. The PROP ladies continue to serve the Lord in many practical ways. This year their Annual Service was held in Kilmakee Church on Sunday 2nd February 1997 when the speaker was Miss Pamela Lockie. At this service a

donation of £300 was given for use in the Crèche at the Wives School at Zomba Theological College in Malawi.

26. PWA was saddened throughout the year to learn of the deaths of the following people. Sympathy has been extended to their families.

8th July 1996 - Miss Beattie Burns, who served as a missionary to India and as a deaconess.

31st July 1996 - Miss Hester Stewart, who served as a missionary to China and as a deaconess.

10th December 1996 - Miss Margaret Newell, who was pianist at many PWA Annual Meetings.

31st December 1996 - Mrs Pam Kirkwood who was to serve on Executive Committee as representative of the Omagh Presbytery.

11th February 1997 - Mrs Martha Davison, mother of Miss Elizabeth Davison, formerly deaconess in Abbot's Cross congregation.

Serving at Home

27. Mrs Lynda Gibson, President of the Deaconess Association, attended the UK Diaconate Conference in Birmingham from 4th June until 6th June 1996. She also attended the Kaire Conference held in Prague from 12th July until 21st July 1996.

28. Miss Mary Angus, Miss Sarah Swindle and Miss Frances Wright attended the International Assembly of Diakonia held in Friedrichroda, Germany from 3rd July until 11th July 1996.

29. Miss Frances Wright participated in the 5th sponsored cycle ride organised to raise funds for the Nazareth Hospital in Israel. "Over Jordan" covered a distance of 250 miles over very difficult terrain. From this event she raised £4,400.

30. The Deaconess Carol Service was held in the Kinghan Mission on 13th December 1996. PWA Executive members and office staff joined the deaconesses and woman workers for the service.

31. On 20th March 1997 Miss Hilary McDowell launched her second book "Around the World on 80 Prayers". On 31st March 1997 she resigned from her post as Director of the Multi Media Workshop. PWA would take this opportunity to thank her for all that she has contributed over 21 years and would wish her every blessing and success in the future.

32. During the year office bearers of the Deaconess Association and PWA office bearers have met together to further consider the role and development of the Diaconate. These meetings have also provided an opportunity for discussion and the sharing of concerns.

33. PWA is grateful for the continuing support given by the Secretary of the Home Board, Rev Derek Poots. His willingness to help and advise on many issues is very much appreciated.

Serving Overseas

34. In all aspects of overseas work PWA is guided by Rev Terry McMullan. His insight and understanding of personnel and partner relationships is shared freely with PWA, and the Executive Committee is deeply appreciative of his continuing support and encouragement.

35. PWA continues to support personnel overseas, paying a proportion of some grants to partner Churches and having responsibility for the upkeep of the PWA flat. Currently 16 missionaries are supported by PWA.

Brazil	Miss Mabel Colson
India	Miss Linda Jackson
Jamaica	Miss Claire Trueman
	Miss Leonora Wasson
Malawi	Miss Freda Algie
	Miss Elma Harkness (final furlough)
	Miss Naomi Martin (study leave)
	Miss Margaret Young
	Miss Diane Cusick
Nepal	Miss Linda McKee
	Miss Joy Gowdy
	Miss Pauline Orr
	Miss Amanda Christie
	Miss Helen Johnston
	Miss Sharon Creighton
Romania	Miss Ilona Walsh

36. Throughout the year consultations between the Overseas Board and PWA Executive Committee have continued in order to establish the best way in which the Overseas Board and PWA may work together in the future for the good of the overseas mission of PCI.

37. In January 1996 Mrs Margaret Boyd, Central President, visited Jamaica. She met with the Women's Fellowship of the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman and also spent time visiting some of the Church's Outreach Programmes and meeting with missionary personnel.

38. In April 1996 Miss Elizabeth Brian as PWA Executive Secretary and Associate Secretary of the Overseas Board spent three weeks in Nepal. In addition to visiting missionaries she was able to observe many UMN projects and attend the UMN Board of Directors meetings.

39. The Overseas Board held a Residential Conference at Loughry College from 18th to 19th October 1996. Several representatives from the Executive Committee attended and were challenged through a variety of speakers and activities to consider mission into 21st century.

40. On Tuesday 18th February 1997 Mrs Phyllis Sleith and Miss Elizabeth Brian, together with Rev Terry McMullan and Rev Brian Gibson, attended a day conference at Belfast Bible College entitled "Care of Missionaries".

Serving into 21st Century

41. At the General Committee meeting held on Thursday 6th February 1997, a presentation entitled "PWA into 21st Century" was made. This followed lengthy discussions within the Executive Committee and outlined the thinking on various issues and decisions the Committee was proposing to take.

42. One of the main issues under consideration is the involvement of PWA in the mission of our Church both at home and overseas. Other issues to be examined in the approach to the Millennium are Communications,

Resources, PWA Handbook, including the Constitution and Bye-Laws and the role of the Executive Committee.

43. Branch members will be given opportunity to prayerfully consider proposals and decisions over a period of time.

Wider World

44. Wider World has enjoyed another steady year and has included articles about the Church's work in Ireland and overseas, news of missionaries and partner Churches, deaconesses and woman workers, PWA and YWG branches, as well as articles which seek to inspire and challenge. There is also a Children's Page in each issue compiled by Adrienne Campbell and the covers of the magazine are produced by Raphael Sutter.

45. Sincere thanks are due to all those who contribute to the magazine and to the congregational agents who work so hard to promote the magazine within their local Churches.

Serving within Young Women's Groups

46. This year PWA Executive Committee and YWG Central Committee decided to take a joint theme:- "Serve the Lord with Gladness", as it was felt that this would emphasise the fact that PWA and YWG are all part of the same organisation.

47. The new office-bearers are Mrs Angela Marshall, Vice-Chairman, Mrs Karen McCracken, Secretary, and Mrs Fiona Moore, Treasurer. Thanks and appreciation are extended to the retiring office-bearers, Mrs Jennifer Cairnduff, Mrs Lynn Orr and Mrs Valerie Stevenson for all their hard work and commitment to YWG.

48. The venue for the Spring Rally on Thursday 2nd May 1996 was First Stewartstown Presbyterian Church. Dr Margaret Wallace was the guest speaker.

49. The Annual Coffee Morning was held on Thursday 17th October 1996. Mr George Ferguson accepted a cheque for £13,000 on behalf of the work of the Belfast City Mission in the Glencairn and Ballyduff estates. Miss Elizabeth Brian, representing the Overseas Board, was presented with a cheque for £13,500 for the work of Ilona Walsh in Romania.

50. Projects for 1996/97 are as follows:

Home:- Adelaide Road/Donore Presbyterian Church, Dublin, is rebuilding its Church and halls to provide better facilities for its growing ministry. YWG will be contributing to the construction of the Church.

Overseas:- Jamaica and Pakistan. In Jamaica nine new congregations need to build or refurbish places of worship and YWG will be supporting this Church extension programme and also the training of pastors. In Pakistan YWG will be helping to improve the living conditions of pastors and their families and providing pastors with bicycles.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev J M CATHCART
Secretary: _____

1. At the end of Matthew Chapter 9 Jesus pointed His followers to the possibilities for service. He pictured these opportunities as a harvest that is plentiful but with only a few farm labourers. His instruction was that they should pray that the Lord of the harvest would provide the labour force. Jesus realised that if people will pray sincerely concerning a need, they will eventually offer themselves to meet that need. The aim of the Board of Social Witness is to provide a practical Christian response to the needs of people today, and to address the issues that many have to face and provide relevant, helpful material and responses.

2. The reports that follow represent a vast amount of Christian Social Witness. Our prayer is that all we do will be effective in ministering to a wide range of human need in Christ's name.

3. The War Memorial Hostel Committee has had the satisfaction of seeing Phase 2 of "Derryvolgie Hall" officially opened by The Moderator on 1 December 1996. This provides in total living space for 88 young people who come to work or study in the Belfast area; but it provides more because under the leadership of the Rev Steve Stockman a vibrant Christian community has developed.

4. The ADE Committee launched its "Get Real" Leaders' resource pack on Drugs just after the last Assembly, and during May a video, particularly aimed at young people, on the subject of drugs.

5. The Child Protection Working Party under the Chairmanship of Rev Norman Cameron has had a busy year, subsequent to the publishing of the Guidelines, answering queries, preparing a new Application Form and a Consent Form. After the training sessions have been completed the Working Party will remain in place to serve the Church for at least another year.

THANKS

6. The Retired Ministers' House Fund Committee came to this Board through a close association with the Presbyterian Residential Trust. As both areas of work have developed we are proposing that this committee be transferred more appropriately to the Board of Ministry and Pensions. We say thank you to the Co-Conveners, Rev Tom Harte and Mr Lindsay Graham for their input into the Board of Social Witness and for the professional way in which the business of the Committee has been handled.

7. This is the first Assembly for 11 years that the Board does not have an Adviser in Social Service. Miss Pamela Lockie resigned at the end of April on the occasion of her marriage and moved to live in Scotland. She brought a Christian caring commitment to every aspect of her work, a work which expanded largely because of her vision of advancing Christ's Kingdom among the underprivileged and disadvantaged of society. The whole Church has

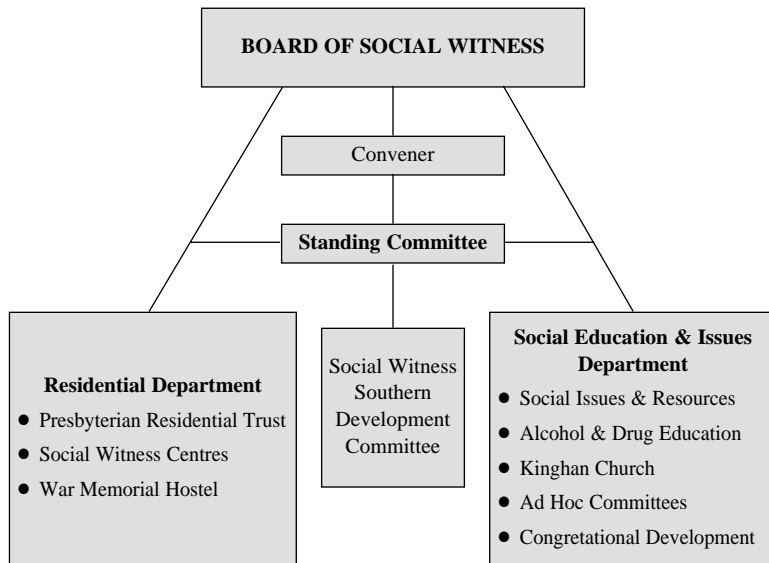
benefited greatly from her input and drive and we thank her for her efficiency, energy and effectiveness as she worked to put her faith into action. And now we wish her well in married life.

8. This Assembly brings the retirement of Rev David Brice from the Social Witness Centres Committee. This is work at the sharp end, and he has enthusiastically and skilfully guided the on-going work at Carlisle House, Thompson House, PCI Enterprises and the Volunteer Scheme. We thank him for the time and energy he has given to this Convenership and for his contribution to the overall work of the Board.

9. We thank all who help with the smooth running of the Board, Rosemary Thompson (Honorary Treasurer), Arlene Wilson, Ellen Wilmont, Phyllis Sleith and all other part-time and temporary staff in the office; the Conveners and all committee members and all Government agencies which provide the funding for many of our projects.

THE FUTURE

10. In response to the last, triennial, evaluation carried out by the Department of Health and Social Services (the body which funds the post of Adviser in Social Service), the NI Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) were engaged to address with the Board the recommendation made by the DHSS in their report. The main concern of the DHSS was the job description of the Adviser, a role which has become increasingly more complex as the work of the Board has expanded. Since the post of Adviser is vacant the Board urges the Church to take this opportunity to examine the way forward. The model that should best serve the Church - that the Board should be sub-divided - is set out below.



11. The person to oversee the Residential Department would be funded by the grant from the DHSS which currently pays the salary of the Adviser in Social Service and provides secretarial assistance. If the Board is to continue to provide the quality and range of service as at present, it needs the grant aid we receive from the DHSS, Health Boards and the Probation Service. Should a person with the necessary qualifications not be in post, the funding would cease.

12. This proposal, if accepted, will be the first step in what will be a major re-structuring of the Board of Social Witness.

Miss Pamela Lockie, Adviser in Social Service, writes:

1. I write this report with mixed feelings having tendered my resignation to the Board as I anticipate my future marriage and move to Scotland.

2. I have considered it a privilege to have fulfilled the role of Adviser in Social Service and wish to record my appreciation to present and past Board and Committee Conveners and Board members for their ongoing support.

3. I also wish to record my thanks to the staff in the office and to those in the projects. It is salutary to consider that the Board employs over 300 persons and has a financial turn over of £3 æ million of which 95%+ is funded through government, bequests and contributions. Therefore tribute must be paid to those government agencies who have supported the development of the work, particularly financially, over the past years.

4. It has been my privilege to be associated with the establishment of an ADE Educator post; two volunteer schemes - 1 providing volunteers to Thompson House, Belfast and the other providing volunteers to assist the social witness of 2 Dublin congregations; the establishment of PCI Enterprises (formerly the Clifton Street Centre); the establishment of Carlisle House; the development of Thompson House and the establishment of 426 Antrim Road as a half-way house with 7 bed-sits; and the establishment of Derryvolgie Hall for students. The Residential Trust has also known its developments - the rebuilding of River House, the extension of York House and Adelaide House, the building of its first nursing home - Harold McCauley House. These last developments within the Board's work have been carried out through the direction of the Secretary to that Committee. At the time of writing discussions continue with various Health and Social Services Trusts regarding the establishment of accommodation for persons with a learning disability. Over the years various resources have been published in the area of life issues, community development, alcohol and drug education to name a few.

5. The Child Protection Guidelines recently published must remain as a challenge for good practice in this area of work throughout the denomination.

6. It is with some anticipation that the future publication of resources addressing the issue of childlessness and infertility are anticipated. The context of my work has not only been within the Church serving on various committees such as Strategy for Mission, Special Assembly, Business Board, General Board, Youth Board, Education Board and Board of Evangelism but also I have been further challenged by my involvement as Moderator of the Department of Social Issues of the Irish Inter-Church meeting and also as an Executive Council member of Evangelical Alliance NI and Council member of EA UK.

7. Further it is good that the contribution of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in the area of community care has been recognised at statutory level through my membership of the DHSS Central Personal and Social Services Advisory Committee.

8. Not only has the contribution to the well-being of persons in need increased in its scope, but the context in which this has taken place has changed. The Board, similar to other voluntary organisations, is subject to Fair Employment legislation, contracting, Registration and Inspection Unit regulations, changes in government policy etc. In accepting contracts to provide services we must also meet the requirements of our funders in areas such as quality, efficiency etc.

9. Because of the extension of the role of Adviser in Social Service over the past 11 years, the DHSS as a recommendation of their evaluation in 1996, asked that the role of the Adviser be reviewed. The Standing Committee has worked hard at this seeking to evaluate our priorities, make explicit our Christian values, ensure that job descriptions are accurate according to the tasks to be undertaken.

10. As I leave I am conscious that the work of the Board of Social Witness stands at a cross roads. Foundations are laid. The challenge comes to the Assembly to continue the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ through the various agencies of the Board of Social Witness.

Rev John Faris, Convener of the Social Witness Southern Development Committee, writes:

1. Grants of £300 have been made to Adelaide Road, Donore Congregation towards supporting a summer assistant who provided help with Dolebusters and of £250 to a member of one of our Dublin Congregations towards fees required in connection with a Master's degree in counselling on the understanding that assistance may be given to the Board in the future. Our Dublin projects constantly report needs for counsellors. Other previously agreed grants to projects in Dublin have been continued.

2. Our volunteer scheme has continued satisfactorily. Karen Morgan has stayed for a second year at Adelaide Road, Donore. Carolyn Gibson began in September 1996 with Abbey congregation in work involving the Horticultural Project, managing the Abbey Church Outreach Centre at 5 Gardiner Row, helping Dolebusters clients with CVs and undertaking research into the drug problem. We commend this scheme to young people throughout our church who are looking for experience in social outreach with a Christian basis and would like to work in the Republic. Such experience can be helpful in social work training.

3. The speaker at our Day Conference for 1996 was Isobel McDonagh on the theme: "Caring for the Carers: the pastoral and spiritual nourishment of those involved in social outreach". The Moderator of the General Assembly opened the Conference with a short time of devotions. It was felt to be very worthwhile by those who attended, but in view of the low numbers there are no plans for a conference this year, although we are available to provide input to the meeting of the Synod of Dublin in 1998.

4. The quest to provide an addiction treatment centre in the Munster area has been subsumed into a wider survey of treatment for drug abuse within the Republic. We are grateful to Carolyn Gibson, her volunteer predecessor Julie Archibald and to Rev Fred Vincent for a research project in conjunction with the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster providing an overview of the needs, health care policies and the types and extent of treatments currently available so that an effective concerted contribution may be planned by Presbyterians. The Presbytery hope to proceed with an education programme for congregations.

5. Contacts are being followed up with other churches on a concerted response to the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and the Committee has been briefed on the progress of a consultation of European Churches on Poverty and Social Exclusion.

6. Mr Ken Jackson has resigned from the Committee and we are grateful for his years of faithful membership and for his many years of compassion for and service of the needy in the name of Christ, compassion and service that still continue. It is appropriate that the new worker with the Dublin Presbytery City Mission, Mr Stephen McGookin, has joined the Committee.

7. We wish to express our appreciation of the work of the Board Adviser in the Republic. Miss Pamela Lockie's concern to promote an all Ireland dimension in the Board's work is very commendable and we shall miss her willingness to travel across the border with a listening ear and a fund of wisdom and experience.

Ministers in Recognised Service

(Called by the Board of Social Witness under Code Par.281.3)

Rev John Chambers, Chief Officer, Relate (NI Marriage Guidance) reports:-

1. 1996 saw solid achievement in the work of Relate in Northern Ireland.

2. **RELATETEEN** This counselling service for teenagers whose parents are separating or divorcing has had a great increase in the number of young people coming for help. This was largely due to the appointment of a full-time co-ordinator for RelateTeen whose salary has been covered by BBC Children in Need.

3. One young user described the RelateTeen room as 'the sunny room'. RelateTeen counsellors can bring some sunshine into the lives of young people at what is a difficult time for them. A number of young people mention that parental breakdown coincides with school examinations. RelateTeen counsellors can provide enough support to help the young person stay on at school and cope better with their examinations.

4. The work of RelateTeen is the subject of a workshop at the second World congress on Family Law and the Rights of Children and Youth in San Francisco during the first week of June 1997.

5. **RESEARCH** *Going to Relate; the short-term effects*, is an interim client evaluation report which indicates that people are extremely distressed when they come for counselling, that this distress is greatly reduced after even

one session, but reduced even more after a series of counselling sessions. The majority of clients reported improvement in their relationships. Couples who go beyond a single interview are 6% more likely to stay together than those who attend only one interview. On average 78% of couples are still together after Relate counselling and just over 20% are back together after separation.

6. A comment from a female client: *I didn't think you would be able to help just sitting and talking, but I can recommend Relate knowing that they can really help. Before me and my husband went along I thought our marriage was over, but now he is much more understanding and we are a lot closer.*

7. The interim report provides much information which will help Relate improve the service. The final report will include a 6 month and 12 month follow up evaluation of those who have been for counselling.

8. **CLERGY TRAINING** A very successful venture during the past year has been the provision of an in-service training programme for Church of Ireland Clergy in each Diocese in Northern Ireland. This has been very well received by the clergy and it will be developed further. Relate has also provided a counselling service for members and clergy in the Diocese of Down and Dromore which has been well-used and effective.

9. **GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY** In the autumn of 1997 Relate Northern Ireland will be 50 years old. We would like to hear from any couples who were married in 1947 and will be celebrating their 50th anniversary this year.

Rev Doug Baker, Corrymeela, reports:-

1. Working from the Belfast offices of the Corrymeela Community during the past year I have been primarily involved in supporting local inter-church contacts, assisting various Christian responses to social needs, and encouraging opportunities for renewal of worship, Christian education and fellowship at congregational level.

2. It is important to realise that although the breakdown of the IRA cease-fire and the tensions surrounding Drumcree have had a devastating effect on community relations throughout Ireland there is more in-depth cross-community contact between churches at local level taking place than at any time in the past. The same events which have made cross-community contact in some settings more difficult to sustain have spurred clergy and lay leaders in other settings to initiate opportunities for dialogue and programmes of action which will contribute to peace in our society. In addition to resourcing some of these church-based cross-community projects, I have particularly been involved in networking leaders of such ventures so that they can learn from each other, and in working with the Peace and Peacemaking Committee to allow such local stories to be shared as part of the training for congregational Peace Agents.

3. The Community work from a Christian Perspective Network, which I continue to co-ordinate, has met regularly throughout this year. Visits to one another's projects provide opportunities for members not only to understand needs in different areas and to learn from creative responses but also to reflect on the understanding of the gospel which has brought many of these projects into being and sustains those involved in them. A residential meeting for this group led by staff of the Mediation Network focused on a biblical basis for

mediation and skills training which could be useful in staff relationships as well as intervention in wider community conflicts.

4. "Summerfest '96" at the Corrymeela Centre brought together well over 1000 people to explore "The Things That Make For Peace." Through speakers, workshops and other aspects of the programme we explored "Building Trust," "Mutual Respect," "The Participation of All," and "The Sharing and Stewardship of Resources." These continue to be primary themes for Corrymeela and in my own educational work in various settings.

5. Finally, I continue to serve as Convener for the Race Relations Committee and as a member of the Peace and Peacemaking Committee with particular responsibility for organising conferences and workshops for members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on these themes.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. Matters relating to drug use and addiction, as well as Gambling and AIDS, continue to be dealt with by the committee in an educative way. We would like to express our thanks to Mr Laurence Kerr our Education Officer for his input to the Committee's work.

2. Agitation of the appropriate bodies is put into action when the need arises. Other organisations such as Hope UK etc do the same and often we consult one with the other on these matters.

3. The Government's Consultation Paper on the Laws relating to Casinos and Gaming, Betting, Lotteries and Amusements with Prizes has been responded to.

4. Gambling, as well as Alcohol use, is being promoted through advertising as something of a pastime and which should be more and more socially acceptable. The Committee believe that the introduction of a Mid-Week Winday Lottery will be detrimental to society as a whole.

5. The follow up Video to the Committee's Youth Pack (Get Real), is now complete. Details are available from the Board Office or the PWA Office.

6. A further section on Heroin etc is now available for Get Real and can be obtained from the Board of Social Witness.

7. Material was circulated to ministers for their use on ADE Sunday in November. The Committee would encourage ministers to use the materials provided to educate on substance abuse and related matters.

8. Again we thank the Rev John Faris in the Republic for keeping ADE issues before the congregations there.

R J GREER, Convener

PRESBYTERIAN WAR MEMORIAL HOSTEL COMMITTEE

1. During 1996 phase 2 of the Derryvolgie Hall project was completed at a cost of approximately £500,000 and the 30 additional rooms with a

recreational area came on stream in October. Derryvolgie's 88 rooms are fully occupied. The total cost of the project was around £2m. The income and expenditure account shows a surplus for 1996 of £28,000 before interest and depreciation.

2. We rejoice that at Derryvolgie the highest aspirations of those who established the War Memorial Trust are being fulfilled in an environment which is both biblical and contemporary. Together with our colleagues on the University Education Committee there is an effective Christian witness at Queens.

3. We gladly pay tribute to the ministry of Rev Steve Stockman and all who work with him.

4. Early in 1997 Quest I Tec our main tenant in Howard House paying a rent of £72,000 per annum went into liquidation. Queen's University Belfast, which leases Brunswick House at a rent of £75,000 per annum, has indicated that it will not be renewing its lease which expires at the end of 1997.

5. The Committee is of the opinion that even with very considerable expenditure it would not be possible to fulfil the terms of our Trust in these buildings. Since our work is now firmly established at Derryvolgie we are seeking General Assembly approval for the sale of Howard House and Brunswick House.

6. The Trustees are being fully consulted at every stage.

7. Income from these sales will be used to fulfil the terms of the War Memorial Trust.

W J SLEITH, W J CAIRNS, Co-Conveners

PRESBYTERIAN RESIDENTIAL TRUST COMMITTEE

1. We again record our thankfulness to Almighty God for His continued blessing upon the work of the Residential Trust at all levels. The dedicated and caring work of staff in each of the homes is undoubtedly a factor in the high occupancy levels throughout the year and a further series of favourable reports from the various Inspection Units. We also recognise the important role played in the House Committees, and the inestimable contribution of the staff at Denegarh. The co-operation and team work is not only encouraging but also ensures effectiveness and efficiency in the work of the Trust.

2. Senior Staff appointments during the year have been: the appointment of Rosemary Thompson to the position of part-time Administrator, Jean Gourley the new wages and salaries clerk at Denegarh, and Evelyn Henning the new Deputy Head of Home for Sunnyside House, Bangor, who has taken up post to replace Mrs P Beers, to whom we express our thanks for almost 9 years of service. A new Warden has also commenced work at the St Andrew Bungalows at Mallusk and at the time of writing we are seeking a new Head of Home for Corkey House, Belfast.

3. We are pleased to report progress on the Dublin Nursing Home project. We will be entering into a partnership with the Dublin Central Mission

of the Methodist Church, whereby for a minimal capital investment a number of beds will be at the disposal of the Trust. It is anticipated that the Frazer Trust will also make a contribution.

4. Discussions have continued regarding the proposed sheltered housing scheme in conjunction with Lucan Presbyterian Church. The advice of the Trustees has been sought. Due to the complexity of funding arrangements no firm commitments have been made, although the Committee is impressed by the vision and enthusiasm of the team in Lucan spearheading this proposal, and we hope there will be further progress soon.

5. A replacement for Corkey House has demanded much thought through the year. While a possible site in the same locality has been identified, the Committee has requested a feasibility study into the needs of that area of Belfast. It is hoped this study will give some guidance to the Committee as to how to meet the future needs.

6. We are thankful that a number of bequests have been received through the year, although we have noted that an increasing proportion of bequests are given directly to homes rather than the general work of the Trust. This trend may curtail future developments in the work of the Trust. We would also record our thanks to members of our church and congregations who have generously supported the work of the Trust this year.

7. The Committee rejoiced in the announcement of the engagement of Miss Linda Shivers, our Secretary, to Mr Raymond Wray, and their subsequent marriage. We wish them God's richest blessing in their life together.

T J McCORMICK, Convener

RETIRED MINISTERS' HOUSE FUND COMMITTEE

1. The increased volume of applications for assistance referred to in last year's report has continued during this year. The committee has therefore felt it prudent to adopt an approximate spending target for each year in order to safeguard the Fund's future ability to respond to need. This will mean a prioritising of requests for assistance.

2. Rule changes approved at last year's Assembly have provided a consistent pattern in processing applications and are working well. A new revised application form is also proving advantageous. The Committee would put on record its appreciation to those involved in these changes, especially to Mr Ted Jackson for his financial expertise in advising the Committee and dealing with the business of the Fund.

3. For many years the Fund was linked to the Presbyterian Residential Trust - being served by the Secretary of the PRT. That link having been severed with the changes in PRT it has been felt that the Retired Ministers' House Fund would be more naturally suited to the Board of Ministry and Pensions rather than the Board of Social Witness. Accordingly a Resolution to effect this transfer is appended.

T L GRAHAM, Convener

SOCIAL WITNESS CENTRES COMMITTEE

1. The Centres continue to make a significant contribution in their particular area of expertise and do so seeking to proclaim Christ in word and deed.

2. **Thompson House** is being well used and its work much appreciated by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. The work becomes increasingly demanding upon staff as residents tend to have very deep seated and complex problems. The Director is gratified that several residents have professed faith in Christ.

3. **PCI Enterprises** once again has had to contend with Government cut-backs resulting in a reduced work force of 31 and 2 core worker posts. We congratulate Mr Harry Moreland, Director, in his appointment to the work of the Irish Mission and thank him for his 8 years of service to the work of Social Witness.

4. **Carlisle House** continues to expand its ministry: the ex-residents group has adapted part of the Clifton Street Centre for its purposes, plans are underway for a local information centre and for an extension to the present building for recreational purposes; and consideration is being given to the establishment of a "half way house" for those who have gone through the programme but have no home to return to.

5. **Learning Disabled Persons Project.** Suitable partnerships and sites are being sought.

6. We thank the staff of the Board Office for their support and especially Miss Pamela Lockie who has done so much to establish the work of this Committee.

D W BRICE, Convener

SOCIAL ISSUES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. The Committee's new name more accurately denotes the aims and objectives of its work. We have defined our fundamental aim as follows: to address through advocacy and resources social issues from a Christian perspective.

2. The Social Issues and Resources Committee is committed to resourcing the church membership at a local level and to providing guidance and help for those who are struggling to apply their Bibles to the increasingly complex ethical jungle that surrounds us in the light of recent scientific and medical discoveries. We have addressed two main areas in the past year: Infertility and Euthanasia.

3 *Infertility and childlessness:* a) A sub-committee continues to work on leaflets to help people affected by this problem (1 in 6 couples). The leaflets should be available by the autumn of this year. b) A Listen Line service is being proposed for childless and infertile couples. It will not be a counselling service but a listening service offered by a number of volunteers who have experienced this trauma and can offer sympathy, a listening ear and further information. The

finer details of this service are being worked out by the sub-committee at present with a view to offering such a service at the beginning of 1998.

4. *Euthanasia*: Plans are ongoing for a Seminar Tour jointly with CARE to consider this complex and increasingly important ethical question. The tour will cover seven Presbyteries between November 1997 and March 1998. The title is *A Time to Die? - A Christian Appraisal of Euthanasia*. The speakers looking at the subject from a medical and theological perspective will be Dr Wesley Magowan and Prof Stephen Williams.

5. *Ethical expertise*: Considering the number of ethical issues which face the SIRC, it hopes where possible, to boost the ethical side of the committee in terms of more specialised representation. In the past an Ethics Committee existed as a separate ad hoc committee of the Assembly. Our hope would be that the SIRC would become the main vehicle for consideration of ethical questions.

N A L CAMERON, Convener

KINGHAN MISSION COMMITTEE

1. It cost £50,500 to run the Kinghan Church last year. Included in this figure there were salaries for one full-time and two part-time staff which amounted to £31,000. The total income was £33,750 including the United Appeal allocation of £5,000 which means there is a deficit of £16,750 for the year.

Assuming no change in income or expenditure our capital will have been exhausted by 1999. Funding of this vital work among the deaf is a major concern.

2. In Northern Ireland there are 191,000 people with a significant hearing loss. 135,000 of these people are over 60 years old.

3. In the Presbyterian Church it is estimated that 45,000 people have a significant hearing loss. 31,500 are in the 60+ age range.

4. Deafness may be divided into four main groups:-

- (a) Those who have been born profoundly/severely deaf or become profoundly/severely deaf around birth. This group is sometimes called the prelingually deaf because the onset of their deafness comes before they have had the opportunity to acquire speech and language. There are about 12,000 in this group in NI. The majority of profoundly deaf people in this group use sign language as their first method of communication: for them English is always a second language and most experience difficulty with their second language. This is not caused by low intelligence but is directly caused by deafness.

Profoundly deaf people will only hear loud machinery in a factory as a slight sound if they do not wear their hearing aid. Hearing aids may help lipreading but without lipreading a profoundly deaf person will probably not be able to understand by hearing aid alone.

Severely deaf people rely a lot on lipreading even though they may use a hearing aid. They cannot use a telephone and need a text phone or a fax to be able to access the phone system. Without a hearing aid they will only hear a loud shout as a whisper.

Children. 12 children in every 10,000 are prelingually deaf and of these 4 will be profoundly deaf. This rate has stayed more or less the same over the last 15 years. Although rubella vaccination means that there are fewer babies born deaf because their mothers have had German measles during pregnancy, the drop has been off set by more babies being born deaf from other causes.

- (b) Those who have **become profoundly deaf** later in life ie after the acquisition of speech and language. This group is often referred to as the adventitiously deaf or the deafened. There are about 2,000 in this group. The majority in this group do not use sign language but rely on lipreading. The quality of their speech depends on the age of onset of deafness.
- (c) Those who are **hard of hearing**. The degree of hearing loss in this group ranges from a loss which is just perceptible to a significant loss which necessitates the wearing of an aid.
- (d) Those who have some degree of hearing loss with an **additional disablement**.

The Church at large has a responsibility to reach these people for the Kingdom.

5. Rev George Grindle came to the Kinghan Mission in 1967. In 30 years changes in the deaf community and in the Mission have been dramatic and extensive. It has been interesting to read the report of the Kinghan Mission for 1967.

6. The Report noted that unemployment in the deaf community was high and that many people had financial and employment problems. Four special Funds had been set up to help:-

- (a) Monthly Relief fund - to help those in need (£84 was paid out monthly)
- (b) Sunday Fare Fund - (A taxi firm was paid £500 per year to bring children to Sunday School)
- (c) Comforts Fund - additional grants in needy cases
- (d) House Purchasing Fund - houses were bought and rented to deaf people.

7. In 1967 social events in the mission included bowls, table-tennis, youth club, parties, outings and film shows. An interpreting service was provided.

8. In 1997 most people connected with the Kinghan Church have well paid jobs and not many experience financial problems. Today we have no funds paying out grants to those in need; instead members are encouraged to do their part in giving to help run the Church and to share what they have with other people. Last year after our special appeal at our anniversary service we are able to give £1,297 to Nightlight. Today the Mission has no property to rent to deaf people. Today Social Services provide many special facilities for deaf people and opportunities abound for deaf people to organise their own activities. It seems that the only problem is that there are so many opportunities for socialising deaf people find it difficult to make choices. Organisations for the deaf have multiplied and continue to multiply. In many ways deaf people have never had it so good. Today the Mission centre is not the first or only venue

where deaf people can meet. The interpreting service pioneered by the Mission was handed over to The Department of Health and Social Services in 1990.

9. In 1967 the spiritual emphasis of the Mission was seen in Church Services, Sunday School and Bible Class. After 30 years we have a special purpose built Church where weekly services (an average of 30 people attend the morning service) continue although there have been radical changes; praise is an important element and visual aids and our own printed material are extensively used. Kathy, our part-time secretary, spends a lot of time preparing visually attractive material for services and teaching. (Membership:- 120 people claim membership of Kinghan Church but the reality is that only 70 attend with any regularity.)

10. A special monthly Family Service (average attendance 40) and teaching Religious Education at Jordanstown School have replaced the Sunday School, as it has been impossible to continue as in the past because of the expense of providing transport.

11. The Bible Class has been replaced by Wednesday night at the Kinghan Church when Bible Study, teaching, sharing and an Alpha course are all part of the mix.

12. The whole thrust of the Mission is to become a Church. Slowly this is beginning to take shape.

13. There is however a vast mission on our doorstep. Many deaf people, especially young deaf people, have no contact with any Church. More and more hard of hearing people have given up the unequal struggle to be involved with the local church and know nothing about this special church. These people need to be reached for the Kingdom.

14. In order to continue and expand the work of the church the appointment of an assistant is urgent. Funding will soon become a major concern and it is hoped the United Appeal Board will consider a substantial increase in their grant to this work. Someone to succeed the Superintendent would need to be identified soon as he will be eligible to retire in 2003 and the new person will need time to prepare for this specialised work.

15. We continue to thank God for His blessings to us throughout the years and to thank His people for their faithfulness in prayer and giving. We know He will continue to guide us and ask for the continued interest and prayerful support of the church.

G GRINDLE, Superintendent
H GRAY, Convener

OLD AGE FUND, WOMEN'S FUND AND INDIGENT LADIES' FUND

1. The Directors of the above Funds report that, during the last financial year which ended 31 December 1996, 166 beneficiaries (55 in the Old Age Fund, 85 in the Women's Fund and 26 in the Indigent Ladies' Fund) received grants.

2. The total distribution of the Funds in Grants, Donations and Gifts was £73,538 (£25,477 from the Old Age Fund, £37,121 from the Women's Fund and £10,940 from the Indigent Ladies' Fund).

3. During the year 8 grants ceased because of the deaths of beneficiaries and 1 beneficiary withdrew because of improved financial circumstances. Thirteen new beneficiaries were added to the Roll.

4. A 'Special Gift' of £100 was sent to every beneficiary prior to Christmas.

5. During the year the Directors responded sympathetically to various problems which had been brought to their attention. They gave one-off donations, as needed, to assist in particular cases where immediate financial aid was more appropriate than annual grants. Ministers are asked to bear in mind the possibility of help from these funds in similar cases connected with their own congregations.

6. The Directors assure the Church that all monies that come to the Funds are carefully and wisely spent.

7. The Directors of the Funds deeply appreciate the kindness and thoughtfulness of those who have remembered the work of the Funds either by gift or bequest, and hope that their example may encourage others to support this vital aspect of the church's outreach.

8. Mrs May Leckey retired from her post in Church House at the end of 1996. The Directors are glad to report that she has agreed to continue on a part-time basis as Assistant Secretary to the Funds, until her successor is able to take up the duties. We thank her for this further indication of the dedication and sensitive service which has characterised her work for the Funds.

9. The Directors of the Funds wish to thank the Staff for the effective and sympathetic way in which they carried out the administration of the Funds during the year.

E W McDOWELL, Honorary Secretary

CHILD PROTECTION WORKING PARTY

1. The past year has been a very busy one for the Working Party as we have guided the Church in the process of implementing the Child Protection Guidelines. We have been very encouraged by the level of interest and the seriousness with which individual congregations are handling this issue. Indeed it would be hard to think of an issue in recent years that has so captured and exercised the attention of Kirk Sessions and Youth Leaders.

2. Since the General Assembly of June 1996 the Working Party has dealt with many queries and through the issuing of Additional Notes to the Guidelines in December 1996 has sought to answer the more common questions. Legal and insurance matters continue to prove difficult and sometimes definitive answers cannot be given. We are however seeking, in association with Messrs Bartholomew and James, to provide as much cover for our Church, Youth Leaders and Designated Persons as possible.

3. Awareness training in every Presbytery will be completed by May 1997 and the Working Party is indebted to Nexus and the Volunteer Development Agency in carrying out this mammoth task. The response in some Presbyteries was overwhelming.

4. The whole process over this past year has been very much focused on awareness raising. We have made a good start and we hope that Sessions and Youth organisations will take time to work through the Guidelines and the practical implications for their local situation.

5. We put on record our sincere thanks to each member of the Working Party, especially those who have helped in training, and to Arlene and Ellen in the Board office for their tireless work over the past year. We are also indebted to Miss Pamela Lockie who has advised us at all times with wisdom and sensitivity and fielded many of the queries that have come reflecting the complexity of this area. She will be greatly missed.

6. We appreciate that this is an ongoing process and congregations are in need of further help and practical guidance. The recommendation is therefore that the Working Party continues for a further year to monitor the situation and provide help.

N A L CAMERON, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the Working Party on Child Protection be retained for a further year to monitor the implementation of the Child Protection Guidelines and provide ongoing help to congregations.

3. That the General Assembly abhor government's introduction of a mid-week lottery game in the United Kingdom, believing that it is creating a greed-driven society and breeding a nation of gamblers.

4. That the General Assembly remain firmly opposed to proposed government changes which will further liberalise the laws within Northern Ireland with respect to Casino, Gaming, Betting, Lotteries and Amusements with Prizes laws.

5. That the General Assembly, realising that government has already banned cigarette advertising on television because smoking kills, now call upon the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland governments to extend this ban to alcohol advertising, since use of this product can also kill.

6. That the General Assembly recognise Sunday 16 November, 1997 as ADE Sunday and encourage ministers and leaders to use the materials provided to educate their congregations and groups on drug related matters and addiction on this Sunday or other suitable date.

7. That the General Assembly encourage and commend to ministers and leaders the ADE Video on Drugs for drug education, recommending that it be used widely throughout the Church and beyond.

8. That the General Assembly record their thanks to Miss P A Lockie for her work as Adviser in Social Service over the last eleven years.

9. That, following the resignation of Miss P A Lockie as Adviser in Social Service, the General Board be empowered to act, if necessary, for the General Assembly in

- (i) approving a new job description for her successor;
- (ii) asking the Nomination Board to submit a nomination, or nominations;
- (iii) making the appointment.

10. That the General Assembly grant permission for the sale of the War Memorial Hostel property situated at Howard Street and Brunswick Street.

11. That the _____ be appointed as Co-Convenor of the Retired Ministers' House Fund.

12. That the Retired Ministers' House Fund Committee be transferred from the Board of Social Witness to the Board of Ministry and Pensions.

13. That, as a transitional arrangement, the Retired Ministers' House Fund Committee be appointed for the ensuing year as follows:

(a) _____, L. Graham, Conveners
The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, Rev. T.I. Harte, L. Graham;
Revs. J.M. Cathcart, Board Convenor, Financial Secretary,

(x) Rev. James Clarke; D. Carson, J.O. Greer.

(y) Revs. J.H. Hanson, M. Barr; W. Lawson, Mrs. E. Craig, Mrs. W. Moffett, Mrs V. Armstrong.

14. That, as a transitional arrangement, all members of the Retired Ministers' House Fund Committee be appointed members of the Board of Ministry and Pensions for the ensuing year.

15. That the customary grants made by the Social Issues and Resources Committee and Alcohol and Drug Education Committee, up to a total of £3,660 be met by the Incidental Fund.

16. That the resignation of Rev D W Brice as Convenor of the Social Witness Centres Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services, and the _____ be appointed in his place.

17. That the Board of Social Witness, with its associated working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 281 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

Anent Par 281(2)(g) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 281(2)(g) of the Code be deleted, and that Par 281(2)(h) be renumbered as Par 281(2)(g).

J M CATHCART

Anent Par 288(2)(e) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that a new Par 288(2)(e) of the Code be inserted as follows:

“(e) administer the Retired Ministers' House Fund;”

and that the present Par 288(2)(e) be re-numbered as Par 288(2)(f).

J M CATHCART

BOARD OF EVANGELISM AND CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Convener: Rev J C BUICK
Secretary: Rev D J TEMPLE

1. The Board of Evangelism and Christian Training met three times during the year.

2. The remit of the Board is to encourage and help the Church to reach out to the lost in our day and generation. One of its responsibilities is to service the work of Evangelism so that the witness of our Church will be both efficient and effective.

3. As we prepare for the launch of "Life 2" our prayer is that the people of God will have a sincere passion and cry for Evangelism. Luke in his Gospel tells us that on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, prior to His going to the cross, He wept over that city. John Knox had a similar passion when he cried, "Give me Scotland or I die". God grant that we, the people of God, will pray and work so that Ireland, will experience an out-pouring of the Spirit of God in revival blessing in the coming days.

4. The Conveners and members of the different committees on the Board have given much time and prayer as they sought to address the various issues that were their responsibilities. To all of them we say a sincere "Thank You".

5. All the Conveners join in expressing sincere appreciation to the Secretary of the Board, the Rev David Temple, and to all the staff in the Irish Mission Office - their co-operation and help over another year is gratefully noted. We not only appreciate what they do, but how they do it.

6. One of the resolutions in our Report indicates that the National and International Problems Committee propose to withdraw from our Board at this Assembly. The Board would wish to place on record its thanks to the past Conveners of this Committee and in particular to its present Convener, the Rev Charles McMullen, who, like his predecessors, has given himself wholeheartedly to this task and has always been willing to take more than his fair share of the work-load. He chaired the meetings in his usual gracious manner and his Committee worked as a team. One of the highlights of his Convenership was the production recently of the booklets on "Church and Culture". We thank him most sincerely and are sure that his talents and gifts will continue to be used in this area, as well as his work in the Parish ministry.

REV J C BUICK

The Rev David Temple writes:

7. After completing a period as Irish Mission Convener, Rev Jackson Buick became Board convener in 1991. Although retired, he gave his full energies to the task of guiding one of the largest Boards of the Church. A man

who has maintained his missionary vision throughout his ministry, and well known throughout the Church as an able evangelist, he always kept before the Board the practicalities of the work of the Gospel.

8. His friendly counsel and gracious approach have been appreciated by many, not least the committee conveners of the Board. We cannot imagine him ever really retiring, but as he lays down the work of the Board we know that he will never lay down the work of the Kingdom. Just as many throughout the Church are ever thankful for having come in contact with Rev Jackson Buick, so also the members of the Board thank God for this man's evangelistic zeal, gentle leadership and Christ-like humanity.

VERY REV Dr R STERRITT

9. Dr Sterritt became Irish Mission Convener in 1989. In 1991 the Church honoured him by calling him to be Moderator of the General Assembly. From 1992 to 1997 he again served as Irish Mission Convener. Amid the demands of one of the largest congregations in the Presbyterian Church, he gave unstinting service to the Irish Mission. He came into the convenership at a time of transition and change. His wise counsel, and friendly approach were much appreciated by Superintendent, Office Staff and Irish Mission Workers alike. His deep interest and concern to foster the work involved him in not only undertaking to promote the Mission through Church services etc. but also getting first hand experience of mission in Ireland by travelling to meet with the Workers in their various situations. His able chairmanship of often lengthy committee meetings has enabled the Mission to organise itself effectively, maintain its vision and translate that into an effective strategy. We thank him for his leadership, friendship and counsel and wish him and his congregation well in the next few years leading up to his retirement.

REV JOHN BRACKENRIDGE

10. The Rev John Brackenridge served the Church with distinction as Convener of the Marriage and Family Committee. To his Convenership he brought among other things:

- A clear Biblical view of Marriage and the Family.
- A sensitivity to those whose marriages were under stress or which had broken down.
- A vision for a Counselling Service which would be effective in helping people and which would also be respected by the secular world.
- An ability to communicate the Churches' teaching on Marriage and the Family to the media and
- An efficiency in conducting the business of the Committee on Mixed Marriages.

Under his Convenership the work of the Committee progressed and as a Board we thank him.

IRISH MISSION COMMITTEE

1. There can be no doubt that Ireland is undergoing a period of rapid social upheaval. Robert Dunlop, a Baptist Pastor who has ministered in Co. Kildare for many years, has caught the reality of the situation in a recent study paper in which he says, "The turbulence of cultural, sociological and religious mutation has catapulted us into a troublesome tailspin. Because we have not been accustomed to much change and certainly not to rapid change, our reactionary dynamics have both a sensational and sometimes irrational hue. Irish religious life in the 20th century has been characterised by an obsessive and unhealthy preoccupation with the mechanics of religious practice and performance - now that the tide is turning we are enduring an obsessive and unhealthy preoccupation with denigrating and denouncing religious practice and performance. While hypocrisy, a la carte selectivity and the bolthole of the 11th commandment, "thou shalt not get caught", have always had a place of dubious respect in Irish society, they have now been turned into a media whipping-post to lash everything that smells transcendent. All this throws us headlong into confusion and lays in our lap a vacuum which we have never had to nurse before. When a creature like this clings to us there are several responses we can make - we can hand it on to somebody else, we can pretend it isn't there and carry on business as usual, we can panic and close up shop or we can seize the opportunity to address the space before it's filled with junk. Of all people, Christians, who are seriously formed and informed by Biblical truth and evangelical thought, should be able to address the challenge of a cultural revolution." The Irish Mission seeks to conduct its missionary endeavours against the backdrop of this challenge.

2. If cultural and social change are the characteristic of society, change also has been a characteristic of Irish Mission personnel. John Henry Corcoran accepted a call to a pastorate with Calvary Chapel in California; Diane Petherick moved to take up an appointment with Regent Street Presbyterian Church in Newtownards and Ken Jackson who came out of retirement to help in the Dublin Presbytery City Mission during the vacancy has now finally retired. We would like to place on record our thanks to all of them who in their individual ways served the Lord with zeal and dedication.

3. We are thankful to Almighty God who continues to call people into the service of the Kingdom, indicating to us that the missionary mandate "to go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19) is far from over. During the year we have welcomed into the Mission, Stephen McGookin from Coleraine who along with his wife Judy is settling into the challenging work of the Dublin Presbytery City Mission. Harry Moreland, an elder in Rathcoole Presbyterian Church, who along with his wife Ann was working for the Social Witness Board in Belfast, has been appointed as an Irish Mission Worker, and after a short course of study at Belfast Bible College will be located in the Irish Republic. David Boyd completes his course at Belfast Bible College in June and during the summer hopes to be located in Dublin to develop outreach work in the Adelaide Road/Donore congregation.

4. Ireland truly is the missionfield on our doorstep. In rising to the challenge the Irish Mission has had meetings with representatives of the Home

Mission and the Dublin Presbytery's Strategy for Mission Committee. Together we are exploring the possibilities of a Church Plant in one of Dublin's vast and needy housing estates. As a committee we have also been looking at our present strategy and the possibilities of developing some work in the West of Ireland - Galway, Ballinasloe, and Sligo all being areas with opportunities and already having a Presbyterian input. The Monaghan Presbytery has also approached us with its plans for an Irish Mission Worker in the Monaghan/Cavan area.

5. The past year has been one of continuing encouragement, although that is in no way to underestimate the difficulties of mission in a land where secularism, materialism, apathy, superstition and error are so prevalent.

6. John Chinnery has settled well into Tullamore and together with his wife Lillian has been well accepted in the community where their sensitive ministry and gracious humanity has encouraged a good number to gather in their home for Bible Study. Their prayer and counselling ministry has encouraged many people and they have rejoiced to see some five or six people come to faith in Jesus Christ. We pray that the vacancy in Mountmellick and Tullamore Congregations will soon be filled and that our Irish Mission Workers in those areas will be an encouragement to the new minister.

7. Sam Francey in Portlaoise has been particularly encouraged at the establishment of a Children's Bible Meeting in nearby Mountmellick. This has been the fruit of several years' work which has been encouraged by Summer Mission teams.

8. In Carlow, Philip Kelso continues to work alongside Rev. Stephen Johnston, the Home Mission Development Minister. A small group meets for Bible Study in the Church but Philip also has individual Bible Studies with interested people. Both Philip and Stephen have opportunities in the Regional Technical College to share the Faith with students.

9. William Workman and his wife Sandra reach out into the housing estates in Athy and Naas. The work among children and young people is rewarding but also difficult as many come from difficult family situations. The adult Bible study group is small but those who come are encouraged.

10. In Kilkenny, Billy Patterson continues to see growth through the Hotel Bible Studies. His diligent visitation in surrounding villages and hamlets puts him in touch with the neediest of people who find that "the entrance of God's Word brings light".

11. On the east coast at Arklow, Philip and Sue Whelton concentrate on reaching out to children and young people. This seaside town and holiday resort with its busy harbour is an area where drugs are both prevalent and available especially to young people. Philip is gifted in reaching out to these young people but finds they have no grasp of even the basic Christian truths. Occasional praise evenings in local hotels, and youth events organised in the local community/leisure centre give opportunities to meet parents as well as children.

12. Keith Preston continues to work diligently in Clonmel and Cahir. The work among the children has been especially encouraging. Since John Henry Corcoran's departure to California, Keith has been helping Stephen Johnston with the work in Fermoy. The children's meeting recommenced in the Community centre. It began with five in October and now has in excess of twenty enthusiastic children. A small adult Bible Study meets in the Grand

Hotel. Those who come are very faithful and we would ask for prayer that others might be led of the Spirit to come under the sound of God's Word. The Irish Mission have decided to place a Worker in this area who would work in both Cork and Fermoy and the Home Mission would like to see a new minister appointed to the joint charge of Fermoy & Cahir.

13. In Northern Ireland Tom Moorehead continues to work in the Glens of Antrim. This is a sensitive and thoughtful work in the present political climate but many are thankful to God for the unassuming way in which Tom carries on his faithful visitation.

14. Tom McCrea and his wife Ella continue to carry on their counselling and educational ministry combating the errors of the cults. Tom will retire in October and the talents and expertise he has brought over the last 11 years will be missed.

15. As we carry on the work entrusted to us by the Church, we are ever thankful to the United Appeal Board for its continuing support and to a multitude of people throughout the Church who give so generously and pray so faithfully. We are thankful to the many Ministers who give our Workers and the Superintendent the opportunity to speak in their congregations about the work.

16. As we assess the present and future needs there is no doubt that the Presbyterian Church is awakening to the challenge of mission on the home front. As the century draws to a close there is undoubtedly a need for more people on the ground, for the most important vehicle in mission today is the individual whose life breathes out a sweet savour of Christ. No wonder the Scriptures say, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

17. We put on record our appreciation of the work done by the Rev David Temple, as Superintendent of the Mission and Editor of the Christian Irishman.

Both in his pastoral care of the Workers and their families, and in his deputation work, he ensures that the welfare of the Workers and the needs of the Mission are kept before the Church.

The Committee also pays tribute to the office staff whose proficiency and co-operation contribute greatly to the efficient running of the Mission.

18. Finally we gratefully acknowledge the interest and support given to the Mission over many years by the Rev J C Buick, and wish him every blessing on his retirement as Convener of the Board.

R STERRITT, Convener
D J TEMPLE, Superintendent

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS COMMITTEE

1. In 1938 a Committee on "Causes of War" was established by the General Assembly to investigate issues of war and peace. Three years later its title was greatly expanded to become "The Committee for the Interpretation of the Task of the Church in the Present Crisis". The Rev Dr J E Davey was the first Convener. In 1943 the Committee was authorised to print and circulate that

year's report as well as that of 1942. Clerks of Presbytery were invited to return observations to the Convener.

2. These are the historical antecedents of the Committee on National and International Problems. It is interesting to chart the course of contemporary problems handled by the Committee over almost sixty years. For example, the political dimension has been reflected locally from "The Duties of a Christian in relation to Political and Religious Differences in Ireland" (1950), to "Republicanism" (1974) and "Loyalism" (1975). In 1986 a report was presented to the General Assembly on "God's Word to the Church in our Present Crisis".

3. In 1966 the Committee examined the controversial subject of religious discrimination in Ireland. Reviewing the report in the "Irish News", a well-known Roman Catholic priest described it as "one of the most important things to happen here for a long time", though he suggested that it was difficult for others to appreciate the sense of hurt which those who believed they had been discriminated against, felt. In his book "Our Irish Presbyterian Heritage" Finlay Holmes notes that "The report evoked sharp criticism from some members of the Assembly, which nevertheless declared itself opposed in principle to 'all unfair religious discrimination', and referred the report back to the committee for revision in the light of comments by Presbyteries and the slightly modified version was received without much opposition the following year." ("Our Irish Presbyterian Heritage", p.171).

4. "Christians and World Affairs" (1952) was a report underlining the more global thrust of work completed. Similarly the focus was upon "Refugees and Displaced Persons" in 1950, "The Colour Problem" (1951), "The Social and Economic Challenge of Communism" (1953), and "Struggle for World Community" (1954).

5. However, the main thrust of the Committee's work has been devoted to social and moral issues. In 1953 the concern was "Encroachments on the Christian Sunday". The following year this had become "Puritanism and Sabbath Observance". In the late 1950s "Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage of Divorced Persons" which was followed by a wider debate on "Christian Sexual Ethics" (1959). "Unemployment" (1960), "Use of Leisure in the Modern World" (1969), and "Television" (1970) received attention. From 1963 there is the rather intriguing title, "Manipulation of the Mind and Tobacco Smoking".

6. To underline the scope and availability of the material as well as the volume of research involved here is a list of the work completed since the late 1970s:

- 1977 - Pluralism
- 1979 - Homosexuality
- 1980 - Christian Lifestyle
- 1980 - Abortion
- 1982 - Nuclear Arms Race
- 1983 - Nuclear Energy
- 1984 - Christian Attitudes to Employment and Unemployment
- 1985 and 1986 - Crime: Prevention, Punishment and Rehabilitation
- 1986 and 1987 - God's Word to the Church in our Present Crisis (Related to Ireland)
- 1988 - AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)

- 1989 - Some Trends in Modern Society
- 1990 - Towards a Concern for the Environment
- 1991 - The Importance of the Family
- 1992 - New Age
- 1993 - Europe and the European Community
- 1994 - Nationhood
- 1996 - Pamphlets on Church and Culture - Bridging the Gap

7. This year we do not bring a further report on national or international affairs to the General Assembly. We do not claim for one moment now to have solved every world-wide issue. Instead we have reached the conclusion that the Committee itself may be part of the problem. Indeed, to quote the title of our 1971 report, the time has come for “Radical Change, Reform and Revolution”.

8. For some time it has been felt that Presbyteries have not been the most effective agencies to handle our research. Crowded agendas concentrate on business with little time to discuss the substance of our publications. Comments transmitted to the Convener have tended to reflect the mind of a sub-committee rather than the entire Presbytery. Hours spent in painstaking preparation have been rewarded by cursory nods from often weary Presbyteries as our material is waved through.

9. This is not to say that many have failed to find our work stimulating and rewarding. Certain initiatives have in fact been taken as a result of our reports. For example, the Panel on the Environment arose from our research into green issues. A leaflet based on our material on “The New Age” has been distributed widely. A conference was organised by the Peace and Peacemaking Committee after our work on “Nationhood”. Of course, it is also true to say that some reports have more impact than others and that there will always be a variety of response to anything we submit.

10. In recent times we have attempted to bypass the handling mechanism of Presbytery. Pamphlets have been produced for use by Kirk Sessions and Midweeks on the subject of “Church and Culture - Bridging the Gap”. These are now available and should provide, we hope, an excellent vehicle for discussion and action. Various aspects are included from urban to rural culture, youth culture, and secularism. Our argument is that the Church itself can be a block to the spread of the Gospel. One analogy compares the Church to a heavy institutional tanker. Many young people are jumping overboard, having found antiquated sailing methods unattractive. Of those remaining on the ship many are unable to articulate what they believe. Many passengers expect the traditional rites of passage without wanting to pull their weight. We seek to challenge the Church to waken up and come alive.

11. The main difficulty for our Committee has been that we find it increasingly difficult to find topics which are not being covered elsewhere. There was a time when this Committee was very much avant-garde in its approach, but now other bodies such as The Peace and Peacemaking Committee and the Social Witness Board are carrying the flag. Outside agencies such as CARE and ECONI, The Evangelical Alliance, TEAR Fund and Christian Aid have simply better resources than we do. Journals and publications are increasingly prolific on so many subjects. A recently launched and locally produced magazine entitled FRONTIERS offers evangelical perspectives on

faith and society, and this again is an excellent aid. This leaves us asking a twofold question - is there any benefit from creating work for the sake of work, and can we produce better material more efficiently than what is now being done by others?

12. Another factor is that the constraints of present Board structures make it extremely difficult to draw on the necessary expertise in order to address complex subjects. We are limited by "x" and "y" nomination lines with the result that the same people have the impossibly difficult task of moving from science and technology in one year to social issues in the next.

13. Our overall conclusion is that the General Assembly could still benefit from a think-tank on issues which are not already being handled elsewhere, and might still in any case want to find its own mind on particular issues. There would be merits in appointing a panel to act, if and when directed, to produce a report. This would alleviate the additional problem of the Committee on National and International Problems spending so much time deciding what it should actually be doing.

14. For these reasons we are proposing that the present Committee be thanked for its services and discharged, and that a panel on current affairs be appointed under the General Board to sit and write as directed.

C J C McMULLEN, Convener

CHRISTIAN TRAINING COMMITTEE

1. The past year has seen some interesting developments in the work and responsibilities of the Committee. It is encouraging to report that other Christian churches and organisations have recognised the worth of training materials produced by the Committee. "Firm Foundations", the study manual on the Westminster Confession of Faith, was commended in a U.K. Christian periodical. 500 copies of this production were purchased for use in the churches of South Korea and a further 500 have been dispatched to the Qua Iboe Church in Nigeria. This same publication has attracted the attention of a major Christian Publishing organisation in Scotland and this has been followed up by a personal visit to the publisher by the Secretary of the Board of Evangelism. We are certain that there will be further positive developments in this area.

Rutherford House, the Edinburgh-based Christian Training Centre, expressed a strong interest in the Elders' Training Manual produced by our Committee and as a result the Board of Evangelism has given permission for this work to be reprinted by Rutherford House for use in Scotland. An introduction to this reprint acknowledges the work of our church in its production. We rejoice that all these materials are proving useful to the wider church.

2. The Committee continually endeavours to promote the use of training materials in our own church. In the past year a scheme was launched to provide a complete set of our training materials free of cost to all ministers installed in their first charge and this has met with appreciation.

3. During the year a leaflet explaining the meaning and implications of church membership has been completed; its title, not surprisingly, is, "What

should a church member be?" This may be used as a follow-up to church membership classes or in the general work of visitation.

4. Work has been progressing on a booklet presenting the distinctive doctrines of the Presbyterian Church. In the course of preparation the committee recognised that much of the proposed material for this booklet is already included in the existing study manual, "On Profession of Faith", consequently it has been decided to reshape this existing manual and also add some additional material to it. This will be launched when existing stocks of "On Profession of Faith" are used up. We would ask all who teach in the church to note that the manual "On Profession of Faith"; contains excellent study outlines on the basic Christian doctrines of God, Christ, salvation, the Christian life, the church and the sacraments. This material can be used not only for church membership classes but also for Bible studies, nurture groups, etc.

5. The Christian Training Committee is very mindful that useful materials relating to Christian training have been produced by other Boards and Committees of our church; for this reason the proposal by the Strategy for Mission Committee to align training committees and agencies under one Board is viewed in a very positive light. This will at least prevent the unnecessary duplication of training materials and resources and at best provide a much more efficient training body for the whole church.

6. Preparation for Life 2 will hopefully occupy the attention of many congregations in the year ahead and we pray that all churches will be active in the work of Christian training.

W J JOHNSTONE, Convener

COMMITTEE ON DIVINE HEALING

1. From the reports received from eleven Presbytery Agents, it would appear that the ministry of healing is organized mainly at Presbytery level usually with a special monthly service for prayer and the laying on of hands. One Presbytery reports that arising out of this specific ministry they are finding more and more opportunities to minister further to people in other areas (for example, marriage counselling) showing that God's healing grace is not only for sick bodies, but also for hurting minds and for unsaved souls.

2. Two Presbyteries have left it up to the individual congregations to highlight the ministry of healing, and the Committee is encouraged to know that many congregations are exercising this ministry as part of their ongoing work and witness. The Committee is keen to encourage this trend, and reminds congregations of its booklet, "Divine Healing - A gift for today's Church" which was written specifically for congregations seeking to start the ministry of healing, and is available from the Irish Mission Office.

3. Twelve Presbyteries were represented at a conference organized by the Committee in September. The Rev David Jardine, a Church of Ireland minister from Divine Healing Ministries, spoke about healing in general and referred to many recent examples in his ministry. There was also an opportunity for discussion and prayer in small groups.

4. Much of the Committee's work for yet another year has been taken up with "Stress in the Ministry" and with seeking to carry out the recommendations of last year's Assembly. The Committee records its thanks to the sub-committee convener, the Rev Ivan Hull, and is pleased to present the following additional report as an Appendix.

J ISAAC THOMPSON, Convener

APPENDIX

FOLLOW UP REPORT ON STRESS IN THE MINISTRY

1. Stress is an undisputed and growing aspect of every day life today in a society that is increasingly insecure, fragmented, and pressurised. Ministers are not exempt from the stresses of life. Without in any way overlooking or being indifferent to the stresses that are prevalent among the occupants of the pews, the investigation carried out by the Divine Healing Committee is the first investigation into occupational stress in ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Committee believes that awareness of sustained stress, its effects, and how to cope with it and manage it are essential if ministers are to offer adequate pastoral care to members of congregations who are struggling with stress related problems. The aim is twofold: to help ministers help others through helping ministers come to grips with their own stresses.

2. At the 1996 General Assembly, the Divine Healing Committee produced its Report into Stress in the Ministry, based on a survey carried out the previous year. That Report was sent down to Presbyteries for study and comment, and the 1997 Report is a follow-up based on the returns received.

3. The Divine Healing Committee is encouraged by the widespread interest shown in its Report from as far away as Texas and California. The Committee is pleased to report that sixteen Presbyteries sent in their comments. It is surely an indication of the merits of the Report that of these responses, only one Presbytery rejected the Report.

4. The Survey and Report are not without their limitations. With hindsight, the Committee could have produced a more incisive questionnaire, or given a separate one to ministerial spouses. The Report contained an appendix so detailed that one Presbytery considered it "daunting," but this was the information base that enabled certain conclusions to be drawn, and is available for others to draw their own conclusions. The Report itself made inferences and statistical predictions based on the 123 returns to the survey, 30 per cent of the total ministers in active service, a response level that one Presbytery observed was "significant in itself." Most respectable polls base predictions on much smaller samples. There is no reason to doubt the credibility of the predictions made by our Report. Whatever its limitations, the Report has succeeded in bringing the subject of Ministerial Stress out into the open, even if it has "raised more questions than it has answered."

5. Most Presbyteries expressed a general comment on the Report in highly supportive terms, while some went further: "highlights an area that needs attention," "highlights what many people already suspected," "raises wider questions of pastoral care and accountability that the Church as a whole needs

to address.” One recognised that “the report and the survey were only a beginning . . . and a pointer to much work still to be done in this area.” Such comments are very heartening to the work of the Committee since, as one Presbytery recognised: “the Divine Healing Committee has not set out to cosset ministers. The ultimate aim is a more effective and efficient ministry.” However, one Presbytery rejected the Report in these words: “the whole thrust of the Report is wrong . . . the subject is not presented from a Biblical point of view.”

6. According to this opinion, ministers have only themselves to blame because stress is the result of failure to live close to the Lord, disobedience and lack of delegation. Consequently, if ministers were only perfect in their relationship with the Lord and with their fellow workers, stress would not be a problem as there would be an adequate supply of “grace sufficient” to meet their daily needs for service. The remedy for stressed out ministers is, therefore, repent and return to the Lord. This opinion can only add to the guilt feelings some have that they are unspiritual and unfit for the ministry. It illustrates how Scripture can be used insensitively to hurt and hinder rather than to heal and help. Ministers are aware that they are not perfect, either in their relationship with the Lord or those associated with them in the work, and neither are those with whom ministers work and among whom they minister. It is help ministers need, not the piling on of guilt.

7. The message of the Scripture, however, is simple and profound: Christian ministry involves risk; the risks call for vigilance; take preventative action before stress overload strikes; learn the skills needed to do the work of the ministry effectively. By doing these things ministers can minimise the risks involved without either exhausting or endangering themselves. In other words, the Bible calls on ministers and laity alike, to take simple, practical steps to safeguard themselves and to ensure that they are effective and efficient in their ministry. This is, of course, a collective responsibility and the remainder of this follow-up to the Stress Report is simply a practical working out of the Scriptural injunctions to love one another and carry each other’s burdens.

The Perception of Stress

8. Most Presbyteries agree that stress is not sinful and some suggested that what may be wrong is for the parties concerned to allow stressful circumstances and situations to continue unaddressed. Three comments sum it up:

“It is an illness. It is possible that sin, failure or weakness might bring it on through guilt and depression, but it is false logic to deduce that all cases of stress result from such causes. Yet, I have found in listening carefully to discussion of the subject after the recent press discussion, that there is little understanding of the stresses under which ministers work and very little sympathy for them from members of the congregation, even from professional people.”

“Some stress may be brought upon our own heads unnecessarily, which greater wisdom and experience could avoid. This could therefore be an indication of failure or weakness.”

“Unfortunately, however, when ministers are under extreme stress, they are likely to feel ashamed, guilty, weak and a failure.”

9. Stress is, in terms of one respondent, “a reflection of an inner struggle trying to cope with opposite and often opposing factors” coupled with a feeling of frustration. It is the existence of these opposite and often opposing factors that causes stress. Stress is personal to the individual in whom these are internalised but it affects individuals in their social environment, work environment, emotional environment and spiritual environment, and the effect is to impair their ability to function normally in these spheres.

10. A more precise definition of stress is this:

stress is what is experienced by the individual when there is a discrepancy between the individual's ability to cope, achieve, and find satisfaction, and the demands made on that ability.

Stress is a measure of that discrepancy. While an excess of ability over demand can give rise to stress, more often than not, as the Survey indicates, the problem is with an excess of demand over ability. Stress indicates inability, inadequacy, for whatever reasons. These demands can come from the environment of the individual or be self-generated, that is, the stressors can be internal as well as external.

11. While these stress factors are amply explored in the Stress Report, the ones that seem to have caught the attention of Presbyteries are factors like attitudes, expectations, personality conflicts, power struggles, misunderstandings, apathy, neglect of family, dividing time over many duties and responsibilities, criticism, lack of support. The minister, the Manse family, the church leaders and the congregation are all caught up in this complexity, as is also Presbytery and the wider church. All are involved in the problem and all are involved in the solution. There is no cure for stress, but there is something that we all can do about stress and that involves things such as stress reduction and stress management. We may divide the former into structural or institutional stress, and functional stress, which is associated with carrying out the work of the ministry.

The Effects of Stress

12. It is probably right to include some description of how stress affects the sufferer. Those who have been through it will recognise the symptoms. Perhaps others will readily recognise that the telltale symptoms are already evident. Detailed information from one Presbytery is quoted since it indicates a familiarity with the subject.

“Stressors are those environmental changes that set in motion the stress adaptation response, and they are legion. Our stress diet selects from a diverse menu: change, mobility, expectations, time pressure, work, control, fear, relationships, competition, overload, illness and death, frustration, anger. Today our culture throws multiple stressors all at once. Little wonder we have dysfunction.

“_ stressors, if not successfully identified and handled, can have serious consequences, with effects persisting long after the stressor has ceased to act.

“Stress disorders are noted in 3 spheres:

“Psychological symptoms: Depression, withdrawal, mental fatigue, anxiety, anger and hostility.

“Physical symptoms: The brain writes prescriptions for the body. An alerted nervous system, and a host of bio-chemical messages charge our body for the assault, but have no foe to fight: rapid pulse, palpitations, increased blood pressure, chest pain, headaches, tightening of muscles of head and neck, insomnia.

“Behavioural symptoms: What our mind and body experience, our behaviour often expresses. We act in a manner consistent with these symptoms - irritation with friends and colleagues, outbursts of temper, withdrawal, detachment, changes in eating and sleeping patterns, increased use of tranquillisers or alcohol.”

Reducing Structural Stress

13. It is readily conceded that some stress in our lives is beneficial and indeed, absolutely essential to a normal and healthy life. Such stress is not part of the problem, though it may be affected by it. The problem lies with the stresses that overload the system and drive it in the direction of breakdown. Some of these excessive stresses belong to the organisational structure of the institutional Church and require to be approached from that direction.

The Code

14. Comments from Presbyteries suggest that consideration ought to be given to a revision of some paragraphs in the Code that goes beyond an updating of thought and language, particularly those that influence public perceptions surrounding the ministry. It may be difficult but not impossible to draw up a more appropriate description that sets out more clearly the roles of the Teaching and the Ruling Elders and of their relationship within the Kirk Session and congregation and how these roles and relationship should work out in practice.

The Training of Candidates for the Ministry

15. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised, as the comments indicate. “There have been too many casualties of recent years which suggest personality problems and inadequate preparation for ministry. There must be better screening so that misfits do not get through the system, regardless of pressures by Presbytery and others, along with a more realistic description of the work to be done and better preparation to do it and cope with the stresses.” Theological training is criticised for being “too academic” and not devoting enough time to prepare for the realities of the ministry beyond College.

16. “Theological training is team based with ongoing support, but this appears to cease when one starts the job. There is need for training in Presbyterianism not only as congregations, but also as individuals, using our talents, but as part of the Church family. . . . We need to establish care beyond College, and, if necessary, the acceptance of that care and support, by legislation. We need to develop a Presbyterian ethos” in order to combat the congregationalism and isolationism that are all too common in our Church.

17. The kind of ideas suggested to improve ministerial training include the following:

“the development of spiritual resources and growth;” “the management of time, the understanding of conflict, and the handling of human relationships;” “personal organisation;” “the inevitability of stress and means of stress-management;” “the need for support from outside the family and possible alternative ways of providing this - prayer partners, year groups or fraternals etc” “discouragement;” “personality conflicts;” “expectation, personal development, people management, conflict resolution;” “self knowledge, dealing with problems likely to arise, leadership, and confidentiality.”

This list is quite extensive and the range of topics indicates that Presbyteries take this matter of preparation for the ministry very seriously.

18. However, there is one issue that is not explicitly mentioned in the Presbytery returns but is related to the matter of self-knowledge. It is the suitability of the individual for the Christian ministry in the first instance. Unfortunately not all candidates are suitable. Some lack the appropriate God-given gifts and abilities and will inevitably find the Christian ministry a place of feelings of inadequacy and stress. Discovering one’s gifts of ministry is crucial and while this process ought to begin in the individual’s home congregation and be affirmed by the selection process, it ought to be explored in depth as part of ministerial training. It is surely right that a person without the appropriate gifts for the Christian ministry be encouraged to seek a more appropriate form of Christian service.

19. The Committee suggests that any preparation for the ministry ought to include a course on Post-modernism, so that ministers might understand the philosophical background to how people think and act in the today’s world.

Presbytery

20. Presbyteries themselves are aware and acknowledge that the structure of Presbyteries needs to be changed for the better. One Presbytery argues for the important role the Presbytery plays in the Presbyterian Church. It is worth quoting in full:

“A stronger leadership of congregations is needed from Presbytery in a day of retreat from faith when many ministers find it difficult to combat the increasing secularisation of society. It is needed also to combat growing bureaucracy and centralisation within the Church. At the same time Presbytery is not very good at its pastoral role.”

21. Other comments state: “The bureaucratic model needs to be dumped and replaced with ideals of mutual encouragement and support,” “The church at large has lost much of its ‘personal’ [touch]. Communication between Church House and ministers, and sometimes between Presbytery and ministers has become far too bureaucratic.” Whether the latter comment is accurate is beside the point, this is how it is perceived, and so often it is perceptions that matter.

22. The Presbytery is caught in a Catch 22 situation. It has an important role to play in keeping at bay a wider bureaucracy, without itself becoming bureaucratic, and in being personal and pastoral in relation to congregations and ministers. The comments suggest that Presbyteries have not succeeded in achieving the correct balance between being business orientated and pastorally orientated, and between the judicial and the relational. “This is difficult while its structure and business remain as they are at present. The infrequency of

Presbytery meetings and the full agendas, which include some business that comes down from the General Assembly, make it difficult for a Presbytery to be less officious, and more a centre and source of encouragement and support.” “This ‘court’ of the church has been very successful as a legal body but not so successful as a caring body.”

23. However, if the Code is considered, the duties of Presbytery are firstly, pastoral, Par 69 (1), 73, and secondly, judicial, Par 69 (2), 74. Consequently, one Presbytery, in an obvious reference to the Strategy For Mission Report, calls on Presbyteries to “Develop the present thinking regarding committees or commissions dealing with business, leaving Presbytery to encourage and support congregations in effective ministry and mission.”

24. The Presbyterian Church is always open to light from any quarter. One Presbytery comments: “At Methodist Synods all routine business stops for a period entitled “Conversation on the Work of God”. Some people share what God is doing in their congregation. Encouraging news and workable ideas are exchanged.” That might not be a bad idea!

25. Any such structural changes in Presbytery meetings need to be accompanied by other changes to remedy “our apparent failure to detect stress amongst our own colleagues, also how poorly we may have handled stressed out and broken ministers and their ministry to a congregation.” Suggestions include: “smaller group structures . . . able to be support groups for ministers and their spouses.” Such groups could “provide cover for members on days off duty,” “organise a programme of regular pulpit exchanges . . . easing the burden of sermon preparation,” “recognise signs of stress and offer help and support.”

26. There is also the need for a “confidential counselling resource within the Presbytery, supported, if possible, with medical and psychological expertise. The personnel need not necessarily be members of Presbytery,” but may be “a panel perhaps drawn from retired clergy and caring organisations as points of contact to which our clergy can go for de-briefing, sharing and encouragement,” or at the very least, “a minister to whom those who are facing a crisis may turn to in the utmost confidence.”

27. While such an “in-house” resource may well be desirable and represent the ideal, in practice the idea may fall victim to the serious problem highlighted in the 96 Report: there is a marked reluctance to turn to one’s Presbytery for help when in trouble. This reluctance is probably due to lack of confidence that ministers have regarding Presbytery in relation to this sort of role. Ministers tend to perceive Presbytery as an unsupporting and uncaring judicial body and their colleagues in Presbytery as unsympathetic and in competition. While ministers prefer to turn to colleagues on a personal and informal basis, these lack the training and skills necessary to provide effective stress counselling. Accordingly it may well be necessary to look outside of the formal structures of Presbytery and even the wider Church for a confidential counselling resource to which ministers may turn for help.

28. Also suggested are Presbytery conferences or retreats, social occasions involving spouses, time for fellowship, sharing and mutual encouragement and “meetings for spouses along the same lines as those for ministers.”

The Minister and the Local Congregation

29. The last of the structural aspects focuses on the minister. The wider Church and the Presbytery have a responsibility at ordinations, installations and visitations to ensure that the Church's provisions for time off on a regular and an annual basis are clearly understood by congregations, Kirk Sessions, Congregational Committees and ministers themselves, as well as setting a reasonable ceiling on the working hours of a minister. At visitations of Presbytery, "there should be questions to the minister about health, recreation and time off, etc." This is a matter of the structures of the Church at all levels acting together to protect the minister from himself, if need be, or from demands and expectations that are unreasonable.

30. On the matter of time off, concern has been expressed that some ministers work in excess of 70 hours a week (20%), with the suggestion that "more than 50/55 hours per week is unhealthy as this takes a great personal toll, may lead to lack of creativity, confirms the whole idea of clericalism and is particularly difficult for ministers without a lot of support at home." No Kirk Session should encourage or permit its minister to work in excess of 70 hours weekly and ought to "restrain" the workaholic minister. It seems reasonable for both Kirk Session and minister to accept a ceiling of 60 hours weekly. After all, how can ministers set a godly example to their congregations if they work excessively and deprive spouses and children of their companionship and presence? Both ministers and Kirk Sessions need to learn to say No!

31. To facilitate such will mean more of a team approach to ministry, a shared ministry. This will mean: "Elders have their congregational districts where they visit on a regular basis. Selected members of the congregation could be trained as counsellors and conciliators." "The Anglican Church, Church of Scotland, and Methodist Church, amongst others use well trained laymen to take services on a regular basis. Why not the Irish Presbyterian Church? Such a resource would not only lighten the minister's sermon preparation burden, it would greatly enrich congregational life."

32. We cannot consider the minister in isolation from the spouse, (generally, though not always, the wife) "There is a high expectation of the minister's wife as the source of care and support not only within the Manse family but to the wider church family. How many wives of ministers are prepared to cope with this?" "Ministers' wives are the unsung heroines of the church. The report notes the high expectations of the minister's spouse as the source of care and support. Perhaps there is a need for a stress survey of minister's wives and children." There is indeed a great need for care and support to be given to ministers' wives to equip them for the realities of being just that. How many ministers have been rescued by the calming influence and wise counsel of those Abigail (1 Sam 25) of the Church?

33. There is an area of concern highlighted by one Presbytery: "In situations which are virtually unbearable it is a pity there is not some machinery in place whereby a minister may be able to make a move for his good and the good of the congregation rather than being dismissed from his church because it is deemed a situation has arisen which no longer makes it possible for him to carry on an effective ministry. Perhaps it is in this area that the Methodists are on a winner because, after 4, 5 or eight years, they can get a move." Is the

Presbyterian Church so institutionally congregational that there is no effective mechanism for dealing with ‘the square peg in a round hole’ situation? This is what drives - and has driven - some to the point of despair and out of the Church, because they feel so helplessly trapped and can see no way of escape, either for their good or the good of the congregation. Is there something to be learned from others here, if we are to be, in every sense of the word, a Presbyterian Church? Is this congregationalism regarding the ministry a feature inherent in our Church or merely a tradition that has taken root? This ought to be looked into.

Reducing Functional Stress

34. Functional stress has to do with how a congregation, elders and leaders, and the minister(s) interact in the life and work of the congregation. In this respect, “What concerned us most about the results of the survey was the perceived lack of teamwork in many congregations. . . . in Presbyterianism the team is of crucial importance.” The local congregation with its elders and leaders and minister(s) is the local expression of the Body of Christ, and essential to that is the concept of Body Ministry in which every member has been gifted to minister to others, while some have been called to a leadership ministry. This means the entire congregation is the team.

35. Here we encounter a problem. “. . . the ‘one man band’ concept is very strong.” “Many congregations, elders and ministers still see ‘clericalism’ as the norm. This is a mixture of tradition, inherited roles and what is most comfortable.” This faulty perception must be changed in the light of Scripture and for the good of the Church.

36. “It is important that the need to change these perceptions is taken seriously.” This change can be accomplished “by regular teaching, education and practice.” “This is part of the on-going work of the teaching ministry. Session conferences may also address the issues and Presbytery visitations might be a time of education on these matters.” The hope is that “over time, the true nature of the Church and the role of ministers and elders may be recognised by all.”

37. Naturally this places the onus on the minister. “A Minister has to learn to say ‘no’ and to delegate, and train, if necessary. The Minister cannot be everything and be everywhere. A congregation has to be educated about this, and how to participate more themselves, and claim ‘their’ church, and not leave too much to their Minister.” This needs to be accompanied by a “greater openness between minister and Kirk Session. We would encourage ministers and sessions to discuss ministerial workload and priorities. There seem to be often conflicting expectations in this whole area.”

The Management of Stress

38. Even with all these changes there will still be stresses to face. There will still be personality conflicts, pressures on time, constant demands, personal issues to be worked through, differing expectations, different attitudes, disappointments and the like. But these are the stresses each minister is responsible for doing something about. Here it is very much a case of ministers

learning how to take control of their lives rather than being driven by many diverse factors all clamouring for their attention.

Ministerial Supervision

39. This is one idea that not many Presbyteries embraced with enthusiasm. The explanation is simple: "Most ministers are independent beings and do not like to have any supervision imposed upon them. Nevertheless, it is probably good to us to have a more mature minister to whom we can turn on a moment of crisis."

40. Help when in crisis is one thing. That is where the idea of a Presbytery Chaplain or Pastor Pastorum found some support, possibly on a wider basis than a single Presbytery. It is suggested that we look at the practice of the United Reformed Church in this matter: they appoint a regional Moderator for a period of several years - a short-term bishop? Most ministers simply hope they won't need a crisis visit.

41. Supervision on an ongoing basis is a different matter, for the reason mentioned. Nevertheless, our attention was drawn to two groups where this exists. "Accountability groups with a strong element of motive similar to the Methodist 'circuit' would help, with a maximum of five Ministers being involved." "Social Workers and other carers have supervision during their first years of work. This can often be very emotionally draining, but it is necessary for the inner development and growth required in the long term, to cope with the work."

42. The provision of support groups among clergy or spiritual directors to whom ministers can be accountable without dependency ought to be pursued. It is noted that such provision is envisaged in the Strategy For Mission Report, though many will prefer to choose their own group, whether within Presbytery or the wider Church or beyond. There will be ministers for whom such groups or directors will be an important support though there will always be those rugged individualists who never need anyone - till the stress overload strikes!

In-service Training Seminars and Conferences

43. One of the good things learned from the Survey is that resources do exist and are being used by ministers (72%). However, the value of in-service training courses, seminars and conferences is questioned. "We found the conclusion respecting "in-service training" rather ambiguous. Those replying say they find seminars beneficial, and yet they fail to solve their real problems. We wondered if this was an admission that they were "a means of escape" from their situation with some "secondary" helps given." That may well be the case, particularly when one considers the list of skills and training desired. (Table 3c of the Stress Report, pages 13, 22 and 23.) This suggests that present provisions are not meeting the needs of ministers. The kind of skills being sought have the potential to enable a minister acquire the skills that make for effective ministry. When ministers are confident they are well equipped and in control they are better able to handle the stresses that come.

44. The Committee would include a further topic for in-service training, a course on Post-modernism, as suggested for preparation for the ministry. It

would give ministers a better understanding of today's generation of young adults.

45. It should not be necessary for all ministers to travel to some central point for the development of ministry skills. The acquisition of skills for existing ministers needs to be localised, possibly through Presbytery under the provisions of the Presbytery Christian Training Committee. There are sufficient modern techniques available today to make this feasible. The value of coming together for such courses is that ministers can fellowship together and discuss the business of the ministry to mutual benefit. There is always good to be gained from the shared testimonies about the work of God.

46. In addition there are ample resources available in the form of books and courses outside the Presbyterian Church and ministers are free to attend them. The accompanying resource list should be considered.

Making Space

47. Making space in a busy schedule is vital, space for oneself, and for one's spouse and family (if married). Such space means taking time off. The Survey suggests that ministers work long hours and most enjoy their work. Some appear to be workaholics while others seem to be unable to withdraw from work, through feeling guilty about not working or unable to say no to demands or whatever other reason. Making space does seem to be a problem. One Presbytery concedes: "Apart from encouraging Ministers to examine their work schedule honestly and critically to see if effective use is being made of time and talent, it is difficult to see what Presbytery or the PCI can do to help them to create 'space' for personal needs and development, and for family life." Another suggests, "make it compulsory to take a day off in the week, and to take the annual stipulated holidays, controlled by the Session Clerk, and referred to Presbytery." There may be situations in which "congregations need to be educated as to the need for the minister to have both time away from ministry in the form of one day per week off and annual holidays and time after Christmas and Easter." However, at the end of the day it is up to ministers "to keep covenant with themselves in making sure that they take time off." Failure to do so is a denial of the example of God in his busy week of creation, who stopped to appraise his work and took a rest day (Genesis 1), and of our Lord, who called his disciples to find a quiet place and get some rest (Mark 6:31). The ability to withdraw and renew our strength is vital. An unstrung bow loses its potency. So do ministers.

48. One Presbytery offers several ways to recover emotional energy, using the idea of margin instead of space:

"margin in emotional energy is paramount. When we become emotionally resilient we can confront our problems with power and hope. It is emotional overload which saps strength, paralyses our resolve and leaves the door open for vulnerability - when our margin of emotional levels is exhausted, pain will be felt. We must learn our limits.

"Cultivate social supports. How many friends do we have? Friends can be as good as medicine.

“Reconcile relationships. A broken relationship is like a razor across the artery of the human spirit. But the spirit of God has healing power. Brokenness and humility bring God’s grace.

“Serve each other. Service is empowering. Doing nothing for others is the undoing of oneself. We do ourselves the most good by doing something for others.

“Rest, laugh, cry. Get away occasionally from people. Escape, relax, siesta, quiet day. Humour is medicine. We are told that 4 month old babies laugh at least once every hour. Life is not essentially humorous, but God has given us the gift of laughter. He knew we would need it!

“Crying can have salutary health benefits (provided it is not a frequent crying which can be a symptom of a deeper depression). A good cry can release a whole burden of emotional pollution.

“Offer thanks. All of us have much to be thankful for. Gratitude fills. Discontentment drains.

“Above all Love. To accept the love of God is to be armed and disarmed at the same time. No weapon is more powerful. In using this weapon we are broken open and it flows out and attaches to others. It heals, it knits hearts, it builds community love. As a healer of the emotions it has no equal.”

49. To this list could be added two other items. One is, develop an interest outside of Church work; one reason why some ministers have problems with retirement is this: they had no life outside of Church before retirement. The other is, learn to relax; in this connection there are relaxation exercises that one can do that are effective and simple to practice and can be done almost anywhere. One company that deals with relaxation aids is mentioned in the Resource list.

50. The report notes the high expectations of the minister’s spouse as the source of care and support. The spouse and children are the minister’s first responsibility before God, not the congregation (1 Tim 3:5). A relevant question in this respect comes from one Presbytery as the more subtle kind of question that could be asked: “How often do you and your wife go out together?” Perhaps we could add, “How often do you and your children go out together?”

51. Here is wise counsel from one Presbytery, quoting Ps 128:3: “The Psalmist says your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house and your sons will be like olive shoots round your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord. In the modern world it is work and status that gives people prestige but to the Psalmist it is family. Our relationships with our families, either our children or our parents, gives our lives balance. Spending time with them, no matter what age they are, is a blessing to us. It makes us normal people. In the end it makes us more effective ministers.”

52. Sabbaticals come under this concept of making space. The idea was favourably received but with varying attitudes. “A sabbatical could be a time of real renewal for the minister and congregation;” “would enable ministers to review and reassess their ministry.” “We were generally in favour if it was to be a genuine time of refreshment. We had reservations if it was to be too closely detailed in its content and purpose.” The Strategy for Mission Committee is currently looking into this matter of Sabbaticals. We await the outcome with interest.

Develop Stress Awareness and Relational Skills

53. While management of stress and relational skills are two of the desired topics for in-service training, they are worth singling out here for emphasis. Know your enemy is an old adage and it is worth applying here. It is important to be armed with knowledge of what stress is, what causes it, how it affects us and how to manage it. So too is, "Physician heal yourself." Part of this is a good look at ourselves. The results of the Survey indicate that there is a personal element in stress, in how we respond to the stressors we encounter, and that includes how we relate to people in varying situations. How we handle situations and the people involved has a significant bearing on how we are affected by stress. This built in aspect determines whether we are rugged in confronting stress or friable, and explains why there is no general solution that fits everyone. Indeed, one Presbytery suggested that as well as the range of topics sought for from in-service training, including the desire for better counselling skills, there needs to be "the adjoining recognition of the need [for ministers] to be counselled professionally themselves." In plain terms, individual ministers need to get their own hang-ups sorted out, a point that should not be ignored. All the courses in the world will be of no value if stress is looked at entirely as an external problem. There is an individual and internal element that cannot be ignored.

54. In addition to any courses that may be run through the PCI, there are ample resources available. Some are suggested in the list of Resources.

Keep Fit

55. One aspect featured little in the responses from Presbyteries, namely, the general fitness and well being of ministers, that is, their physical and spiritual health. This is an area where a spouse and good friends within and without the congregation can have an important input: "It is they who may identify some of the signs associated with excessive stress such as sleeplessness, mood swings and declining health." There is but one quotation on this matter: "Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. We should not mistreat them. We need a healthy lifestyle with good eating habits and regular exercise." Stress tends to be associated with poor sleeping habits, rushed meals and little to no exercise. Ministers have a responsibility to ensure that they maintain a state of physical well being and so must give attention to getting enough sleep, physical exercise and a healthy diet.

56. Physical fitness requires discipline. Paul was fond of athletic analogies and refers to discipline in strong terms in 1 Cor 9:24-27. Discipline is not just to protect oneself from things that harm and hinder, but also to ensure that those that are essential to a race winning fitness are being made use of. Discipline means making space for fitness.

57. Spiritual fitness is of greater importance, while not neglecting the physical, a point Paul makes in 1 Tim 4:7,8. This picks up a serious problem highlighted by the Report (table 2k on page 11). Ministers in general admitted the problem of maintaining an adequate devotional life. Preoccupation with pressures and problems has a negative effect on our spirituality. This is a valid criticism voiced by one Presbytery: "ministers fail to cultivate their relationship

with the Lord . . . Since ministers are not as close to the Lord as they might be, they find themselves not drawing upon that “grace sufficient” to meet the daily needs for service.”

58. Ministers will readily concede that they are not as close to the Lord as they might be. This is more serious than it appears; missing out on God’s grace has the potential for the development of a troublesome and poisonous bitter root (Heb 12:15). To avoid this requires discipline. To maintain one’s spiritual zeal requires discipline. Ministers must make it a matter of the utmost priority to build into their daily lives time for reading and meditation and prayer. This space for God, this communion with God, must be protected and maintained. In this connection, Presbyterian ministers of all people should heed the words of the Psalter. The 27th Psalm is one example of what to do when you are hunted down, surrounded with conflicts and with fears within. It closes with the repetition of the word, “wait.” The person under great stress has not time to wait, but that is what is needed. All ministers need this discipline and learn to slow down, to stop, to take time out, to seek God’s face and relax in his presence. With him there is strength and hope.

Caring for the Casualties

59. So far this Report has concentrated on the vast majority of ministers who carry out their ministries despite varying degrees of stress, and the Report has suggested various techniques to enable ministers to survive stress and be overcomers despite it. But, as the original Report indicated, there are some, and thankfully the actual number is small, who have been adversely affected by prolonged, excessive stress and have become its casualties. For such, this is a traumatic and devastating experience, and for their families. In most instances the wife has seen it coming long before it happened, but has been powerless to prevent it.

60. When the minister succumbs to excessive stress, it may well lead to hospitalisation for serious surgery, to prolonged impairment of health, to leaving the ministry altogether, and in rare cases, to premature death. The damage that stress can wreak on its victims and their families should never be minimised. This is a very sensitive matter and the effects of it can live long after the crisis has passed, and those involved need to be treated with gentleness and consideration.

61. The pathway to recovery for the casualty of excessive stress is long and slow. It is not uncommon for the minister concerned to be out of work for an extensive period, of six months to a year and even longer in severe cases. Such prolonged absence calls for a lot of support from friends and colleagues in Presbytery and the wider Church. It is at such a time that the institutional Church needs to show its caring face and counter the charge of uncaring bureaucracy. Correspondence has been received from ministers and relatives who found this caring approach sadly lacking.

62. The financial implications of such prolonged absence from work are drastic, especially in the situation where the minister is the sole income producer. Ministers would be well advised to take out the appropriate insurance

to cover such eventualities. It may never be needed, and the incidence of long term absence is low. But on the other hand, it just might be needed.

63. If ministers act appropriately in the light of the recommendations of this Report, then, hopefully, there will be fewer serious casualties of stress overload in the future.

64. There is a larger number of ministers who, while not so adversely affected, are, nevertheless, casualties of stress. For them, stress is a life-dominating problem. They need more immediate help than can be presently offered by the institutional Church, and they cannot wait for a reduction of structural stress to work their way. What help can be offered to them?

65. For those concerned, the immediate course of action is to find a trustworthy friend or support group, not just to offload their feelings of stress, though that is important, but who can listen and act as counsellors and ministerial supervisors, and help the minister work through the section on Management of Stress. This may not resolve the root issue, but it will help overcome the feeling, of loneliness, isolation and not knowing where to turn that accompanies situations of deep stress. This will enable ministers to regain some control of their lives, and be better able to cope with the secondary stresses. Depending on the nature of the case, it may be necessary to involve professional counsellors as well as Presbytery or other courts of the Church in order to resolve matters that lie outside the minister's or the support group's ability to resolve. This is a serious pastoral situation and the sufferer and spouse need sensitive support, care and wise counsel, to prevent a full stress breakdown from happening.

The Bottom Line

66. Supposing ministers deal with all the matters referred to above. What then? The minister is confronted by the fundamental or bottom line stress that is integral to Christian ministry and from which ministers cannot escape without betraying their calling.

67. This bottom line ministerial stress is well outlined for us by the Apostle Paul in his strained and painful relationships with the Church at Corinth, with important implications for ministry today.

68. Christian ministry involves a sense of necessity, of compulsion, to preach the Gospel, (1 Cor 9:16). Ministers can live with this.

69. There is the recognition of one's finiteness and frailty: "jars of clay" (2 Cor 4:7). Most ministers know that they are not Superman, they cannot do everything, and they do not embody all the gifts of ministry themselves. Some may have expectations well beyond reality, but others are overwhelmed by their finiteness and frailty.

70. Ministers can feel "harassed at every turn, conflicts on the outside, fears within" 2 Cor 7v5; "hard pressed on every side" 2 Cor 4:8; or "hunted down" 2 Cor 4:8 by those who oppose them. But, with Paul, "besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches" 2 Cor 11:28. This is, perhaps, the bit that hurts, literally. Why is this so? Simply because there is a sinister power of evil that acts to oppose every minister of Christ and spoil their work in the congregations. Ministers are engaged in spiritual warfare: "our

struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” Eph 6:12. This is a dimension to the Christian ministry that ministers ignore to their cost. It is real, but it is not final. In the power of the Lord, Christian ministers can stand their ground and refuse to be beaten, Eph 6:11,13. Indeed, Christ calls all Christians to be overcomers Rev 2:7.

71. There is supernatural grace available through the Holy Spirit so that the Christian minister need not lose heart (2 Cor 4:1,7). Ministers should not lose sight of God’s provision; it is always there, not simply to pull us out from the conflict, but to empower us in it to stand despite it.

72. Such grace does not absolve the minister from learning how to use the divinely powerful weaponry of this spiritual warfare, (2 Cor 10:4,5), the weapons listed in Eph 6:14f as: truth, righteousness, evangelism, faith, salvation, word of God and prayer. Just as Christians have to become trained to be godly, (1 Tim 4:7), trained to distinguish good from evil, (Heb 5:14) and trained in righteousness, 2 Tim 3:16, so too Christians need to be trained in the use of the Christian armour and weaponry for this spiritual warfare.

73. God promises relief, (1 Cor 10:13). That relief may come from a variety of sources, for example, a friend, (2 Cor 7:6), a change of heart, (2 Cor 7:7), or even flight (Acts 20:1). Yes, sometimes getting completely off side is the prudent choice to make - you live to “fight” another day. However, ministers fulfil their ministries conscious that sometimes the only way of escape is through being faithful unto death itself. Thankfully, that is not an option that many ministers of the PCI have had to face in this century.

Conclusion

74. Stress is not new. Stress will not go away. Ministers serve despite stress. Ministers suffer from stress. The same is true for members of our congregations for both live in a world of stress. Occasionally ministers and members collapse under stress. There is no cure for stress for there will always be stressors. But stress can be reduced and stress can be controlled. This requires the combined efforts of the entire Church. The well being of the Church body depends on the well being of each member.

75. Because of the highly individualistic nature of stress, there is no simple blanket answer to the problems of stress. People respond differently to the stressors and the answers are correspondingly different. It is, therefore, impossible to legislate for the whole Church. Nevertheless, there are things that the whole Church as well as Presbyteries and individuals may do to change what can be changed and to cope with and control what cannot. This Report, with the help of Presbyteries, has sought to provide help as at least a starting point towards that end.

76. The challenge that stress poses for ministers and laity alike is this: to break stress down into manageable amounts so that the energy and drive associated with short term stress might be used positively and creatively in developing Christian character and perseverance in the service of God, and at the same time minimise sustained high levels of stress and its destructive effects.

77. This Report is offered with the prayer that it be used by the Lord of the Church to refresh and renew the devotion, commitment and zeal of his ministers throughout the Church for effective and efficient ministry among the congregations and beyond To God be glory in the Church!

Resource List

Useful books

The Joy of Stress, Dr Peter Hanson, Pan.

Stress - The Challenge to Christian Caring, Gaius Davies, Kingsway.

Making the best of stress, Mark R, McMinn, IVP.

Dying to Change, Mary Pitches, Hodder and Stoughton.

Burn Out Stress in the Ministry, John Davey, Gracewing.

Change Directions, Dr David Cormack, Monarch.

You and Neurosis, H J Eysenck, Fontana.

Fact and Fiction in Psychology, H J Eysenck, Pelican.

Catastrophe Theory, Denis Postle, Fontana.

Mental Health in the Workplace, Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health.

Other useful resources

Restoration Ministries

This is a confidential ministry of prayer and counselling.

Contact: Rev Ruth Patterson, 01232 621867.

Staff Care Service

This is a Confidential Counselling Service provided by experienced Health Care Social Workers with developed skills in this area of work.

Contact: Mrs Margie Savage, 01232 790703, 790673, 790699.

Stress Check Ireland

This provides a range of products from "Stressdots", which help the individual monitor stress levels, to massagers for relieving stress, stress pens and a useful book on stress and techniques designed to reduce stress levels.

Contact: Mr G McLarnon, Dublin, 353 1 8215 121.

Handling Stress

This is an Open University study pack and training resource suitable for self-help groups wanting to run courses about stress. Ref P922G.

Contact: Open University, 01908 653140 or Fax 01908 655072.

Mike McKimm

Mr McKimm organises one, two and five day courses for groups, offering experiences and practical ideas to help individuals accept the need for change

and draw up individual realistic action plans to avoid some causes of stress, to control other stresses, and to implement coping mechanisms.

Contact: Mike McKimm, 01238 541776 or Fax 01238 541222.

Industrial Therapy Organisation

The ITO provides training programmes and employment initiatives for people suffering from mental health problems, through identifying vocational needs and providing a structured and sheltered environment that enables them to gain confidence to return to normal work. ITO also provides a consultancy service.

Contact: referral by GP or any of the Community Mental Health Team, or direct to any of the following ITO centres: Antrim 018494 28081; Bangor 01247 270979; Belfast 01232 745015; Downpatrick 01396 613791; Enniskillen 01365 323630; Foyle 01504 373502; Newry and Mourne 01693 66117; Newtownards 01247 822410.

B U P A

BUPA offers a Stress Management Programme comprised of three elements: a Stress Audit, Wellbeing Workshops, and a Wellbeing Employee Assistance Programme.

Contact: Tel 0171 656 2000

Fax 0171 656 2700

Internet <http://www.bupa.co.uk>

Reflexology, Massage, Aromatherapy

Some have found that a combination of these has been of great help in relieving the stress-related pain that occurs in the muscles of the shoulders, neck and head.

Contact: Yellow Pages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the intention of the Divine Healing Committee to propose specific and substantial resolutions to the General Assembly. However, it was agreed to defer these till after other important changes, such as proposed by the Strategy for Mission Committee, are agreed at the General Assembly. Accordingly a number of recommendations are presented reflecting in a more general way the intention of the Report on Stress in the Ministry.

1. That the Divine Healing Committee be thanked for its work and that ministers and Presbyteries be thanked for their participation in the study of Stress in the Ministry.

2. That Presbyteries be encouraged to become more pastorally orientated, to promote the development of friendship support groups and to provide social and fellowship occasions.

3. That Presbyteries enquire regarding their ministers' health, recreation, time off and workload, and encourage congregations to become aware of these matters.

4. That programmes of in-service training be commended and that their contents should reflect increasingly the needs expressed by the ministers and Presbyteries.

5. That ministers take seriously the recommendations concerning the management of stress and are urged to avail themselves of the opportunities that already exist for time off.

6. That ministers recognise that there is some stress that goes with the privilege of being ministers of the Gospel and that at no time are they bereft of God's mercy and grace in Christ.

7. That the General Assembly commend to Almighty God all our ministers, those who minister in situations and under circumstances that give rise to high levels of stress, and especially those who have suffered adversely from stress related illnesses, and pray that we may all be channels of God's grace in supporting and encouraging each other in advancing the cause of Christ, to the glory of God.

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY COMMITTEE

1. Marriage Care Counselling continues to offer couple counselling to all whose marriages are under stress. The service is accessed by telephoning 01232 322284, asking for Marriage Care Counselling. Our lines are open from 9.30 am - 4.30 pm Monday to Friday. We encourage more ministers to make full use of the service and to advertise it within their congregations.

The service will come under review in the autumn of 1997 having been operational for five years. A new programme of selection and training of counsellors may follow in 1998.

2. Rev J W McAuley continues to act as Secretary to the pastoral interviews of couples who plan to marry where one or both have been divorced.

J BRACKENRIDGE, Convener

APPENDIX

REPORT ON THE INTER-CHURCH STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIXED MARRIAGES 1996 - 1997

The Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages met in Dundalk on November 15, 1996. The Most Rev Anthony Farquhar, Auxiliary Bishop of Down and Connor, Co-Chairman of the Committee, acted as Chairman for the meeting.

Changes to the Membership

It was noted that the Very Rev Hamilton Lecky has recently retired and that, as yet, has not been replaced on the Inter-Church Standing Committee. It was agreed that the appreciation of the Committee should be conveyed to him

for his considerable work and energy over many years as a member of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages.

The Chairman recalled that Mr Lecky had been a member of the Committee since its inception and, over the years, had brought much enthusiasm and commitment to the work of the Committee and to the pastoral care of Inter-Church couples.

Report on the Meeting of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages 1995-1996

There was a brief discussion of the previous year's Report and it was noted that this has now been distributed and approved by each of the Churches.

A paragraph in that Report refers to a Doctoral Thesis on the question of Inter-Church Marriage in Ireland which had been undertaken at Queen's University, Belfast, by a Swedish post-graduate student Ms. Maria Eriksson. A copy of this Thesis has now been procured. The document is entitled "Cross Community Marriages in Northern Ireland: The Churches as Social Support and Social Constraint". Copies of the document will be posted to the delegates together with the Report on this year's meeting.

Correspondence

The Committee noted the correspondence from the Ad Hoc Inter-Church Liturgical Group containing suggestions for Inter-Church Baptism Services and Inter-Church Marriage Services. It was agreed that a letter of thanks should be sent to the representatives of the group for the time, effort and research which they generously gave in producing this useful document.

The Committee also noted the correspondence from Dr David Stevens pointing out that the aforementioned Reports had been brought to the attention of the Inter-Church Committee on September 19 together with a copy of a letter from the Revd Elizabeth Hewitt, Methodist Church, outlining some initial reactions to the Reports.

Discussion of the Reports from the Committee on Marriage and the Family

(a) Suggestions for Inter-Church Baptism Services

The Committee was in agreement with the suggestion that the title of Inter-Church Baptism Services should be replaced by "Services for Baptism of Children of Inter-Church couples".

The Committee noted the reservations outlined by Rev Elizabeth Hewitt (see 3 above) and recommended that these be addressed before the documents are given formal approval. Some delegates also felt that the use of the term "Guidelines" was perhaps over-stating the role which was envisaged for this Report. It was agreed that the term "Guidelines" should be substituted by "Suggestions".

At a more basic level, there was a strong feeling among the Committee members that it may not be advisable to circulate these Reports without substantial ancillary material outlining the pastoral and theological sensitivities

and considerations which should be taken into account at baptisms and weddings involving Inter-Church couples. There may well be a need also for some explanation as to how the baptism and wedding ceremonies are currently celebrated within the various traditions.

It was felt that the compilers of the Reports had already discerned the need for such background material insofar as they provided a brief preamble or introduction to each of the Reports. Nonetheless, the Inter-Church Standing Committee is of the opinion that before formal approval be given to the Reports, they should again be considered by the Inter-Church Committee with a view to drawing perhaps on the skill of the Department of Theological Questions in order to address some of these points and possibly expand the existing introductory paragraphs.

The Committee also recalled the long-standing position of the Inter-Church body against the practice of joint or double baptisms. There does, however, seem to be a pressing need for further reflection as to how the joint pastoral care may be undertaken for Inter-Church couples and their children.

(b) Suggestions for Inter-Church Marriage Services

It was agreed that many of the observations which had been made in regard to the Report on Baptism could be applied with equal validity to the Report on Inter-Church Marriage Services. Here too it was felt that the Report would benefit greatly from being placed in a context which allowed for a more detailed pastoral and theological reflection on the theme.

On the one hand, it is clear that the initial proposal emerging from the last Plenary Meeting of the Inter-Church body, (namely that a list of agreed liturgical texts be compiled), has now been completed. Nevertheless, the Committee is of the view that the Reports should not be issued in their present format without some further refinement and attention to the points raised above.

Several members expressed the view that it does not fall within the remit of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages to produce or issue texts of this nature. It was agreed, therefore, to refer the Reports for further discussion to the Inter-Church Committee and commend to their consideration a final decision as to how and whether these Reports should be issued.

Marriage Preparation Courses

The Rev Brendan Murray and Rev John Brackenridge reported on Pre-Marriage Courses which had been organised this year in the Greater Belfast area for couples preparing for Inter-Church Marriage. It was noted that these Courses continue to be well received by participants and, as a general rule, take place twice yearly. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of the total number of Inter-Church couples avail of these Courses.

Within each of the traditions, there is a variety of established methods and factors for preparation for marriage but all the major Churches have some manner of Pre-Marriage preparation. As a general rule though, the organisers of such Courses prefer participants to avail of the Course freely and of their own choosing. Experience shows that where a person or a couple only attend under

duress, or out of deference to the wishes of clergy or family, this can have a very damaging affect on the mood and tone of the entire Preparation Course.

Mgr. Devine reported on arrangements for Inter-Church Marriage preparation in the Greater Dublin area. During the past year, there have been five such Courses which take place either over the course of two weekends or a one evening per week basis, for five weeks. The Courses are organised by the Inter-Church Marriage Preparation Group and the Association of the Inter-Church Families provide the host couple.

A large percentage of each Course closely resembles the type of Marriage Preparation Course currently organised by Accord, the Catholic Marriage Advisory Service. Several modules, however, deal more specifically with the concerns of the Inter-Church couple. There is some concern, however, that the married couples who generously give of their time and energy to the organisation of this Course have remained substantially the same as those who initiated this venture in the 1970's. There seems to be a difficulty in recruiting new couples to undertake this task. Clearly come thought and reflection will have to be given to this problem if the Courses are to continue as successfully as heretofore.

Recent Trends in Inter-Church Marriage

It was agreed that recent trends in the celebration of Inter-Church Marriage Services have been, in the main, very positive. Where problems do arise they tend to be more isolated than before and are not, therefore, representative or typical of the experiences of most Inter-Church couples.

Regarding the marriage of an Inter-Church couple according to the Roman Catholic rite, it was noted that as a general rule these marriages are not to be celebrated in the context of Eucharist. (An exception may be made where both parties specifically request the priest to have a Eucharistic celebration).

On some occasions, the priest will encounter a lack of understanding among his parishioners as to why the Eucharist is not a part of such celebrations. However, with a little tact and sensitivity, the priest can succeed in making the Inter-Church wedding an instructive moment for his congregation and a powerful moment of ecumenical witness for all.

Although the trends specific to Inter-Church Marriage have not given cause for concern during the past year, it must be acknowledged that judging from the trends within each of the traditions, it is clear that an ever greater number of couples are choosing not to marry at all. There is, as yet, no reliable statistical data to assess the extent of co-habitation outside of marriage among Inter-Church couples. There is no reason, however, to suggest the experience there is any different from that of the general population.

It was noted that recent changes to Civil Family Legislation in the Republic of Ireland will lead to the introduction of Divorce Legislation there early in 1997. It will, therefore, be interesting to observe the trends emerging in the Republic over the next number of years. Clearly though, the experience of Western Europe suggests ever greater pressure on family and marital life resulting in increased pastoral challenges to ministers and clergy of all traditions.

Next Meeting of the Inter-Church Committee

It was agreed that next year's meeting of the Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages should take place in Mount Oliver, Dundalk, on Friday, November 21, 1997 at 2.30 pm.

Members of the Committee

Revd John Brackenridge, Most Revd Gerard Clifford, Revd Hugh Connolly,

Rt Revd Mgr Patrick Devine, Most Revd Anthony Farquhar (Co-Chairperson), Mrs Olive Marshall, Rt Revd Michael H G Mayes (Co-Chairperson), Very Revd Brendan Murray, Revd David Turtle

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

1. The Committee spent most of its time in the preparation for our special outreach event in 1998-99, now called LIFE 2. We want to thank all those who have been involved in its planning and commend the programme to the whole Church.

2. Dr Brian Kingsmore, our evangelism promoter, continues to be a most helpful encourager at every level of our Church. He has been heavily involved at the planning stage of LIFE 2 and will be available to help local congregations in their planning and implementation. A brief report of his work is given below. His enthusiasm and guidance are always of great benefit to the Committee. We ask you to continue to remember him in prayer, especially during the busy period leading up to the launch of LIFE 2.

3. The Committee would like to thank all congregations who took part in the census in January 1997. Already this has brought urgent concern and action in some places. We hope that the census was helpful for each congregation and plan to repeat the exercise in the near future.

4. LIFE 2 information packs will be sent shortly to congregations. We hope these will be used by as many as possible in each congregation to stimulate thinking and action leading up to LIFE 2 and well beyond. They include sections on preparing for evangelism, prayer guidelines, suggestions for evangelistic events, training of evangelists and evangelism study aids. They can be photocopied, and used by Kirk Session, Evangelism Committees, Home Groups, Congregational meetings and/or others.

5. It is hoped that each congregation will use the winter session of 1997-98 to plan their strategy and events for the following year. Also we hope that each congregation will quickly offer its members many opportunities to pray effectively for LIFE 2, long before any local events occur.

6. More information, including that for prayer and tools which can be used locally, will be produced during the following year and can be added to the pack. It is also hoped at a later stage to include further material for discipleship training and action, along with helps offered to Kirk Sessions to assess the effectiveness of the programme at a local level, and ways in which evangelism will become a natural activity throughout the congregation.

7. We always have at the back of our minds that these materials should be user-friendly and offer a broad range of ideas. In the end each congregation will decide how LIFE 2 should operate for them. We look forward to hearing of innovative ideas which can be shared with others.

8. During the session 1998-99 it is our prayer that every congregation throughout our Church will hold events as part of the LIFE 2 programme, and that these events will serve as a springboard to future evangelistic outreach.

9. LIFE 2 will be launched in each congregation on a Sunday, yet to be decided, in September 1998. Further details will follow.

10. We believe that God has called us at this time to confidently take the gospel to the needy people of this island, to our own fringe members and beyond. Let us boldly and regularly come to God to ask that He would pour out His blessing on our plans and activities. We believe that it is through Jesus Christ and His salvation that we can have new eternal life. Let us tell others with renewed zeal and love.

G CONNOR, Convener

APPENDIX

EVANGELISM PROMOTER'S REPORT

Rev Dr Brian Kingsmore reports:

1. This has been another year of encouragement and fulfilment in the work of promoting evangelism throughout the whole church. There has been a steady demand for my services covering a wide geographical area from Lucan in the South to Londonderry in the North. I have spoken at Presbytery Conferences, Rallies, and Stated meetings. I was particularly impressed with the sterling work being done in the Carrickfergus Presbytery on the five occasions I visited there.

2. Other services and seminars conducted included Kirk Sessions, Special Rallies, Church and Presbytery Evangelism committees as well as some specialised cell groups. I am indebted to the Ministers who visited personally to help me in preparation for their follow-up meetings in the Church. These times of mutual sharing have made my work easier and very enjoyable.

3. Two one-day conferences were held with the Irish Mission Workers in Lucan and further contacts are to be made. In all these meetings I have listed it needs to be stressed that I discovered God has been blessing and continues to bless the work being carried on week by week in many parts of the land. I sense a definite rise in the spiritual temperature of our Church. There is an awareness as to where we are at the present time and a willingness is growing to do something about improving our evangelistic efforts in the immediate future.

4. This awareness is a spur to those of us engaged in the demanding committee work of the Life 2 Outreach, the Strategy for Mission Committee and the 20/20 Vision Assembly Conference. I am also involved with the Youth Board and their outreach efforts. One other area that has been a means of opening doors was my series of articles printed in the Christian Irishman to do with practical ideas concerning evangelism in the local church. I continue to be

surprised by the enthusiastic responses to these, resulting often in follow-up visits with sessions and committees.

5. I would conclude this report with grateful thanks to all those who have made this year so fruitful and enjoyable, especially the Rt Rev H Allen, Revs G Connor and J Buick who have given their time and support far beyond the bounds of duty.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the resignation of the Board Convener, Rev Jackson C Buick, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Very Rev Dr D H Allen be appointed in his place.

Irish Mission Committee

3. That the resignation of the Convener of the Irish Mission, the Very Rev Dr R Sterritt be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that Mr Douglas Cowan be appointed in his place.

National and International Problems Committee

4. That the present National and International Problems Committee be thanked for its services and discharged, and that the General Assembly record their appreciation to the out-going Convener, Rev C J C McMullen, for his work.

5. That a core panel on National and International Problems be established under the General Board to act if and when required.

6. That the General Assembly commend the pamphlets on 'Church and Culture' for study and use by Kirk Sessions and Bible Study groups.

Christian Training Committee

7. That the General Assembly are glad to learn that other Churches and Christian organisations at home and overseas have recognised the value of materials published by the Christian Training Committee and are making good use of them.

8. That the General Assembly commend the leaflet, "What should a church member be?" to all congregations and encourage them to make full use of all training materials in preparation for the year of church-wide mission.

Divine Healing Committee

9. That the seven recommendations of the Appendix on Stress in the Ministry be implemented immediately.

10. That the General Assembly give permission to the Divine Healing Committee to have two people trained in stress counselling/management and be available to ministers under stress, or to make suitable alternative arrangements.

11. That 1,000 copies of the Reports on Stress in the Ministry be printed as a separate publication and charged to the Incidental Fund.

Committee on Marriage and the Family

12. That the resignation of the Convener of the Committee on Marriage and the Family, Rev J Brackenridge, be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev Trevor Steele be appointed in his place.

Evangelism Committee

13. That the General Assembly encourage every congregation to use the next twelve months in prayerful planning for outreach in 1998-99 under the LIFE 2 initiative.

14. That Presbyteries and Congregations be encouraged to observe Sunday 13 September, 1998 as the formal church launch of LIFE 2.

15. That the Incidental Fund make a grant of up to £5,000 for each of two years to meet the cost of the LIFE 2 programme.

16. That thanks be expressed to all who have served as visiting evangelists during 1996.

17. That the General Assembly support Bible Sunday on 7 December, 1997, and continue to pray for all involved in the translation of the Scriptures and production of Bible studies and aids throughout the world.

General

18. That the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training, with its associated working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 282 of the Code as follows:

YOUTH BOARD

Rev DANIEL KANE, Convener
Miss ROSALIND STIRLING, Youth Officer

1. “The Youth Board shall encourage the study of, and response to, the needs of young people. It shall also facilitate local congregations in the work of evangelism, training and nurture of young people.

The Board shall also act on behalf of the General Assembly, where appropriate, in relation to relevant youth organisations and bodies, including the statutory Youth Service.”

These two paragraphs formally constitute the function of the Youth Board according to Par 283(2) of the Code. This is the role we on the Youth Board seek to fulfil within our denomination as we facilitate and resource effective youth ministry carried on week in and week out at local congregational level. Our Church continues to be well served by many committed and talented leaders who willingly dedicate their gifts to this end. The Board readily acknowledges the Church’s indebtedness to such people. Our prayers are for everyone who endeavours to promote the cause of Christ amongst young people so that they are converted to faith in Him and become active citizens of His Kingdom.

2. The Board continues to be grateful for the enthusiasm and vision of our Youth Officer, Miss Roz Stirling, who works tirelessly to implement the Board’s agreed mission statement. Our youth office staff, Mrs Jean Gibson, Mrs Felicity Atwell and Miss Lois McIlrath work hard and cheerfully to ensure the smooth administration of our Board’s business, and we record our gratitude to them. Mr Maurice Kennedy, our Centres Director, continues to develop our youth centres as places of excellence and ministry, and we thank him for his tireless energy and hard work.

3. The Board’s focus on resourcing local congregations for effective youth ministry has shown us that one of the greatest needs in our Church is for the assistance of a field worker. The ever-increasing demands from ministers, Kirk Sessions and youth leaders in this regard must be met if we are to reach our young people and win them for Jesus. In Donegal and Monaghan Presbyteries, Miss Iris Stevenson is doing a very worthwhile job in this regard in her capacity as Youth Development Officer for these two Presbyteries. We are also glad to report that the Rev Keith McCrory has been appointed to similar work in the Dublin area in a joint appointment with the Board of Education. We thank these two people on behalf of the whole church and assure them of our continuing prayerful support.

4. The Board is very aware however, that this leaves the whole of Northern Ireland where the majority of our young people live, served by one person in this respect - namely the Youth Officer! Last year’s General Assembly gave the Board “outline planning approval” to proceed towards the full-time appointment of a Northern Field Officer (Min. Gen. Ass 1996 page 66, Resolution 5). This post will cost £25,875 per annum. The United Appeal Board has agreed to fund the post for a two year period to get it up and running from

September 1997, after which we are confident of securing external sources of funding. We cannot stress how urgently the Board views the appointment of such a person and ask for the General Assembly's whole-hearted support of this proposed field-worker.

5. Constructive consultations were entered into with the Executive Committee of the Ulster Guiding Association concerning changes to the wording of their promises. The written clarification sought on behalf of the Youth Board was given and on balance the Board see no reason why the present partnership with the Guide Association should not continue. A resolution to this effect was passed at the October 1996 meeting of the Youth Board.

6. The Nexus Ireland Project, which aims to develop the Lucan Youth Centre as a place of effective, Biblically-based reconciliation ministry within our Church and beyond, goes on apace. The building of a new multi-purpose hall, with new kitchen and ancillary rooms has been completed, the necessary finance being secured outside of United Appeal Board funding. We look forward to an official opening in the early autumn. The Board is also glad to report the appointment of a full-time Programme Director, Mr Ian Scott, who will be based at the Lucan Centre. This post will be funded from the Delors package of European funding. There is a two-fold aspect to the Programme Director's job:-

- (a) To write and plan suitable cross border/cross community reconciliation programmes.
- (b) Having contacted and visited schools/churches/social groups in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties to facilitate and deliver such programmes.

This is an exciting and strategic appointment coming as it does in the present political situation, so we ask for your prayer support.

7. The last year has been one of consolidation and reappraisal with the structures and programmes of Youth Link NI. Interim arrangements have been set in place to make the working of the organisation less cumbersome, and after some fine tuning these will be drawn up.

8. CYSC continues to provide a necessary Protestant training resource and has a positive role to play in training our youth leaders.

9. The Board wishes to thank those who supported the Youth and Sunday School Project Namaste in 1996/97 and commends the project on Indonesia for 1997/98 to everyone.

10. The Board is drawing up policy regarding the "Child Protection Guidelines" as appropriate to our various activities, and implementing procedures of good practice in this respect.

11. We are grateful for the generous support of our church for the work of the Youth Board, not least through the financial assistance we receive from the United Appeal Board, which is our major source of funding. We are also thankful to the Government of the Republic of Ireland for their financial support of youth development work in the Republic.

12. The Board regrets the resignation of the Rev Robin Brown as Convener of the Youth Events Committee. We pay tribute to all the enthusiasm and energy he put into this demanding convenership, especially with its heavy summer commitment. We pray God's continued blessing on his ministry.

YOUTH TRAINING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. This Committee seeks by the provision of training, resources (personnel and materials), and opportunities to encourage local church Youth Leaders to be more effective in reaching, nurturing, equipping and challenging young people to be disciples of Jesus Christ within the context of Ireland.

TRAINING WORKING GROUP

2. By the time this report is published the Youth Leadership Training Course should have been completed in the Presbyteries of Derry & Strabane, Donegal and Monaghan; this means that one third of the Presbyteries have now held the new Course. Unfortunately the numbers on the Courses tend to be small. This is partly because Youth Leaders are often already over-extended in their time commitment and partly because there is still a general reluctance in churches to take seriously the need for, and value of, proper training.

3. The Courses in both Donegal and Monaghan were organised by Miss Iris Stevenson, the Youth Development Officer for those Presbyteries and Keith McCrory, based in Dublin, has been adapting the Course to suit the needs of Youth Leaders there. Although not under the care of this Working Group it has been exciting to see the Board's two Youth Development Officers making a big impact in their respective areas.

4. At the end of 1996 we held a Training Day for 18 Ministers and Youth Leaders who had offered their services as Trainers for the Youth Leadership Course.

5. Following a model established in Omagh Presbytery we are currently investigating ways of encouraging a Presbytery to assess its own Youth Ministry situation and needs.

TRAINING TREVOR WORKING GROUP

6. Training Trevor, the largest training event in Ireland, promises to be bigger and better than ever before. There are a number of firsts for this year's event: a new venue, the University of Ulster at Jordanstown; a new date, the 14th of June; a new seminar Track, especially for Sunday School Teachers. We are expecting over 1,000 delegates and there will be more seminars (in larger rooms) and a wider selection of resources than ever before.

7. The theme for the day is "DRY BONES DANCING" taken from the vision of Ezekiel, the Dry Bones being Programme Ideas, the Flesh on the Skeleton being the relational nature of Youth Ministry and the Muscle the quality of the Leader's own relationship with God. There is the usual mix of experts from home and overseas with the keynote speaker being Martin Sanders (USA) who will be encouraging the delegates to look with eyes of faith at what can be and bringing a challenge to live a life of faith.

RESOURCES WORKING GROUP

8. The group has been preparing two resources during the past year:

- (a) "Presbytery Youth Agents Handbook" which seeks to provide: an explanation of how the Youth Board sees the role of the Agent; information about the support, facilities and resources available through the Youth Office; and a resource list of useful contacts (e.g. speakers, bands, drama teams).
 - (b) "Young People, Honestly!" A booklet unpacking some of the key issues in understanding Young People and Youth Culture in the local context and giving guidelines as to how we can use the culture to communicate the Gospel.
9. The possibility of a Resource Day for Youth Leaders is currently being investigated.

RECONCILIATION WORKING GROUP

10 During the past year the Working Group have developed a library of resource material, including a list of speakers, which is available from the Youth Office. They are currently preparing some material about "What it means to be a Presbyterian" to be used in Youth Fellowships

11. Two Single Identity sessions were organised. The first a day with Full-time Youth Workers and the second a residential weekend for Youth Leaders and young people over 17.

In each case the aim was to encourage the participants to understand their own identity and heritage as Presbyterians and to let that understanding challenge how they live out their faith in the context of Ireland.

D STANFIELD, Convener

YOUTH CENTRES COMMITTEE

1. The Youth Centres Committee is encouraged by the activities held at each of the Centres: Guysmere, Lucan and Rostrevor, and reports that during the past year an ever increasing number of young people and leaders have benefited from the facilities.

2. It is the desire of the Centres Committee to continue to develop our facilities where young people can be challenged by the claims of the gospel, taught in the Word of God, and instructed in how to use their gifts and talents to the benefit of the Church of Jesus Christ and their fellow citizens throughout the length and breadth of this land and further afield.

3. Under the enthusiastic leadership of Mr. Maurice Kennedy, the Centres' Director, assisted by his wife Helen, these goals and aspirations of the committee are implemented at the 'coal face' with enthusiasm. Maurice's ability to organise coupled with his financial expertise has contributed much to the physical improvements at each of the centres throughout the year that has passed.

4. Last year the report highlighted the proposed development of Guysmere, that 'tenders had been opened, and work started on the sports hall.' This work is now completed and the W.S.K. Crossley Hall was officially opened

on 28th April. The Centres Committee place on record their sincere thanks to the Guysmere Management Committee for all their hard word and enthusiasm during the months of this building project.

5. In Lucan work on the dining hall is progressing well and should be completed by the summer of 1997, finance permitting. The Lucan Centre is used not only weekly but on a daily basis by many groups. The mid-week chalet facility continues to be available to ministers and full-time workers who need a quiet, relaxing break.

6. Rostrevor continues to be used by smaller groups and we extend a warm welcome to the Rev Brian McMillen.

7. This year our Centres are continuing to be used to facilitate various camps. Rostrevor will host a music camp providing workshops and seminars for those with musical talents from 7-13 July. The Lucan Soccer camp, 3-8 August, alongside the Summer camp, 16-22 August, is undoubtedly a repeatable activity from last year. The Guysmere Girls' Camp, 28 June - 5 July, and the Boys' Camp, 11-19 July, will be exciting holidays for many campers with their success this year being as great as previous years. The Committee thank all who put time and energy into the organising and staffing of these camps.

8. The Centres Committee sees the camps, along with other activities, as part realisation of the goal that our centres are not only facilities merely for holiday breaks, but centres for ministry.

9. The Centres Committee has taken seriously the guidelines issued by the General Assembly in respect of child protection and is endeavouring to ensure that the highest possible standards are pursued at every level.

10. It is the Committee's desire to continue to develop high standards of accommodation within the three centres. We thank God for those who over the past year have come to faith, and for young Christians who have been challenged into further avenues of service as a result of ministries within the centres.

11. Thanks are extended to individual Committee members at local level and to the staff of the Youth Office for their willingness to promote the work with graciousness and enthusiasm.

D.I.J. McNIE, Convener

YOUTH HOME MISSION COMMITTEE

1. During the past year the Youth Home Mission Committee has continued to maintain and develop links with local congregations. We welcomed Mr John Luke as the chairman of the Summer Outreach Working Group, and Mrs Helen Bruce as the Co-ordinator for the PCI Year Team. We said farewell to Miss Anna Montgomery, who had been in the co-ordinating role for PCI Year Team for the last year. We wish her well as she settles down to married life in the USA.

PCI YEAR TEAM

2. This is a very exciting work within the Youth Board. It affords the opportunity for service to a number of young people who offer themselves for a

year to the Church. This last year we have had to restrict our intake on the Team to six. While this is frustrating, we are ever thankful to God that He continues to use the Team wherever they go. Throughout the year the Team received ongoing training and help. It is encouraging to see the individuals grow and mature in Christ. The Committee would wish to thank those congregations, where the Year Team had the privilege of serving, for caring for them and allowing them to work with the congregations. We would continue to commend this part of the Youth Board's work to the whole Church and if any would like any more information of how the Year Team can serve in their area, they may contact the Youth Office for more details. The Youth Home Mission Committee would commend this type of service to all young people of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Application forms may be obtained from the Youth Office.

SUMMER OUTREACH TEAMS

3. It is very gratifying to know that during the Summer months nearly three hundred young people give part of their time, energy, money and talent in service to God through going on a Summer Outreach Team. Fourteen Teams were sent out all over Ireland with the aim of reaching many children, teenagers and adults for Christ. While the newcomers on the Teams go with a certain amount of fear, there is a great sense of being together in the work of Christ. Over the week or fortnight friendships are made that will last for a life-time. We thank congregations for hosting Summer Outreach Teams. We would wish to point out that to receive a Team a congregation needs to make an application. Guidelines have been prepared for congregations who are thinking about this type of work. They should make their request to the Youth Office. This work is continually being assessed and location of Summer Outreach Teams may vary year from year, depending on availability of Team members and requests from congregations.

EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL WITNESS

4. A manual has been produced to help Leaders to teach and train their young people in the local congregation, to know about and know how to communicate their faith and evangelise their peer group. There will be some pilot teaching sessions taking place in the near future. The Working Group continues to oversee the Wembley Outreach Team for which interviews are held and suitable training organised. This Team is very different from our "Home" Teams, because it deals with people from a multi-faith background. Any young person who would be interested in this work should contact the Youth Office for further details.

5. The Youth Home Mission Committee would wish to thank the office staff for all their help. We are also encouraged and grateful to those young people who offer themselves for the various aspects of this work. We pray that God will continue to bless this part of the Youth Board's work.

M G McCLELLAND, Convener

YOUTH OVERSEAS COMMITTEE

1. The Youth Overseas Committee continues to carry out its work through three working groups. The committee has sought to get young people interested and involved in the overseas mission of our church. Our thanks go to all the members of the working groups and also to the Overseas Board for their help and support.

OUTGOING TEAMS WORKING GROUP.

2. This working group seeks to provide opportunities for young people from P.C.I. to go overseas to experience first hand the work of our partner churches, see our missionaries in action and be involved in some aspect of the work.

3. In 1996 we had teams going to Jamaica and the Czech Republic. In Jamaica the young people were able to see the work of the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman as well as the work of some of our missionaries. The team engaged in the study of mission and spent time with some Jamaican churches and youth groups. In the Czech Republic, continuing our church's partnership with the Czech Church, our young people were involved in joint youth activities with the Czechs.

4. This summer our young people will be travelling to South Africa, where they will spend time at an International Youth Conference, they will see the work of the Evangelical Bible Seminary, Pietermaritzburg and they will be able to visit some inner city outreach work in Durban. The team will be able to visit Africa Enterprises which Michael Cassidy (speaker at 2020 Vision) heads up. The young people will also have opportunity to study mission.

5. There are also a number of individual young people going overseas for short term missionary service. We praise God for these young people.

INCOMING TEAMS WORKING GROUP

6. This working group seeks to host the many young people who visit P.C.I. each summer, allowing them to experience life here and be involved in many of the aspects of our church.

7. Last year we received young people from India, Jamaica, and the Czech Republic. They participated in many churches here, met with many youth fellowships and participated in some of our summer youth events.

8. We hope to receive a number of young people from the Wembley area of London.

MISSION PROMOTION WORKING GROUP

9. This working group is seeking to provide resources and materials for youth fellowships to help youth leaders include overseas mission in their programmes. They are exploring new ways in which they can promote world mission amongst Presbyterian young people.

PHILIP McCREA, Convener

YOUTH EVENTS COMMITTEE

1. The Youth Events Committee continues to bring young people together for worship, fellowship and fun. This is done through four working groups.

YOUTH NIGHT WORKING GROUP

2. Last year's Youth Nights were addressed by Andy Hickford, ably supported by Logan and Robb and the Youth Night orchestra and choir. This year the subject will be "The Real Jesus" and our own Steve Stockman will be the speaker. We continue to be grateful to everyone who works so hard to make this the successful event which it is, and to youth leaders who bring their young people along to Youth Night.

YOUTHREACH WORKING GROUP

3. The Youthreach Festival continues to go through a process of reappraisal and metamorphosis. This year is very much an "in between" year in this development, and so Steve Stockman, who understands the thinking of the Working Group has been asked to be the main speaker. This is also an experiment to see if there is any possibility of a link between Youth Nights and Youthreach, although it is not our intention that this should necessarily be through having the same speaker at both events. A series of morning sessions will bring time for further opportunity to reflect on God's Word and respond in worship. Youthreach 97 will be from 4th August 1997 at University of Ulster, Coleraine.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES WORKING GROUP

4. The aim of this working group includes such things as: to connect young people with issues of the social gospel, to motivate young people and challenge the Church in this area, to be indirectly evangelistic and not merely for young Christians, to incorporate elements of fun, learning and action.

5. Exciting plans for an all night youth activity on Friday 19 December 1997 for young people in the 13 - 18 year old age group, with the necessary leader/young person ratio, are in hand. This will be in co-operation with Christian Aid and TEAR Fund, under the umbrella of World Development. This is an innovative and creative step for the Board. We hope many support us with their prayers and presence.

STARTING AS A STUDENT

6. This event grew out of a perceived need amongst young people going on to tertiary education. This year's event is organised for Saturday 6 September 1997 in Union Theological College, with Mr Joe Carey as the Keynote speaker.

D J KANE, Acting Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

General

2. That the General Assembly appoint the Revs David Stanfield, Adrian Moffett, Stewart Jones and Mr Trevor Long to be representatives on the Board of Management of the Churches' Youth Service Council.
3. That the General Assembly appoint to Youth Link N I Groups:
 - (a) Youthlink Executive - Rev D J Kane and Youth Officer
 - (b) Training and Development - Rev Adrian Moffett and Mr Trevor Long
 - (c) Cross-community - Rev David Stanfield and A N Other.
4. That the following grant be paid from the Incidental Fund:

Youth Link N I	£6,500.
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5. That the General Assembly give the Youth Board permission to appoint a full-time Northern Field Officer.
6. That the resignation of Rev R L Brown as Convener of the Youth Events Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that Rev R J Hyndman be appointed Convener.

Youth Overseas Committee

7. That the General Assembly rejoice in the number of young people continuing to offer themselves for short-term service overseas and commend to the prayers of the church those who will be travelling in the coming weeks.

Youth Training and Resources Committee

8. That the General Assembly encourage congregations to commend "Dry Bones Dancing", the Training Trevor event for this year, to their Youth Leaders and Sunday School teachers.
9. That the General Assembly congratulate those who have completed the Basic Youth Leadership Training Course and encourage each congregation to recommend the course to their youth leaders.
10. That the General Assembly encourage Youth Leaders to make use of the resources available from the Youth Office.

Youth Home Mission Committee

11. That the General Assembly commend and pray for all young people who offer their service to Christ and the Church through serving on the PCI Year Team or Summer Outreach Teams in the coming year.

Youth Centres Committee

12. That the General Assembly commend the three Youth Centres, Guysmere, Lucan and Rostrevor, to the support and prayers of the Church.
13. That the General Assembly give thanks for the completion and opening of the new sports complex at Guysmere Youth Centre.
14. That the General Assembly commend the continuing development of Lucan Youth Centre to the Church.

15. That the General Assembly commend the six camps being held in the summer to the Church: The Girls' and Boys' Camps at Guysmere, the Adventure Camp in Kilrea, the Music Camp in Rostrevor and the Soccer and Summer Camps at Lucan.

Youth Events Committee

16. That the General Assembly commend the two Youth Nights to the prayers of the Church and encourage congregations to commend the event to their young people.

17. That the General Assembly commend Youth Reach to the prayers of the Church and encourage congregations to commend the event to their young people.

18. That the General Assembly commend Starting as a Student on 6 September to the prayers of the Church and encourage congregations to commend the event to their young people.

19. That the General Assembly commend the all-night youth activity planned for 19 December to the prayers of the Church and encourage congregations to commend it to their young people.

General

20. That the Youth Board, with its associated working committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 283 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Convener: Dr R J RODGERS

Secretary: Rev R F S POOTS

1. The underlying aspiration of the Board of Education is to assist in whatever way possible in the Church's task of leading our children and young people in the direction God has charted for them, of ensuring that their lives are fulfilled, enriched and challenged, of encouraging them in a positive, personal relationship with God which will govern and colour their whole lives through, of providing for them the environment, conditions, example and opportunities by which they may grow in grace and truth - and find that role in the Kingdom of God designed for them and in which they may fully utilise the distinctive talents and abilities God has given them.

2. The Board seeks to realise that aspiration through the three Committees whose individual reports follow. Sometimes it can seem that the Church Education Committee is accepted by others as working in what they would describe as a natural area of responsibility for a Church, the University Education Committee is tolerated as providing a pastoral rather than a curricular activity, and the State Education Committee is regarded with a degree of suspicion and even hostility by critics who cannot agree that the Church has here a legitimate part to play - save, perhaps, it might be somewhat grudgingly conceded, with respect to some contribution to the development and support of Religious Education.

3. It is worth, therefore, emphasising three things:

- (i) The Board would be opposed to any rigid separation of religious and secular education which it sees as concerned with the whole of life. It seeks to have an influence upon all those agencies and processes of family, Church and state, formal and informal, statutory and voluntary, spiritual and secular, which complement each other in the educational process.
- (ii) The right of the Church to be involved, the Board believes, derives from a combination of the commission of a Biblical imperative, an historic engagement at all levels, and a concern to enhance the lives of all children and young people - whatever their social or geographical backgrounds, whatever their perceived academic abilities or aptitudes might be, and whatever the denominational traditions in which they have been raised.
- (iii) The Board would hope that the legitimacy of the Church's present involvement is based upon the professional expertise it is prepared to invest, the distinctive and timeless values for which it stands and the Kingdom vision to which it lays claim.

Rev R S McMullan

4. The Rev R S McMullan was appointed Acting-Convener of the Church Education Committee following the resignation of Mr O A McAuley

and, one year later, became Acting Co-Convener alongside the Rev I T McKee. It has now been decided to nominate Mr McKee as sole Convener.

Mr McMullan guided the Committee through a period of transition and, with his customary courtesy and skill, supervised the office administration efficiently. His period of Convener'ship was marked by a deep commitment to the education of children in biblical truth as well as by the importance he placed on the equipping of Church members to more effectively "... teach others also". The Board wishes to record appreciation for all his work on its behalf.

Recognised Ministries

Rev David Bruce, General Director of Scripture Union (Northern Ireland) reports:

1. The first part of the international aim of Scripture Union is as follows: "Working with the Churches, Scripture Union aims to make God's good news known to children, young people and families and to encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer".

2. In Northern Ireland, Scripture Union has enjoyed good relations with the Churches and these aims have been worked out in partnership, mainly at congregational level. For example, during the past year SU staff have worked with many congregations in Sunday School training, in youth leader training, in resourcing Bible study groups, both with printed materials and training of group leaders and in developing teams of volunteers to staff holiday Bible Clubs during the holidays.

3. At Presbytery level, SU staff were involved with the Presbytery of Ards this year in a series of parenting seminars, working with Rev Ian McKee and others in facilitating a series of three evenings to address the challenge of parenting pre-schoolers, primary children and teenagers.

4. SU staff and volunteers have preached in pulpits all over the Province, spoken at PWA meetings and midweek fellowships, sometimes about the work of SU, sometimes on other topics related to children and young people.

5. Scripture Union counts it a privilege to work in partnership with the Churches in this way, and gives thanks to God for an emerging vision which will take the movement with boldness into the next century.

Rev Patricia McBride, Chaplain at The Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe, Donegal, reports:

1. This is my first year as full-time chaplain in the Royal and Prior School and it is the school's first time to appoint a chaplain. The post is funded by the Department of Education.

2. The Royal and Prior is the only secondary school of Protestant ethos in Donegal and has approximately six hundred pupils, of whom one hundred are weekly boarders. The majority of the pupils are Presbyterian.

3. Opportunities for contact with pupils are varied and include daily year-group assembly, class teaching of Religious Education and a secular subject, a Christian Union meeting in the day-school and an evening meeting in the boarding house, services of worship such as Carol Services, and, this year,

services to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the school in its present form. I have been provided with a comfortable study in which I can meet with pupils individually or in small groups. As need arises, I visit pupils at home or in hospital.

4. Parents or guardians are primarily responsible for the education of their children, so it is important to foster good communication between home and school. I play my part in this, meeting parents and guardians at parents' meetings, open events in the school and phone calls or home visits.

5. Management and staff have welcomed me into the school and together we are developing ways of working as a team.

6. I thank the Board of Education for calling me to this work and ask for continued prayer support.

Rev Robert McMullan, General Director of Scripture Union (Republic of Ireland) reports:

1. It has been a year of many changes adjusting to a new lifestyle and routine, new environment and a bigger parish!

2. Scripture Union has been instrumental in the drawing up of a Child Protection Policy for a number of independent organisations and smaller churches involved in ministry throughout the Republic. *"This group recognises the importance and value Jesus places on children and the love God has for them. As groups and individuals working with children and young people in the Republic of Ireland, we want to ensure that the best possible environment is provided to allow them to develop to their God given potential."*

The Mission Statement, entitled 'Commitment to Care', seeks to give guidelines to enable better care for children and workers in all aspects of ministry from weekly meetings to residential events.

3. Ministry to Families continues to be a very important aspect of the work of Scripture Union. Family Weeks, Special Needs Camp for disabled young people, a Father and Son, and a planned Mother and Daughter Camps, as well as the usual Adventure Camps and weekends at Ovoca Manor (near Ballykissangel), enable us to fulfil our aims in this area as well.

4. I have recently been appointed Secretary of the Britain and Ireland Regional Council for the next three years. This will involve extra travel and time away from home but also an opportunity to experience the wider ministry of Scripture Union around the world.

5. Scripture Union continues to facilitate the church in whatever way it can, but also seeks to help teachers in their work and witness. A Teachers' Support Group, which meets each term, is at present planning the first ever Christian Teachers' Conference in the Republic.

6. Council and Staff are very grateful to the Assembly for its continued interest in the work of Scripture Union in the Republic of Ireland.

STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NORTHERN IRELAND

1. If the latter part of the year saw the main focus of the Committee's concern rest upon projected changes in the Republic of Ireland, much of the earlier period was taken up with Proposals for a Draft Order in Council relating to the reorganisation of educational administration in Northern Ireland.

Educational Administration Review

2. Opinion in the Board was divided on the central issue of whether there should be a reduction from five to three Education and Library Boards. This ranged from total opposition to any such change from members resident in that part of the province served by the Western Board to a readier acceptance elsewhere that change of some kind was both desirable and timely. The former were concerned not to put in jeopardy a system where local accountability and delivery of services were seen to be working well. The latter were more disposed to take at their face value Ministerial assurances that there would be no wholesale loss of jobs or major shifts of personnel or abnormal closure of small schools resulting from reorganisation. All agreed to register concerns related to the employment rights of staff, the proposed new method of appointing Board Chief Executives, and the desirability of preserving the transferor influence through Board membership. All were dubious about the level of savings to the education service which it was claimed would ensue.

3. As it happened, the Draft Order was put on hold by the Prime Minister, and its reappearance after the General Election must be now at least open to question. It would be very interesting to know just how much of the scarce educational resource has been expended over the last few years both in the promotion of and in opposition to the concept and nature of administrative change. The Board would continue to hold to the view unanimously endorsed by the General Assembly in 1993, that government should take steps to establish within each Education and Library Board area - however many or few these are - a body which would have a particular interest in maintaining the distinctive ethos and character of controlled schools.

Integrated Education

4. Following the General Assembly's support last year for the transformation route, the Committee has maintained an interested, watching brief on the progress of integrated schools within the controlled sector. It has welcomed the positive steps taken by the Minister to facilitate those parents who demonstrate their desire to move in this direction. The Committee is aware that in a number of schools not specifically designated 'integrated' there is already a degree of organic integration taking place and, for that reason, would wish to see government encourage that process without requiring a radical restructuring of their pattern of governance.

Transferor Representatives' Council

5. The Committee has continued to co-operate closely with representatives from sister churches in the Transferor Representatives' Council to articulate those views with which the three Boards of Education are deemed to be in agreement. Not only in a number of written submissions on a variety of issues on which our views have been sought but in regular meetings with the Minister, with Education and Library Board officers and advisors and with other educational interests, our representatives have sought to uphold our Church's position and make positive contributions. One illustration of the effectiveness of such co-operation has been the legislative change conceded in response to specific lobbying by which the transferor representation in controlled secondary schools is chosen: the 'electoral college' for that constituency is now confined to transferor governors in feeder primary schools. It might also be added that it was one of our own Board's representatives who first drew attention to the serious problem of underfunding of the education service as a whole, an issue which has not been neglected in representations made to the Minister.

C C E A

6. Very recently the Committee and the Board responded positively to a request from the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment to be involved in the monitoring of Religious Education and in influencing how the outcomes of such monitoring might be used in any future revision of the programmes of study for Religious Education. It is a matter of enormous gratification that the Convener of our Board, Dr R J Rodgers, was invited to accept the Chairmanship of the Religious Education Subject Committee of CCEA. We wish him well in this important position.

Board Advisory Panel for the Republic of Ireland

7. In order to be better informed on matters relating to education in the Republic, the Board approved a recommendation from the Committee to set up a Panel to advise the Board, as and when necessary and appointed the Board Convener and Secretary, Revs T P McCaughey, N Cubitt, J S B Drennan, A V Martin, M Hunter and Mr Brian Duffy to serve as members. Other interested groups or individuals may be invited to confer from time to time without voting rights. The function, membership and effectiveness of the Panel will be monitored and amended as necessary.

Transferors' Representatives

8. Education and Library Boards, as well as Boards of Governors, will be reconstituted in the near future. The Church is grateful to those who have served as Transferors' Representatives for their commitment to what is now a demanding task and for the significant contribution made to education by those who represent the Church's interests.

Committee Convenership and Board Secretaryship

9. In view of the additional responsibilities which will devolve on the Convener of the Committee in the incoming year, the Assembly will be

requested to appoint a Co-Convenor and Co-Secretary of the Board for the ensuing year.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Primary Schools

Rev J S B Drennan, Director of Primary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:

1. Its a "long and winding road" would seem to be an apt way to start this report about primary education in the Republic of Ireland. It seems a very long time ago that the process of educational reform was begun and it was thought that the process was near the end but now its not so certain.

2. The Education Bill has been debated through the Dail and we have had our statement on ethos accepted by the minister but now the only question remaining is to whether or not schools will be subject to the fair employment legislation. Negotiations are ongoing at the time of writing.

3. The Education Bill 1997 sets out to be "an act to make provision in the interests of the common good for the education of every child in the state ..."

4. Rev Nancy Cubitt is now representing the Church on the Executive of the Church of Ireland Chairpersons' Association. At the Synod of Dublin a resolution was passed stating approval of the new developments in the "Relationships and Sexuality" program so long as it is developed in the "context of a moral and spiritual framework consistent with the values and ethos of the school".

Secondary Schools

Mr B Duffy, Director of Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:

1. The Presbyterian Church welcomed the White Paper "Charting our Education Future". We were glad to encourage moves to alleviate disadvantage and to increase the participation of parents and teachers in the running of schools. We also celebrated the Government's support for diversity in education and its approach to maintaining choice for our families between different types of schools.

2. As this report is being written (March 1997), the Education Bill has been published and has passed its second reading. We again welcome the attempt to put education on a statutory footing for the first time and to define the rights of pupils, parents, teachers, school managers and patron bodies.

3. Under the terms of the Bill, Education Boards are to be established in ten regions and are to be representative of school patrons, national parent associations, trade unions or staff associations, local authorities and other nominees. The Minister is charged with ensuring that minority religions are represented within her allocation of nominees. Among the functions of the Education Boards are planning and co-ordinating the provision of education in

the region, providing funding to schools and co-ordinating support services. Boards may acquire property and buildings and lease them to patrons.

4. Concern for the Presbyterian Church with regard to Education Boards centres on ensuring that representation for minority denominations is adequate, that the cost of the bureaucracy of the Boards does not detract from educational provision, that the boards do not encumber educational institutions with unnecessary regulations, and that adequate funding is secured by schools.

5. With regard to governance, the Bill states that all schools will have Boards of Management, representative of parents, teachers and patrons. There is no formula of representation prescribed in the Bill and considerable negotiation at local and national level is expected to follow. The Bill provides for the freezing of capitation grants and allocation of teachers to schools which do not install Boards of Management. The Minister is given the power to impose a Board of Management of a particular composition if the parties concerned fail to reach agreement.

6. All of the major Churches in the Republic have recently been in negotiation with the government to secure amendments to the Bill which would clarify the role of the patron (presently Boards of Governors in most cases), protect the right of the patron to control admissions policies (the Bill is vague in this sensitive area) and remove the powers of the Minister to impose a Board of Management or financial penalties.

7. State examination of Religious Education is precluded by law at the moment. The Bill includes the necessary amendment to the Intermediate Education Act of 1878 to enable RE to become part of the state examination system. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has produced draft syllabi which are presently being amended in the light of consultation. Our Church has long requested such a development and warmly welcomes it.

8. During the year, the Secondary Education Committee, which also contains representatives of the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church and the Religious Society of Friends, has been considering the shortage of Protestant teachers and is in the process of devising strategies to increase the supply. It is exploring the possibility of creating a co-ordinating body representative of the various interests in Protestant education to facilitate the targeting of new types of funding to the disadvantaged. The main work of the committee remains the allocation of over £2 million in grants to families of minority religious denominations.

Religious Education in Day Schools

Rev W T J Richardson, Organiser of Religious Education in Day Schools, reports:-

1. Reports have been received from all eighteen northern Presbyteries for the first time in fourteen years. Well done Presbytery Agents! However, not all Presbytery Agents supplied the necessary statistical information. This is to be regretted for, not only is it unfair to the Presbytery Agents who are painstaking in the supply of this information, but it also greatly prevents the Church from getting an overview of the statistical trends provincially. Surely it was not too

much to ask all Presbytery Agents to make every effort to continue to make the report and also supply the statistical information for next year.

2. Almost unanimously Presbytery Agents/Ministers speak in glowing terms of the work of RE in day schools. There appears to exist, at both the Primary and Secondary sectors a most cordial relationship between school Principals and local Ministers and, in not a few reports, Ministers have been referred to as “an extension of the staff”. Many of our Ministers act as Chairpersons on Boards of Governors or as Governors. They conduct Assemblies, take classes and are consistently available to give what support they can to both teachers and pupils.

3. Special mention must be made of the RE specialists in the Secondary sector. Consistently reports underline how much their work is valued and particularly so as these teachers often operate under difficult timetabling arrangements. In not a few occasions the back-up of the Area Board RE Advisers is mentioned. Their advice and support would appear to be crucial in the whole field of RE teaching within this sector.

4. The work of RE in Day Schools has always been greatly valued by our Church. It is of paramount importance that this continues particularly in an age where increasingly children/young people either opt out of Sunday School altogether or do so at an early age. The question is posed “Where do such children receive Religious Education and guidance for the great moral and ethical importance of living if they do not receive it within our schools?” Ministers must continue to use their statutory right of access into schools to give all the support, guidance and help they can to teachers, principals and pupils for God’s sake and for the sake of the moral fabric of our time.

R F S POOTS, Convener

CHURCH EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Training

1. During the year thirty-four classes were held for the training of Sunday School teachers, Bible Class and Children’s Church leaders, as well as classes for Sunday School teacher training in Route, Coleraine, Ards, Foyle and Tyrone Presbyteries. A five year training plan has now been drawn up.

2. The Sunday School Organiser has also taken part in classes organised through the Christian Training Centre, has delivered lectures in Union College, conducted Church services and engaged in Presbytery-based training in connection with the introduction of the Child Protection Guidelines. The Sunday School department is also providing four seminars during Training Trevor in June, 1997.

Conference

3. A highly successful conference for Presbytery Sunday School Agents was held in January.

Publications

4. The Sunday School department continues to publish annually Teachers' Guides and Worksheets with a 'Presbyterian flavour'. The four lessons published in August 1996 dealt with Baptism, PWA, Children/Young People in the Church, and Run to Win (Drug Education). The topics for 1997/98 on the theme of Following Jesus are

- (i) At the Table (Communion);
- (ii) On the move (Church Extension);
- (iii) In the home (Family Matters)'
- (iv) Into all the world (Overseas Work).

A third edition of "The Sunday School Teacher" will be printed during the month of April each year.

Sunday School and Youth Projects

5. The Sunday School and Youth Project, Namaste, at the time of writing has brought in the magnificent sum of £68,150. Sunday School and Youth Groups who contributed so generously to this project are thanked for their support.

The Project for 1997/98 will focus on the work of lay training for Sunday School and Bible Class teaching presently undertaken by the Sumba Christian Church in Indonesia, a partner Church of PCI.

Gosford Fun Day

6. The Church Education Committee has accepted the challenge of being responsible for organisation of a new Gosford Fun Day on Saturday, 2 May, 1998.

Awards of Bibles

7. The Committee expresses thanks to the administrators of the Local Bible Fund for enabling it to make the following awards of Bibles during the year:

- 17 teachers with 30 years or more service
- 49 children with 5 years or more unbroken attendance
- 3 children for repeating the Shorter Catechism

8. Mrs. Jean Brown, who has been Secretary to the Sunday School Office for thirty years less one month, retired at the end of February and Mrs Donna Thompson was appointed as her successor. Mrs Brown's faithful service and magnificent contribution to this vital area of our Church's work is readily acknowledged.

Job Descriptions

9. The Committee produced Job Descriptions for Sunday School Teachers, Superintendents, and Helpers which have been circulated to all Sunday School Superintendents.

R S McMULLAN, and I T McKEE, Acting Co-Conveners

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

1. This year has seen major developments in chaplaincy work within the Dublin third level institutions. The appointment of Rev Keith McCrory as Youth Development Officer/Chaplain to Dublin City University and Dublin Institute of Technology has meant a meaningful increase in youth and student work within the Dublin area. He also has duties relevant to both the Youth Board and the Education Board. Rev Katherine Meyer has been appointed to serve as chaplain to Trinity College for another 3 years. The three main Protestant Churches in the Dublin area are about to embark on a joint review of chaplaincy provision in Dublin and the results of this could have far-reaching consequences.

2. Rev Peter Lyle has been appointed to succeed Rev George Moore as part-time chaplain at University of Ulster at Coleraine. The Committee thanks Mr Moore for his contribution to the work at UUC, and wishes him well in his new area of responsibility.

3. The work at Queen's University continues to flourish. The Bush and Derryvolgie Hall are both bustling centres of student and youth activities. The chaplains and their assistants contribute to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in the University and in Stranmillis College.

4. The Committee is very grateful to those ministers who have an active student work within their parishes. It is acknowledged that throughout Ireland, both North and South, students living away from home are supported by local churches in so many ways. Please pray for all chaplaincy work, and especially for part-time chaplains who combine busy parish duties with supporting young people in Colleges and Universities.

R H MITCHELL, Convener

Queen's University

Rev Noel Williamson reports from Queen's University:

1. With a student population of 15,000 and two examination seasons, life at the Queen's chaplaincy continues to be busy and varied. The Bush drop-in centre at Elmwood has proved to be a very popular meeting-point and focus for our students. Inter-chaplaincy contact has expanded and we have developed an increasing programme of study, social and worship events, viewing ourselves as a larger team within the University.

2. Education remains a key electoral issue and the staff, academic and administrative, continue to feel underfunded and, therefore, undervalued. Queen's is currently in the process of appointing a Vice-chancellor in succession to Sir Gordon Beveridge.

3. Many thanks for another happy year at Elmwood go to Mrs Belanne Thompson and Mrs Iris McConnellogue for their sterling work at the Bush, and to Prof Hasley Mitchell and his Committee for continued interest and support.

University of Ulster

Rev David Stanfield reports from the University of Ulster at Jordanstown:

1. This year seems to have been one of constant struggle heavily affected by the events of the summer especially at Drumcree. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to hold organised events because of changing timetables, work and placement pressures and financial constraints which are causing students to seek part-time employment. However, on reflection, this has been a very encouraging year from a number of angles.

2. Relationships have been developed with more students and staff than ever before, particularly amongst post-graduates. We have provided opportunities for open discussion of issues facing Christians in the context of Northern Ireland (sectarianism, good citizenship, justice, repentance, reconciliation) and are very grateful to ECONI for their valuable contribution to those discussions.

3. We are frequently bringing a Christian perspective into an increasingly secular environment, especially at times of induction for new students (from home and overseas) and of training workshops for staff and senior students. Mixers is being used by 100-200 students each evening and continues to provide a positive, alcohol-free, alternative to the Students Union. Coupled with this, our relationships with Students Union officials and Student Services have never been better.

4. It has been encouraging to see a number of students' lives changed significantly as they become more committed to Jesus Christ.

5. One concern is the struggle to develop meaningful relations with the executive of the Christian Union. These have been deteriorating over the last two years and are a source of sadness as the Union is effectively failing to recognise the presence of the PCI on Campus. The position adopted by the office-bearers seems to be directly related to the interdenominational nature of chaplaincy at the University and is a difficulty on all Campuses.

6. We express thanks for the continued prayerful support of the Church.

Coleraine Campus

Rev Peter Lyle reports from the University of Ulster, Coleraine Campus:

1. I took over from Rev George Moore on 1 December 1996 and found the Presbyterian Chaplaincy in good order. I wish to record my thanks to him for showing me around and informing me about the operation of the chaplaincy.

2. Fifteen first year students registered as Presbyterians in September 1996. A meeting is held every Wednesday during term time for all Presbyterian students when we focus on Bible study, the development of our prayer lives and Christians at work. Numbers are small but I plan to push this heavily in September, 1997.

3. I am also seeking to promote a "Student Care System" among local congregations challenging them to follow the example of Portrush congregation which runs a "Student Tea" once a month. Church members make the food and

serve it to students who come along. Some Christian literature is available for the students to take if they wish. An average of 40-50 students attend.

4. I am settling in to the work and very much enjoy working with the other Chaplains with whom there are good relations.

Magee Campus

Rev Robert Davey reports from the University of Ulster, Magee Campus:

1. The total number of full and part time students at the Magee Campus is now around 2,500. However, the new student intake this year was down slightly on the previous year due to over-enrolment in that previous year. Out of these new, first year students there was only one Presbyterian and that person from Scotland. So the opportunities for organised activities are very limited. The Christian Union, however, continues to have its meetings each Wednesday and this provides a forum for those of different denominations to meet together.

2. I continue to be available in the Chaplains' Office on Wednesday afternoons and over the last couple of years this has provided opportunity to talk to several young people about spiritual things and Christian commitment, with fruitful results.

3. Other activities this winter have included the Annual Chaplains' Conference in Limerick and a joint Christmas Carol Service.

Dublin

Rev Katherine Meyer reports from Trinity College, Dublin:

1. The Trinity College chaplaincy team is made up of five members including two full-time Roman Catholic chaplains, one full-time Church of Ireland chaplain and part-time Methodist and Presbyterian chaplains. Each autumn, though it is very often close to the end of term, we all receive names and local addresses of students who have identified themselves at registration as belonging to our particular tradition. My list at present includes about 100 Presbyterians, and all first-year students are contacted as soon as I have the necessary information.

2. We continue to plan most of our programme together and we keep each other informed of denominational services or events. There are a number of ecumenical services, which we plan together, throughout the year and we hold a Tuesday morning prayer service each week in term. These services are led by one of the chaplains or by students.

3. Highlights of our joint programme in 1996 included a lively panel discussion for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity entitled "Turning Over the Ground: Subversive Ministries for a New Church"; a day trip to the Famine Museum at Strokestown House followed by a meal and evening prayer; an outdoor drama during Holy Week; and a service to mark the beginning of the academic year at which the reflection on the gospel reading was given by Dr Tony Bates, a members of the Department of Psychiatry.

4. We also try each year to lend background support and encouragement to a number of the student societies in which faith issues are debated and service

projects to the inner-city Dublin community are carried out. The student-run projects which the chaplains supported this year included a Christian/Muslim social evening and a Christmas dinner and party for senior citizens.

5. I am very grateful, as always, for the ongoing support of the University Education Committee in my work here, and it was a particular pleasure to welcome the Moderator, the Right Rev Dr Harry Allen, and Mrs Allen to Trinity this year. They were able to meet all of my colleagues in the chaplaincy and to hear about our work and our struggles. Dr Allen's interest and assurance of the prayers of the church for us were deeply appreciated by us all.

University College Dublin

Rev Denis Campbell reports:

1. There are only thirty-seven Presbyterian students out of a student population of around thirteen thousand at this College. Three receptions for students were held during the year hosted jointly with the Church of Ireland and Methodist chaplains. We were encouraged by the good attendance. Contact with students is made through visitation and through attending student societies.

2. Several students worship on Sundays in local Presbyterian churches.

3. All the chaplains meet for prayer and planning on Wednesday mornings.

Dublin City University and Dublin Institute of Technology

Rev Keith McCrory reports:

Dublin City University

1. DCU is one of Dublin's most recent additions to third-level education. Originally the National Institute for Higher Education, university status was conferred in 1989 and since then at DCU the student population has grown from 600 to over 5,000 and is continuing to rise. The University's facilities continue to be developed with additional student accommodation and a new library already in the pipeline.

2. Since there are very few Presbyterian students on campus, my first year's ministry has involved young people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Through students' lunches, trips out, organisational involvement, pastoral care, and one-to-one conversations this year has been very much an orientation period for me and one in which to begin building new relationships. It has been very encouraging to see some of these relationships start to blossom.

Dublin Institute of Technology

3. DIT is Ireland's largest higher education institution with a total student enrolment of over 22,000. These students are spread over six main campuses and several smaller colleges. In only ten hours per week it is quite a challenge to make any significant contribution to this vast body but by focusing in on a few locations I have seen relationships begin to take shape here too. The Chaplaincy team in DIT is heavily involved in setting up the orientation

programme for new students and with DIT's move to faculty organisation this has required much effort over the past year. The eight full-time chaplains find themselves very busy and I have enjoyed the challenge of fitting in to all that already occurs.

4. Chaplaincy in the growing, and sometimes strained environment of Dublin, is both difficult and tremendously rewarding. In the whole of Ireland less than 200 students are attending the Christian Unions that exist. In DCU only a small handful are involved and they are finding it hard to keep going. In DIT no CU meets in any of the campuses. However, despite this difficulty, the opportunity for ministry with third-level students is enormous, and the importance of such ministry is clear.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

State Education Committee

2. That the General Assembly once again urge the Government to recognise the state-funded support systems available to other sectors and to establish a structure to provide an identifiable and unequivocal voice in education to represent the controlled sector, and also to provide for it a specialised and co-ordinated support system sympathetic to the culture and ethos of parents who have traditionally depended on that sector.

3. That the General Assembly deplore the severe cut-backs in funding with all their damaging consequences to the whole of the education service and call on Government to reinstate the funds directed elsewhere and, further, to recognise that education merits a higher funding priority in that it is an investment in our children and young people as well as in the future of our community.

4. That the General Assembly commend teachers for the high standard of professionalism they have maintained in the particularly difficult circumstances currently affecting education and, also, express appreciation of the leadership, balance and judgement brought by transferors' representatives to the deliberations and decision-making processes of Education and Library Boards, Boards of Governors and other bodies on which they serve.

5. That the General Assembly welcome the setting up of a Panel to advise the Board on educational matters in the Republic of Ireland and commend those who represent the interests of the Church in education there, especially through the Church of Ireland Chairpersons' Association and the Secondary Education Committee.

6. That the Rev J H McIntyre be appointed Co-Convenor of the State Education Committee and Co-Secretary of the Education Board with the Rev R F S Poots.

University Education Committee

7. That the General Assembly commend the work of the chaplaincies and others who provide pastoral care for students in third level education in Irish

Universities and Colleges, and urge all our young people to seek out and use all the facilities provided.

Church Education Committee

8. That the General Assembly urge the Church to support the Sunday School and Youth Project for 1997/98 on Indonesia.

9. That the General Assembly commend the new Gosford Fun Day on Saturday, 2 May, 1998 to the enthusiastic support of the Church.

10. That the General Assembly encourage all congregations to use the new Sunday School Teachers' Guides and Worksheets on the theme "Following Jesus".

11. That the resignation of the Rev. R S McMullan, as Co-Convenor of the Church Education Committee, be received, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev I T McKee continue as sole Convenor.

General

12. 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

Convener: Rev S A MATTHEWS

1. Throughout the year the Board of Studies has continued its traditional rôle of co-operating with Presbyteries in the selection of Candidates for the Ministry and has carried out its various responsibilities through its Committees.

2. In a more innovative way, the Board has also sought to further the developments and improvements envisaged by the Ad Hoc Committee on Theological Education which completed its work last year.

3. The Board has been greatly assisted in both these spheres by the appointment of Rev Harry Robinson as Director of Ministerial Students by the Assembly in 1996. Mr Robinson has already shown the value of having a full time official to co-ordinate the work of all those who are involved in providing proper training and evaluation for our students for the ministry. The Board urges the Church to support Mr Robinson through its interest and prayers.

4. The Board is pleased that we have more than an adequate number of students for the ministry to meet the needs of the Church. It is anticipated that at the time of the General Assembly there will be over thirty available for Call. The Board strongly believes that the Church should have a pastoral concern for those who have reached the end of their training and who have not yet received a Call.

5. In this final report to the Assembly, the Convener of the Board would like to pay tribute to the various Conveners of the Union College Management Committee, the Students' Bursary Fund, the Magee Fund Scheme Committee, the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee and the Committee on Studies with whom he has worked. As well as giving hours of faithful voluntary service to the Church they brought to their tasks a spirit of integrity and co-operation and genuine concern for our students, which points beyond to the one Lord and Master we seek to serve.

DIRECTOR OF MINISTERIAL STUDENTS

Rev J H Robinson reports:

6. This first year of appointment has opened my eyes to the complexities as well as the exciting possibilities of the post. Broadly speaking, one can group the day-to-day work under two headings: doing more carefully and thoroughly the administration and supervision of students previously undertaken by myself and others on a very part-time basis; putting into action the vision and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Review Committee.

From this, the range of activities and appointments has included: meeting with those who are wrestling with a sense of Call, giving them accurate, up-to-date information on procedures and encouraging them in their exploration of God's Will; setting up the new, enhanced process of Interview and Assessment, including its Summer School, Distance Learning and Placement elements; arranging our first pre-term College Retreat; addressing the concerns of the current student population - high among these being the present position of over-

supply; arranging and administering the first and second year placements and offering constructive criticism to final year students on their conduct of a Sunday morning Service; keeping a pastoral contact with students outside Ireland and devising better ways of ensuring their integration on return; setting up the courses undertaken by Licentiates and assessing their required reflective essays; representing the College and Board of Studies at Sunday Services and mid-week meetings.

Getting to grips with the many facets of the post has been greatly eased by the consistent helpfulness and good-will of Mrs Dale Wright (part-time Secretary), the Faculty, the Secretarial and Domestic Staff at the College and the Officers of the Board.

THE REV S A MATTHEWS

7. The Rev S A Matthews has now come to the end of his term as Convener of the Board of Studies. He has carried out the duties of this responsible appointment with the thoroughness and attention to detail which the Church has come to expect of him.

He always prepared for Board meetings with meticulous care, and his thorough grasp of detail was evident in the way in which he was able to answer questions. The conduct of the Residential Interviews required a particular sensitivity, and Mr Matthew's personal integrity and inward strength enabled him to handle these matters well. He was at all times approachable and fair-minded.

Mr Matthew's convenership coincided with a period of fundamental questioning about the future of theological education, and led to wide-ranging changes in procedures, including the recent appointment of a Director of Ministerial Students. Mr Matthew's clear-sightedness and wide experience of educational matters, combined with his patience and good humour, made a signal contribution to this lengthy process.

He will be greatly missed from the oversight of the Board, which gladly records its thanks to him for all that he has achieved in his Convenership.

RESPONSE TO STRATEGY FOR MISSION REPORT

8. The Board found itself in full agreement with the overall aim of the Strategy for Mission Committee but with fundamental misgivings about its more recent proposals. In particular, the Board is not persuaded that the training of students for the Ministry should be subsumed by a Central Training Unit because such training is, of necessity, specialised and specific to the degree that there is little significant overlap between it and the training of others in Christian service.

In considering the issues raised by the Strategy for Mission Report in regard to Christian training in general, and while not accepting its detailed conclusions, the Board is persuaded that the time is ripe for the General Assembly to review the provision of general Christian Training. The 1992 ad hoc Review Committee set up "to review the whole process of theological education" found it necessary to concentrate initially on the theological education and formation of students for the Ministry and, in turn, found this area

so complex and demanding that it did not have opportunity to take up the matter of the theological education, formation and training of others for Christian service.

DEPARTMENTAL AIMS IN RELATION TO THE TRAINING AND FORMATION OF MINISTERIAL STUDENTS

In furtherance of the on-going review of theological education and training initiated by the Ad Hoc Review Committee, the following Departmental Aims are submitted:

Preamble

Union Theological College is the College of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, seeking to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and every branch of His Church.

The College's objective is to provide the resources necessary to enable the church to maintain an effective presence in the world.

The College's mission is to prepare men and women for ministry whether in the ordained ministry at home or overseas, or in some vocation other than the traditional pastoral ministry.

The College is committed to academic excellence and practical relevance, to the historic faith and to its expression in language and actions meaningful in the modern world.

The College aims to be a school of Christ, where not only in the classroom setting, but also in community, men and women grow in knowledge and in Christian character and maturity in their relationships and their involvement in church and society.

The major part of the work of the College is the preparation of men and women for the pastoral ministry through academic study, theological reflection and practical training.

Each department makes its contribution to this over-all aim.

Practical Theology

The Practical Theology Department aims

1. to train and encourage students to acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary for ministry;

2. to enable students to develop a vision for God's work throughout the world and to formulate strategies that will lead to effective ministry;

To achieve this, the Practical Theology Department will offer courses in

homiletics and communication skills;

the meaning, history and practice of worship;

Christian Education;

pastoral studies, care and counselling;

the study of mission and evangelism;

the psychology of religion;

the relationship of the Church to the world in which it is called to serve God, both in the wider context and the local situation;

church organisation and administration.

Each student undertakes a number of placements in different types of congregation to gain a varied experience of the issues facing the minister in Ireland today.

At all times students are encouraged to develop the gifts which God has given them and a sense of responsibility and accountability in the discharge of their ministry.

Church History

The aims of the Department of Church History in Union Theological College are to teach, challenge and encourage our ministerial students in order that they can mature in their faith and be better equipped to serve in the Church of Jesus Christ.

TEACH We aim to teach our ministerial students about the development of Christian doctrine and practice from New Testament times until the present day. Individuals, movements, documents and thought will all be explored in the pursuit of deep learning.

CHALLENGE We aim to challenge the already-formed theological ideas of our ministerial students. Not content to simply repeat inherited formulations, we will engage in a challenging examination of the trajectory of Christian interpretation from historical context down to the present day.

ENCOURAGE We aim to help our ministerial students become more aware of God's sovereign control in history. Informed, warned and encouraged by the lessons of Church History we aim to prepare our students for years of profitable ministry.

Old Testament

The overall aims of the contribution of the Old Testament Department training are:-

- to communicate to students a thorough knowledge of and an enthusiasm for the Old Testament Scriptures as the word of God;
- to introduce students to the world of Old Testament scholarship;
- to equip students with linguistic, historical, literary, theological and other necessary hermeneutical skills
- to give students a basic reading knowledge of Hebrew and experience of exegesis of the Hebrew text
- to enable students to relate OT material in a relevant way to the modern world
- to prepare students for a preaching ministry

The main components of the core course provided in the OT department are:-

- Elementary Hebrew
- The text and transmission of the OT, and other relevant introductory topics

- An outline of the History of Israel from earliest times through to the inter-testamental period

- A general introduction to each of the main types of OT literature (with detailed study of particular books and exegesis of selected passages): The Historical Books; The Prophets; The Pentateuch; The Psalms, the Wisdom Literature, and the other poetic books

- An introduction to the *theology* of the Old Testament and to major theological themes within it

In all sections of the core-course attention is given to:-

- developing exegetical skills as a foundation for ongoing study after college

- evaluating the contribution of scholarship to our understanding of the text

- interpreting the OT message in the light of the NT material and of the Christian gospel

- exploring issues relating to the preaching of Old Testament material

- applying the OT message to issues facing us in our immediate context in the modern world

Optional courses available in the department (eg for those doing the BTh /BD degree along with ministerial training) currently include specialist modules in each of the main blocks of OT books and in OT Theology. Also available are a number of Advanced Hebrew modules and introductory modules in Aramaic and Syriac.

Systematic Theology

The Department of Systematic Theology has a threefold aim, within the context of our general Collegiate aim.

1. To train theological students in the habit of coherent and integrated thinking in the area of Christian doctrine, against the background of the Christian tradition and for the purpose of engaging with the contemporary world.

2. To provide an introduction to the field of Christian Ethics. Although attention is given here to the intellectual dimension of ethical issues, some integration with the courses in Practical Theology is a desideratum.

3. To foster an analytic habit of mind, against the background of objections to Christian belief. This is the specific function of a mandatory half-course in Philosophy of Religion.

While the topics under consideration in Philosophy of Religion and Christian Ethics may, in principle, vary, the core of the Christian doctrine course constitutes both an historical and theological perspective on:

the nature of biblical authority; the doctrine of God (including the Trinity and Christology); Soteriology; Church and Sacraments; Eschatology.

The Westminster Confession of Faith is also specifically studied.

New Testament

The overall aims of the New Testament Department are:

- to communicate to students a thorough knowledge of and an enthusiasm for the New Testament as the Word of God

- to introduce students to the world of New Testament scholarship and to equip them with the historical, literary, theological and other necessary hermeneutical skills - to enable them to interpret the Bible in its historical context.

- to enable students to relate the Bible in a relevant way to the modern world

- to give students a basic reading knowledge of Hellenistic Greek and experience of reading the New Testament in Greek.

The main components of the core course provided in the NT department are:-

- The text and transmission of the New Testament.

- Introduction to the thought world of the age in which the New Testament was written.

- Introduction to the Gospels, Acts and the Epistles and the hermeneutical skills needed to exegete them

- Detailed exegesis of sections of the Gospels, Acts and the Epistles

- Study of the theology of the Gospels, Paul and the Johannine Literature.

- Introductory Hellenistic Greek together with detailed exegesis of sections of the Greek text.

In all sections of the course attention is given to:-

- developing exegetical skills as a foundation for ongoing study after college

- understanding the contribution of scholarship to our understanding of the text

- exploring issues relating to the preaching of the Bible

- applying the Biblical message to issues facing us in the modern world, particularly in the context of Ireland.

COMMITTEE ON STUDIES

1. The Committee met four times during the year.

2. It continued to give advice to prospective candidates and to set courses and administer examinations in accordance with the Regulations of the General Assembly and the direction of the Board of Studies.

3. In the academic year 1996/97 there were 52 students under the care of Presbyteries as listed in the appended Schedule.

4. Eight students were granted permission to study at Universities/Colleges other than Union: four at Aberdeen, one at Edinburgh, two at Princeton, New Jersey and one at Regent, Vancouver.

5. The Committee expresses its thanks for the work of the following external examiners:

OT Language and Biblical Theology - The Rev I J Patterson, BA, MTh.

NT Language - The Rev W P H Erskine, MA, BD.

NT Greek (Qual) - The Rev W P H Erskine, MA, BD.

Systematic Theology - The Rev D Bradley, BA, BD.

Church History - The Rev T N Hamilton, BA, BD.

Homiletics, Public Worship and Pastoral Work - The Rev Dr D C Irwin, MA, BD.

STUDY IN A MISSIONARY PARTNERSHIP

Rev Dr Ian Hart reports:

6. Students who are studying for the ministry of our church at Union College are encouraged to spend one of the 3 theological years (or, if they prefer, a “year out”) studying theology in a country where we have a missionary partnership. Such a time can be a very enlightening and stimulating experience; for example, overseas churches are often struggling with very different issues from those we are preoccupied with in Northern 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).

RESIDENTIAL INTERVIEW

7. The Residential Interview was held in Union College on 15/16 September 1996. The Interviewing Panel comprised: The Very Rev Drs A R Rodgers, J Ross and R Sterritt; the Revs R F S Poots, R S Hetherington, R L Craig, M Stanfield, R J A Bell, J Campbell, R Lockhart, B A Kennedy, T C Morrison, D C Porter, F A Bradley, D B Knox, W J Orr; Dr R J Rodgers, Mr H R F Plester, Mr S Agnew and Mrs M Robinson, together with the Rev S A Matthews (Director), the Rev J H Robinson (Secretary), and Dr D E Eagleson MA, DipVocG and Mrs H Mullan BSc PGCE (Vocational Consultants acting as advisors to the Panel).

Seventeen candidates were in attendance and completed the normal aspects of the interviewing process. Of these, seven are among those being recommended to this General Assembly, four are not being recommended at this time and seven are not being recommended.

The 1997 Residential Interview is planned for 17th to 21st June.

A W G BROWN, Convener

APPENDIX

SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS

ARDS	Colin J Gamble	Edinburgh
	Cecil A Grant	Princeton
	Mark C A Gray	Union
	Simon Henning	Union
	Kenneth S Jeffrey	Aberdeen
	W R Brian Martin	Union
	Maurice M Stewart	UUJ

	Jonathan Wylie	-
ARMAGH	J Geoffrey Jones	Union
BALLYMENA	Lee H Eagleson	Union
	Stephen Richmond	-
EAST BELFAST	Michael N Davidson	Union
	Graeme J Kennedy	Union
	Andrew N Kerr	Union
NORTH BELFAST	William H G Crawley	Princeton
	Roy W Gaston	Union
	Mark Jones	Regent Vancouver
	Angus A McCullough	Union
	David B Murphy	Union
SOUTH BELFAST	W R Neil Craigan	-
	J R Ian Harbinson	Union
	Peter G McDowell	Union
	Cheryl A Reid	Union
	Philip D Thompson	Union
CARRICKFERGUS	Colin Burcombe	Union
	R Ian Carton	Union
	Stephen J Lockington	Aberdeen
	Philip W Patterson	Union
COLERAINE	Geoffrey D Allen	Union
	Jonathan P Moxen	Union
	Philip B Wilson	Aberdeen
DERRY & STRABANE	Mark Dunn	Union
	David S Gilmore	Union
DOWN	Mervyn Gibson	Union
DROMORE	Samuel J Castles	Union
DUBLIN & MUNSTER	Brian D Colvin	Union
	Kenneth R Gibson	Union
IVEAGH	T David Hagan	Union
	Edwin S McDowell	-
	Ronald D McDowell	Aberdeen
	John A Peacock	Union
NEWRY	Kenneth W J Hanna	Union
	Kenneth Henderson	Union
	William J A Moody	Union
	Robert J Stevenson	Union
OMAGH	David W Reid	Union
ROUTE	Gareth Aitcheson	Union
	David J Steele	Aberdeen
TEMPLEPATRICK	Christopher M Glover	Union
	Louise J Robinson	-
	Anne E Tolland	Union
TYRONE	Adrian T S McAlister	Union

MAGEE FUND SCHEME COMMITTEE

Magee Director's Report

1. Much travel, many locations and a wide variety of programmes have been some of the hallmarks of the Christian Training Programme for the past year. Thankfully most of the programmes have been well supported and those attending have expressed appreciation for the help and encouragement received. A one day conference on "Contemporary Ministry" was conducted by Drs S Logan, S Oliphant and R Craven, who are members of Westminster Theological Seminary Faculty, USA. Over 90 attended and were enriched and challenged by the speakers. Another special feature of the programme was the Joint Residential Conference between ministers from our own church and those from the Church of Scotland. This was held at St Ninian's, Crieff and all who attended were renewed and helped both with the fellowship and the content of the programme. The theme for the conference was "Reforming and Transforming".

2. The new programme for 1997-98 is now ready and ministers, elders and laity are asked to give their support to the programme both by their prayers and attendance.

3. Much thought, prayer and consultation goes into the preparation of the Christian Training Programme. Those Presbyteries that have asked for special items to meet their particular needs have had these included in the planning. Overall the general interest shown has been encouraging and the help of Presbytery agents is very much appreciated.

4. Another Summer School of Theology has been planned from 15th to 18th June 1998. It will be open to both residential and non-residential participants. Meals will be available in the College through the good offices of the Domestic Bursar. We are privileged to have as our two guest speakers, Professor Patrick Miller and Mr David Turner. Professor Miller is Old Testament Professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, USA. He is greatly in demand to lead conferences and Summer Schools and we are fortunate to have someone of his calibre coming to lead us. Mr Turner is a member of the Select Vestry at All Souls, Langham Place, London. He has spoken at our General Assembly and those who heard him on that occasion will be glad of the opportunity to hear him again. He is a leading QC in London and it is interesting to know he comes from Northern Ireland and still has family members living here. A new aspect of the Summer School this time will be that members of Union Theological Faculty have agreed to conduct Seminars as part of the programme. Further details will be given later but it is hoped that this School will be as well supported as the previous ones.

5. The book "Living Leadership" continues to be much in demand and those who have read it express appreciation for the help given in it. A new book on visiting is now available entitled "Valuable Visits" written by the Director. It is for elders and lay visitors who find difficulty visiting in times of bereavement or sickness and in a variety of other situations. It is available in Family Books or at CTC and it is hoped that this book will prove helpful to those who have the privilege and responsibility of visiting.

6. The Bible Correspondence Course continues to have enrolments and those involved in doing the course find it stimulating and worthwhile.

7. Thanks go to all who have attended the variety of courses held. The support of the Magee Committee has meant much throughout the year. Special words of thanks go to the Rev Charles McMullen who as convener continues to give invaluable insights and much encouragement. Also thanks must go to my secretary, Mrs Mary Coles, for all her detailed work, not least in getting the final copy for the new book, "Valuable Visits".

8. The prayers, interest and support of the whole church are sought for all the work being done through the Christian Training Centre.

A H GRAHAM, Director

STUDENT'S BURSARY FUND COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met three times during the year.

2. There were 43 students for the Ministry who received benefit from the Bursary Fund in the last academic year.

3. The total expenditure of the fund during 1995 was £258,872 while the total income from all sources amounted to £262,354. £158,597 came from the United Appeal.

4. We thank all who supported the fund during the year. This could have been by direct giving or offerings at services of Ordination, Installation or Licencing. These financial offerings are much needed and appreciated and realised £44,817 in 1996. The Pulpit Supply Association administered by the students at Union, contributed £1,795.

5. Through the assistance of the Publications Department we have produced a new attractive leaflet for use at services of Ordination etc - this leaflet is in the form of a bookmark.

GEORGE MOORE, Convener

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. During the year 1996 the Committee met on four occasions. Meetings of sub-committees were also held.

2. Professor Laurence S Kirkpatrick BA, BD, MTh, PhD was installed in September 1996 in the Chair of Church History in succession to Professor Emeritus R F G Holmes, an appreciation of whose work appeared in the 1996 Reports. We warmly welcome Professor Kirkpatrick. We also welcome the Rev Harry Robinson, Director of Ministerial Students, who will sit and deliberate with the Committee. The Management Committee records its appreciation of the work of Professor Harold Nicholl, who has lectured part-time in Moral Philosophy for the past 6 years, and whose period of service has come to an end due to reorganisation. The College has been most fortunate in benefiting from

Professor Nicholl's scholarship teaching 'gifts' and interest in its students. Prior to taking up the part-time lectureship Professor Nichol was Convener of the College Management Committee.

3. The death of the Rev Professor Emeritus E A Russell brought a deep sense of loss to the College Community and to the Church at large. Professor Russell's contribution as a Parish Minister, Professor, and Principal of UTC, was immeasurable. Many ministers and students recall his lectures and his personal interest in them with gratitude and affection. His scholarship and his work in Theological Education will be long remembered. The Committee expresses its condolences to Mrs Russell and the family and gives thanks to God for the life, work and christian example of Professor Russell.

4. The Principal, on behalf of the Faculty, has reported to the Committee that -

- (a) for the Academic Year 1996, 37 Ministerial Students are enrolled (1st year - 14; 2nd year - 9; 3rd year - 14). All but one have enrolled for degrees of the Queens University: 36 non-ministerial students are enrolled (1st year - 22; 2nd year - 11; 3rd year - 3): 3 part-time students are also enrolled, making a total of 73 full-time and 3 part-time students;
- (b) the first intake of university students taking theology as part of a joint honours course has been registered;
- (c) work of computerising the Library Index continues. The Library is now open to students after normal closing time and a separate alarm system has been installed with a designated student responsible for setting it; and
- (d) a gift from his year group and friends in memory of the late Rev Bill Loney has been received to provide furnishings for the new student computer suite. Money has also been raised for this purpose through the sale of diaries.

5. The Management Committee records its appreciation of the gift of the friends of the Rev Bill Loney. It has, with the approval of the Trustees, realized £18,509.75 from the College "Better Equipment Fund" and allocated £7,000 from the Stewart Fund to supply 7 Professorial and Secretarial Staff with compatible Computers and Printers and 4 computers for student use. The realisation of capital from the "Better Equipment Fund" reduces income from that fund but, in the financial circumstances of the College, was the only method of funding necessary computerisation. The Committee is grateful to Professor J C McCullough for his advice and expertise in Information Technology.

6. The College reserves from its independent income to meet running costs is becoming depleted and we are now largely dependent upon allocations from the United Appeal and Student Bursary Fund. College endowments have been examined and any free endowments (that is endowments other than those for a specific purpose - eg Scholarships) have been identified to meet future equipment and other projects. The realisation of capital does, of course, mean the reduction of income from the investments, but the Committee has no other option to meet information technology and other necessary development costs.

7. During the year a College Brochure has been produced and circulated to schools and other appropriate outlets. The Committee records its thanks to

Professor J C McCullough and Mr Stephen Lynas, Information Officer, Church House.

8. The Committee is considering methods for the updating of Student accommodation and for wider use of College Plant. Routine maintenance and decoration of premises was carried out.

9. Due to the increasing Secretarial work at the College, it has been necessary to appoint a part-time Secretarial Assistant. The post is, in the first instance, for a temporary period of 6 months and we welcome Mrs Linda Cameron to this position. The Committee is grateful for the helpful advice from Mr Charles Robinson, Church House, in connection with staffing matters.

10. Examination of the work of the Library has been overtaken by the retirement of Mrs Doreen McDowell who has been College Librarian for the past 15 1/2 years. Mrs McDowell is the third member of her family to serve the College, following in the footsteps of her father and grandfather. The Committee records its appreciation of Mrs McDowell's work; her great helpfulness to staff and students and her efficient running of the College Library. She will be greatly missed. A temporary appointment of a Chartered Librarian on a part-time basis, Miss Maureen Carswell, has been made until such time as arrangements can be finalised to advertise for a permanent Chartered Librarian. The Committee records its appreciation of the work of Professor S N Williams and of Mr Trevor Little of Queens University, in assessing Library needs and necessary development.

11. Permanent non-professorial staff have been included in a Pension Scheme identical with that in Church House.

12. Rolling plans for the development of information technology, maintenance, use of the building, equipment and future priorities for the College are being prepared by the Faculty for consideration by the Committee.

13. The UTC and Edgehill Co-ordinating Committee met on one occasion during the year; working arrangements continue to be harmonious and helpful to both Colleges.

14. Once again, it has been a pleasure to co-operate with the Christian Training Centre in the Summer School and other public lectures.

15. The Management Committee records its appreciation of the work of the College's academic and administration staff for the helpful and efficient performance of their duties. Their ready co-operation enables the College to run well and for the benefit of all the students.

MARGARET L JOHNSTON, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly accept the resignation of the Rev S A Matthews as Convener of the Board of Studies, that he be thanked for his services and that Very Rev Dr A W G Brown be appointed in his place.
3. That the work of the Director of Ministerial Students be commended to the whole Church for support and prayer.

4. That the work of the Magee Director of Christian Training and the Bible Correspondence Course be commended to the whole Church for support, participation and prayer.

5. That the books "Living Leadership" and "Valuable Visits" be commended to elders and lay workers in the Church.

6. That the General Assembly encourage support for the 1998 Summer School of Theology to be held at UTC and CTC from 15th to 18th June.

7. That the following grants be paid from the Incidental Fund:	
To cover the expense of the June Residential Course and Interview	£1,015
To cover the expense of the Pre-Term College Retreat	990
To cover the expense of the Weekend of the Applicants' Course	584
To cover the expense of Licentiate Courses	113
To cover the expense of a meeting for students and their spouses	500
To cover the expense of honoraria for Extern Examiners	295
To provide teaching in Communication Skills for students outside Ireland	85

TOTAL £3,582

8. That the Assembly note that the Students Bursary Grant for 1997/98 will be £3,100 and the married allowance £1,400, and that children's allowances will continue to be paid at CMF rates.

9. That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Board of Studies, be accepted as students for the Ministry and placed under the care of their Presbyteries:

James Moore Casement	Glengormley	North Belfast
Christoph Ebbinghaus	Hamilton Road	Ards
Samuel David Finlay	Harryville	Ballymena
David Samuel Henry	Markethill	Newry
Colin William Aidan Martin	1st Stewartstown	Tyrone
Michael McClenahan	1st Lisburn	Dromore
Colin Kerr McDowell	Harryville	Ballymena
David Andrew Simpson	1st Ballyeaston	Templepatrick

10. That the Board of Studies, together with the appropriate working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par. 285 of the Code as follows:-

COMMITTEE ON RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES

1. The Committee held three stated meetings during the year.
2. The Committee agreed unanimously to support the decision of the North Belfast Presbytery to recommend that the Rev James Hunter, BD, be received as a Minister without Charge under Par 219 (4) (c) of the Code.
3. The Committee declared a former minister of our Church eligible for a particular vacancy. The minister in question did not receive the call.
4. Four new applications were received:-
 - (a) A minister from the Congregational tradition in Yorkshire.
 - (b) A minister from the Whangarli Uniting Church, New Zealand.

- (c) A minister from the USA Presbyterian Church.
- (d) A minister from the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

In light of the manpower situation in our Church, the Committee agreed unanimously that these applicants be thanked for their interest, and informed of the present oversubscription of ministers at present in the PCI.

ROBERT JOHNSTON, Convener

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report be received.

COMMISSION ON TRUSTS

1. Attention is drawn to the Capital Account of the General Investment Fund. The Commission advised the acceptance of the Trust Funds.

A.J. RANKIN, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Commission on Trusts for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 130 of the Code as follows:-

BOARD OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Convener: Mr O J G WHITE

1. The Board met three times and was represented at numerous other meetings during the year.

2. The Board has continued to improve the quality of the accounts of the organisations under its control. Several more departmental accounts have received full audit reports this year. Unfortunately the need to comply with best accounting practice means that each set of accounts includes considerable detail to enable the reader to understand fully the results of the reporting body. To the lay reader it is often difficult to obtain an overview of the central church's financial position. With this in mind the Board is preparing a summary set of accounts which will be available at the time of the 1997 General Assembly. This seeks to give an overview of the financial results of the central Church body without going into too much detail.

3. The Board has received representations from several Congregations and Presbyteries as to the level of assessments being raised by the central church. For most of the last 10 years the assessments raised have been high because of two key factors -

- (a) The change of method of financing Ministers pensions from the old style "pay as you go" method to the fully funded basis. This has meant that congregations are currently paying two contributions:-
- (i) the pensions of Ministers who retired some time ago and who are paid on the "pay as you go basis"; together with
- (ii) the contributions paid into the Ministers Pension Scheme.

When Ministers come to retirement age under the latter new scheme, their pensions will be paid from the pension scheme rather than on the "pay as you go basis". As the number of Ministers paid under the "pay as you go basis" reduces the assessments for Ministers' pensions will fall. This year the assessment for pension contributions will fall by 1.25p per £ of stipend as the old pay as you go scheme unwinds.

- (b) The second large assessment is for the redevelopment of Church House. The Church has been fortunate that over the last few years interest rates have remained low thereby reducing the interest charge incurred. The financial projections prepared for the Board indicate that the Redevelopment Loan will be repaid by the year 2000. Once this is achieved the special assessment will of course cease, thus reducing the drain on congregations.

4. The Board nominates Ernst & Young for appointment as auditors of all Committees, Boards, Trusts, Commissions and Agencies of the General Assembly for the current year (Code Par 286 (2) (b)).

Rev D S Graham

5. Due to other commitments Rev D S Graham has found it necessary to tender his resignation as Convener of the Assembly Buildings Committee. He was appointed as Convener of the then Church House and Assembly Hall Committee in 1994 and since then has given excellent service. His business acumen proved invaluable in dealing with the final lettings in the Spires Shopping Mall and other matters arising from the re-development of Church House, while his quiet efficiency helped to steer a busy committee through long agendas. He will be missed but we wish him well in any new posts to which the Assembly may appoint him.

ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee is pleased to report that the overdraft continued to decrease during the year 1996.

2. Income from lettings rose to £62,421 (+56%) in 1996 and we express our thanks to all who have used the accommodation during the year.

3. The Committee would also like to express its thanks to all congregations for their continued support.

4. At the time of writing all units in the Spires Shopping Mall are let.

5. The Committee has set in motion a programme of cyclical decoration of the building; new lighting has been installed in Wellington Street and stair carpet has been repaired.

6. The Committee would like to express its thanks to Mr Harry Orr (Building Manager) and his staff, Lambert Smith Hampton (Managing and Letting Agents), Gordon McKnight Partnership (Architects) and Cleaver Fulton and Rankin (Legal Advisors) and the Friends of Church House.

D S GRAHAM, Convener

FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met three times during the year.

2. The Committee continued its work on staffing matters and has drawn up proposals relating to the employment of staff. A copy is appended.

3. The Committee has almost completed its work on revised Conditions of Employment of Staff. This has included liaison with the Labour Relations Agency.

4. An Employers Handbook in respect of employment procedures is also in the process of completion.

5. Following the Consultation Document on Charity Legislation in Northern Ireland, Government has now stated that decisions on implementation will be delayed until the overall situation arising from the Deakin Report becomes clearer. Improvements in Annual Accounts towards fulfilment of Recommended Practice continues and the following Annual Accounts for 1996 now fulfil recommended practice.

Union Theological College
 Lucan Youth Centre
 Nexus Ireland
 Guysmere Centre
 Rostrevor Centre
 The Old Age Fund
 The Presbyterian Women's Fund
 The Indigent Ladies Fund
 Carlisle House
 Trust Estate of Mr John Getty (Deceased)
 The Kinghan Mission

6 Changes were made to the central church computer systems, including upgrading the memory and speed of the server. Operating systems were enlarged to allow greater potential for sharing information through the network with a view to introducing internal e-mail. We continue to consider ways to improve the usage and potential of the central database. The accounting systems were enhanced during the year to record Irish pound transactions and improve efficiency.

7. Overdraft facilities previously granted were reviewed. These included the project at Guysmere, the replacement of Corkey House, phase II of the Derryvolgie Hall project and the funding of the Director of Ministerial Students post.

8. The Committee implemented recommendations in connection with compliance with the Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 in relation to the Staff Pension Scheme.

These included

- (i) Continuation of the existing Trustee being the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
- (ii) The Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure to include the first stage decision maker to be the Committee on Finance and Staffing.
- (iii) Appointment of an actuary and auditors.

9. The Committee pays tribute to the dedication of staff to their duties and their role in providing support to congregations, ministers and the public.

C ROBINSON, Convener

APPENDIX

THE PERSONNEL FUNCTION OF ASSEMBLY AGENCIES

1. INTRODUCTION

Aim

The aim of this Report is to ensure that all staff employed centrally by the Church have terms and conditions that meet the requirements of current employment legislation, which has now become very complex. It is also hoped

that this exercise will clarify certain employment issues within the Church, and so lessen the risk of misunderstandings or disputes arising.

Scope

The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church and all Commissions, Boards and Committees are accountable to it. Nothing which follows is to be construed as detracting from the Assembly's powers or duties, or those of its Nomination Board.

In the absence of a deciding case it cannot be said with certainty whether the civil courts would view the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as being "legally" one employer. However, the Board of Finance and Administration wants to have in place the most effective structure for the Church's centrally employed staff and will always seek professional legal advice as necessary.

It should be noted that this report is not concerned with the ministers of congregations (including Home Mission ministers), as they are not deemed to have a contract of service, nor is it concerned with students, assistant ministers, associate ministers, "additional pastoral personnel", ministers in Recognised Service, Prison and Forces Chaplains, or persons directly employed by congregations, such as ministers' secretaries or sextons. The status of some of these may need to be considered at some other time or by some other body; this report is confined to the position of the remaining centrally employed staff.

The role of the General Board and its Panel on the Overview of Funding is reflected in its various reports to the General Assembly from 1992 onwards and need not be discussed here, save to stress the Assembly's decision "that all proposals for new posts or major projects requiring additional funds be submitted to the relevant funding agency of the Church and to the General Board before being brought to the General Assembly." (Mins 1993 p 63, res 23).

2. BOARD OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The personnel role of the Board of Finance and Administration is set out in Par 286 of the Code. For ease of reference the relevant sections are reprinted below.

- (2) *The Board shall directly or by committee perform the following duties:- ...*
 - (2)(c) *exercise the personnel management function in respect of those in the employment of the Assembly and those other officials and staff in Church House or related appointments under the Assembly ...;*
 - (2)(d) *delegate to other Boards and officials as much of the responsibilities in ... (c) above as is consistent with the proper exercise of the Board's above mentioned duties.*
- (3) *The Board shall directly or by committee have the following powers to:- ...*
 - (3)(b) *require Boards and officials to provide financial and other information as the Board shall require;*
 - (3)(d) *require Boards and officials to obtain the prior approval of the Board to the adoption of any policy or change in policy affecting the legal status of the Church, a Board or an official of the Church; ...*

- (3)(g) *approve all contracts of employment and amendments thereto of persons in the service of the Assembly or one of its Boards or Committees;*
- (3)(h) *require Boards and officials to provide all information necessary for the review of staff matters;*
- (3)(i) *require Boards and officials to adhere to, and to direct staff under their control to adhere to, any regulations introduced by or with the authority of the Board for the welfare or the general efficiency of the staff of the Church or the property of the Church.*

3. PRESENT STRUCTURES

- (i) There are currently 4 Commissions and 15 Boards appointed by the General Assembly. (See Schedule 1).
- (ii) Of these, the Shankill Road Mission Commission, 9 Boards and 2 Committees have staff in a variety of categories. (See Schedule 2).
- (iii) The Shankill Road Mission Commission, the Board of Finance and Administration, the Overseas Board, the Home Board and the Board of Social Witness (including the Residential Trust) employ significant numbers. The College Management Committee is also an important employing agency.
- (iv) Certain posts, being directly involved with the ministry and mission of the Church, could for present purposes be succinctly described as mainly “spiritual” in nature. These posts include:-
 - (a) Theological Professors and lecturers (College Management Committee);
 - (b) The Director of Christian Training (Magee Fund Scheme Committee);
 - (c) Irish Mission Workers (Board of Evangelism & Christian Training);
 - (d) The Promoter of Evangelism (Board of Evangelism & Christian Training);
 - (e) Overseas Missionaries (Overseas Board);
 - (f) University Chaplains (Education Board).
 - (g) Deaconesses, Women Workers and Nightlight staff (Home Board).
- (v) Certain other posts are of a mainly “philanthropic” nature. The Shankill Road Mission Commission, the Presbyterian Residential Trust and other agencies of the Social Witness Board undertake a wide range of such work.
- (vi) The third main category of post could be described as “administrative”, being concerned with those who are employed in offices in Church House and elsewhere. The Committee on Finance and Staffing has a particular responsibility for employees in this category.
- (vii) The control of field staff falling into the categories described in paragraphs (iv) and (v) above rests with the relevant Board or Agency but, even so, consultation with the Committee on Finance and Staffing is advisable on a range of matters such as pensions, health and safety

and the harmonisation of terms and conditions of employment, and also remuneration, so that all who are engaged in similar work for the church enjoy similar benefits, wherever they are located. The General Assembly has already decided that “the Board [of Finance and Administration] liaise with other relevant Boards of the Church to seek to harmonise, wherever possible, the terms and conditions of employment of the Church’s employees”. (Mins 1995, p 81, res 3).

4. PROPOSALS

A. It is proposed that, subject to provisions of Par 286 of the Code (which deals with the role of the Board of Finance and Administration) the following bodies should be approved by the Assembly as Employing Agencies (types of staff covered by these Agencies are in brackets),

- (i) The Shankill Road Mission Commission (all its staff).
- (ii) The Home Board (Deaconesses, Women Workers and Nightlight staff).
- (iii) The Magee Fund Scheme Committee (Magee Director).
- (iv) The Union Theological College Management Committee (all its staff).
- (v) The Board of Evangelism and Christian Training (Irish Mission Workers, Promoter of Evangelism).
- (vi) The Overseas Board (Overseas Missionaries).
- (vii) The Education Board (University Chaplains).
- (viii) The Board of Finance and Administration (all administrative staff in Church House and elsewhere, except as otherwise provided; and all staff serving under bodies not listed at (i)-(vii) above, including Heads of Department and staff serving the Youth Board and the Video Unit).

Note: This report initially covered the Board of Social Witness, including the Presbyterian Residential Trust. However as that Board is now considering how they might be restructured in the near future it is considered best to exclude them from this report at this time but to report in respect of them at the 1998 General Assembly.

B. It is proposed that no other agency should directly employ staff in its own name unless expressly authorised by the General Assembly or the General Board.

C. It is proposed that the Committee on Finance and Staffing establish a sub-committee representative of all approved Employing Agencies.

D. It would be desirable not to have too many central Employing Agencies but there are legal and practical reasons for some Agencies being listed separately.

5. THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND STAFFING

The Committee will continue to discharge the duties set out in Par 286 of the Code (see section 2 above). In particular, it will:-

- (a) be the sole determining body in respect of the terms and conditions of all staff for whom it is the Employing Agency;
- (b) provide a personnel service for all other Employing Agencies under the Assembly;

- (c) seek to harmonise, wherever possible, the remuneration and terms and conditions of all administrative staff employed centrally by the Church;
- (d) advise generally on the terms and conditions of field staff;
- (e) require (where relevant) all Employing Agencies to provide information about:-
 - (i) the wording of Conditions of Appointment Forms. (Employing Agencies will issue these forms in their own name, but only after the wording has been approved by the Finance and Staffing Committee);
 - (ii) the creation of any new posts other than those falling within the provisions of Section 3 (iv) above (ie the "spiritual" posts);
 - (iii) the recruitment of staff (temporary or permanent) to all posts other than those falling within the provisions of Section 3 (iv) above; the advertising of such jobs and consequent short-listing and interviews.
 - (iv) grievance and disciplinary procedures and the dismissal of staff;
 - (v) health and safety policy statements;
 - (vi) Fair Employment policy and monitoring procedures;
 - (vii) matters relating to redundancy (before any approach is made to staff);
 - (viii) Equal Opportunity Policy
 - (ix) such other employment matters as may arise from time to time.

The Convener of the Finance and Staffing Committee will continue to act as Honorary Personnel Officer until the Board of Finance and Administration decides otherwise.

6. ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

Three resolutions are appended to give effect to the proposals contained in this report.

SCHEDULE 1

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS OF ASSEMBLY

- I GENERAL BOARD
- II JUDICIAL COMMISSION
- III COMMISSION ON UNION OF CONGREGATIONS
- IV BUSINESS BOARD
- V BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS
- VI BOARD OF NOMINATION
- VII INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS BOARD
- VIII OVERSEAS BOARD
- IX HOME BOARD
- X SOCIAL WITNESS BOARD
- XI BOARD OF EVANGELISM & CH. TRAINING
- XII YOUTH BOARD
- XIII BOARD OF EDUCATION

- XIV BOARD OF STUDIES
- XV COMMISSION ON TRUSTS
- XVI BOARD OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION
- XVII UNITED APPEAL BOARD
- XVIII BOARD OF MINISTRY & PENSIONS
- XIX SHANKILL ROAD MISSION COMMISSION

SCHEDULE 2

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS OF ASSEMBLY CURRENTLY HAVING FIELD STAFF

- I BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS (Video Unit)
- II OVERSEAS BOARD
- III HOME BOARD
- IV SOCIAL WITNESS BOARD
- V BOARD OF EVANGELISM & CH. TRAINING
- VI YOUTH BOARD
- VII BOARD OF EDUCATION
- VIII BOARD OF STUDIES
- IX BOARD OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION
- X SHANKILL ROAD MISSION COMMISSION

COMMITTEES OF ASSEMBLY CURRENTLY HAVING FIELD STAFF

Union Theological College Management Committee
Presbyterian Residential Trust

Notes:

- (i) For Irish Mission see Board of Evangelism and Christian Training
- (ii) The term "field staff" is used to denote staff other than those in administrative posts.

GETTY BEQUEST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1.The Committee received a report on the redevelopment work at Mountcollyer Avenue Mission Hall viz:-

Final Account	£81,130.40	
17½% VAT	14,197.82	£95,328.32
Professional Fees		<u>13,355.76</u>
	Total Cost	£108,683.98

INCOME

Anonymous Gift		£53,333.00
DOE Urban		
Development Grant	£18,626.00	<u>71,959.00</u>
Shortfall		<u>£36,724.98</u>

Mr George Ferguson, Secretary to the Belfast City Mission, reported that the Hall was re-opened on 9 March 1996 by Mrs W Cooke, wife of the former Secretary of the City Mission.

2. A letter was tabled from the Minister of Craigry Hill, Larne requesting financial assistance for support of the work of the Getty Mission Hall in Larne.

After careful study of the Will of the late Mr John Getty and the minute of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 October 1965, it was unanimously agreed that the Committee could not meet the request on the grounds that the Will provides for financial support and maintenance of a missionary in Larne, while the minute of 11 October 1965 refers to a cy pres scheme for the compensation received when the Getty Mission Hall was demolished during redevelopment work in the area.

3. It was agreed to allocate income for 1996 as follows:-

	1996	1995
	£	£
Overseas Board - Foreign Mission	1,030	970
Overseas Board - Jewish Mission	515	485
Home Board	1,440	1,360
Belfast City Mission	<u>4,215</u>	<u>3,985</u>
	<u>£7,200</u>	<u>£6,800</u>

T H COCHRANE, Convener

INCIDENTAL FUND COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met on three occasions during the year.
2. The Fund Account (including the General Purposes Fund) showed a credit balance at the end of the year of £148,000.
3. The Committee reviewed applications for funding and recommend the following grants be paid in 1997:

	£
Arrangements Committee	6,500
Board of Social Witness	3,660
Board of Studies	3,582
Church Architecture Committee	1,350
Church and Government Committee	4,100
Finance and Administration	17,000
Historical Society	13,700
Inter Church Relations Board	56,150
Panel on the Environment	145
Peace and Peacemaking Committee	2,400
Public Worship Committee	£800
Strategy for Mission	3,000
Youth Board	6,500
20:20 Vision Coleraine	<u>50,000</u>
	<u>168,887</u>

4. The Committee confirms that a loan to Familybooks of £50,000 in 1995 is to be repaid in two instalments - £25,000 on 1.8.97 and £25,000 on 1.8.98.

5. Thanks are recorded to all members of Committee and to all who assisted in any way.

J D McCLEERY, Convener

STATISTICS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee recognises the volume of work carried out in Congregations and Presbyteries in relation to the completion of the Statistical Returns. Errors are still being detected in too many submissions, leading to wastage of time and effort by those involved in handling the returns.

2. Statistical and financial data for 1996 is summarised in Tables 1-5. Comparative figures for the preceding year also appear in these tables.

3. Graphical presentations of some data have also been provided to help with the visibility of trends. Comparisons can be made with each of the last 5 years, as well as 10 years and 20 years ago.

4. Work has continued in respect of the handbook for those involved in finance and statistics within our Congregations and Presbyteries. It is planned to issue the first part of the handbook during 1997.

D L LAMB, Convener

TABLE ONE**PERSONS AND AGENCIES**

	1995	1996	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	187	185		2
Ministers in Active Duty	430	429		2
Retired Missionaries	5	5		
Missionaries in Active Duty	48	55	7	
Total Ministers and Missionaries	670	674	4	
Licensures	18	15		3
Congregations	559	559		
Total Families	119,792	118,300		1,492
Persons of All Ages	304,265	297,205		7,060
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	101,829	100,421		1,408
Baptisms	2,774	2,621		153
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	2,085	2,042		43
Communicants	123,833	122,397		1,436
Attended at Least One Communion during year	85,309	82,094		1,215
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	7,285	7,291	6	
Number on Rolls in Sunday Schools and Bible Classes	38,999	38,062		937

TABLE TWO
CONGREGATIONAL INCOME

	1995		1996		% Difference	
	£	IR£	£	IR£	N.I.	R. of I.
Specified Sources	17,727,945	915,195	18,427,001	938,325	3.9%+	2.5%+
Building Fund etc.	8,513,085	493,299	8,926,708	721,051	4.9%+	46.2%—
“For Others”	3,738,947	198,258	3,872,387	204,893	3.6%—	3.3%—
Raised from other sources	3,232,015	444,565	3,593,856	488,408	11.2%—	9.9%+
Bequests etc.	2,464,487	95,577	2,491,026	57,108	1.1%+	40.2%—
Total Receipts	35,676,478	2,146,894	37,310,973	2,409,784	4.6%+	12.2%—
Total Receipts Less						
Bequests etc.	33,211,991	2,051,317	34,819,947	2,352,676	4.8%+	14.7%—
Bequests	702,797	21,177	713,774	14,447	1.6%+	31.8%+

TABLE THREE
CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE

	1995		1996		%Difference	
	£	IR£	£	IR£	N.I.	R. of I.
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	9,674,895	561,710	10,197,472	591,211	5.4%+	5.3%+
Payments under Assembly Assessments	4,509,103	267,782	4,752,393	280,950	5.4%+	4.9%+
Building, Repairs, etc.	8,774,197	455,832	9,664,554	632,897	10.1%+	38.8%+
United Appeal Schemes	2,215,810	94,516	2,291,803	95,419	3.4%+	1.0%+
Supplementary Schemes						
Other Religious and Charitable Objects	2,290,841	181,479	2,331,943	152,358	1.8%—	16.0%+
General Expenses	5,096,431	391,843	5,423,008	430,801	6.4%+	9.9%—
Total Payments	32,561,277	1,953,162	34,661,173	2,183,636	6.4%+	11.8%—

TABLE FOUR
CONGREGATIONAL BALANCES

	Closing 1995		Opening 1996		Closing 1995		%Difference	
	£	IR£	£	IR£	£	IR£	N.I.	R. of I.
Credits	14,297,075	1,058,223	14,571,817	914,782	15,100,398	1,021,514	3.6%+	11.7%+
Debits	3,065,664	80,792	3,127,306	71,516	3,403,520	82,278	8.8%—	15.0%—
Net Credits	11,231,411	977,431	11,444,511	843,266	11,696,878	939,236	2.2%+	11.4%+

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

	1995	1996	% Difference
	£	£	
Total Ministerial Income			
(Active Duty — Note 2)	7,544,276	7,790,816	3.3%+
Retired Ministers; Income	1,356,738	1,417,452	4.5%–
Stipend Paid	5,727,127	5,969,793	4.2%+
Allowances			
Light, Heat, etc			
Ministerial Duties			
Total	1,769,686	1,808,679	2.2%+

Note 1 Figures for the Republic of Ireland have been converted into £STG using the average value of the £IR for the year.

Note 2 This refers only to 366 ministers in charge of congregations, excluding Assistants, Chaplains, Missionaries, Professors, Administrative Officers and Ministers in recognised service in special work.

TABLE SIX**PERSONS**

	1995	1996
Persons who are aged 18 and under	63,050	61,211
Average attendance at Sunday Worship — Morning	96,333	95,239
— Evening	22,650	22,469

APPENDIX

Salary Scales of Executive and Administrative Posts. (The undernoted figures are inclusive of a 3.5% increase applied as from 1 January, 1997 following the annual review).

EXECUTIVE POSTS**Scale 1 (£15,348 - £17,892)**

Building Manager

Scale 2 (£17,424 - £20,568)

Dean of Residence

Director of Nightlight

Scale 3 (£19,572 - £22,800)

Executive Secretary, PWA

Secretary for Education in Mission

Secretary - Residential Trust

Promoter of Evangelism

Sunday School Organiser/Christian Education Secretary

Director - Video Unit

Financial Accountant

Scale 4 (£21,648 - £25,836)

Youth Officer

Superintendent of Irish Mission

Adviser in Social Service

Information Officer

Scale 5 (£23,748 - £27,948)

Deputy Financial Secretary

Director of Ministerial Students

Convener of Overseas Mission

Scale 6 (£25,836 - £30,168)

Deputy General Secretary

Scale 7 (£29,412 - £33,804)

General Secretary

Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS**Scale 1 (£7,776 - £9,132)**

Junior Secretary

Telephonist
Assistant Building Manager

Scale 2 (£9,132 - £10,656)

Secretary
Telephonist/Receptionist
Information & Technology Assistant

Scale 3 (£10,332 - £12,060)

Senior Secretary
Production Assistant
Administrative Assistant

Scale 4 (£11,796 - £13,680)

Personal Secretary
Information and Technology Officer
Financial Assistant
Administrative Assistant

Scale 5 (£12,972 - £15,084)

Personal Secretary
Computer Controller
Publications Manager
Administrative Assistant
ADE/Aids Officer
Youth Centres Director

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That Ernst and Young be appointed as auditors of all Committees, Boards, Trusts, Commissions and Agencies of the General Assembly for the current year.
3. That the resignation of Rev D S Graham as Convener of the Assembly Buildings Committee be received, that he be thanked for his services and that _____ be appointed in his place.

Incidental Fund Committee

4. That the assessment for the Incidental Fund for 1997 be 4p in the £ of Stipend.
5. That the assessment for the Redevelopment of Church House project be 10p in the £ of Stipend.

Getty Bequest

6. That the following be appointed to the Committee of Management in accordance with the terms of the Will of the late John Getty:

Revs S Hutchinson, Dr J Girvan, Dr T J Simpson, Dr A J Weir, R J T McMullan, R F S Poots, J N Seawright; Messrs T H Cochrane, G Ferguson, W H Henry, D Lamb, J F Rowan and O J G White.

Finance and Staffing Committee

7. That the following be approved as Employing Agencies of the Church within the terms of Section 4A of the Report (Proposals):-

Shankill Road Mission Commission
Home Board
Magee Fund Scheme Committee
College Management Committee
Board of Evangelism and Christian Training
Overseas Board
Board of Education
Board of Finance and Administration

8. That no agency other than
(i) those listed in Resolution 6 above;
(ii) the Board of Social Witness and the Presbyterian Residential Trust shall employ staff directly in their own name unless expressly authorised by the General Assembly or the General Board.

9. That all Employing Agencies be required to furnish the Committee on Finance and Staffing with the information specified in Section 5(e)(i) - (viii) of the Report.

General

10. That the Board of Finance and Administration, with its associated working committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 286 of the Code as follows:-

UNITED APPEAL BOARD

Convener: Rev W COWPER LYNAS

Secretary: Rev S HUTCHINSON

1. The Board is pleased to report that it was able to pay in full all the proposed allocations for 1996.

2. The Target for 1997 was agreed by the Assembly in June 1996 as £2,360,000. (See Schedules I and II)

3. During the year the Board consulted with representatives from Social Witness, Youth, Studies, and Communications Boards, also Church Extension, Shankill Road Mission, Irish Mission, Kinghan Mission, and Union College.

4. The requests for funding for 1998 rose by 171/2% over the proposed grant for 1997. The Board agreed that the Target for 1998 should rise by no more than 3% over the 1997 figure. The proposed Target therefore for 1998 is £2,430,000. (See Schedules III and IV)

5. The Board regrets that it is not able to meet in full the requests for 1998. It would also point out that the proposed grants can only be paid if the 1998 Target is reached.

6. It was reported to the Board that, in a small number of congregations, where the Target had been exceeded in contributions, the sum above the Target had been put away to help to meet the Target the following year.

It was also reported that, in one or two congregations, the sum given above the Target had been channelled into other accounts.

The Board wishes to point out that all money contributed to the United Appeal must be returned in the year it is contributed, and must be used solely for the United Appeal.

7. Last year the Board reported (Reports p 291) on the funding of the new position of Director of Ministerial Students, which the Assembly agreed to in 1995. As this post comes under the Board of Studies, which is not on the list of agencies funded by the United Appeal, notice of motion to add its name was given and received (Mins p 23).

Resolution No 3 is now submitted to empower the United Appeal Board to make grants to the Board of Studies in respect of the Director of Ministerial Students.

SCHEDULE I

Presbytery	Contributing Families 1995	United Appeal 1997 £
Ards.....	10,884	252,249
Armagh	4,168	96,598
Ballymena	8,296	192,269
Belfast North.....	8,303	192,431
Belfast South.....	4,857	112,566
Belfast East	10,511	243,604
Carrickfergus.....	6,424	148,883
Coleraine	4,810	111,477
Derry & Strabane.....	3,866	89,599
Donegal	1,332	30,871
Down.....	5,287	122,532
Dromore	5,537	128,326
Dublin & Munster.....	1,375	31,867
Foyle	3,024	70,085
Iveagh.....	3,705	85,867
Monaghan	1,019	23,616
Newry.....	2,832	65,635
Omagh.....	2,616	60,629
Route.....	3,856	89,367
Templepatrick	4,985	115,533
Tyrone	4,142	95,995
	101,829	2,360,000

SCHEDULE II

	Requested 1997 £	Proposed Grant 1997 £
Home Mission.....	290,500	220,000
Church Extension.....	498,000	225,000
Christian Training & Evangelism.....	48,300	45,000
Irish Mission.....	226,000	200,000
Education Board.....	205,000	155,000
Students Bursary Fund.....	188,200	188,000
Chaplains Committee.....	27,700	27,000
Youth Board.....	199,600	185,000
Rostrevor Centre.....	3,000	2,000
Guysmere Centre.....	5,000	5,000
Lucan Centre.....	32,500	7,000
Social Witness Board.....	60,800	55,000
Social Service Committee.....	2,600	0
ADE Committee.....	31,000	25,000
Thompson House.....	15,000	15,000
PCI Enterprises.....	5,000	2,000
Carlisle House.....	17,500	3,000
Old Age Fund.....	100	0
Residential Trust.....	16,000	5,000
Shankill Road Mission.....	35,000	0
Overseas Board.....	723,000	715,000
Publications Committee and.....		
Information Department.....	86,800	85,000
TV/Broadcasting Committee.....	28,000	25,000
Union Theological College.....	200,000	180,000
Kinghan Mission.....	7,700	5,000
Forces Committee.....	0	0
Director of Ministerial Students.....	64,500	60,000
Contingencies.....		86,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Less Bequests	3,016,800	2,520,000
		160,000
		<hr/>
		2,360,000

SCHEDULE III

Presbytery	Contributing Families 1996	United Appeal 1998 £
Ards.....	10,869	263,009
Armagh	4,136	100,084
Ballymena	8,213	198,739
Belfast North.....	8,107	196,174
Belfast South.....	4,583	110,900
Belfast East	10,255	248,152
Carrickfergus.....	6,371	154,166
Coleraine	4,777	115,595
Derry & Strabane.....	3,787	91,638
Donegal	1,308	31,651
Down.....	5,228	126,508
Dromore	5,564	134,638
Dublin & Munster.....	1,343	32,498
Foyle	3,065	74,167
Iveagh.....	3,685	89,170
Monaghan	1,008	24,392
Newry.....	2,772	67,077
Omagh.....	2,541	61,487
Route.....	3,834	92,776
Templepatrick	4,888	118,281
Tyrone	4,087	98,898
	100,421	2,430,000

ERRATUM SLIP**This page replaces the original page 268****SCHEDULE IV**

	Requested 1998 £	Proposed Grant 1998 £
Home Mission.....	289,000	230,000
Church Extension.....	289,900	270,000
Christian Training & Evangelism.....	58,000	50,000
Irish Mission	220,000	215,000
Education Board	170,000	150,000
Students Bursary Fund.....	174,600	170,000
Chaplains Committee.....	16,000	15,000
Youth Board.....	221,700	200,000
Rostrevor Centre	2,000	2,000
Guysmere Centre	5,000	4,500
Lucan Centre.....	500	500
Social Witness Board.....	56,400	53,000
Social Issues & Resources Committee..	2,600	1,000
ADE Committee	37,100	25,000
Thompson House	13,000	5,000
PCI Enterprises	5,000	1,000
Carlisle House.....	45,100	30,000
Old Age Fund	0	0
Residential Trust	12,000	5,000
Shankill Road Mission.....	40,000	15,000
Overseas Board.....	762,300	740,000
Department of Communications.....	94,200	90,000
TV/Broadcasting Committee	38,200	30,000
Union Theological College.....	299,600	225,000
Kinghan Mission.....	33,800	10,000
Forces Committee	0	0
Director of Ministerial Students	73,100	53,000
Contingencies.....		30,000
	2,959,100	2,620,000
Less Bequests		190,000
		2,430,000

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the United Appeal for 1998 be as set out in Schedules III and IV.
3. That, Notice of Motion having been received by the Assembly in 1996, the Board of Studies be added to the agencies which receive funding from the United Appeal.
4. That the United Appeal Board for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 287 of the Code as follows:

BOARD OF MINISTRY AND PENSIONS

Convener: Rev W J R ROBINSON

1. The Board met three times during the year to receive reports from each of its constituent Committees. Many matters of policy were discussed and recommendations were received and approved.

2. The presentation of accounts has been changed from a "Receipts and Payments" basis to that of "Income and Expenditure". This more accurately reflects the true position of the funds held by the Board and was required by new Charity Legislation.

3. At the end of the year the Central Ministry Fund stood at £841,203 compared with £776,768 at the end of 1995. It must be remembered however that the retained balance, which is of course a working balance bringing in interest, stood at £924,961 at the end of 1989.

4. The present state of the Central Ministry Fund has made it possible to increase the Basic Ministerial Minimum from £14,316 to £14,760. It has also been possible to increase the payment under Par 316(2)(e) of the Code from £420 to £600. The cumulative effect of these increases produces an increase of 4.23% for a minister on the Basic Ministerial Minimum. This compares with an increase of 2.87% in 1995 and 3.8% in 1996.

5. An overture is also being brought to the Assembly to amend Par 315(3) of the Code to allow for additional minimum levels for 5 to 10 years service, 15 to 20 years service and 25 to 30 years service. This will provide considerable additional enhancement for many.

6. As projected last year the cost of the Ordained Assistantship Scheme has dropped and the cost of the Licentiate Scheme has increased. The new Associate Scheme has also had an impact on the Central Ministry Fund. Overall the cost in these three categories has increased from £241,615 in 1995 to £262,330 in 1996.

7. The increase in assessment in 1996 for the Widows of Ministers Fund from 5p in £ of Stipend to 6.5p in £ of Stipend reduced the rapid decline in the fund. The deficit for the year was £13,026 leaving a final retained balance of £72,159.

8. The position of the Retired Ministers Fund shows a surplus for 1996 of £31,616 leaving a retained balance of £199,883.

9. The Board has sought to respond positively to congregations in their plea for a reduction in assessments. Various steps were required to make this a possibility including as an interim measure the increase in subvention to the Retired Ministers Fund thus enabling them to increase their proposed reduction in assessment to 1.25p in £ of Stipend.

In addition it was agreed that the payment of 1.25p in £ of Stipend, which was collected by the Retired Ministers Fund and passed on to the Ministers Pension Scheme (1978), should be paid directly into the MPS (1978).

10. The new assessments for 1997 were therefore approved as:-

CMF	33.33	p in £ Stipend	(33.33)*
WMF	6.5	„	(6.5)
RMF	8.25	„	(10.75)
MPS (1978)	16.25	„	(15.0)
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	64.33	„	(65.58)

* 1996 figures in brackets.

The overall reduction of 1.25p in £ of Stipend in 1997 follows on a reduction of 0.25p in £ of Stipend in 1996. The total assessment on congregations by the Board has therefore been reduced by 0.38% in 1996, and a further 1.91% in 1997.

11. To enable greater financial flexibility an overture is brought to this year's Assembly which would make it easier for the Assembly to reduce CMF assessments without undue delay, subject of course to finance being available.

12. The Ministers Pension Scheme (1978) Fund continues to grow and the valuation shows its Asset Value at 31st December 1996 was £26,174,090. Actuarial Valuation at 6th April 1995 showed the scheme fully funded and satisfying all current legal requirements.

13. The increase in Death in Service Benefit under MPS (1978) from three to four times the Basic Ministerial Minimum was brought into effect since the last Assembly.

14. The Board expressed concern last year that only 171 completed Expression of Wish Forms were in place. Though this number has now increased to 243 the Board would emphasise the wisdom of completion of these, and would urge all members of the Ministers Pension Scheme (1978) to attend to this matter without delay.

15. The rationalisation of the committee structure within the Board has proved very beneficial. The new 'Committee on Retirements and Pensions' has enabled more rapid decision making without the need for constant referring back to other sub-committees as was the case in the previous structure. Further fine tuning will help us increase our efficiency.

16. For the first time the declaration of the Basic Minimum was made at the October meetings of the Central Ministry Fund Committee and the Board. This enabled outstanding balances due to ministers being paid in January for the first time. In the older system outstanding balances had not been paid until March. It is hoped that in future years the payment of all moneys due will be made in December.

REV W J R ROBINSON

Rev D S Graham reports:

17. The Board notes with regret the retirement of the Rev Roy Robinson as its convener.

Mr Robinson has marked his time as convener with a keen awareness of detail and he was noted for his meticulous preparation for meetings. He was patient in his explanations, fair in his attitudes and firm in his conclusions.

The Board will miss his particular expertise and wishes to express its best thanks and deep appreciation to Mr Robinson for his untiring efforts during the period of his convenership.

CENTRAL MINISTRY FUND COMMITTEE

1. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 1997.

(a) Ministerial Minimum for 1997	£14,760	(£14,316)
Minimum for 10 years' service	£15,498	(£15,033)
Minimum for 20 years' service	£16,236	(£15,747)
Minimum for 30 years' service	£16,974	(£16,464)

(b) **Family Grants:** Payable to qualified Ministers serving in Northern Ireland whose total income, excluding Family Grants, does not exceed the appropriate Ministerial Minimum plus £1,400 and to all qualified Ministers serving in the Republic of Ireland in respect of their children on the following scales and regulations:

	Northern Ireland	Republic of Ireland	
Birth to 10 years (IR£350)	£180	(£150)	IR£420
11 to 15 years (IR£550)	£270	(£225)	IR£660
16 years and over			
(i) in full-time attendance at Grammar School or other similar institutions (IR£1,000)	£330	(£275)	IR£1,200
(ii) in full-time attendance at University or other similar third level institution of full-time learning (IR£1,875)	£525	(£350)	IR£2,250

The grant in respect of any child who is 16 years of age and over falling into category (b) and who is in receipt of a maintenance or training grant shall be reduced by £1 for every £1 by which such maintenance or training grant exceeds £850.

- (c) **Augmented Grants:** The amount a minister may earn apart from congregational work without the Augmented Grant being affected shall be £2,500 under Par 316(2)(d)(i) or £1,500 under Par 316(2)(d)(ii) the total in no case exceeding £2,500
- (d) **Bequests:** a minister may receive up to £750 per annum from bequests received during his ministry without grants being affected.
- (e) **Differential Grant:** The Republic of Ireland Differential for 1997 - IR£1,500 (IR£1,800).
 - 2. That the CMF make a subvention payment of £235,000 to the RMF.
 - 3. That the extra payment of £15 per month to retired ministers be continued.

J McVEIGH, W J ALEXANDER, Joint Conveners

COMMITTEE ON RETIREMENTS AND PENSIONS

(a) WIDOWS OF MINISTERS FUND

- 1. The accounts showed a deficit on the year of £13,026 leaving a retained balance of £72,159.
- 2. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 1997:-
 - (a) Widows Pension - £3,690.
 - (b) Widows not in receipt of NI State Pension - £3,690 + £475.
 - (c) Widows not in receipt of NI State Pension or PWFA - £3,690 + £500.
 - (d) Widows whose husbands were not eligible for NI State Pension - £3,690 + £3,248.
 - (e) Eire Differential - IR £800.

(b) RETIRED MINISTERS FUND

- 1. The general stability of the fund in 1996 was noted.
- 2. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 1997.
 - (a) Basic Retirement Allowance £7,380.
 - (b) Supplemental Grant for those living in the Republic with no State Pension £5,190 (married), £3,248 (single).
 - (c) Eire Differential IR£1,200.

(c) MINISTERS PENSION SCHEME FUND 1978

- 1. The report from the Trustees and the accounts for the year ended 31 December 1996 are included in the published accounts.
- 2. The Trustees have awarded an increase of 21/2% on pensions (in excess of the Guaranteed Minimum Pensions) for the year commencing 6 April 1997.
- 3. The Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 has ramifications for the Scheme and these have been addressed:-

- The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland remain in place as Trustees of the Scheme following the prescribed consultation with Scheme members, both active and pensioners.
- A Statement of Investment Principles has been prepared by the Trustees after consultation with their Scheme Advisers, Investment Managers, the Scheme Actuaries and the Board of Ministry and Pensions. It sets out the Trustees' investment policy relative to their obligation to Scheme members and their dependants.
- An Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure has been established along prescribed lines to deal with disputes between members and the Trustees.
- Equalisation of benefits between men and women in respect of service between 17 May 1990 and 6 April 1992 has been effected.
- The rules of the Scheme will be changed to formally index-link to the Retail Prices Index up to a maximum of 5% p.a. pensions earned for service after 5 April 1997.
- The scheme will be subject to a Minimum Funding Requirement (MFR) - a device for measuring annually the solvency of pension schemes.
- The scheme will be applying for a new certificate to enable members to remain contracted-out of the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme.
- Pensions and Divorce are covered in the legislation and the Trustees will be informed by the Courts of any attachment orders with which they must comply.
- Additional requirements on Trustees for the disclosure of information to members and other interested parties have been recognised and a monitoring system set up to ensure compliance.

4. The Trust Deed and formal rules, now 10 years old, are being updated. The members' booklets, produced in 1995, will be updated at the next reprint.

5. The following Minister is not a member of the Ministers Pension Scheme (1978):- Rev J L Tosh

(d) GENERAL

The Committee received an application from Rev Elinor Henning (Donoughmore and Stranorlar) to retire on health grounds. The application was approved and the Presbytery of Donegal was given permission to release her. The pension recommended to the General Assembly, in view of the circumstances, should be 15/35ths of full pension.

R I A ALLELY, R KERR, Joint Conveners

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Central Ministry Fund

2. That retired ministers be paid in the current year a special grant (Code Par 315(5)) of £15 per month from the Central Ministry Fund.

3. That a subvention payment of £235,000 be paid to the Retired Ministers Fund from the Central Ministry Fund.

4. That for 1997, supplemental payments be made in respect of qualified ministers as follows:-

for ministers of more than 5 years service

or of more than 10 years service

or of more than 15 years service

or of more than 20 years service

or of more than 25 years service

or of more than 30 years service

since ordination

to enable payment of 102½%, 105%, 107½%, 110%, 112½%, 115% respectively of the Ministerial Minimum.

Retired Ministers Fund

5. That the scale of assessment for RMF for 1997 be 8.25p in the £ of Stipend as shown in the column. 'Stipend paid to Minister' or as fixed for a vacancy by the Union Commission.

6. That permission be given to the respective Presbyteries upon request to release for retirement under the '65' rule, Rev Douglas Armstrong (Greenisland), Rev Ronald W C Clements (Joymount), Rev William J Hook (Cunningham Memorial), Rev Dr Eliz Jamison (under care of East Belfast Presbytery), Rev Alan V Martin (Abbey, Dublin), Rev Dr John W Morrow (Irish School of Ecumenics), Rev Sydney McCartney (Finvoy), Rev Robert S K Neill (1st Castleberg & Killeter), Rev Ian S McDowell (Christian Aid Secretary), Very Rev Dr James A Matthews (Sixmilecross), Rev Norman J Linkens (Cloughey & Portavogie), Rev Kenneth J C McConnell (Dunfanaghy & Carrigart), Rev Dr Ivan J Wilson (Cumber & Upper Cumber).

Widows of Ministers Fund

7. That the scale of assessment for WMF for 1997 be 6.5p in the £ of Stipend as shown in the column 'Stipend paid to Minister' or as fixed for a vacancy by the Union Commission.

Ministers Pension Scheme Fund (1978)

8. That the scale of assessment for 1997 for MPSF (1978) be 16.25p 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.

Retirement on Health Grounds

9. That the pension payable to Rev Elinor Henning be 15/35ths of the full pension.

General

10. That the resignation of Rev W J R Robinson as Convener of the Board of Ministry and Pensions be accepted, that he be thanked for his service, and that Rev D S Graham be appointed in his place.

11. That the Board of Ministry and Pensions, with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 288 of the Code as follows:

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED**Anent Par 313(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 313(1) of the Code be deleted, and that the following be substituted in its place:

“Contributions from the congregations of the Church assessed on the stipend paid to the minister in the preceding year, or as fixed by the Union Commission in giving leave to call in a vacancy, at a rate which shall be determined annually by the Assembly on the advice of the Board of Ministry and Pensions”.

W J R ROBINSON

Anent Par 315(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 315 (3) of the Code the words “and for ministers of more than 10 years service, or of more than 20 years service, or of more than 30 years service, since ordination of 105%, 110% and 115% respectively of the Basic Ministerial Minimum;” be deleted, and that the following be substituted in their place

“and for ministers of more than 5 years service, or of more than 10 years service, or of more than 15 years service, or of more than 20 years service, or of more than 25 years service, or of more than 30 years service since ordination of 102½%, 105%, 107½%, 110%, 112½%, and 115% respectively of the Basic Ministerial Minimum;”.

W J R ROBINSON

Anent Par 316 (1)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 316(1)(a) of the Code be deleted, and that the following be substituted in its place:

“in respect of the CMF assessment, a sum not less than one-quarter of the annual sum due according to the regulations for the time being of the General Assembly”.

W J R ROBINSON

SHANKILL ROAD MISSION COMMISSION

Conveners: Rev K SMYTH

Mr JAMES O'NEILL

Superintendent: Rev W M CAMPBELL

1. We give thanks to our Heavenly Father who has once again proved great in His faithfulness to us.

Hostel for Single Homeless

2. On Thursday 27 June, 1996, Lord Blease of Cromac and Rt Rev Dr D H Allen performed the re-opening ceremony of our totally renovated Hostel for Single Homeless at 56-58 Shankill Parade.

3. The total cost of the project was £50,000 of which £36,000 was grant-aided by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The remainder was furnished by Shankill Road Mission.

4. Mr John McFarlane (Manager) and his team of helpers are commended for all their hard work in the Master's service.

5. The Hostel residents and Manager were involved at Christmas in a report by Ulster Television into Homelessness and all commented on how well Shankill Road Mission cared for the residents.

Personnel

6. Due to a lack of expected funding, Mrs Caroline Kerr and Mr Tom Gouldie (who had been working in the Drop-In Centre) left the Mission's employ during the year. We wish them God's richest blessing in the future.

7. In August, Mrs Rosalind Wilson was appointed as Catering Manager. Since her appointment she has brought to the Cafe a quiet efficiency, flair and imagination in the menus and transformed the place. We commend her and the excellent work she does for the Master.

Christmas Appeal

8. The response of congregations to our Annual Appeal was as usual overwhelming in its generosity.

We were able to meet all the requests for toys and we also distributed 90 food parcels to pensioners, which was an increase of 30 parcels on last year, a significant fact in these days of cuts.

9. Rt Rev Dr Harry and Mrs Allen visited the Mission on 18 December to see at first hand the volume of work for Christmas and the other areas of the Mission's outreach.

10. Dr Allen's BBC Christmas Message was recorded during his visit and all in the Mission were pleased to be involved.

Mission Centenary

11. In 1998 Shankill Road Mission will be celebrating 100 years of outreach. A small sub-committee consisting of Revs W M Campbell, Dr A R Rodgers, K Smyth, N M Williamson, Mr J O'Neill and Mr T Doyle are investigating various ways of publicising and marking this landmark.

Community Work

12. The Mission Building is well used during the week.

- A crèche operates from Monday to Friday from 9.00 am - 12 noon, organised by Shankill Community Council.
- A Pensioners Club uses the Games Room on two mornings per week and the Hostel residents join with them for snooker, pool, darts and table-tennis.
- A mixed Knitting Club operates on a Tuesday afternoon and a Senior Citizens Ladies Fellowship meets on a Wednesday afternoon.

13. Recently, in co-operation with Belfast City Mission, Mr John Miskelly has been visiting in the Cafe and sharing his faith with the customers. This venture has been appreciated by Shankill folk.

Thanks

14. We would wish to place on record once again, our thanks to the Mission staff for their faithful and tireless work, without which we could not continue.

Our thanks too, go out to all those congregations and individual church members who have supported us both prayerfully and financially.

We are always conscious of this strong bond of support and goodwill as we seek to minister in West Belfast.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly commend the work of the Hostel for Single Homeless and its Manager, Mr John McFarlane, to the prayers and support of the Church at large.
3. That the Shankill Road Mission Commission be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 129 of the Code as follows:

TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

1. The following is an extract from the Minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees at their Annual General Meeting, held in Church House, Belfast, on 10 April, 1997.

2. "The Report of the Executive Committee and the Statement of audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 1996 of the following were laid before the Trustees, and were adopted by them:

- The General Investment Fund
- The Commutation Fund
- The Non-Participating Trust Funds
- The Magee Fund
- The Tops Wilson Trust Fund
- The Fire Insurance Trust Fund
- The Fortune Mission Bequest

3. Moved by Prof D A D Montgomery, seconded by Mr A T Ross and unanimously agreed that the Report and the Statements of Account 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 Prof D A D Montgomery, Mr A T Ross and Mr W Cosgrove 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 1996 of Getty Trust, and The Ministers Pension Scheme (1978) and had accepted these for inclusion in the volume of Accounts to be submitted to the General Assembly. On the proposal of Prof D A D Montgomery, seconded by Mr A T Ross, this report was received".

5. Two retiring members of the Executive Committee were re-appointed for a further three years, these being Rev W D F Marshall and Mr G McCullagh.

6. Mr D Bell and Sir Eric McDowell were nominated members of the General Assembly, according to the provision of the Code, Par 97 (h) (iii).

Trust Funds

7. **Mrs A M Davidson Trust.** The total income available in 1996 for distribution was £5,607.85. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Union Theological College	£2,500.00
Church House Redevelopment	£2,500.00
Nexus	£607.85

8. **Sir Wm V McCleery Estate.** The total income available for distribution is £29,278.48. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Central Ministry Fund	50%
Retired Ministers' Fund	30%
Widows of Ministers' Fund	20%

9. **Estate of Miss Irene Scott:** The total income for 1996 available for distribution amounts to £6,066.28. The Board of Trustees recommend to the General Assembly that this be allocated as follows:-

Thompson House Project	1/3rd
Church House Redevelopment	1/3rd
Guysmere Development	1/3rd

10. **Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown.** The total income for 1996 available for distribution amounts to £3,893.14. The Board of Trustees recommend to the General Assembly that this amount be paid to Church House Redevelopment Appeal.

GENERAL INVESTMENT FUND

11. Declaration of Dividend	15.4.96	15.10.96
Number of shares qualifying	3,726,578	4,040,597
	£	£
Income from investment for distribution and income tax recoverable less administrative charge and Investment Advisers Fees	366,231	507,000
Dividend per share	9.00p	13.00p

In the year 1996 £48,000 was transferred to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve and the balance on the Dividend Equalisation Reserve at 31 December, 1996 is £180,500.

12. The combined annual Dividend of 22.00p per share is to be compared with 21.50 for 1995; 21.00 for 1994; 22.00 for 1993; 25.50 for 1992; 25.00 for 1991; 23.50 for 1990; 21.00 for 1989; 18.50 for 1988 and 17.25 for 1987.

13. Valuation	15.4.96	15.10.96
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	16,078,135	17,425,847
Cash on Deposit	604,129	1,856,534
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	165,500	180,500
Property and Ground Rents	1,905,895	1,905,895
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£18,753,659	£21,368,776
	<hr/>	<hr/>
No of Shares Issued	3,726,578	4,040,597
Share Value	£5.0324	£5.2885

Crescent Church Loan Fund

14. The Committee considered applications from congregations seeking loans from the Crescent Church Loan Fund. Loans totalling £55,000 were made.

Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)

15. The joint sub-Committee representative of the Trustees and the Board of Ministry and Pensions continue to monitor the investments, meeting regularly with the Fund Managers. In accordance with statutory requirements the Report of the Trustees and the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) together with the Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 1996 are included in the Volume of Accounts.

Ethical Investment

16. The Trustees regularly review their policy on ethical investment. In response to representations recently received they have decided to review the matter of armaments and other ethical issues during the coming year.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON, Secretary

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommendation regarding the Mrs A M Davidson Trust be adopted.
3. That the recommendation regarding the Sir Wm V McCleery Trust be adopted.
4. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Irene Scott Trust be adopted.
5. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Ida Mary McGeown Trust be adopted.

AND THIS COURT DOTH FURTHER DECLARE, pursuant to the provisions of Section 22.1(c) and Section 29.1(b) of the Act that the property available within the aforementioned charitable trusts and other property applicable for similar purposes can be more effectively used in conjunction when made applicable to common purposes.

AND THE COURT DOTH, pursuant to Sections 22.1(c) and 29.1(b) of the Act APPROVE the Scheme annexed hereto.

AND IT IS ORDERED that the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland be appointed as Trustees of the Fortune Mission Bequest.

AND IT IS ORDERED that the terms of the Fortune Mission Bequest be varied as are set out in the Scheme annexed hereto.

AND IT IS ORDERED that in default of agreement it be referred to the Taxing Master to tax on the standard basis the costs of and incidental to the said application of the Defendant.

AND IT IS ORDERED that the said costs when taxed or agreed be paid out of the Accumulated Fund.

M. STARTIN
Proper Officer

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND
 CHANCERY DIVISION
 IN THE MATTER OF THE CHARITIES ACT
 (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1964
 AND
 IN THE MATTER OF THE TRUSTEE ACT
 (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1958
 AND IN THE MATTER OF THE FUNDS OF
 THE FOREIGN MISSION OF THE
 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND,
 THE JUNGLE TRIBES MISSION IN INDIA,
 THE COLONIAL AND COMMONWEALTH MISSION,
 THE CONTINENTAL MISSION, THE ZENANA MISSION,
 THE JEWISH MISSION AND THE FORTUNE MISSION BEQUEST

BETWEEN
 THE TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
 PLAINTIFF

-AND-

HER MAJESTY'S ATTORNEY GENERAL
 FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
 DEFENDANT

1. Pursuant to the order of the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland Chancery Division made on the 11th day of November 1996 it is ordered that the trust funds set out in Schedule 1 hereto be forthwith held by the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and that they forthwith be known collectively as the 1996 Mission Review Fund ("the Accumulated Fund").

2. The Trustees shall hold the Accumulated Fund on trust and subject to all of the powers and discretions provided by the Irish Presbyterian Church Acts 1871 and 1901.

3. The Overseas Board of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland shall be entitled to apply the income of the Accumulated Fund under paragraph 279(3)(c) of The Code for all or any of the following purposes:-

- (a) For the education and training of missionary workers.
- (b) For the maintenance and support of missionary workers.
- (c) For the costs of and incidental to the transport and dispatch of missionary workers to missionary areas designated by the General Assembly or the Overseas Board.
- (d) For the provision of religious training and education for the people of missionary areas.
- (e) For the general education and enlightenment of the people of missionary areas.
- (f) For the provision of medical services and advice for the people of missionary areas.
- (g) For the proclamation of the Gospel in word and action in such manner as the General Assembly shall from time to time determine.

4. In determining the allocation of the income of the Accumulated Fund for all or any of the purposes tabulated (a) to (g) at paragraph 3 above the Overseas Board shall be attentive to the purposes expressed by specific donors to any of the specific trusts set out in Schedule 1 hereto and, where possible, shall endeavour to apply the credit balance of specific contributions to the Accumulated Fund as near as possible to those purposes expressed by the original donor.

5. In determining how to apply the income of the Accumulated Fund under paragraph 279(3)(c) of The Code the Overseas Board shall seek the opinion and take into account the views of the Presbyterian Women's Association Executive Committee in relation to the disbursement of the income of the capital balance of the portion of the Trust Fund created by the addition of The Zenana Mission Fund to the Accumulated Fund.

In the matter of The Fortune Mission Bequest:

1. Pursuant to the order of the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland, Chancery Division made on 11th day of November 1996 pursuant to the provisions of Section 29 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 the trust estate and funds referred to in the will of the late Edgar Fortune shall forthwith be vested in the trustees of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

2. Pursuant to Section 29 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 the scheme approved by the court on 15th July 1868 in relation to the administration of the trust estate and funds of the late Edgar Fortune shall be varied in the following respects:-

- (a) Paragraph 4 of the said scheme shall be forthwith revoked.
- (b) Paragraph 5 of the said scheme shall be revoked and replaced with the following provisions:-

“That the said trust estate and funds in the will of Edgar Fortune shall be vested in the Trustees for the time being of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.”

SCHEDULE 1

The following specific funds are to be amalgamated in a united fund to be known as 1996 Mission Review Fund. The exhibit references in the following schedule relate to the exhibits to the Affidavit of Samuel Hutchinson sworn on 16th May 1996.

- (a) The former Foreign Mission bequests which are referred to as exhibit SH3.
- (b) The former Jewish Mission which is referred to as exhibit SH4.
- (c) The former Colonial Mission which is referred to as exhibit SH5.
- (d) The former Continental Mission which is referred to as exhibit SH6.
- (e) The former Jungle Tribes Mission which is referred to as exhibit SH7.
- (f) The former Zenana Mission which is referred to as exhibit SH8.

FORTUNE MISSION BEQUEST

1. In accordance with the decision of the General Assembly (Minutes 1995, pp 52 and 54; Reports 1996, p 306) an application was made to the High Court to have the Fortune Mission Trust vested in the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This application was approved by the Court in the terms set out in the Appendix to the report of the Trustees.

2. There is no other business remaining for the Fortune Mission Trustees to transact. It is therefore recommended that their resignation be accepted now.

SAMUEL HUTCHINSON, Secretary

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the resignation of the Fortune Mission Trustees be accepted and that they be thanked for their services.

STRATEGY FOR MISSION COMMITTEE

Conveners: Rev W A KENNEDY
Rev D J McKELVEY

Introduction

1. A Church - on fire for mission
waiting on God in prayer
innovative in outreach
generous of heart and pocket
relevant in bringing timeless truth to the modern age

Such is the desire of all our hearts.

2. The Strategy for Mission Committee is totally aware that the transformation required to create such a church will not come about through altering structures or changing mindsets.

3. It is and must be the work of the Holy Spirit to transform and revive. Our prayer has been, is and will continue to be that God will revive this His Church - and soon!

4. We recognise this calls us to - Repentance and Prayer
 - Repentance - for being content with less than God desires
for our reluctance to risk present security for future blessing
for allowing this land to be swamped by evil, violence, materialism and apathy
 - Prayer - open heartfelt intercession
open-minded and open-hearted listening for the voice of God
longing for and awareness of the movement of His Spirit

These will bring the revival.

6. Our work we see as the digging of ditches (2 Kings 6) for God to fill. Some perhaps is the unblocking of drains, the removal of blocks in river beds. We believe that this strategy will focus our minds, make necessary change easier and release energy and finance and personnel to work to bring in the kingdom.

7. Some felt that it was hard to get a handle on the many proposals we presented last year - therefore we circulated a brief resume of our aims, definitions and strategy to all Presbyteries. We include it here as it still clearly states what is the heart of our strategy.

* * * * *

Proposed Strategy in the 1994 & 1996 Reports

Aims and Definitions

Aim: to focus the life of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on Christian MISSION to people inside and outside the Church as a first priority.

We offer two **definitions** of Mission:

1. John Stott's "Mission describes everything the Church is sent into the world to do. 'Mission' embraces the Church's double vocation to be 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world.'" "...mission arises out of the nature not of the Church but of God himself. The living God of the Bible is a sending God." (Christian Mission in the Modern World, (London: Falcon, 2nd Ed. 1977), pp. 30 & 21.

2. Our own summary: "In Mission the Church witnesses to the world of Christ which is evangelism and serves humankind in His name which is social action. Mission embraces both witness and service."

Concise summary of the proposed strategy.

1. To make PRESBYTERY the powerhouse driving the change to a mindset for Mission with its "business" seen as first and foremost superintending and stimulating Christian mission within its bounds through the constituent congregations.

2. To gear CONGREGATIONS to a new mindset and to deliver mission on the ground at the local level (which is their sphere) assisted, resourced and trained by Presbytery.

3. To organise the Boards and Agencies of the PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND in the most efficient way, so that they provide for Presbyteries and congregations the services, resources, perspective, channels and advice which only the whole Church in Mission can provide - particularly in areas where the Presbytery faces a challenge beyond local strength.

* * * * *

Responses from Presbyteries

8. The conveners or other representatives of the committee were given opportunity to speak at and answer questions at 10 of the 21 Presbyteries and we are grateful for the way in which both we and they were thus enabled better to understand the contents of the report and the feelings and fears of the members of Presbytery.

9. We received replies from all 21 Presbyteries - most of them full and cogently argued. Most chose to use the rough scoring guide that we had suggested namely:-

- (a) Strong agreement with the Report and proposals in the resolutions.
- (b) Broad agreement with the Report and with the specific proposals being made by the SFM Committee though recognising that some details may need refinement.
- (c) Considerable agreement with the Report and proposals - though wishing to see significant changes in the proposals.
- (d) Recognition that the PCI faces challenges in this area but believing that a great deal more work needs to be done before concrete proposals are brought to the Assembly.
- (e) Strong disagreement with the Report and the proposals in the present resolutions of the SFM Committee.

10. It has to be said that some used it somewhat idiosyncratically. As can be seen A-C indicate agreement in principle with the report. D & E disagreement with our principles and ideas. However several Presbyteries awarded scores of D whilst stating that they were in favour of the 'principle' we had set out. Without altering scores to make them conform to the categories given but using them exactly as given by Presbyteries, the total score was A-C 83; D & E 54.

11. Only 2 areas did not receive a favourable vote. Mission Priority Areas and Church Planting were each A-C 9 and D & F 9. However here especially we noted several Presbyteries stating - "we are in favour of this idea but it needs more work" and awarding a D rather than a C score.

12. The mix is further complicated by Presbyteries who gave more than one score for a particular area. Several Presbyteries did not use the scoring system. Others used it for some categories and not others and some used it with such qualifications to particular scores that made them dubious.

13. The Committee has taken on board the following matters raised by the Presbyteries and Boards and the proposals later in this report are our attempt to achieve what the Church has clearly asked us to do - and to address the problem which the Church faces so clearly in moving from maintenance to mission.

Presbytery Replies:-

(i) **In Service Training (Res 4, 6; Par 36-41; Appx A).**

Presbyteries on the whole welcome the principle of in service training - indeed most felt it was 'essential', 'timely' and 'crucial'. Problems were seen as 'finance', 'pastoral cover' and an 'unweildy top-heavy system'. In particular there was almost universal agreement that it should be based at Presbytery rather than at 'redundant' Synod level.

(ii) **Sabbaticals (Res 5, Appx B)**

Once again there was very widespread agreement about the need for sabbaticals - few Presbyteries ruled them out. Flexibility in the system was desired and concerns again were about pastoral cover in small Presbyteries, cost, and the practicalities of ministers with young families and working spouses being free to take a sabbatical.

(iii) **Training in mission and ministry for members of local congregations (Res 7-9; par 32-34; Appx C).**

Once again the majority of Presbyteries are enthusiastically in favour of the principle. Fears centred around overload at Presbytery level - worry about extra committees - and concern over the ability of central resources to feed the system.

(iv) **Presbytery Business and Personnel (Res 15,16; Appx D1 & D2; pars 55 & 56).**

Reactions to these varied from 'we already do much of this' to 'we cannot fit our business into present meetings never mind fewer business meetings'. Some remain suspicious of enlarged or higher powered 'business committees/commissions'.

On personnel pleas are made by some Presbyteries for flexibility in clerkship terms of office - though we suggested these as guidelines

which would provide flexibility. Some wondered if 'elders can be time limited as representatives since ministers are not'.

We agree that much is best left for 'local arrangement' but only if the nettle of moribund business bound Presbyteries is tackled

- (v) **Presbytery Mission Strategy (Res 17-19; Appx D3; Pars 57-61.)**
Replies indicate some confusion - some seeing this as unnecessary or 'our disparate Presbytery could not produce a unified strategy'; others are very congregational in their approach seeing Presbytery's role only as encouraging congregations to be 'mission minded'. Most see Presbytery visitations as crucial in this part of the Presbytery's Mission Strategy. We have been interested in the concept of 'Presbytery Partnership' for Mission which the Church of Scotland has pioneered and which perhaps best illustrates our concept of a Presbytery Mission Strategy.
- (vi) **Congregational Mission Strategy (Res 20; Para 66-68)**
This received more A's than any other proposal. Many regarded it as the core of the proposals. Two Presbyteries scored it E objecting to a mandatory strategy. However most suggested that a flexible practice of encouragement, rather than imposition, of this should be pursued urgently.
- (vii) **Church Planting (Res 27; Para 95-99; Appx G)**
FOR 'Broad agreement with concept of 'Church Plant.' There is an 'optimum size for congregations' 'probably the way forward for Church Extension'. But AGAINST 'Where do we find the church planters?' 'What does broad agreement with the standards of the church mean?' 'A recipe for strife and division. Opinions were divided and whilst overall the concept was taken on board - much needs to be resolved before implementation.
- (viii) **Mission Priority Areas (Res 28; Para 100-1-1; Appx H)**
On the whole urban Presbyteries or those in more obvious mission fields (such as Dublin and Munster) were enthusiastic. Others did not see the relevance or were concerned about parish bounds and losing the emphasis that mission was essential in every area.

Matters referred to Boards - Presbytery Comments

Some Presbyteries referred to these 4 areas:-

- (ix) Assembly Boards
- (x) Central Training Unit
- (xi) Membership
- (xii) Giving

Their comments fell into the following lines:-

9. Assembly Boards - The vast majority of those who commented were strongly in favour of a United Board of Mission for Ireland and the consequent changes to other Boards - the main negative was one expressed also by ourselves that structural change does not necessarily achieve anything on its own.

10. Central Training Unit - Widespread agreement was expressed. 'It is clear that there is wasteful duplication in the field of training and that CTC is due for a thorough reform. The Committee is on the right lines with its proposed

Central Training Unit'. Only caveats were the normal ones of Finance, more Assembly appointments etc.

11. Membership - Presbyteries were surprised that this and that on 'Giving' were sent to Boards rather than to them. The Boards must also have been surprised since none of them have commented on them! Two major comments received.

- (a) Yes, we need to expect more from our members - without driving people away.
- (b) Either complete agreement on Elders serving for a term on Kirk Session or absolute opposition to such a suggestion - there was little middle ground here. It is worth noting that the Doctrine Committee will report that there are neither doctrinal nor confessional reasons to prevent 'term' membership of Kirk Session.

12. Giving - with a few exceptions, most agree with the committee's stance. Tithing is not a law but a guide - but realistic giving needs to start and be taught. However almost every Presbytery which commented on this section also commented that 'such teaching is difficult as long as the ministers salary is tied to giving by a fraction'. There is a serious moral issue here that needs to be addressed.

Digest of Board Responses

14. Each of the Four Boards concerned have responded carefully to our proposals. Those matters that concern them are diverse and therefore we deal with them in three separate paragraphs.

15. **The Home Board and the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training** were being offered in our report an 'arranged marriage' with some of the latter's children being adopted by others.

The Boards - welcomed the proposals for a single Board of Mission for Ireland
 declared willingness to move towards a marriage of Irish and Home Missions
 expressed concern to preserve the funding base of the Irish Mission
 sought to protect the staff presently employed
 desired a Board that sought mission in its broadest sense
 but did not lose the sharp edge of evangelism

The Board of Social Witness -

was concerned that Mission would not solely be the preserve of the New Board
 that Social Witness would be seen as an integral part of the Church's mission
 that a structure could be found to co-ordinate the whole of the Church's mission

The Board of Studies -

agreed to accept the Christian Training Committee as part of the Board

preferred continued co-operation between the Christian Training Centre and Union Theological College rather than a 'new Central Training Unit'

affirmed that Ministerial Training would be separate from any Central Training Unit

accepted our suggested change of name to 'Board of Christian Training' though they offered other alternatives

felt that the Assignment Committee should be moved to their Board

and that the Divine Healing Committee would be better placed elsewhere

A Church with its mind set on mission

16. The Committee believe that the thoroughgoing manner in which many Presbyteries approached the remit of the 1996 Report has given rise to a fruitful debate throughout the Church. Many issues have been discussed which are central to having mission at the heart of our understanding of why we exist as a Church in this island of Ireland.

17. It is clear to us that there is general agreement on the core of our 1994 Report, namely, that if we are to be faithful to the Lord who called us, and effective in what he calls us to do, we must as a matter of urgency "consolidate and develop a mindset for mission."

18. Our analysis in 1994 of the world in which our members and adherents live and our exposition of the culture of the younger people whom we need to reach with the good news of the Gospel has not been challenged. The statistics of gentle but definite decline in the numbers of those who place themselves within the ambit of our congregations' witness are a warning that another generation may see Christian faith as marginalised here as it is in Great Britain.

19. Only a Church engaged in the Biblical obedience of mission in the power of the Holy Spirit can hope to see decline turned into growth. Only a Church centred on Christ's imperative to mission can hope to bring the life giving liberty of the Gospel to individual persons and build a community where Christian faith and kingdom values make their mark on society.

20. The debate within the Presbyteries has enabled us to take stock of impracticabilities and genuine difficulties. It has also shown us that, whilst the Committee's proposals are all interrelated, there does need to be a structured approach to dealing with them over a period of a few years.

21. How to guide a large, diverse and independent spirited Church in a direction which most admit is necessary or desirable but few want to have imposed on them creates a difficulty!

22. A clear impression emerges from the responses that within the PCI many members of Presbyteries stress the Congregation not the Presbytery as the fundamental unit.

23. Within this ecclesiology it is clear also that there is strong support for the concept of the congregation becoming more focused on mission but without having this imposed by legislation of the General Assembly.

24. The Committee has revised its major proposals and proposes that they should be dealt with in three stages.

- (i) First the most basic layer of the strategy: congregational mission strategies and related matters of Presbytery support.
- (ii) Second, resourcing and developing the leadership and membership of congregations through training for mission.
- (iii) Thirdly, co-ordinating and renewing the Board, Committee and Agency structures of the PCI for mission.

25. It is our conviction that things grow best from the ground upwards rather than from the top down. The chart after par 97 shows the manner in which we see this happening over the years 1997 to 2001. The strategy begins from the local congregation.

26. However, even if we begin with local mission strategies and plans, the various strands of the whole strategy must in fact grow together. Local mission strategies do not stand alone but require advice, support and training from Presbytery and the agencies of the whole Church. It is important that people on the ground do not feel isolated and personally overwhelmed by the task, or that they approach it in an uninformed way which later needs correction.

27. The issue of Boards, Committees and Agencies in the overall strategy relates closely to the support of Presbyteries, ministers and congregations in seeking to establish and operate local initiatives. It is all in fact “a seamless robe.”

(i) Congregational mission strategies .

28. The Committee accepts that the responses of the Presbyteries whilst favourable to the idea of congregational mission strategies do indicate a preference to proceed in this direction by persuasion rather than through legislation

29. The Committee, therefore, proposes to follow the less prescriptive course of asking the Assembly to “request” congregations and Presbyteries to adopt mission strategies. We trust that, if the Assembly concurs, this course will not result in a fatal weakening of the impact of being a Church with “a mind set on mission.” Later we propose a mechanism so that there will be a follow-on body charged with continually calling the Church back to our commitment to this central purpose.

30. It was never our intention that last year’s “guidelines” for Presbyteries on gearing their life to mission should have any mandatory status. We have revised them (Appendix I) and present them again as useful suggestions to Presbyteries who wish to gear their life to the support of mission as the priority.

31. If congregations are to begin work on appropriate mission strategies with achievable goals they need help to do so. Initial help in drawing up and implementing local strategies should be available from members of Presbytery who have suitable skills or from some appropriate agency of the central Church. We suggest that Presbyteries and Boards should gear themselves for this task and that a useful model may be found in the Mission Statement for the Presbyterian Church as a whole which was received by the General Assembly in 1992, subsequent to the Coleraine Assembly.

32. Our researches prior to the 1994 Report indicated that mission was often stifled and the keenest members often overworked and drained. We also noted from our enquiries widespread complaints of apathy and a generally low level of spiritual concern amongst the majority in most congregations. On the other hand many Church members today are so absorbed in responsibilities that they have little left to give in time but need much support.

33. A mission strategy will only succeed if behind it there lies a people who are prayerful disciples with a genuine experience of Christ in the power of His Spirit and moved to serve and witness in every sphere of life.

34. Similarly, even congregations where there is a drive to mission will need guidance, support and models from Presbytery and from the central agencies of the PCI.

35. We therefore present in Resolutions 1 to 17 a programme to further encourage the PCI to become "a Church with its mind set on mission" and to ensure that, whilst not prescriptive, there is explicit guidance from the General Assembly and a build up of provision to support those congregations who will increasingly go for this outlook.

36. The Strategy for Mission Committee, formerly a standing Committee of the Home Board, became an Ad Hoc Committee of the Assembly in 1992. Such committees have only a limited life span. The present Committee has, in our opinion, succeeded in its time as an Ad Hoc Committee in drawing together creative people to analyse our present challenges in "home" mission and in presenting the Church with a renewed vision for our life.

37. If the mindset for mission is to be nurtured rather than required, ways must be found to ensure that it succeeds in growing and spreading freely amongst our congregations and Presbyteries to become a permanent feature of our life. Some body is necessary to keep the "mindset for mission" agenda alive in the Church and recall us to it constantly.

38. We propose, therefore, that the Strategy for Mission Committee as it comes to the end of its Ad Hoc phase, should be replaced by a Committee of the General Board. This body would bring together representatives of all the "home" mission Boards and in particular ensure the full participation and integration of the Social Witness Board and the Youth Board in the ongoing work of overseeing, refining and promoting "a mind set on mission" (in the full sense of mission) within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland..

39. This successor to the present Committee is necessary if, whilst we do not legislate mission strategies into the lives of congregations and Presbyteries, we none the less wish to ensure that the vision of a Church focused on mission as the core of its life does not fizzle out.

(ii) Training and personal development for Mission.

40. It has always been a conviction of the Committee that we must not add to the sense of panic that many ministers and congregations already feel as they face rapid change. We have therefore been committed to a strategy in which ministers, elders and church members are encouraged and given resources for any change in direction which becoming a congregation committed to mission involves.

41. We remain firmly committed to the principle that at the heart of a strategy for mission there must lie provision for our leaders to reflect theologically on what they are doing, learn and re-learn essential skills and have time to be spiritually refreshed and encouraged. The Church of Scotland as part of its focus on National Mission has just enacted a two week per year provision for training for its ministers.

42. We have carefully listened to the Presbyteries as they have commented on this area of our 1996 proposals and sought to modify them appropriately. In particular, we have made extensive changes to the proposals for In Service Training (IST) and Sabbaticals.

43. The revised scheme, presented in Appendix A, reduces the cost to the Church, both in time and money, and yet creates greater flexibility, by taking the two weeks annual entitlement suggested in 1996 and dividing it between IST and Sabbatical provision.

44. We believe it essential that, particularly in the early years of establishing “a Church with its mind set in mission,” we should give each minister or full time pastoral worker the opportunity for at least one week to receive stimulation and refreshment in mission.

45. The main change which we have made to the 1996 proposals is that we have united In Service Training and Sabbaticals under one scheme by taking the two weeks previously proposed for IST and dividing them notionally between short term and longer term personal development. In the new scheme every minister in active service would be entitled to one week for In Service Training annually and to a second week which could either be spent annually or saved for up to seven years to create a sabbatical of seven weeks. In the seventh year the IST week could be added to make a full two month period available (annual leave could also be used to stretch it to three months).

46. There was widespread opposition to the concept of making Synods the basis of information and report for In Service Training. However, such an investment of time must clearly be seen to be for the benefit of the Church and so we retain the idea of accountability. But, in deference to Presbytery concerns, we have opted for a pattern by which Presbytery would be responsible for approving study leave plans and for receiving subsequent reports. The wider Church is given responsibility for the necessary functions of gathering information as to what is profitable (or otherwise) and observing the operation of the scheme so that necessary modifications can be made intelligently.

47. The demands of establishing “a Church with its mind set on mission” are such that we believe that the IST week should become available as soon as possible. However, we propose the phasing in of the second week over three years for two reasons: (a) so that there would not be an uncontrollable rush of applications for Sabbaticals 7 years into the scheme; (b) so that the financial requirements should also be phased in.

48. Clearly there will have to be a considerable element of self-funding by those who take up IST and Sabbatical opportunities. However, the Church cannot escape making substantial provision and we offer the option that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should follow the example of the Church of Scotland and offer up to £125.00 per week.

49. If the scheme was fully operational, and all were taking their full annual entitlement, this would cost 430 x £250.00 or £107,500.00 per annum. As we propose the phasing in of the scheme the cost would be £71,666.00 in the first year (£53,750.00 for IST and £17,917.00 to be saved against future sabbaticals). Year two would cost £89,583.00 and year three £107,500.00.

50. The most equitable way to fund the scheme would be through a levy on stipend through CMF or through a new fund. This would be at a level 1.13p for year one, 1.41p for year two and 1.7p thereafter though we believe that non utilisation of the scheme would leave the fund in surplus and reduce the levy. We believe that this will be acceptable to congregations because they are directly benefiting from it in the personal development of their minister or ministers.

51. This scheme would mean that a congregation with Stipend of £5,000.00 would pay £85.00, one with Stipend of £15,000.00 would pay £255.00. In other word the congregation which is self-sufficient in stipend would almost exactly pay for its minister's IST. Larger congregations would pay £425.00 for £25,000.00 but these congregations will be increasingly likely to have Associate Ministers who would also be covered.

52. In addition congregations with only one minister would have to fund two more supply fees in the year on average. To offset this we commend to the Church a 25% reduction in the supply fee, which in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is grossly in excess of anything offered in other denominations.

53. In Resolution 10 we ask the General Assembly to give a firm approval in principle to the revised scheme in this Assembly and to direct the Committee to submit appropriate legislation in June 1998 to bring it into operation from June 1999.

54. This gives a further year for consultation and refinement and two years for Presbyteries to set up systems for their part in its operation and for the CTC to prepare itself to provide appropriate levels of information to individual ministers and to Presbyteries.

(iii) Central Training provision.

55. One of the areas of the 1996 Report which received the most positive response from Presbyteries was that of training in mission and ministry for members of local congregations.

56. This, added to the provision of enhanced in service training opportunities for ministers, if the Assembly so decides, makes it essential that we move nearer to the rationalisation and co-ordination of the resources of the PCI in Union Theological College, Magee House, the Evangelism Board, etc. to help service "a Church with its mind set on mission."

57. If the Assembly accepts the revised In Service Training/ Sabbatical scheme it is essential that there be established a resource centre which can enable our ministers to use their entitlement to the best advantage of the Church's mission and to their own encouragement in leading their congregations into a mind set on mission.

58. We therefore present to the Assembly a revised version of the 1996 proposal, recognising that further work needs to be done before it can be operational. In Resolution 11 we ask for approval in principle this year so that

the year 1997-1998 might be given to working out a definitive scheme by the bodies concerned together with the Strategy for Mission Committee so that together they may bring a definitive scheme to the Assembly in 1998 for approval.

59. The scheme as proposed in Appendix B does not require any legal changes initially in UTC or the Magee Fund and is more a matter of establishing a joint structure for servicing a new approach to providing mission oriented training for the Church.

60. The time schedule we suggest could be allowed to spread over a further year, if absolutely necessary, but provision in this area would then be in danger of being out of phase with In Service Training needs.

61. In the proposed time scale the year 1998-1999 following Assembly direction would give opportunity to establish the Council and get systems operative to meet the demand from those seeking information on IST opportunities and from congregations discovering their need for enhanced training and inspiration of their members.

62. The Christian Training Centre is central to the proposed "Central Training Unit" and needs to become an expert centre of advice on outside provision and to "buy in" that expertise on a regular basis.

63. We believe also that the Training Council/Central Training Unit will be crucial to an increased emphasis in the training of ministerial students on mission as the heart of the Church's life. We do not, however, envisage any dilution of the distinctive role of Union Theological College nor that its role in the basic training of ministerial students would come under the Training Council. We recognise that much more than the training of ministerial students does already take place within its walls. This should increase. Valuable resources could also be redirected if the Central Training Unit were to operate largely from within Union.

64. If the Assembly accepts the proposals for In Service Training / Sabbaticals but rejects the proposals in this area then it will need as a matter of urgency to direct the CTC or some other body to make provision to service the IST/Sabbatical scheme.

65. We believe that the proposal on the encouragement of research on mission (par 6 under Implementation in Appendix III) is extremely important. If we are to be a Church living for mission and by mission in today's society we need to have a research effort directed towards today.

66. Irish Presbyterianism has a long history of academic research, but it has been and is predominantly historical research that examines our past history of ministry and mission. We need to direct our postgraduate students into the challenge of assessing and evaluating what we are doing today to fulfil our commission.

67. Perhaps as the Practical Theology Department of UTC develops over the next few years it should move in the direction of becoming an "Institute of Ministry" - as one Presbytery suggested in their response.

Board Structures and "new mission agency."

68. In the 1996 Report we proposed the creation of two Boards whose focus would be on mission. The suggestion was that most of the Home Board

and the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training should come together as a "Board for Mission in Ireland." The Christian Training Committee would be transferred to the Board of Studies which would become the "Board of Christian Training."

69. We have held discussions with representatives of these Boards. The Home Board and the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training have found broad agreement that they should move together under one umbrella. This will place them together in mission but, more importantly, will bring them within a single administrative unit - reporting to one Board and having a unified Standing Committee.

70. The matter of a single mission agency which would encompass the work of the Home Mission, Irish Mission and Church Extension contains much more complex issues and sensitivities. The phrase that was put to us was "courtship" so that the various agencies might begin to talk about the issues and move towards one another through greater co-operation in their work.

71. We have taken note of the concerns of the Board of Social Witness and the Youth Board that a Board for Mission in Ireland should not imply that their distinctive work is not part of our mission. Therefore we propose that the successor to the present Strategy for Mission Committee should contain strong representation from these Boards. They should be well represented also on the new Mission Board.

72. The Board of Studies does not raise any objection to receiving the Christian Training Committee but whilst accepting our suggestion for a new name for the Board might wish for further discussion on its ultimate title.

73. We recognise that the role of selecting, training and equipping ministers is too big a task, and the role of providing and co-ordinating In Service Training too disparate, for all this work to come under the aegis of the Training Council.

74. Such was never our intention. It is the expertise and the facilities which Union Theological College can lend to the In Service Training of ministers and members which we wish to harness under the Training Council.

75. Nor do we foresee the Youth Board, the Social Witness Board and other agencies of the Church devolving all their training functions to the Training Council. But we do see it as having the task of co-ordinating and therefore maximising the effectiveness of all that the Church does in training.

76. Since the In Service Training provision would provide money to the purchaser, the Training Council should so order the costing of its services that, beyond the monies already available through the Magee Fund, it would be more or less self-financing. As with other areas we have sought in this years report to suggest a plan for progress in this area which would encompass a number of years.

77. In Resolutions 12 and 13 we are asking the Assembly to give direction to the three Boards concerned to work towards becoming two Boards which focus respectively on (A) participation in mission, and (B) training for mission. Our expectation down the line is a unified mission agency with different departments but one heart and mind.

78. Because of the complexities involved, changes in a number of Convenerships and the difficulties in the Clerk's office over 1997-1998, we ask

the Boards to bring legislation no later than 1999 and in the years following to co-ordinate their work in such a way that they will grow, if at all possible, into what is effectively a single agency for our Mission in Ireland.

79. We ask that Appendix F in the 1996 Report be referred to them as a working document.

OTHER ISSUES FROM THE 1996 REPORT

Church Planting and Mission Priority Areas.

80. We remain convinced that if the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is to make progress in winning younger people to Christ in today's society this will necessitate creative forms of mission such as Church planting and mission priority areas.

81. We take note, however, that there is need to tighten up our documents on these areas - though without producing policies which are so restricted that we stifle the opportunities that exist in Ireland today.

82. We therefore bring no resolutions on these areas this year but propose to work further on them during 1997-1998 so that we may present new guidelines for consideration by the Assembly at a later date - hopefully June 1998.

Membership and giving

83. These areas of the 1996 Report were referred to the Boards rather than the Presbyteries for discussion, but the Boards have not given any response to us.

84. A Church such as ours cannot hope to be effective in mission unless we have a membership who are healthy in faith, walking with our Lord Jesus Christ in the Spirit and therefore actively praying and living as disciples.

85. We have referred to this under the key area of Congregational Mission Strategies, but the issues raised in the 1996 Report cannot be allowed to be swept aside.

86. We wish to go back to the area of the renewal of our members in spiritual life in our work during 1997-1998 and we, therefore, have no resolutions for the Assembly this year.

87. Increased giving by our members is one of the underlying prerequisites of advance in mission. There is, of course, a direct correlation between the spirituality of our membership and their ownership of vision in mission.

88. Some Presbyteries discussed the membership and giving aspects of the 1996 Report and most of them were very enthusiastic.

89. This is a crucial aspect of strategy for mission which must not be downgraded. We wish to continue discussion and work on this area also during 1997-1998 with a view to bringing something concrete to the Assembly in 1998.

90. A number of Presbyteries raised the difficulty which many Ministers have in preaching on giving when they will benefit directly and in proportion from any increase. There does seem to be a widespread desire to find a system of Church financing where stipends are not based on a fraction system.

91. We note that the Church of Scotland in its attempt to focus on mission has introduced a scheme where, with an increased minimum, stipends are limited to minimum plus a maximum of 30%.

92. We are convinced that this area of our finances needs urgent attention from the whole Church, but in the knowledge that the Tyrone Presbytery are bringing a Memorial on this subject to this year's Assembly we have not presented a resolution.

Conclusion

93. The years in which the Strategy for Mission Committee have worked on their analysis and proposals have been exceedingly demanding on those members who have played an active part in the Committee and especially on the Conveners.

94. One Conventer retires automatically under the seven year rule in 1998 and the other wishes to retire at that point also when the Committee may take on a new existence under the General Board.

95. The Committee and Conveners have been sometimes elated by the enthusiasm of the Church and at times downcast by the opposition of some.

96. We have sought to listen to genuine criticisms and often agreed with them. However, we do wish to see all the enthusiasm, vision and labour of these years come to fruition in leading the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as a whole further forward in being "a Church with its mind set on mission."

97. We present this report and resolutions as an approach to dealing with the huge amount of material in the 1996 Report. We submit our work to the Church for approval or rejection, in part or in whole, in the conviction that we have genuinely sought to unite practicality and vision.

Strategy for Mission: Flow Chart for implementation of proposals

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<i>Congregational mission strategy etc</i>	Assembly approval	SFM Committee keeps mindset alive Boards resourcing	IST encouraging ministers	Boards of Training & Mission in Ireland in place	
<i>In service Training/ Sabbaticals</i>	Approval in principle	Legislation of scheme	one week of IST Sabbatical weeks accrue for 1/3	Sabbatical weeks accrue for 2/3	Sabbatical weeks accrue for all
<i>Central Training Unit</i>	Approval in principle	Legislation of scheme	establishment of CTU		
<i>New Board Structure and New Mission Agency</i>	Assembly direction to work towards union	progress towards union	legislation to establish new Board structure	progress towards NMA	further progress towards NMA
<i>Church plants MPA's membership giving</i>	further work by SFM Committee	further report to General Assembly			

APPENDIX I

Presbyteries and Strategy for Mission

1. The Presbytery is the core of the strategy. It should deliver mission within its bounds by -
 - entering into partnership with its congregations
 - utilising the resources of the Boards of Mission and Christian Training
 - taking to itself the responsibility for projects, planning and priorities in its area
2. This does not require legislation - but it does require Presbytery to function differently - not as administrative processing agents of matters travelling up from and down to congregation and Assembly.
3. It should become a dynamic, decision taking, encouraging, worshipping community. The following paragraphs are designed to allow such changes to happen. They are suggestions not rules so that each Presbytery may adapt them as seems best in their situation. But they (or their equivalent) are vital in changing the whole function and mindset of Presbytery to what we believe it can become.

Presbytery Strategy for Mission Committees

4. Each Presbytery should appoint a Strategy for Mission Committee or other Committee to deal with the following remit:
 - (a) To assist the Presbytery to draw up a strategy for consolidating and developing a mindset for mission amongst its congregations and to take account of strategic issues in mission within the area within its bounds where it has a perspective greater than local congregations.
 - (b) To assist the congregations within the Presbytery, both informally and through the Visitation Procedures, to draw up a mission strategy for their parishes that is appropriate to local needs and the congregation's particular priorities. The Presbytery should encourage congregations to adopt strategies which complement or harmonise with those of neighbouring congregations and which take account of Presbytery's wider perspectives.
 - (c) To advise the Presbytery on the designation of Mission Priority Areas (when agreed) and to represent Presbytery in the management and oversight of schemes or initiatives set up to meet the needs of these.
 - (d) To serve as the link between Presbytery and new central mission structures.
 - (e) To liaise with the Presbytery Training Committee so that appropriate resources and training are made available to make mission strategies effective at congregational and Presbytery levels.
 - (f) There should be close liaison with those representing the Overseas Board in Presbytery so that mission can be presented as a cohesive whole.

**Suggestions for better Structuring Presbytery Business etc in a context of
mindset for mission**

1. Presbytery might hold stated business meetings in the months of February, May, September and December.

2. Presbytery could form a small but representative Commission to process routine and non-controversial business between stated business meetings and to process routine business for the main business meetings. Membership of the Commission might be for two years.

3. Presbytery might meet on at least two other occasions for the purpose of reflection, praise and prayer. If thought appropriate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper may also be observed. At all meetings of Presbytery the opportunities for worship should be maximised, and where possible include praise and a period of corporate prayer.

4. Presbytery could consider organising a Residential Conference once per year for ministerial members in active service for the purpose of fellowship and inspiration. The theme might be suggested by the Moderator, Clerk and Strategy for Mission Convener.

5. In seeking to find ways to motivate and inspire elders for mission Presbytery might encourage a programme to meet the spiritual, training and social needs of ruling elders.

6. Presbytery should accept the commitment of organising and supporting events to facilitate fellowship within the Presbytery: in the first instance for members of Presbytery and then for other identifiable groups, eg Sunday School teachers.

7. Where a Presbytery, for reasons of geographical size or number of congregations, experiences difficulties in encouraging effective and meaningful fellowship, it might consider forming "sub-Presbytery groups" for congregational co-operation and mutual support in mission.

8. To retain freshness and a flow of new enthusiasm Presbytery appointments should probably not be open-ended but might be held on the same terms as Assembly Convenerships and Board membership. Where appropriate Presbyteries could place their Clerkship on a similar basis though recognising that the benefits of experience might necessitate renewal for five years beyond the seven year term.

9. Representative Elders should be subject to the same nine year rule as membership of Assembly Committees.

10. In the formation of working groups and committees Presbytery should appoint people with relevant skills or interests even though they may not be representative elders.

11. Presbytery should be careful not to overburden the Moderator and Clerk by expecting attendance at meetings at which others could preside and take minutes - as many Presbyteries do in practice.

APPENDIX II

A Mission Oriented Ministerial Development Programme for the PCI through In Service Training and Sabbaticals

Purpose: To help individual ministers in the development of the perspective and skills required to give leadership and inspiration in the ongoing commitment of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to be a Church centred on Christian mission.

- 1. Outline:** The Ministerial Development Programme would
 - 1.1 entitle ministers in the employ of the PCI to one week of In Service Training each year and to a further week towards Sabbatical leave. Sabbatical weeks could be either added to the IST week and spent annually as a two week period of IST or saved for up to seven years to create a period of sabbatical leave (to which the IST week could be added in the seventh year to make a full two month period possible).
 - 1.2 enable ministers to reflect on, evaluate and be refreshed in their ministry.
 - 1.3 enable ministers to engage in theological reflection related to mission, development of additional personal skills for mission and benefit from personal spiritual growth and inspiration for mission.
 - 1.4 be regarded as a joint vocational task to be shared between the minister and the Presbytery or employing Board or Agency.
 - 1.5 ministers and licentiates engaged in full time congregational work would be entitled to a maximum grant of £125 for each week of In Service Training or Sabbatical leave to be financed by a levy on stipend through the General Assembly's Incidental Fund or other suitable fund and regularly adjusted for inflation.
 - 1.6 where medically or pastorally necessary Presbytery should exercise its right to grant leave that is not study oriented.
- 2. Process:** The process will include the following components:
 - 2.1 The individual minister would present to Presbytery an application containing a proposal or proposals for the use of his/her In Service Training or Sabbatical entitlements for the year. The proposed Training Council or other body would draw up a suitable application form.. Entitlement might be used through attendance at a residential or non-residential course, a seminar which met once a month, etc. Applications would include:
 - (a) A self-assessment of the individual's needs.
 - (b) Full details of courses, etc., proposed to be followed/ attended.
 - (c) An assessment of the benefits to the individual and to the congregation/ Board/ Agency.
 - (d) Dates of absence.
 - (e) A budget detailing estimated costs.
 - (f) A claim to save the sabbatical week if this is the path being followed
 - (g) (Where appropriate) nomination of a fellow Presbyter to take pastoral responsibility for the congregation during absence.

- 2.2 An assessment by the Presbytery of the application which would take account of the In Service Training history of the individual in preceding years in order to achieve balance between the three elements in 1.3. The Presbytery, as part of its mission strategy and pastoral concern, would encourage all ministers to make use of their entitlement to In Service Training. Presbytery would be at liberty to find their own way of delegating this duty though it might devolve it to its "Christian Training Committee".

Finalised applications would be authorised by the Moderator and Clerk of Presbytery.

- 2.3 The presentation to Presbytery, through its supervising committee, of a full report and assessment by the individual at the end of each annual period of In Service Training to evaluate the particular course taken and to indicate the degree to which the agreed aims of the year had been fulfilled. A claim for expenses up to the maximum of £125.00 per week would be presented (accompanied by receipts) with this report and following authorisation by the Presbytery Finance Committee would be paid out by the appropriate fund. Where necessary advances might be made on the basis of the budget provided but all monies received should be accounted for to the Presbytery.
- 2.4 Presbyteries should send an annual evaluation to the Training Council, including a form in which individual participants evaluate the particular course which they have used, so that the various options followed by ministers may be assessed for usefulness to others and the whole scheme progress intelligently and efficiently. In the light of experience the Training Council would seek modification to the scheme where necessary.
- 2.5 The Training Council or other body should gear itself to provide information to ministers on as wide a variety as possible of In Service Training opportunities which fulfil the aims of 1.3. This might be done in printed form, through information technology and through personal consultation.

3. Implementation:

- 3.1 The scheme would begin one year after the necessary legislation is passed and in the first year the In Service Training week would be available to all ministers. Sabbatical weeks would accrue for ministers ordained for 28 years or more from year one of the scheme, for ministers ordained 14 to 27 years from year two and for ministers ordained from 1 to 13 years from year three. Presbyteries should have the right to defer particular applications for Sabbatical leave if an excessive number of ministers apply in any one year. In such a case saved weeks should not be forfeited beyond seven years. All such leave would include one Sunday free of duties per week taken.
- 3.2 The introduction and implementation of the Ministerial Development Programme would be monitored by the General Assembly's Training Council and procedures periodically evaluated.

- 3.3 These provisions should apply equally to all full time staff whose work is 'ministry' in the broader sense. For instance, the programme should apply equally to pastoral or lay assistants, deaconesses, youth workers, Irish Mission workers, Missionaries etc. Those working overseas in places where relevant in service courses are not readily available should be permitted to take the time as sabbatical incorporated into their furlough arrangements. Licentiates, who are covered by other provisions for ongoing training, would be excepted from this scheme.
- 3.4 The In Service Training of those working in Congregations who are not ministers would be funded at an appropriate rate by the congregation. Those employed by Boards or Agencies would be funded by the employer.

NOTES

1. If this scheme were adopted in principle in June 1997 legislation would be presented in 1998; in 1999 all who are covered by it would have one week of IST; In 1999, 2000 & 2001 one third of ministers would begin to accrue a Sabbatical week

2. Costs. If all parish ministers took up their entitlement cost would be approx. (based on 430 ministers)

1999	£71,666	1.13p on stipend
2000	£89,583	1.41p
2001	£107,500	1.7p

We recommend that a 25% reduction be made in the Supply Fee to equalise the costs of extra Sundays out of the pulpit by Parish ministers.

APPENDIX III

Towards a Central Training Unit

"The General Assembly wish to explore how the central training resources of the PCI in Union Theological College, Magee House, the Evangelism Board, etc. might be unified and co-ordinated to help service the kind of patterns of mission suggested by the present resolutions." (Resolution 3T, 1994)

Present Provisions.

There are presently at least three constituents in the provision of the PCI for theological and practical training of students for the ministry, lay training and further studies in theology and ministry:

- (a) **Union Theological College** for the training of students for the ordained ministry; and "generally to promote theological education of a high academic standard and practical training relevant to the work and witness of the Church" (Code Par 119).
- (b) **The Christian Training Centre** presently operates under the provisions of the Magee Fund Scheme. Four aspects of training are included in the legislation:

- (i) The provision for approved persons of teaching and training facilities and financial assistance to enable them to avail themselves of classes and courses at Union College, or at any other institution or institutions approved by the General Assembly, or of private tuition.
 - (ii) The provision of courses in training of auxiliary Church workers.
 - (iii) The development of extramural courses in Biblical studies, theology and associated fields of study both in Union College and elsewhere in Ireland.
 - (iv) To assist in the provision of courses of further education and training for ordained Ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
- (c) **A plethora of agencies** including: Peace and Peacemaking, National and International Problems, Ethics and Christian Training, Doctrine Committees; Evangelism Promoter.

Implementation

1. **A Training Council** should be established immediately including representation of the Magee Fund, Christian Training Committee, Union Theological College and the training areas of the Youth, Social Witness, Home and Overseas Boards and such others as the Assembly or the Business Board see fit, together with a number of individuals with expertise in training, management and co-ordination of resources.

2. This Training Council should seek to create **a Central Training Unit** for the PCI based on the Magee Provision. To fulfil legal requirements any such body should have a Magee Fund Committee as a subcommittee.

The change envisaged would necessitate the appointment of an administrator who would act as “Director” of the CTC, promote the work of the CTC, consult with other denominations and training providers in general, attend courses, liaise with Presbytery Committees administering In Service Training, advise as to the availability of courses elsewhere, prepare programmes for in-house training courses, maintain the daily running of the CTC, secure finances and be responsible for general management.

The administrator would have an important role co-ordinating work with the Practical Theology Department of UTC.

3. The Training Council would:
- (a) subject to the Assembly’s approval and normal nomination procedures, draw up the job description and terms and conditions of employment of the Director (when the post of Magee Director becomes vacant) and such other staff as might be deemed necessary and approved by the Assembly. It is envisaged that the Director’s role is primarily that of Manager/Administrator/Policy Initiator rather than that of Provider or Trainer;
 - (b) initiate the co-ordination and dissemination of information on external courses and conferences, ensuring that Presbytery committees are adequately briefed, resourced and trained for their role in In Service Training and Sabbaticals and that Presbyteries and parish ministers are

aware of the resources available for study, reflection, renewal and the learning of new models and skills for mission.

- (c) seek to make provision also to support Presbyteries and parish ministers as they address the training needs of Elders and church members for inspiration and skills in making mission the normal life of congregations as they work out their local mission strategies.

These tasks should be done in close co-operation with Union Theological College.

4. In implementing the programme the Training Council or its successor would be expected to provide and implement such courses as are necessary or appropriate. It would do so from its own resources or in partnership with other Churches or Church/secular training organisations. Such in-house provision should not seek to reduplicate courses already offered adequately by bodies such as Scripture Union, CPAS, Belfast Bible College, etc. The Training Council should seek to send trainees to appropriate courses in the UK or buy in excellence by arranging for providers of such courses to run them locally at their invitation.

Provision under 3c above, should parallel the approach to ministerial In Service Training through the use of internal PCI resources and the buying in of excellence from other appropriate sources and making available information about suitable courses and materials.

5. In the early years of consolidating and establishing a mindset for mission within the PCI the Training Council would have a particularly crucial role in making available to parish ministers and Presbyteries opportunities for training which would give inspiration and spiritual equipment for Mission and provide information on models for the fulfilment of congregational mission strategies.

6. The Training Council should develop a research function in connection with the Practical Theology Department of Union College so that there is an active programme of reflection on the practice of mission within the PCI. This would enable good and effective practices to be recognised and further developed. In addition such research would enable the Church to act strategically in engagement in mission under Christ in Ireland.

7. The Strategy for Mission Committee believes that a system such as this will greatly facilitate the renewed mindset of the whole Church for mission. We believe however that all courses and training should follow the discipling model - show - teach - do: no training should be simply theoretical. We believe that the promise of Matthew 28 which promises "I am with you always" is attached to obedience to the command "Go into the world."

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

Resolutions on the Books (Mins 1996 p52)

2. The Committee on Strategy for Mission continue to actively promote a Mindset for Mission in co-operation with the Mission Assembly Committee and Evangelism Committee's Churchwide Outreach.

3. That the General Assembly commend the Bible Studies on Mission to those who have not yet used them and call all congregations to prayer for the mission of the Church.

4. That each Kirk Session recognise their responsibility to equip the leadership of congregations for ministry and mission and that such training/resourcing, formal or informal, is to be understood as the right and the responsibility of all who are in leadership.

5. That the General Assembly reaffirm their commitment to provide appropriate training for all church members.

6. That the General Assembly once more call on all congregations, Presbyteries and members to commit themselves to ‘pray without ceasing’ that God will revive His Church, heal our land and motivate His people for mission in the name of Christ.

MISSION

7. That the General Assembly reaffirm their belief that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at every level should be “a Church with its mind set on mission” and declare their commitment to facilitating the outworking of this emphasis.

8. That the General Assembly call upon all congregations and members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to engage in prayer: privately, in small groups and as congregations, that God would send His Holy Spirit upon the Church so that our people may become disciples with a genuine experience of Christ and in the power of the Spirit be moved to serve and witness in every sphere of life.

Congregational Mission Strategies

9. That the General Assembly request each congregation to draw up an appropriate mission statement for its own local mission which includes realistic and achievable goals as well as longer term objectives.

10. That the General Assembly request all Presbyteries to support and assist congregations to think strategically about their mission with appropriate advice, teaching and training.

11. That the General Assembly request the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training, the Social Witness Board, the Youth Board and other appropriate Boards to work together to develop and disseminate models for congregations which seek to establish a mission strategy and guidance for living out a mindset for mission.

12. That the General Assembly request Presbyteries to assist their congregations to develop prayer, spirituality and discipleship amongst their members so that they may experience the mind, heart and power of Christ for his mission.

13. That, in order to keep the “mindset for mission” alive and on the agenda of the Church, the Strategy for Mission Committee become a committee of the General Board from June 1998.

14. That the General Assembly commend to Presbyteries the revised suggestions on Presbytery business, personnel and strategy for mission

committees as useful models for Presbyteries seeking to gear their lives for the support of mission.

Training and personal development for mission

15. That the General Assembly approve the outline scheme for In Service Training and Sabbaticals (Appendix II) and direct the Strategy for Mission Committee together with the Board of Studies to bring legislation accordingly to the June 1998 Assembly and to take interim steps to facilitate its operation.

16. That the General Assembly approve the outline scheme for the creation of a Training Council and Central Training Unit and direct the Strategy for Mission Committee together with the Board of Studies to finalise details and bring legislation to the June 1998 Assembly.

Board Structures and a “new mission agency”

17. That the General Assembly direct the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training and the Home Board to begin a process of working together towards the creation of a single Board for the mission of the PCI in Ireland and that they bring legislation accordingly no later than the 1999 Assembly.

18. That the General Assembly direct the Board of Studies and the Committee on Christian Training of the Board of Evangelism and Christian Training to begin a process of working together towards the creation of a single Board for the training of the membership of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for participation in mission and that they bring legislation accordingly no later than the 1999 Assembly

19. That the General Assembly strongly encourage the Home Mission, Irish Mission, Church Extension Committee and other agencies of Presbyterian mission in Ireland to begin a process by which they may continue their increasing levels of co-operation and work towards incorporation within a single agency, and that they jointly report to the General Assembly annually on their progress.

20. That the General Assembly refer Appendix F of the 1996 Strategy for Mission Report to these agencies as a working document.

Other areas of the 1996 Report

21. That the General Assembly note and approve the intention of the ad hoc Committee on Strategy for Mission to work further on guidelines for Church Planting, Mission Priority areas, membership and giving.

22. That the ad hoc Committee on Strategy for Mission be re-appointed for a final year as follows:

MISSION ASSEMBLY (1997) COMMITTEE

Conveners: Revs. J R DICKINSON, Dr T W J MORROW

1. The Mission Assembly Committee has met six times since last Assembly. Working Groups for the morning, afternoon and evening sessions and for Publicity and Arrangements have also been continuing to meet regularly.

2. The bulk of the work has consisted in the finalisation of the seminar speakers, topics and accommodation and the details of worship at the morning and evening sessions. In the development of our plans we have endeavoured to take special note of the needs of the disabled and have appointed someone to our Arrangements Working Group to assist us with this.

3. The title and logo for the conference were finalised in the early autumn. The Mission Assembly is now to be known as **2020 Vision**. As most will realise this plays on our need of perfect sight in following, as a denomination, where God would lead us and on the need to declare "*Good News for the Next Generation*", as the sub-title has it.

4. Publicity materials were released at a press launch on 26 November and circulated to congregations thereafter. Individuals have been appointed in each Presbytery area to provide a link with the committee and to encourage churches to register. At the time of writing nearly 200 congregations have registered.

5. To assist with the administrative load which registration and correspondence has been generating, the Committee appointed Mr. Stanley McDowell as its Administrative Officer.

6. We have sought to inform the wider church of **2020 Vision** and what it is all about through the publications of PCI. We would wish to record our gratitude to the editors of the Presbyterian Herald, Christian Irishman and Wider World for their interest and co-operation. As the morning and evening sessions are open to the public, it is important that as many as possible know about the Assembly Conference and this will be the major thrust of our publicity between now and August.

7. As well as keeping Presbyteries informed of our plans individual members of the committee have been accepting invitations from Kirk Sessions, congregations and Synods to speak about **2020 Vision**. We have been impressed with the warmth of our reception and the sense of excitement which many seem to have about the event. We hope that this is catching! At the time of writing, two Presbyteries have already booked conferences with committee members to follow up on the event.

8. With the main speakers in place, the seminars organised, the choir and orchestra practising and the registrations starting to come in, there is little else that the committee can do other than to appeal to the whole Assembly to give us your support in August. Please make sure that every congregation has been registered; encourage every Kirk Session to come as a group to some

evening or morning sessions; challenge members of every congregation who may be on holiday in the North West to drop in to the public sessions; pray that this will be a significant time of meeting with God and each other.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Mission Assembly (1997) Committee be re-appointed for the ensuing year as follows:

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