



## GENERAL ASSEMBLY



# ANNUAL REPORTS

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

- Notes:**
- (i) **Business commences at 10 a.m. on Tuesday and at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday and Thursday.**
  - (ii) **An “Introduction to Assembly Business” will be given in the Assembly Hall on Tuesday at 9.15 a.m.**
  - (iii) **Communion will be held on Tuesday at 12 noon and Worship on Wednesday and Thursday at 12.15 p.m. The break for lunch will be at 1 p.m. each day.**
  - (iv) **Figures in brackets refer to page numbers in the Annual Reports.**

#### **Tuesday**

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Business

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Union Commission

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Presbyterian Women

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Overseas

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General

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#### **Wednesday**

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General

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Youth and Children's

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2010 Committee

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Mission in Ireland

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Communications

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#### **Thursday**

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Trustees

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Trusts

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Finance and Personnel

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Education

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Christian Training

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Social Witness

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United Appeal

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Judicial Commission

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## NOTES

## MONDAY, JUNE 1

### Within Church House

7.00 p.m.—

Service of Worship  
Constitution of Assembly  
Memorial Roll  
Election of Moderator

## TUESDAY, JUNE 2

10.00 a.m.—

1. BUSINESS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (1-7).
2. Reports of Presbyteries (8-16).
3. Reflection on 1859 Revival.
- (10.30) 4. Reception of Corresponding Members and Delegates.  
**Church of Scotland:** Rt Rev Bill Hewitt, Rev Lorna Hood, Mr Stuart Robertson.  
**United Reformed Church:** Rev John Marsh.  
**Presbyterian Church of Wales:** Rev Hayden Thomas.  
**Church of Ireland:**  
**The Methodist Church in Ireland:** Rev Roy Cooper, Mrs Louise Wilson.  
**Irish Council of Churches:** Rev Fr Irenaeus du Plessis.  
**Conference of European Churches:** Rev Matthew Ross  
**Presbyterian Church USA:** Rev Doug Baker.  
**The Waldensian Evangelical Church:** Rev Laura Testa  
**Presbyterian Church of Australia:** Rev Stuart Bonnington.  
**Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT), Indonesia:** Rev Ebenhaizer Imanuel Nuban Timo, Rev Welmintje Kameli-Maleng, Rev Bendalina Souk, Mrs Ince Damaris Pitronela Sayuna  
Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA):  
Igreja Evangelica Presbiteriana de Portugal (IEPP):

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

## NOTES

(11.00) 5. UNION COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (112-126).

6. Overtures anent Pars 236(2), 274(6)(e) of the Code (126).

(11.40) Intermission

**12.00 noon** **Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**

**2.00 p.m.—**

7. PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN: Report and Resolution (164-169).

8. Overtures anent Pars 114(2), 114(2)(a), 114(3) and 115(2) of the Code (169-170).

(2.30) 9. BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS: Report and Resolutions (127-147).

Leadership Development; Mission Involvement; Outreach Ministries; World Development.

(3.45) Intermission.

4.00 10. GENERAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (17-108).

Priorities; Moderator's Advisory; Doctrine; Global Concerns and Church Relations.

(6.00) Close of Business.

7.45 PRESBYTERIANS TALK : HEALTHY CHURCH — CARING COMMUNITY.

### **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3**

**9.30 a.m.—**

11. GENERAL BOARD (cont'd): Report and Resolutions (17-108).

Church and Society; Pastoral Care Panel; Ministries Panel; Centres Panel.

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

## NOTES

(10.45) Intermission

(11.00) 12. GENERAL BOARD (cont'd): Report and Resolutions (17-108).

Church House Panel.

13. Overtures anent Pars 81(3), 33(4), 62, 98 of the Code (108-109).

**12.15 p.m.—**

Worship.

**2.00 p.m.—**

14. BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY: Report and Resolutions (193-207).

Training; Research and Education; Resources; Ministry Opportunities; Ministry Events.

15. 2010 Committee (305-306).

(3.30) INTERMISSION

16. BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND: Report and Resolutions (148-163)

Communications; Strategy for Mission; Research and Resources.

17. Overtures anent Pars 305(9), 40(4) of the Code (163).

(5.15) 18. COMMUNICATIONS BOARD: Report and Resolutions (239-244).

Lapsed Business.

(6.00) Close of Business.

**7.45 p.m.— Evening Rally.**

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

## NOTES



## THURSDAY, JUNE 4

**9.30 a.m.—**

19. TRUSTEES: Report and Resolutions (301-304).
20. COMMISSION ON TRUSTS: Report and Resolutions (300).
- (10.00) 21. BOARD OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL: Report and Resolutions (266-293).  
Finance, Legal and IT; Personnel; Property Management; Pensions and Assessments.
22. Overtures anent Pars 124(1), 125(1), 125(A), 318A(1), 318A(2)(b), 318B(3)(b), 319(1), 320(3), 321(4), 324(1), 325(3), 326(1)(b), 326(1)(c).

(10.45) Intermission

- (11.00) 23. BOARD OF EDUCATION: Report and Resolutions (245-265).  
State Education.

Lapsed Business.

**12.15 p.m.—**

Worship

**2.00 p.m.—**

24. Calvin Remembered.
25. BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING: Report and Resolutions (208-238).  
College and Magee Management; Ministerial Development; Ministerial Studies; Training of Church Members.
26. Overture anent Par 78(b) of the Code (238).

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

## NOTES

(3.15) Intermission

(3.30) 27. BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS: Report and Resolutions (171-192).

Specialist Ministries; Older People Services; Family Services; Adult Services.

28. UNITED APPEAL BOARD: Report and Resolutions (294-299).

**In private**

(5.00) 29. Recognised Ministries Report and Resolution (70-73; 107).

30. Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Report (73).

31. JUDICIAL COMMISSION (110-111).

(6.00) Intermission

**In Public**

**7.00 pm** Late Business, if any.

Lapsed Business.

BUSINESS BOARD: Final Report.

CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY.

*If it seems possible to finish business by 6.30 p.m., the afternoon session will continue to the close*

*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. 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. Committees:** 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 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 or a section of it, may be received and referred back. This is done by an amendment to resolution 1. Any matter to which the Assembly is to be committed must be stated in a specific resolution. Resolutions should be kept to conclusions, rather than include arguments in support such as are appropriate to speeches. Similarly, speeches in the Assembly carry the authority only of the speaker.

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

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

9. After Questions, the presenter of the report formally proposes the appended resolutions in block and another person seconds, with a speech taking up any other aspects requiring treatment. Where it is considered helpful the seconder may speak before questions to clarify issues which may arise during questions.

**10. The Resolutions** are then taken in succession. The first of these is always “that the report be received”. This is the point where members may discuss (not ask questions

about) any matters in the report or for which the Board, etc., should bear responsibility, but which do not arise under any subsequent resolution.

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

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

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

Proposing a group of Reports	10 minutes reduced to 7
Seconding a group of Reports	7 minutes reduced to 5
Other speeches	5 minutes reduced to 3

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

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

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

14. An amendment, if seconded, must be dealt with before further debate on the original resolution or

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

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

16. In the “**Alternative**” format each Board is given 35 minutes for a “Presentation”, including not only the proposing and seconding of the Report but the introduction of guests, the showing of videos, etc as may be desired. Outside speakers require the permission of the Business Board. Assembly questions for clarification then follow, and finally the resolutions. The speeches of the proposer and seconder, and any comments from Committee Conveners, should all be included in the allotted period of time, and these officebearers not speak again (except on a point of clarification or to close the debate on a resolution) otherwise the report is liable to overrun and cause business to lapse. No speech should be longer than ten minutes, unless by specific permission of the Business Board.

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



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

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

## NOTES

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# BUSINESS BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The Business Board has continued to review the work and arrangements of the General Assembly. It is accepted that the Assembly should now normally meet Monday to Thursday.

2. The Session of “Introduction for New Members” was welcomed by many last year and will be given again on Tuesday morning at 9.15 a.m. The Board is grateful to the Arrangements Convener, the Rev Gordon Best, for undertaking this task. Attention is also drawn to the yellow pages – “A Guide to Assembly Procedure” – which has been reviewed this year.

3. The “SPUD” gatherings of young people will be reported by the Youth and Children’s Ministry Board, but the Business Board has found the reports of the events both encouraging and challenging. Resolutions prepared by the young people are included in some of the Board reports. It has also been agreed that the appropriate young people be given permission to speak to the reports and resolutions.

4. This year the Board of Social Witness has been given the opportunity on Tuesday evening to highlight some of the issues concerning Health provision. The “Let’s Talk” evening will be on the topic – “A Healthier, More Caring Community”. Please invite all who may be interested to come to the Assembly Hall on Tuesday at 7.45 p.m.

5. The Moderator’s Rally on Wednesday at 7.45 p.m. will reflect some of the main themes of the 1859 Revival. This will also be marked by a short talk by the outgoing Moderator, the Very Rev Dr Donald Patton, on Tuesday morning.

6. This year is also a time for celebration to mark the 500th Anniversary of the birth of John Calvin. Union Theological College is organising a Calvin Conference in September and the Rev Principal Laurence Kirkpatrick has agreed to speak on Calvin prior to the Board of Christian Training report on Thursday afternoon.

7. Delegates were appointed to attend other Church Assemblies and meetings:

**Presbyterian Church of Wales 2009:** Rt Rev Dr J Stafford Carson

**Church of Ireland General Synod 2009:** Very Rev Dr John M Finlay; Mr WH Scott

**Methodist Conference 2009:** Very Rev Dr W Donald Patton; Mr Denis Poynton

8. 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 2009-2010, together with the associated Arrangements Committee is as follows:-

The Clerk, Convener  
The Moderator, Clerk and Deputy Clerk of Assembly, Moderator-Designate, former Clerks, preceding three Moderators, Conveners and Secretaries of Commissions and Boards.

Rev WT Cordner; Mrs J Mann – Rev CUR Bradley; L McIlwaine – Rev D Knowles; J Suitters – Rev TV Patterson; Miss M Torrens – Rev JR Burnett; V Garland – Rev PP Campbell; DC Cowan – Rev AE Tolland; N Carmichael – Rev James McCaughan; ..... – Rev Dr J Fell; T Allen – Rev SA Woodburn; W Reid – Rev DB Knox; A Maxwell – Rev CG Gamble; W McIlreavy – Rev GM McClelland; H Smyth – Rev J Mackerall; R Gillanders – Rev DB Murphy; Wm Grills – Rev R Herron; JA Patterson – Rev RW Gaston; ..... – Rev WJ Murdock; JH McClurg – Rev Dr AR Rodgers; E Carroll.

**A. ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE (6)**

Rev GE Best, Convener

- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of Assembly, Moderator-Designate, Deputy Clerk, Communications Secretary, Hospitality Secretary, Buildings Manager; Committee Convener.
- (x) Rev Alan S Thompson; D Crowe, M Fisher, Mrs J Anderson.
- (y) Revs WT Cordner, AE Tolland, R Herron, WJ Murdock, TV Patterson; Miss M Torrens, DC Cowan.

**The URC Assembly 2008**

*The Right Rev Dr W Donald Patton reports:*

Accompanied by my wife, I attended the 2008 Assembly of the United Reformed Church which took place in the beautiful setting of Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. It was a residential Assembly which gave a greater sense of fellowship and commitment to the proceedings. This was the last of the **annual** Assemblies; future Assemblies will be held biennially with a Celebration event open to the whole Church planned for 2009.

The 700 delegates were accommodated in the Edinburgh Conference Centre of the University, the main auditorium holding 450, with the overflow in an adjoining room linked by video camera. The proceedings were recorded on video in their entirety. A lot of work had been put into using the visual technology to the optimum level, with many of the addresses and reports illustrated on screen. Microphones were placed around the hall for easy involvement in debate from the floor.

The Assembly was presided over by the new Moderator, the Rt Rev John Marsh, now retired from active ministry. His quick wit and informal style gave a relaxed feel to the sessions. The theme of pilgrimage was woven throughout the worship and the business. In his inaugural address, the Moderator asked the question: 'What would a Christian Church look like shaped by destiny more than history and its ever-pressing contemporary circumstances?' and developed the theme under the headings of catholic (inclusive), orthodox (living at points of interface where humanity, religion and spirituality meet) and reformed (always renewing and moving on). During the other three main worship sessions the Rev

Dr Jane Leach (author of *Walking the Story: In the steps of Saints and Pilgrims*) expanded on the theme reflecting on a five week trek she made on the pilgrim way in north-west Spain to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. She spoke about stranger and hospitality (Hebrews 11/Genesis 18); rootedness in the love of Christ (Ephesians 3); and humility and freedom (Genesis 1-3).

A new voting system was introduced this year designed to arrive at decisions by consensus. It is quite complicated and kept the Moderator alert and busy. Orange and green cards were used to gauge the mood of the delegates as debate unfolded. Agreement by majority voting was resorted to only when consensus could not be reached. This resulted in more measured contributions from the floor, though I thought some more vigorous comments would have injected a touch more life to the debates. Certainly the use of the coloured cards would be of considerable help to our Moderator and Clerk when vocal and standing votes are being taken.

Some themes were familiar. Ministers are concerned about their pension provision (that ominous phrase ‘actuarial deficit’ appeared!) and housing in retirement. Other subjects were less familiar, for example the appointment of a Race Development Officer. We were struck by the number of women who played a significant role up front, yet a resolution expressed concern that the URC ‘... has been unable to achieve equality of opportunity, proper gender equality and participation by women at all levels of the Church’s life.’ Not only delegates from corresponding Churches were welcomed but also representatives from other faiths with which the Church has an on-going dialogue.

The **Vision4Life** programme is encouraging Congregations to renew themselves and to become more outward looking. Accompanying study booklets on the Bible, prayer and evangelism have been produced. This is being reinforced by a strategic review of the Church’s life and work which aims to put in place a vision and a strategy for the next ten years. Research suggests to them that growing Churches have four factors in common – quality of worship and depth of spirituality; a small group culture that nurtures members and develops skills; clarity of purpose; and strong local leadership.

A Youth Assembly ran in parallel to the main Assembly with 50 young people (children of delegates for the most part) present. They joined the main body on the Sunday to share some of their activities and thoughts by word and on screen. The Reports Book set out ‘A Vision for youth and children’s work across the United Reformed Church.’ Under the headings of Worship, Talking about God, Growth, Telling our stories and Community, the report details strategic goals and advocates innovative ways of doing Church to involve and to attract young people.

My wife Florence and I, were made warmly welcome by the organisers and had opportunity to chat with some delegates. We valued the chance also to network with other delegates. I had a warm and useful conversation with the Rev Ofe-em Okoi Onun from the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, reminding me that world presbyterianism and the reformed faith are alive and well and of the breadth of the wider Christian community on a global scale. Heaven will be amazing!

My overall impression is of a Church which has been in decline for some years, has awakened to its condition and is now trying to do something to reverse

the trend. The next ten years will be crucial in determining whether the denomination has a long-term future.

### **The Welsh Assembly 2008**

*The Right Rev Dr W Donald Patton reports:*

I attended the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales held in the Lampeter Campus of the University of Wales, 8-10 September, 2008. We were warmly welcomed and well looked after. There was plenty of opportunity to meet and mingle over meal times. We noticed that English is very much the second language, the proceedings being conducted in Welsh (translation provided) which made worship rather interesting!

The Church faces many of the same challenges with which our own Church is grappling. Concern was expressed that there are presently no candidates for the ministry. Congregational numbers have been dwindling forcing arrangements for multi-pastorates and throwing an increased burden of work on fewer shoulders. One speaker quoted the example of sixty-five Churches in Carmarthen with only two ordained Ministers to serve. Presbyteries have been instructed to draw up strategies for mission and it is envisaged that team ministries will be key to future work and witness. There is a realisation that new ways of doing Church and of reaching out need to be explored. Christian Community Workers could be expanded where there is no clear Christian presence. The example of the Salem Centre in Rhyl was cited. At the University of Glamorgan the Chaplaincy is developing a plan to set up a charitable company with five partnership Churches, encouraged by the enthusiastic support of the Vice Chancellor. Less organised groups might meet in pubs, or as cell groups. There is an openness to consider radical approaches. The Church is asking 'What is our mission in our day and time?' One report suggests that gospel mission and not the preservation of buildings must be the Church's priority.

As with us staff pensions are a concern. The central Church has agreed to a contribution rate of 17.5% Pensionable Salaries, and active members contribute 7.5%.

A discussion document on 'The blessing of Civil Partnerships' prepared by the Worship and Doctrine Panel has been sent to the three Associations of the Connexion and to Presbyteries for discussion and comment. This promises to be a lively debate in 2009.

The Education section of the Church and Society Department underlined the importance of keeping 'a watchful eye' on what was happening with religious education at classroom level as there is concern among many that too much time is being devoted to 'other' religions at the expense of Christianity. The opinion was expressed that, generally, Christianity should form some two thirds of statutory religious education, but that A level courses, for example, might not contain any study of Christianity due to options chosen. Multi-culturalism is having a greater impact on Welsh society than perhaps is happening here to date, but clearly these comments flag up the need for us to be vigilant too.



The Rev Robert Roberts preached at the Tuesday and Wednesday Worship sessions, with great warmth and thoughtfulness, from Acts chapter 4 on the man at the beautiful gate. Three lectures were delivered – two by Dr Robert Pope, Bangor, on Welsh Presbyterian history, and one by Rev Dr D Ben Rees, Liverpool, summarising in ten points how John Calvin has influenced the Welsh Church. It was a masterly presentation, exemplary in eruditeness and also in communication. I was so enthusiastic that I ordered a copy of the CD, remembering only over lunch-time that it had been recorded in Welsh!

### **The Methodist Conference 2008**

*The Very Rev Dr John M Finlay reports:*

The annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland met in Kiltfennan Presbyterian Church, Londonderry from Friday, 6 to Tuesday, 10 June, 2008.

The Very Rev Dr JM Finlay and Mrs Ruby Millar attended as observers from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Dr Finlay was given opportunity to address the Conference and bring greetings from PCI.

The incoming President, the Rev Aian W Ferguson was elected and installed at a service in Carlisle Road Methodist Church on the Friday evening. The theme chosen was 'One Lord – one task.' Daily worship and Bible study was led by the Rev Thomas Stuckey. His addresses, 'On the edge of Pentecost,' were both stimulating and challenging.

One of the highlights of the Conference is always the Ordination Service and Communion which this year was held in the impressive surroundings of the Millennium Forum. Each Ordinand is introduced and given opportunity to share their own spiritual journey. The collective ordination of all involved makes it a very significant occasion not only for family and friends but also for the whole Church.

It would not be possible to summarise all the proceedings and deliberations of Conference in a few sentences. Mission was a recurring theme and an important emphasis throughout. Many instances of encouragement and spiritual blessing on the work of various agencies were reported. This was particularly so in the area of urban mission. One of the Conference's objectives is to explore new and innovative ways of carrying out the Church's mission in this 21st century. An interesting report on pioneer ministry explored the possibility of engaging in evangelism and witness that would be a new expression of the Kingdom and not necessarily be characterised by traditional denominational structures.

Another significant point of discussion was the question of membership. In a denomination where this is much more loosely defined than within our own, problems were arising because those who were and were not members could not always be easily identified.

On the subject of inter-Church relations there was an awareness that in order to enhance the mission of the Church in Ireland there should be less emphasis on denominational differences and a greater flexibility that might

enable the Churches to work more closely together. Relational ecumenism was seen as a better way forward than any attempt at structural unity.

As always we were warmly welcomed and generously received. We pray that as denominations we may each seek to serve the one Lord in the accomplishment of the one Task.

## **ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE**

### **Guidelines to New Members**

1. Following the appreciation expressed last year, it has been agreed to give an opportunity for Elders and Ministers who are attending the General Assembly for the first time to be given an introduction to Assembly procedures. This will take place between 9.15 am and 9.45 am on Tuesday, 2 June, immediately prior to the first Business Session of the Assembly.

### **Communion and Worship Services**

2. The Communion Service this year will as usual commence at 12 noon on Tuesday. There will be a coffee break immediately prior to this service, but members of Assembly are asked to be in their seats not later than 11.55am. There will also be worship on Wednesday and Thursday at 12.15pm, open to the public.

### **Exhibition**

3. Various exhibition stands will be displayed this year in the Concourse, the Carrickfergus Window area and the Minor Hall. These will feature the work of Boards and other agencies within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

### **Tea/Coffee Breaks**

4. Tea and coffee will be served this year in the Minor Hall and in the Concourse. As many people as possible are positively encouraged to make their way to the relatively spacious surroundings of the Minor Hall to minimise the usual congestion in the Concourse.

### **Alternative Speaking Point**

5. For those wishing to speak who have genuine difficulty climbing the steps onto the platform, an alternative speaking point is provided on ground level in front of the rostrum. However, members of Assembly are encouraged to use the rostrum whenever possible. The row of seats directly in front of the rostrum is reserved for those queuing to speak in debates. In the interests of efficiency and courtesy, members are asked to respect this.

### **Voting Cards**

6. These should be obtained as soon as possible from the desk located in the Concourse where they are available on Monday evening/Tuesday

morning, after which Members should contact the Financial Secretary's Office. Ministers please note once again this year that when obtaining voting cards, they are asked to produce the Registration Card which is enclosed with these Reports.

### **Admission**

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

### **Expenses**

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

GORDON BEST, Convener

## **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommended Order of Business be adopted.
3. That the professional amplification controller and the visual display operator be admitted to the private session.
4. That a grant of £16,000 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Committee.
5. That the Business Board, with its associated working Committee, be appointed in accordance with Par 275 of the Code for the ensuing year beginning 15 March, 2010.

## REPORTS OF PRESBYTERIES

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev CJC McMullen is their Moderator; that the Very Rev Dr TJ Simpson, Clerk-Emeritus of the General Assembly, died on 26 February, 2009; that the Rev James Gordon resigned his charge on 30 January, 2009 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Armagh; the Rev NSR Lockhart Lockhart resigned as Associate Minister at Hamilton Road, Bangor on 15 May, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; the Rev William Brown, Minister without charge, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Route; the Rev WJ Todd, Minister without charge, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; the Rev GWD Stewart, Minister transferring, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that Mr Graeme Fowles was received as a Licentiate having presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast; that Mr Mark Catney was received as a Licentiate having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down; that under their care are: as Ministers without charge the Revs DM Spratt, CD Mawhinney, David McKee, Dr SI Dennis; as Licentiates Messrs Graeme Fowles, David Leach, Ben Walker, Michael McClenahan; Mrs Karen Mbayo, and Miss Molly Deatherage; as students Messrs Graeme McConville, Andrew Conway, Peter Douglas, Andrew Galbraith and Owen Patterson; as a Minister transferring from another Church: the Rev Dr AF Nel; that they held a consultation at St Andrew's; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DR Byers is their Moderator; that the Rev JH Harrison, Minister Emeritus of Craigavon and Vinecash, died on 22 November, 2008; that the Rev WJA Moody resigned the charges of Moy and Benburb on 18 September, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; the Rev MM Stewart resigned the charges of Lislooney and Knappagh on 18 September, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that the Rev James Gordon presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed to the charge of Second Keady and Drumhillery on 30 January, 2009; that Mr RG McElnea was licensed on 23 May, 2008 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr RS Agnew was licensed on 1 June, 2008 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr RN Orr was licensed on 6 June, 2008 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane; that they have under their care as students for the ministry Messrs Ashley Graham, David McCullagh, Mark Proctor and Mark Wilson; that during the year they held consultations with First Portadown, Armagh Road and Loughall; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DJ Kane is their Moderator; that the Rev WJA Moody presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was installed to the charge of Brookside, Ahoghill on 19 September, 2008; that Mr CWA Jones was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 18 May, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that Mr Thomas Bruce was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 8 June, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that Mr WE Chestnutt was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 22 June, 2008 and remains under the care of Presbytery; that Mrs LM Keys was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 22 June, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that they have under their care as a Minister without charge: the Rev JD McGaughey; as a Licentiate: Mr WE Chestnutt; and as students for the ministry: Messrs RM Moody, NL Smyth and SW Moore; that they held consultations at Connor and Buckna; and that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

The **NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev JSB Drennan is their Moderator; that the Rev TD Gribben resigned from Whiteabbey on 2 March, 2008 having been appointed as Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly; that the Rev NSR Lockhart presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed in the Congregation of Ballyhenry on 16 May, 2008; that the Rev DH Thompson presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was inducted as Mission Development Officer, Board of Mission in Ireland, in Eglinton on 9 November, 2008; that the Rev AV Stewart presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick and was installed in the Congregation of Whiteabbey on 27 February, 2009; that they received as Licentiates Mr Thomas Bruce, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena, Mr MF Russell, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and Mr JA McKay, having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; Mr John Montgomery, Licentiate, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; Mr Peter Turton, Licentiate, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Route; that they have under their care as Ministers without charge the Revs LH Eagleson, CI McKnight, WA Shaw, WM Smyth (retired) and FW Vincent; that they have under their care as Licentiates Mr. David McCarthy, Mr. Thomas Bruce, Mr JA McKay and Mr MT Russell; that they have under their care as students for the ministry Mr Richard Houston, Miss Jane Nelson, Mr Jackie Spence, Mr Lachlan Webster and Mr Ivan Ferris; that a consultation was held with the Congregation of Crumlin Road; and that Congregational Financial Reports are being printed separately.

The **SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev WJ Orr is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr JW Morrow died on 1 January, 2009; that the Very Rev Dr KNE Newell retired as Minister of Fitzroy

on 21 September, 2008; that Mr Graeme Fowles was licensed on 13 June, 2008 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that Mrs Janice Browne was licensed on 15 June, 2008 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; that Mr WJA Buchanan, Licentiate, was given credentials to the Monaghan Presbytery on 11 August, 2008; that the Rev MG McClelland, Minister under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Iveagh Presbytery on 12 August, 2008; that they have under their care as Minister without charge, the Rev Simon Henning; as Students, Lesley Ann Wilson, Colin Millar and Ivan Steen; that consultations were held with McCracken Memorial and Lowe Memorial Congregations; and that Congregational Financial Reports are being printed separately.

The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev WM Brown is their Moderator; that the Very Rev Dr RFG Holmes, Principal Emeritus of Union Theological College, died on 14 July, 2008; that the Rev Harold Boyce, Retired Director of Congregational Life, died on 28 November, 2008 and that the Rev Dr RJ Magee, Minister Emeritus of Dundonald, died on 31 January, 2009; that the Rev DH Thompson resigned as Minister of Strand and was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev Richard Hill, Minister without charge under the care of the Presbytery, resigned on 31 January, 2009; that the Rev AC Rankin presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route and was installed as Minister of Stormont on 30 August, 2008; that the Rev PG McDowell presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster and was installed as Minister of Garnerville on 31 August, 2008; that the Rev Daniel Rankin presented credentials from the Presbytery of Newry and was installed as Minister of Strand on 21 January, 2009; that Mr JL Rutherford was licensed on 8 June, 2008; that Mr GR Connor presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was received as a Licentiate; that the Rev DJ Montgomery, Minister without charge under the care of the Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that Mr Andrew McConnell, a Licentiate, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Foyle; that the Rev Troy Morgan, Ordained Assistant in Cregagh, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Monaghan; that under their care are: as Ministers without charge Revs DR Baker, RA Crooks (retired), WJ Harshaw, Dr E Jamison and LR Pedlow; as a Minister transferring from another Church WS Smart; as Licentiates DF Leal, JL Rutherford and GR Connor; as students Mark McKeown, Peter Bovill, Jonathan Boyd and Edward McKenzie; that they held consultations at Gilnahirk and Mersey Street Congregations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Karen Campbell is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr TH Lyle, Minister Emeritus of Second Islandmagee, died on 17 March, 2008; that the Rev NM Williamson, Minister of Magheramorne, retired on 24 December,

2008; that the Rev Robert Vallely, Minister of Ballylinney, retired on 28 February, 2009; that the Rev DJ Paul, Minister of Gardenmore, resigned his charge on 31 August, 2008 and became a Minister without charge under the care of Presbytery; that the Rev JP Moxen, Minister of Ballynure, having received a call to the Congregation of Greystone Road, Antrim, resigned his charge on 25 September, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that Ms HM Rendell, was ordained and inducted as Chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces on 16 November, 2008; that on 25 May, 2008 Mr GR Connor was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry; that on 30 May, 2008 Mr MF Russell was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian ministry; that on 29 June, 2008 Mr JA McKay was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian ministry; that on 21 May, 2008 credentials were received from the Presbytery of Ballymena on behalf of Mr CWA Jones, Licentiate Assistant in Ballyclare; that on 9 September, 2008 credentials were received from the Presbytery of Ballymena on behalf of Ms L Keys, Licentiate Assistant in First Larne; that on 22 May, 2008 Mr CWA Jones, Licentiate Assistant in Ballyclare, having received a call to be Moderator's Assistant in OC Randallstown, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that on 3 July, 2008 Mr G R Connor, Licentiate under care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that on 3 July, 2008 Mr MF Russell, Licentiate under care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that on 3 July, 2008 Mr JA McKay, Licentiate under care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that on 21 August, 2008 Mr SA Woodburn, Licentiate Assistant in Gardenmore, having received a call to the Congregation of Edengrove was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that on 3 February, 2009 Mr JM Gracey, Licentiate Assistant in First Larne, having received a call to the Congregations of Coagh, Ballygoney and Saltersland was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that under their care are, as Minister without charge the Rev DJ Paul; as Licentiates Mr JM Gracey, Mr David Clawson, Mr Andy Carroll and Ms LM Keys; as a Student Mr NRA Cooper; that no consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **COLERAINE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev CJ Aitchison continued as their Moderator; that the Rev JRI Harbinson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh and was installed to the pastoral oversight of Moneydig Congregation on 27 June, 2008; that the Rev JD Mark, Minister without charge, was issued with credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that they have under their care as students for the ministry Mr Stephen Hibbert, Mr John Stanbridge and Mr Neil Stewart; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately; that, following the decision of the General Assembly in June, 2008 with regard to the reorganisation of Presbytery boundaries

the Presbytery of Coleraine held its final meeting on Tuesday, 3 March, 2009 in First Presbyterian Church, Coleraine, Church Halls.

The **DERRY AND STRABANE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev TD Hagan continued as their Moderator to the closure of the Presbytery on 3 March, 2009; that they have under their care as Licentiates Mr RN Orr having presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and Mr RSJ McIlhatton; that they have under their care as Ministers without charge the Rev JC Teeney and the Rev Dr LWH Hilditch; and as a Licentiate without charge, Mr William Montgomery; that they held consultations with Carlisle Road and Crossroads and with Sion and Urney; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being published separately.

The **DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Amanda Best continued as their Moderator; that the Rev CM Wilson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was installed to the charge of Ballylennon and St Johnston on 25 July, 2008; that under their care is a Student Mr Jonathan Cowan; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed in a Year Book.

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev AA Cole is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr WJ Patterson, Minister of Killinchy, retired on 21 April, 2008; that the Rev JM Casement, Minister of Second Saintfield, resigned his charge on 1 August, 2008 and was received as a Minister without charge; that the Rev MM Stewart presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was installed to the charge of Clough and Seaforde on 19 September, 2008; that Mr J Cochrane was ordained and inducted to the work of Overseas Missionary Service on 15 June, 2008; that Mr SA Woodburn presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was ordained and installed to the charge of Edengrove on 12 September, 2008; that Mr Mark Catney was licensed on 25 May, 2008 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that the Rev Daniel Reyes-Martin was given credentials to the Presbytery of Monaghan; that under their care are: as Ministers without charge, the Rev RN Stewart, the Rev JM Casement, the Rev GR Stockdale and the Rev Samuel Armstrong; as Licentiate Mr MC Cowan; as Student Mrs Kathryn Viner; that during the year they held no consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **DROMORE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DH Gilpin, is their Moderator; that the Rev CM Wilson resigned as Assistant Minister in Hillhall on 24 July, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Donegal; that the Rev DJ Temple, Minister without charge, on 11 April, 2008 was given credentials to the Presbytery of Newry; that the Rev WJ Todd presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed to the charge of St Columba's on 27 June,



2008; that Mr Raymond McKibbin was licensed on 30 May, 2008; that Mr RS Agnew presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was received as Licentiate in Maze; that Mr RG McElnea presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was received as Licentiate in Banbridge Road, Dromore; that the Rev RD Cameron presented credentials from the Presbytery of Omagh and was received as a Minister without charge; the Rev JD Mark presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine and was received as a Minister without charge; that under their care are: as Minister without charge the Rev JD Mark; as Licentiates Mr RS Agnew, Mr Clarke Deering, Mr RG McElnea, Mr Raymond McKibbin and as Student Mr Colin McKibbin; that they held consultations at Maze and Railway Street; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev DT Moore is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr Samuel Mawhinney, Minister of Fermoy with Cahir, resigned his charge on 4 April, 2008 and was installed as Minister of Adelaide Road, Dublin, on 5 April, 2008; that the Rev AJMcL Smith, Minister of Dun Laoghaire, resigned his charge on 31 July, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Donegal (USA); that the Rev PG McDowell, Minister of Christ Church, Limerick, resigned his charge on 30 August, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that the Rev DJ Montgomery presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was inducted to the charge of Greystones on 12 April, 2008; that the Rev John Rushton, Minister without charge, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Monaghan on 2 April, 2008; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **FOYLE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev AC Wilson continued as Moderator to the closure of the Presbytery on 3 March, 2009; that the Rev James Luke, Minister Emeritus of Dungiven, died on 16 September, 2008; that Mr Andrew McConnell presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was ordained and installed to the charge of First Limavady and Magilligan on 12 September, 2008; that they have the Rev KG Patterson under their care as a Minister without charge; that they consulted the Congregation of Ballykelly; and that the Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev PD Thompson is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr SA Matthews, Minister of Bannside, retired on 25 September, 2008; the Rev WL Orr, Minister of Glascar and Donaghmore, retired on 31 January, 2009; that the Rev JRI Harbinson, Minister under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials on 27 May, 2008 to the Presbytery of Coleraine; that the Rev MG McClelland presented credentials from the Presbytery of Belfast South and was installed to the charge of Tandragee on 29 August, 2008; that Mr TP McCullough, presented credentials from the Presbytery of

Templepatrick and was ordained and installed to the charges of Ballyrone and Drumlee on 19 September, 2008; that Mr TN Bingham was licensed on 29 June, 2008 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that Mrs Janice Browne presented credentials from the Presbytery of Belfast South and was received as Licentiate; that under their care are: as Ministers without charge Revs EG McAuley (Retired); as Licentiate Mrs Janice Browne; as Student Mr Andrew Faulkner; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev John Rushton is their Moderator; that the Rev Walter Herron, Minister Emeritus of First Monaghan and Stated Supply of Smithborough, died on 8 June, 2008; that the Rev John Rushton presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster and was inducted to the charge of Drum, Cootehill and Kilmount on 11 April, 2008; that the Rev Daniel Reyes-Martin presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was installed to the charge of Ballyalbany and Glennan on 26 September, 2008; that the Rev Troy Morgan presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was inducted to the charge of Stonebridge, Clones, Newbliss and Ballyhobridge on 11 October, 2008; that Mr WJA Buchanan presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was ordained and installed to the charge of First Ballybay, Second Ballybay, Drumkeen and Rockcorry on 12 September, 2008; that they held consultations at First Bailieborough, Corranearny and Trinity Bailieborough; and that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev SS Johnston is their Moderator; that the Rev RJ Mattison, Minister of Cremore, Poyntzpass and Fourtowns, retired on 30 September, 2008; that the Rev Daniel Rankin, Minister of First and Second Markethill, resigned his charge on 20 January, 2009 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that the Rev RK Graham presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was installed to the charge of Clarksbridge and First Newtownhamilton, Garmany's Grove and McKelvey's Grove on 4 April, 2008; that the Rev DJ Temple presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was installed to the charge of Warrenpoint and Rostrevor on 11 April, 2008; that Mr AD Mullan presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route and was received as a Licentiate; that during the year they completed no consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev JT Williamson is their Moderator; that the Rev RD Cameron resigned his charge on 18 January, 2009 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that the Rev Kenneth Henderson resigned his charge on 13 February, 2009 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Route; that they

held a consultation at Seskinore; and that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being published separately.

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev HW Mullan is their Moderator; that the Rev AC Rankin, Minister of First Ballymoney, resigned his charge on 29 August, 2008 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that the Rev Kenneth Henderson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Omagh and was installed to the charge of Ballyweaney on 14 February, 2009; that Mr Peter Turton presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was ordained and installed to the united charge of Armoy and Ramoan on 27 September, 2008; that Mr AD Mullan was licensed on 25 May, 2008 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Newry; that the Rev William Brown presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was received as a Minister without charge; that Mr DS Brownlow was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that they have under their care: as Ministers without charge the Rev Dr Victor Dobbin, CB, MBE and the Rev William Brown; and as students Mr JB Mullan and Mr J McConaghie; that they visited the Congregations of Trinity, Ballymoney and Dunluce; and that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev RC Kerr is their Moderator; that the Rev James Tolland, Minister Emeritus of First Donegore, died on 10 August, 2008; that the Very Rev Dr SJ Dixon, Minister of First Antrim, retired on 31 March, 2008, that the Rev Brian Kennaway, Minister of Crumlin, retired on 10 January, 2009; that the Rev AV Stewart, Minister of Dundrod, resigned his charge on 26 February, 2009 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev JP Moxen presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was installed to the charge of Greystone Road, Antrim, on 26 September 2008; that Mr CWA Jones presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was ordained and inducted as Assistant Minister in the Old Congregation, Randalstown, on 1 June, 2008; that Mr TN Bingham presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh and was received as a Licentiate under the care of Presbytery; that Mr TP McCullough was given credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; that under their care is a Student, Mr SA Morrow; that they held consultations at Hydepark, Dundrod and Templepatrick; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **TYRONE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev SJM Lindsay is their Moderator; that the Rev GWD Stewart presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed in the Congregation of Maghera on 30 May, 2008; that Mr DS Brownlow presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route and was ordained and installed in the Congregations of Newmills and Carland on 3 September, 2008; and that Mr John Montgomery, having presented credentials from the Presbytery

of North Belfast, was ordained and installed in the Congregations of First and Second Moneymore on 5 September, 2008; that under their care, as students for the ministry, are Mr Stewart Glendinning, Mr Bryan Kee, Mr Noel Mulholland and Mr Graeme Orr; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

#### **RESOLUTION**

1. That the Report be received.

# GENERAL BOARD

Convener: THE CLERK

1. The reports of the various and varied Committees and Panels of the General Board will indicate another interesting and challenging year as the Church seeks to focus under God on the priorities of its work. Perhaps the words of the Psalmist have taken on a renewed significance in a number of different contexts – “I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry” (Psalm 40:1).

2. The year has shown, yet again, the importance of having a co-ordinating and representative Board which can articulate the Church’s view on important topics of concern to the Church and the wider community. For this purpose a special meeting of the General Board was called on 6 February to discuss the situation surrounding the Presbyterian Mutual Society going into administration. This has been a tremendous challenge to many loyal Church members and the Church’s response is outlined in the Moderator’s Advisory Committee report. The General Board was also meeting in March just after the callous killings of two soldiers and a police constable – Sappers Mark Quinsey and Patrick Azimkar and Constable Stephen Carroll. At a time of heightened fear in the community, the General Board, through the Church and Society Committee, was able to express the Church’s outrage and concern. The representative nature of the General Board is important at these critical times.

3. The co-ordinating role of the Board is also becoming more recognised. On many issues the Boards, which have their own areas of responsibility, find that their concerns are similar to, or even overlap with, the work of other Boards. The Priorities Committee, on which all Boards are represented, is increasingly able to facilitate important discussions which, by co-ordination, strengthen the overall work of the Church.

4. The General Board is also at times able to help existing Boards who are reviewing their work by providing a wider Church perspective. This year, at the request of the Communications Board, a Panel was set up to review the remit and working of the Board of Communications in the light of the present communication needs of the Church. It is hoped that the Panel will report to the General Assembly through Daily Minutes.

5. Following from debates at the last General Assembly two Panels were appointed:

- (i) **Pensions Review** (see Minutes 2008, p 52, res 3) – Moderator, Clerk, the Revs JL Casement, DJ Irvine; Ms Helen Johnston; Messrs Douglas Crowe, John Hunter, George McCullagh; with Messrs R Kerr (Pensions Adviser), Clive Knox (Financial Secretary) in attendance. The Panel would plan to bring a substantive report to the 2010 Assembly.
- (ii) **Inter-Faith Reference Panel** (see Reports 2008, p 22) – Moderator, Clerk, the Very Rev Dr David Clarke and the Rev Charles McMullen. While it is useful to have a group to advise on inter-faith matters it has not been necessary to consult this year.

6. Last year, a Memorial of the Kirk Session of Saintfield Road Congregation was received and its prayer granted. This referred to the General Board for implementation the matter of a ruling elder being permitted to retire from the duties of the eldership with a title such as "Elder Emeritus", and have their names placed on a role of "Elders Emeriti". Reference was made in the Memorial to the position of "Minister-Emeritus" (Code Par 225). This title is given to a Minister who retires in the usual way, or may be given to a Minister who voluntarily resigns the pastoral charge "if the Presbytery so propose and the Assembly decide" (Code Par 226(a)). This is so that "by virtue of such enrolment (the Minister shall be) a member of the superior courts of the Church". In the case of a retiring elder the membership of courts is not relevant, but an Overture is provided to amend the Code to allow a Kirk Session to request the Presbytery to place the name of a retiring elder on a list of "Elders Emeriti". It is assumed that this would only be for elders of an appropriate age and length of service, as determined by the Presbytery.

7. Other matters raised with the General Board include the abuse of alcohol, especially on-street drinking, and the application of water rates to Church premises. Kirk Sessions and Congregations are asked to keep both under review and make representations where appropriate.

8. During the year a group drawn from a number of Boards saw the potential for displaying a positive Christian message on the scaffolding around Church House, especially the Tower. The General Board encouraged this and approved a budget from the Incidental Fund of up to £10,000. It also approved a budget of £10,000 for a Calvin Conference, to be held at Union Theological College in September.

9. During the year new legislation came into force creating the UK Borders Agency. This has meant the PCI has had to register as a sponsoring body in order that non-EU nationals may be given visas to work with the Church. A more detailed report will be available in the Daily Minutes.

10. In the Republic immigration legislation is also under review. The present system for allowing "religious workers" is not satisfactory and discussions are taking place with the Department for Justice.

11. The re-organisation of some of the Presbyteries has now taken place and names are suggested for two Presbyteries in the North-West. These are "Derry and Donegal" and "Coleraine and Limavady". Suitable resolutions are appended.

12. It was with deep regret that the Board learned of the death of the Very Rev Dr TJ Simpson, Clerk Emeritus of the General Assembly. A fuller tribute will be found elsewhere in this volume of reports, but the General Board would wish to record its appreciation of the dedicated service he gave to the whole Church and to extend its sympathy to those who mourn.

13. The volume and complexity of the necessary work being undertaken by the General Secretary's Office continues to grow. The General Assembly should be grateful for the willing co-operation of the staff – Mrs Joyce Anderson, Mrs Jennifer McClure, Mrs Michelle James and Mr Seth Wright. Joyce leads an effective team who provide an essential service to the whole Church. Their commitment to the work of the Church is much appreciated.

## PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

1. The setting of priorities for our Church has been a continuing process, beginning through the Strategy for Mission Committee, continuing with the Ad-hoc Committee on Priorities and now the Priorities Committee. In 2005 the Priorities Committee set out its basic vision and aspirations:

### 2. THE BASIC VISION

#### THE TASK

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland today seeks to be obedient to the crucified and risen Christ and so present His gospel in a meaningful way to the present “Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. As the Church is sent in mission to the whole world, so its vision must be for a Church whose heart is in radical obedience to the word of God, which is called both to proclaim the word of the gospel and manifest the works of the gospel. This is the calling of the Church in every age and location. It is a costly vocation, since it is the crucified Jesus who said: “As the Father has sent me so I send you.” Acceptance of that vocation will inevitably involve pain, loss and rejection, as well as joy, resurrection and great gain as the Church seeks to represent Christ and the gospel in a fragmenting society. Today’s witness is to a Western European culture that wishes to turn its back on its Christian roots and a world that is intolerant of the uniqueness at the core of the Christian message.

#### A REFORMED IDENTITY

A reformed and reforming identity does not consist of merely understanding accurately the liberating truths that distinguish a reformed tradition, or of resting comfortably within their expressions and forms over the centuries, but in a continued and courageous outworking of the vocation to be a Biblical Church in the present generation. The Church should be committed to a view of Christian faith and presence which is not only personal and private but which is vibrantly public and engaged with the world for Christ’s sake.

Central to reformed faith is the challenge to call the world to repentance, faith in Jesus Christ and a new obedience empowered by his Spirit. That power is released into the Church, and through the Church into the world, by prayer. Believers are called in prayer to open their lives and the structures of the Church to the leading of the Spirit.

#### ASPIRATIONS

While only the Holy Spirit knows what the Church will be like in the future, the Committee identified six characteristics to which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should aspire, if it is to have a strong witness in the present time:

- A Church that is secure and confident in its Christian identity, so that all other identities (national, cultural, social and political) are secondary;
- A Church where the leadership shares a common vision, experiences growing unity and enjoys fresh clarity of purpose,

while celebrating and making room for genuine Christian diversity;

- A Church that is balanced in its commitment to the great commission and the great commandment, placing emphasis not simply on mission to the world but on mission in the world;
- A Church which, rooted in the Bible, proclaims the gospel of grace with clarity in its preaching and demonstrates in its living Christ's power to forgive and bring new life;
- A Church that at every level opens her heart to those who are different, warmly welcoming the stranger, the immigrant, the vulnerable, the prisoner, the poor and marginalised;
- A Church in reciprocal relationship with the worldwide Church, in a way that displays a fresh humility to listen to and learn, and a confidence to share and serve that reaches from the end of the pew to the end of the earth.

### 3. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

In working with this vision the Committee was aware of some underlying principles which had been set out by the Ad-hoc Committee in its report of 2003.

- Human resources take precedence over material resources.
- Congregational mission and ministry take precedence over that at Presbytery and Assembly level.
- An emphasis should be on things which only the Church can do.
- The work of Congregations should be contextualised within the communities where the Church is found.
- Denominational structures should be continually reviewed to assess their efficiency at facilitating the Church's purpose.

### 4. DEVELOPING ASPIRATIONS

In 2006 the Priorities Committee identified six characteristics to which the Church should aspire if it is to bear strong witness in the context of the present time.

- (a) *A **prophetic voice**, confidently proclaiming where it stands and who it stands beside, in a society which is increasingly secular and often opposed to Christian values and lifestyle.*
- (b) *A **caring fellowship**, welcoming the stranger and learning from one another, valuing the gifts of each individual, while offering prayer and pastoral support to all in need.*
- (c) *A **platform for service and outreach**, with each Congregation seeking to identify the needs of the community where it is placed and encouraging its members to act as Christ's representatives in the place where they live and work.*
- (d) *A **place of transformation**, where people do not leave as they have entered but are challenged and changed, having encountered the living God present in the worship and the lives of his people.*
- (e) *A **community of global concern**, learning from and sharing with our brothers and sisters in the world Church, while recognising with them*



*those issues of concern for our stewardship of the world's resources where together we must challenge injustice, poverty and oppression in Jesus' name.*

## 5. KEY OBJECTIVES

The Committee further identified the following five key objectives to strengthen the present witness of the Church:

- (i) Developing centres of pastoral care and fellowship;
- (ii) Discipling and training for all-member ministry;
- (iii) Encouraging prophetic community involvement;
- (iv) Recognising the importance of global engagement;
- (v) Renewing the servant-courts of the Church.

## 6. SPECIFIC GOALS

During 2007-2009 further work has been undertaken in trying to agree specific goals coming out of these key objectives. The 2006 Report was also discussed by Presbyteries. This section of the report attempts to clarify these goals and set them in a time-frame.

- (i) **A strategy for the Pastoral Care of Manse Families.** This work has been undertaken by a Panel under the convenership of the Rev Gabrielle Farquhar. It has worked closely with the Board of Social Witness. A strategy has been agreed by the General Assembly and will be implemented during 2008-09. The Panel will then stay in place to monitor its effectiveness. The Board of Christian Training has also been asked to emphasise pastoral support through its training and sabbatical programme.
- (ii) **A strategy to encourage an ethos of conciliation throughout the Church.** This is seen as closely allied to objectives (i) and (v). Promoting conciliation has been identified as a responsibility for the Moderator's Advisory Committee. Some of the time and expertise of the Peacemaking Officer – Mrs Laura Coulter – has been given to this task. Her appointment was extended to June 2009. A decision will need to be made at the 2009 Assembly as to how this work should be continued.
- (iii) **The co-ordination of Christian Training.** The new Board of Christian Training has been established and is beginning its work, including the appointment of a Co-ordination Panel. The Panel is hoping to provide a more co-ordinated approach to training in 2009-2010. The Board is also undertaking a review of the management structures at UTC which may mean a change in the relationship of the Christian Training Centre to the College. This will be finalised at the 2009 Assembly. A realistic time-frame for co-ordinated training to be in place would be 2011.
- (iv) **The Development of Post-ordination Training.** The Board of Christian Training is also working on a more strategic approach to Post-ordination Training, including a possible compulsory component. This strategy will be brought to the 2009 Assembly.

- (v) **Developing Ministry roles in a Congregation.** A Panel has been considering the evolving ministry roles in Congregations, including Additional Pastoral Personnel, Non-Stipendiary ministry and Readers. Its 2008 Report to the General Assembly is being discussed widely throughout the Church and recommendations will come to the 2009 Assembly. A realistic time-frame for implementation would be 2011.
- (vi) **The Co-ordination of Mission Strategy.** In recognising that mission cannot be divided into “local” and “global”, a panel has been established to consider how the mission work of the Church can be more fully integrated. The definition of “mission” is also being discussed. A full report should come to the 2010 Assembly.
- (vii) **A Strategy for mission in Ireland.** This is primarily the on-going work of the Board of Mission in Ireland but delivery involves the Union Commission and Central Ministry Fund. Discussion has begun, and is on-going, as to how resources can be allocated effectively. Progress will be monitored by the Priorities Committee.
- (viii) **Resourcing work with families and young adults.** This has been recognised as a vital part of the Church’s mission in Congregations, to be supported through the Board of Youth and Children’s Ministry. The Board will report on strategic appointments through restructuring.
- (ix) **The development of a Communications Strategy.** A Communications Co-ordination Panel is in place. The General Board has also appointed a panel, at the request of the Communications Board, to review the functions of the Communications Board. A realistic time-frame for full implementation of the co-ordinated strategy should be 2010.
- (x) **A re-examination of the role of the Presbytery.** This has emerged as important from a number of recent reports including the Presbytery Bounds Panel. The fundamental issue is to identify the governance role that is needed between Congregations and General Assembly. It is especially relevant since the phasing out of Synods. The membership of a panel to undertake the work is being finalised and it will not substantially report until the 2010 Assembly.
- (xi) **A review of General Assembly Structures.** The question has been raised as to whether the present Board/Committee structure is helpful in developing a co-ordinated vision for the whole Church. There is also the question of how involved in the decision-making process members of the Boards really feel. While a panel will be appointed to bring a substantive report to the 2010 Assembly, some of the initial thinking is taking place in the present co-ordinating groups.
- (xii) **A reconsideration of the United Appeal.** The Committee in April 2008 received a paper on the United Appeal principle of augmentation. A further paper on United Appeal budgeting is being tabled by the Clerk, with the encouragement of the Board Secretaries. The papers will require detailed discussion with the United Appeal Board, Board of Finance and Personnel and possibly other parties. A Sub-Committee was appointed to consider the issues, but there is a degree of urgency. It would be hoped a report can be agreed no later

than the 2010 Assembly. This would allow new budgeting arrangements to be in place for the 2011 (or 2012) United Appeal.

- (xiii) **A review of the working of the Tyrone Memorial** is on-going and may take a radical view of the payment of ministers. Related to this is the use of the Central Ministry Fund. The review is being carried out by the Board of Finance and Personnel who will present an interim report to the 2009 Assembly.

## 7. OTHER ISSUES

While the above goals are definite and time-limited, there are other issues identified by the Committee which may in time generate specific goals. These include developing the prophetic voice in society; welcoming the stranger; re-engaging with the community in which a Congregation is set; re-considering our stewardship of the world's resources; advocating justice in a world of poverty and oppression; working together at the local level both within and beyond the Congregation. These and other themes may emerge as priorities to which specific goals are attached in subsequent discussion.

## 8. RELATION TO THE UNITED APPEAL

If goal (xii) above is progressed the Committee will be accepting a clearer role in determining the priorities of work within the United Appeal. In the interim, it is at times necessary for the Committee to advise the United Appeal Board on specific questions, so as to balance resources within the Appeal.

In seeking advice this year, the United Appeal Board alerted the Committee to its proposal to recommend that the General Assembly move the funding of the Students' Bursary Fund to an assessment. The Priorities Committee supports this proposal which recognises that the funding of students for the ministry is an essential task for the Church. The proposed arrangement will also helpfully bring all the ministry funds together under assessments. However, the Committee is concerned at the level of assessments, especially those related to ministry – CMF, RMF, WMF, Pension Scheme, Prolonged Disability, Ministerial Development, SBF – and the ability of Congregations to pay. It therefore recommends that an examination of all assessments be included in the remit of the Panel appointed to review PCI's position on pensions.

# MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Nomination of Moderator

1. The Moderator's Advisory Committee considered letters from two Presbyteries following a letter sent by the Clerk of Assembly to outline procedure for the nomination of Moderator of the General Assembly. The Presbyteries questioned whether voting should necessarily be by secret ballot. The Committee considered that while voting on policy and principles may be by any of the accepted practices, voting on named people should be by secret ballot. This is prescribed in the Code for the election of a Minister and is the normal practice of the General Assembly for its appointments. The Committee therefore

recommends that voting in Presbyteries for the nomination of Moderator of the General Assembly should be by secret ballot, with the candidate who receives the lowest number of votes dropping off the list each time until one name remains.

### **Election of Ruling Elders**

2. During discussion it was pointed out that at an election of ruling elders the names, when put individually to the meeting, are often voted on by a show of hands. The Committee will consider further what is meant by “a poll of the voters present” at Code Par 179(4).

### **Presbyterian Mutual Society**

3. The Moderator’s Advisory Committee met on two occasions to consider the response of the Church to the evolving situation of the Presbyterian Mutual Society. On 21 November the Clerk of Assembly outlined the position of the Society as it was then known. The Chairman of the Directors and Secretary of the Mutual Society had asked for a meeting on Monday, 27 October. At that meeting they indicated that the Society was no longer able to meet demand for payments and the Directors had invoked the rule delaying payment for 21 days. They indicated that a letter was being sent to all shareholders.

4. At a routine meeting of Clerks of Presbytery, held on 6 November, the Clerk of Assembly alerted Clerks of Presbytery to the problem, but took the view that shareholders had the right to be told by the Society before any comment was made by the Church. There was useful discussion as to how Presbyteries might be able to support their members and the Clerk of Assembly agreed to alert all Ministers as soon as it was clear shareholders had been informed. It was recognised that Ministers in Congregations would be critical in offering support to those deeply affected and upset.

5. On 12 November, the Clerk wrote to all Ministers including a copy of the Presbyterian Mutual Society Directors’ Statement to shareholders and a Press Statement issued by the Society. (Copy of letter appended). In the letter he stated:

*“It is easy to point out that the Mutual Society is a separate legal entity which is quite separate from the Church. It is also clear that the Church cannot in any way underwrite the commitments of the Society. However, the reality is that many Presbyterians who have invested in the society are now understandably worried and we have a responsibility to care pastorally for them.”*

Since then the Church has been considering all possible ways to fulfil its responsibility to care, recognising that much of this support must be given at a local level.

6. On 14 November, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment announced that it had rushed through urgent legislation to allow the Presbyterian Mutual Society the option of going into administration or a voluntary arrangement. This information was e-mailed to all ministers the following day, again emphasising the Church’s responsibility to those deeply

concerned by the unfolding events. On Monday, 17 November, the Society was placed into administration and Mr Arthur Boyd, FCA, appointed Administrator.

7. At its meeting in November, the Moderator's Advisory Committee affirmed the steps that had been taken to inform the Church of the situation as it was known, recognising that the Church has limited knowledge. There was much discussion of the growing concern among shareholders and the position of the Church. The Committee recognised some of the legal issues which may emerge. In general the advice was to say little until the Administrator was able to make a full and accurate assessment of the Society. The Committee also considered a possible letter from the Moderator to follow up that of the Clerk. A small group was appointed to advise the Moderator on this letter, which was sent to all Ministers on 21 November. (Copy of letter appended)

8. The Moderator's Advisory Committee also looked at how the Church might support those in financial difficulty, whether through their investments in the Presbyterian Mutual Society or for other reasons. There are funds within the Church which can give modest support to those in acute hardship and it was felt best to utilise them for the present. While it was recognised that these would not meet the requirements of those who need immediate access to large sums of money, it was felt important to do immediately what can be done. The Financial Secretary wrote to all ministers on 24 November, outlining the funds available both to individuals and to Congregations.

9. The Moderator reported to the Committee that he had written to the Prime Minister on 3 November asking for sympathetic consideration of the position of the Presbyterian Mutual Society and particularly the plight of its shareholders. A reply from the Treasury on 9 January, indicated that a review of the regulatory framework for mutuals in Northern Ireland is underway, but it did not directly suggest financial help for the Presbyterian Mutual Society. As well as on-going meetings which the Moderator and Clerk have held with interested MLAs and others, the Moderator took the opportunity while visiting Westminster on 21 January, to raise the matter with Northern Ireland MPs. He wrote again to the Prime Minister on 23 January, again raising the issue and asking for a meeting. One possibility is that this meeting would be with the First and Deputy First Ministers, for whom it is reported a meeting with the Prime Minister is being arranged. This initiative is supported by a petition, which has been circulated to all Church members, a letter in their private capacity from 23 former Moderators, the Methodist Church in Ireland and many local politicians.

10. The Petition, which was begun on-line by an individual, was circulated on 23 January with a letter from the Moderator encouraging signatures (copy of the letter appended). It received strong support, with over 28,000 signatures, and on 1 April the Moderator and others, visited Westminster to deliver the petition to Northern Ireland MPs. He met with a wide variety of political representatives from both Houses of Parliament and the Chairman of the Treasury Select Committee, Mr John McFall MP. This proved to be a useful series of meetings and the Moderator was encouraged that the plight of many investors had been acknowledged and understood.

11. The Moderator also wrote to the Taoiseach on 29 January asking for a meeting to emphasise with him the suffering felt by many investors, including

those in the Republic. At the time of writing a meeting had not yet been arranged.

12. The Moderator also brought together a small group to advise on financial initiatives which might be taken, especially a "Relief Fund" which had been suggested by one of the members. The group met on three occasions, with others in attendance, but following the publication of the Administrator's Report it was accepted that this initiative would not proceed.

13. The Administrator's Report was issued on 12 January, 2009. It included a proposal that "the Society's existing business should be wound down in a managed and orderly manner through a formal arrangement with its members". It invited creditors to vote on 5 resolutions, 3 of which, if agreed, would allow for the orderly wind-down through a formal arrangement, as suggested by the Administrator. This way forward was accepted by the overwhelming majority of investors and the decision announced in February.

14. The Moderator's Advisory Committee again met on 26 January, 2009, to review the developments in respect of the Presbyterian Mutual Society, as outlined above. It appreciated many of the frustrations and difficulties of those trying to respond on behalf of the Church to a changing situation, where there are still no definitive answers to crucial questions. It also recognised that there were times the Church rightly deferred to the Administrator. The independence of the shareholders must be respected at all times. It must be recognised that the Mutual Society is accountable to the shareholders and not to the General Assembly.

15. The question of Benevolent/Hardship Funds was again considered, in the context of those Presbyterians who may have pressing needs for whatever reason. Up to the present, the existing funds have proved sufficient for any requests of that nature. It was therefore agreed that no special provision needs to be made at present to meet the acute benevolent needs of members, but this will be kept under review.

16. The situation of those in the Church who need access to larger amounts of money in the short term is also a concern. Even with the publication of the Administrator's Report the total potential needs of Presbyterian Mutual Society members is unclear, as is the help the Church may be able to give. The Moderator's Advisory Committee also recognises that in the present financial climate there will be Presbyterians in need who are not shareholders in the Presbyterian Mutual Society. In order to give this situation further careful thought, the Moderator's Advisory Committee recommended to the General Board in February the appointment of a small Panel to advise on the response of the Church to the evolving financial crisis, including the situation of the Presbyterian Mutual Society. The membership of the Panel is – Moderator, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Financial Secretary, Communications Secretary, the Very Rev Dr SJ Dixon; the Revs RIA Allely, Roy Vallely; Mrs Avril Heenan, Messrs Alan Bridle, Derek Wells, Hubert Martin, John Millar and John Hunter and it will report in Daily Minutes.

17. At a special meeting on 6 February, the General Board considered the situation and passed the following resolutions:-

- That the General Board, recognising the deep hurt felt by many at the recent events surrounding the Presbyterian Mutual Society, calls the Church to continue in prayer for all who are involved.
- That the General Board supports the request of the Moderator for an urgent meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss support for those who are suffering because of the present situation of the Presbyterian Mutual Society.
- That the General Board encourages contacts with the Taoiseach and his Government to explore ways in which help may be given to Presbyterian Mutual Society savers, some of whom live in the Republic.
- That the General Board asks its officers to continue on-going consultations with Executive Ministers and MLAs at Stormont to seek support for those who are suffering, for whatever reason, through the present financial crisis.
- That the General Board appoints a small Panel to advise on the response of the Church to the financial crisis, including the situation of the Presbyterian Mutual Society. The membership of the Panel to be: Moderator, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Financial Secretary, Communications Secretary, the Very Rev Dr John Dixon, the Revs Roy Vallely and Bob Allely; Hubert Martin and Derek Wells with power to co-opt.
- That the General Board takes steps to investigate the spiritual and ethical issues that emerge for our Church from the history of the Presbyterian Mutual Society, especially in the light of recent economic developments that forced the Society into administration, and that a report be presented as soon as appropriate.

At the time of writing a Panel is being formed to consider the issues raised in the final resolution.

### **Conciliation**

18. The Moderator's Advisory Committee is also responsible for the promotion and development of a conciliation service and ethos in the Church. It would put on record its appreciation of the dedicated work of Mrs Laura Coulter in co-ordinating and developing conciliation as an essential aspect of the Church's ministry. Her time as Peacemaking Officer comes to an end in June and the Committee is considering ways to ensure that this work continues and is developed.

### **Assessors**

19. The Moderator's Advisory Committee continues to appoint assessors to Presbyteries when asked to do so.

**APPENDIX I****Clerk's Letter to Ministers, 12 November, 2008**

Dear Colleague,

By now many of you will be aware of the situation concerning the Presbyterian Mutual Society. I enclose a Directors' Statement which was sent to all shareholders on Monday, together with a Press Statement issued by the Society today. This has naturally caused deep concern for many of our members. In offering pastoral care it is important that we are aware of as many of the facts as possible.

It is easy to point out that the Mutual Society is a separate legal entity which is quite separate from the Church. It is also clear that the Church cannot in any way underwrite the commitments of the Society. However, the reality is that many Presbyterians who have invested in the society are now understandably worried and we have a responsibility to care pastorally for them.

The situation which has arisen is part of the wider "credit crunch" which seems to have taken everyone by surprise. The Mutual Society found in recent weeks that the requests to withdraw money have far exceeded the liquid cash funds which are available. Of course in the longer term the assets of the Society are in loans and property which are secure and can be realised, although this is not the best time to sell property. The Directors are rightly asking for time to handle the situation in the best way for everyone, but of course that may not be how this develops.

While, as ministers, we cannot give financial advice I hope we will be able to show that we care and point people towards those who can help. The Church is also being supportive of approaches made by the Directors of the Society to Government. The Moderator has written a letter to the Prime Minister encouraging a positive response to the request that the guarantee offered to savers be extended to apply in these circumstances. The Directors of the Society have also had discussions with Executive Ministers and I understand the issues are being considered by OFMDFM. We will continue to be supportively in touch with those who have the decisions to make.

Perhaps one of the best definitions of mutuality is found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians – "If one member suffers, all suffer together: if one member is honoured, all rejoice together" (1 Cor 12:26).

Please encourage your people to pray:

- For those who are distressed and troubled by recent developments
- For the Directors of PMS as they make difficult decisions
- For the Staff who are under tremendous pressure
- For the Church's caring witness in offering the love of Christ to those who see difficult times ahead.

I am sending this letter both by e-mail and post to all ministers. It may well be helpful to say something in services on Sunday and this letter may, of course, be used. If there are further developments before the weekend I will send an additional e-mail to those for whom we have contact details. If either Clive Knox or myself can help in any way please let us know.

Yours sincerely,

DONALD J WATTS



**APPENDIX II****Moderator's Letter to Ministers, 21 November, 2008**

Dear Colleague,

Further to the Clerk of Assembly's letter dated 12 November, I am writing to ask you for your help with the pastoral circumstances we now find ourselves in following the affect of the "credit crunch" on the Presbyterian Mutual Society which has been placed in the hands of an Administrator who has been appointed to assess the situation and decide what is the best way forward. This will take time. Meanwhile, many people are still confused about the facts and distressing stories are emerging of personal difficulty experienced by some members of our Congregations.

Although the Moderator has no role within the PMS, I have become increasingly concerned. Therefore I have consulted with the Moderator's Advisory Committee and I am now asking for your assistance and make the following suggestions which you could share with your Session, Congregational Committee and your Congregation as you judge advisable.

- (1) **Information about PMS.** Please draw everyone's attention to the helpful statement by the Administrator on the PMS website at <[www.presbyterianireland.org/mutual](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/mutual)> and the FAQ's you will find there.
- (2) **Help for one another.** As Presbyterians we should care for and help one another. I understand that already individuals in some Congregations are seeking to help fellow members who are investors in the PMS and as a result find themselves in cash difficulty. I want to promote this idea among our Congregations. I believe there are people of goodwill in our Congregations who would be willing to do what they can to help.
- (3) **Prayer.** Commend the PMS, the PCI and individual investors for Prayer. Do remember the PMS staff who have been under a great deal of stress themselves in the past few weeks and pray that a way may be found to resolve the situation.

Thank you for all that you are doing of a pastoral nature and in anticipation of your further assistance.

Yours in fellowship,  
W DONALD PATTON

**APPENDIX III****Moderator and Clerk's Letter to Clerks of Presbytery, 1 December, 2008**

The developing situation at the Presbyterian Mutual Society is one which causes great concern throughout our Church. The Society has helped many Congregations and individuals over the years, but has found it impossible at present to meet the requests of its shareholders to withdraw money. This has put some members in a very difficult position when they have been depending on access to their funds. As we have said in previous letters, the Church has a responsibility to care and to try to find ways to help.

You will know an Administrator has been appointed by the Society and he must report within eight weeks of his appointment. It would appear that he is unlikely to report much before then, although we have made the point that the present uncertainty is very unhelpful. He must obviously be allowed time to make a thorough review of all the circumstances, in order to best serve the needs of all the shareholders. In the meantime shareholders need our support and prayers in a difficult time of waiting. We should also encourage them to seek professional advice from their solicitor, accountant or Citizen's Advice Bureau.

We have made clear to the Administrator that the Church is very ready to help in any way it can, and did indeed support an early approach to the Prime Minister to seek an extension to the government's guarantee. The Chancellor has indicated in his Pre-Budget Statement that the position of Mutual Societies in Northern Ireland is being considered. We do feel at present that we should accept the Administrator's judgement as to what is helpful, while recognising that we may also have to make our independent judgements as a separate body.

We have been encouraged, in this very difficult situation, by suggestions coming from both individuals and Congregations of ways in which we may help one another within the Presbyterian family. These include Congregations paying back their loans from the Society earlier than required, inviting investors who can wait longer for their money to allow those in difficulty to be reimbursed earlier and the willingness of some people to invest more of their money in the Society.

A small group has been formed, initially consisting of the Very Revs Dr David McGaughey, Dr John Dixon, Mr Roy Prescott (Rostrevor), Mr Ian Brown (Knock), to assist the Moderator in sifting through the suggestions and see how they might work. This, of course, will be done in co-operation with the Administrator. One of our key concerns is that the help should reach those who need it most.

This is a complex situation which affects our Presbyterian community very deeply, but we are reminded by the Psalmist: "Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit" (Psalm 147: 5). We ask that you continue to pray to God, our Sovereign Lord, for all who have been troubled and hurt by these events and for those trying to seek a way forward which will be fair to everyone. May God surround us and protect us all.

Yours sincerely,

W DONALD PATTON  
Moderator

DONALD J WATTS  
Clerk

#### APPENDIX IV

##### **Moderator's Letter to all Members, 23 January, 2009**

I am sending this letter to all ministers and asking that it be distributed as widely as possible. It is also available at [www.presbyterianireland.org](http://www.presbyterianireland.org) and I attach a printed petition for those who cannot access the online petition in support of the Mutual Society.

Since November of last year when news broke that the Presbyterian Mutual Society was in trouble, and the subsequent appointment of an Administrator much of my time and thought has been absorbed by the distress and anxiety felt

by my fellow investors. Through conversations, meetings, letters, emails, and telephone calls I am aware of many stories of personal difficulty as a result of the freezing of the assets of the society. I am deeply concerned about the sense of despondency that has settled over so many people.

I want to acknowledge and to thank our ministers and others within our Congregations who have pastored people in various ways, including holding meetings to hear each other and to share information. The Scriptures urge us to 'bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ' and as fellow Presbyterians we must take this seriously and be concerned for one another and do what we can to help. The problems are impacting every area of our work and witness and the issue is proving very difficult for the Church to deal with.

The Administrator has issued his report and we have a better sense of what he is thinking. Investors have now received their voting forms and have a say in how the Administrator proceeds. There has been confusion surrounding the resolutions which the Administrator has helpfully clarified saying that "if you wish to accept the proposal for an orderly wind down over time, you should vote 'yes' for resolutions 1, 2, and 5. You may vote either way for Resolutions 3 or 4 as the outcome of the vote on these does not affect the key proposal for an orderly wind down over time."

Investors are asking many detailed questions about how this has happened, and what the future holds. I am given to understand the Administrator, as an Officer of the Court, is legally constrained in what he can say. This in turn has placed the Church, its officers and myself in a very frustrating position. We do not have the information to answer questions being asked and have no access to the relevant information though a meeting with the Administrator this week did help clarify confusion around the voting issue.

I know that several meetings of investors have been held, some organised by Presbyteries and some informally by local ministers, to both share information and try to answer some of the difficult questions surrounding administration and the Society. This is to be encouraged.

While the central Church is meeting acute needs by offering limited grants through benevolent funds accessed by Ministers, it does not have the resources to respond to major needs except the General Assembly decides otherwise. Unfortunately, schemes to offer more substantial help that the small group I established were developing have proved more complex and difficult to put into practice. In order to move things forward the Clerk has called a special meeting of the General Board for Friday 6 February.

Some weeks ago I wrote to the Prime Minister seeking his sympathetic attention for the plight of investors in the Mutual Society. The matter has been referred to the Treasury which is undertaking a review of the regulatory framework for financial mutuals in Northern Ireland. Last Wednesday, 21 January I met with several of our local MP's at Westminster and we discussed the Mutual Society. Everyone is aware that the First Minister, Peter Robinson is seeking a meeting with the Prime Minister on this subject. I too, am following up my original letter with another requesting a face-to-face meeting with the Prime Minister.

It is important that as many Presbyterians as possible sign the petition which has been placed online on the Downing Street website at

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Save-the-Mutuals/> I have also asked for this petition to be sent out to Ministers in printed form to be made available for members of Congregations to sign. We need thousands of signatures to indicate to the Government the widespread concern of the Church at large and to support those placed in personal difficulty by the events which were triggered by the Government guarantee to the banking system. This will also strengthen our hand as we make representation to government.

I do not know what the eventual outcome of these approaches, and of the Administrator's work, will be. Clearly it will be some time before we know. I urge our people to keep these matters constantly in your prayers and for us all to hold together through these stormy times. We look to our God who has been our refuge and strength in our long and often difficult history and to His Word which assures us that He is 'an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea... The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.' (Psalm 46:1,2,3,7)

In prayerful fellowship,

W DONALD PATTON

## DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

1. The 2007 General Assembly gave the Committee the following brief: '...To re-examine the Church's position on children's presence and participation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper'. The Committee has judged it necessary to separate the issues of presence and participation for two reasons. Firstly, although the two issues are in some ways connected, they are also distinct. It is possible, for example, to argue for the presence of children at the Lord's Supper but not their participation in it. Secondly, while the subordinate standards of the Church make reference to criteria for participation in the Lord's Supper and this bears on the question of paedocommunion, they make no reference to the question of the presence of children. When this paper speaks of *participating* in the Lord's Supper it means partaking of it. In distinction from this it shall also allude to participating in the *service* in which the sacrament is celebrated, which differs from participating in the sacrament itself.

### The presence of children

2. There is no material in the New Testament that explicitly addresses this question. The Old Testament does, however, say something about the presence of children at the Passover, which is regarded in the Christian Church as a type of the Lord's Supper instituted on the occasion of Passover by Jesus Christ, himself our 'Passover' (1 Corinthians 5:7). They are all present at the first Passover (Ex 12:22b), as the deliverance of the people of Israel, which the Passover marks, is the deliverance of a whole community. Subsequent Passovers were meant to follow this pattern, so far as we can tell, although they were dropped or misused in Israel until Hezekiah and Josiah reinstated them more or less aright (2 Kings 23:22; 2 Chronicles 30:1-5; 35:1-19). Paedobaptism is an acknowledgement that the covenant community embraces the very youngest

children and so marks a continuity between the covenant community of the Old Testament and the Church of Jews and Gentiles in the New. For these reasons, it appears that, as members of the covenant community, children should certainly be present at the Lord's Supper, unless there are very good reasons indeed to the contrary. The Committee is not aware of any such reasons, although it accepts that wisdom and common sense must determine to a large extent how they should be included in a service where the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated and whether, for practical reasons, it would sometimes be inappropriate for children of *all* ages and stages to be present. Further comments on how children might participate in a liturgy containing a celebration of the sacrament are contained in appendix B. The question of whether they should partake of the bread and wine of the *sacrament* itself is now considered.

3. Given the remit of the General Assembly, the Committee sees it as its responsibility to interpret both Scripture and its own subordinate standards, bearing in mind both the existence of these standards in the Church and their subordinate nature.

The relevant material in our subordinate standards is as follows:

The confessional statements of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms explicitly teach that children should not partake of the Lord's Supper until they are old enough to examine themselves and discern the body and blood of Christ.

Question 177 of the Larger Catechism is particularly clear:

*Q: Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ?*

**Answer:** The sacrament of baptism and the Lord's Supper differ, in that baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.

The Larger Catechism also states:

*Question 171: How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?*

**Answer:** They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.

*Question 174: What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the time of the administration of it?*

**Answer:** It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fullness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

In order to adequately live up to these principles a degree of maturity in both age and spirituality is necessary. This emphasis on the serious and active method in the Lord's Supper would preclude children from partaking as some of them may be too young to be able to understand what they are observing. On a plain reading of the Westminster Standards, children cannot participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In this respect, the Westminster divines appeared to be following the lead of Calvin, whose position is set out in Appendix A.

On the other hand, according to the Westminster Confession of Faith, the visible Church "consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children" (25.2). When the same Confession defines the sacraments in general, it states that one of the reasons for which they were instituted was "to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world" (27.1). If the Church consists of believers and their children, and if one of the purposes of the sacraments is to put a visible difference between the Church and the world, then believers and their children should be visibly differentiated from the world by receiving these sacraments.

Further, our Subordinate Standards make the following statements with respect to the recipients of baptism concerning the things signified and sealed in the sacrament.

**WCF 28.1.** Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible Church; but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in the newness of life. Which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in His Church until the end of the world.

**Larger Catechism 165.** Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible Church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.

**Shorter Catechism 94.** Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

4. To speak of baptism as ‘sign’, ‘seal’, ‘ingrafting’ and ‘engagement’ is to use very strong language with respect to salvation. Its application to infants raises questions that bear on paedocommunion, as shall be noted later.

Baptism, which is administered to infants, is (a) a sign, (b) a seal, (c) a means of grace. It is a *sign* of the truth of the Gospel; it is a *seal*, i.e., God is present renewing by his Holy Spirit His covenant promises; it is a *means of grace*, because the blessings signified and promised are actually conveyed. These designs are not realised automatically apart from faith and the issue of whose faith is involved and how the nature of faith is to be understood is most important. Yet, in the Reformed tradition, baptism is certainly not merely a sign. (See particularly Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol 3, 588-90. Later, attention is drawn to his statements on infancy and original sin.)

*Engagement* is a formal interim state before marriage. Formerly, and still in many cultures, it was a legal state with rights and privileges, to be confirmed for life and enhanced at marriage.

5. Children are part of the covenant family and the Lord’s Supper is the family meal. Calvin strongly repudiated the notion that it was merely a memorial event, the bread and wine being merely symbolic of a different reality. Christ is really and spiritually present at the Lord’s Supper; in communion those who partake are joined in a particularly mysterious way with him in his risen presence in heaven and feed on his present and living reality spiritually as they partake of bread and wine. Different accounts are given of what practice Calvin wanted to obtain in sixteenth-century Geneva: either he sought a weekly celebration of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper but, for political reasons, had to content himself with a monthly arrangement or he sought a monthly celebration but had to content himself with a quarterly arrangement. In either case, his high estimation of the importance of the Lord’s Supper is indicated.<sup>1</sup> This surely adds up to the importance of children being present: the body of Christ was broken for them and the blood of Christ shed for them.

6. From a terminological point of view, it may be thought that the subordinate standards do not strictly exclude a type of ‘paedocommunion’ in one sense of the word, because a child of sufficient age and ability for self-examination may be qualified to partake of the Lord’s Supper. In such a case, the child partakes on exactly the same basis as does the adult. But when this report speaks of the case for ‘paedocommunion’, it means the case for children partaking of Lord’s Supper just by virtue of their membership of the covenant community, on the same basis as they are entitled to baptism without presupposing an ‘adult’ type of faith, just as it is not presupposed when infants are baptised. The argument against paedocommunion in this sense hinges on the requirement of self-examination stated in 1 Corinthians 11:28; it would be wrong for children to participate in the Lord’s Supper as they cannot examine themselves.

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1 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, chapter 17.

### 1 Corinthians 11:28

7. 1 Corinthians is the earliest passage in Scripture on which to build a sacramental liturgy. In chapter 10, Paul interprets key moments in Israel's history from the perspective of the Christ-event. The Exodus event is depicted in sacramental terms both as a baptism and as a meal. "Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same supernatural food, and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ..." The passage goes on to warn against idolatrous practices, citing Ex 32:6 as proof. In contrast, the Christian 'participation' in Christ's blood and body is characterised by unity ("because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for all partake of the one bread."), and cannot countenance dividing this worship with demons ("You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.")

8. In chapter 11 Paul then addresses the Corinthian Church's celebration of the Lord's Supper. This classical defence for credo-communion (and virtually the sole Scriptural basis offered by Calvin, WCF and LC) namely, 1 Cor 11:17-32, ought to be interpreted within its literary and historic context *before* setting it within a doctrinal system. Word has reached Paul of their abuse of the sacrament, marked as it was by selfishness, gluttony and drunkenness. So he is handling sacramental theology within a pastoral context. Paul is clearly addressing a particular problem within the Corinthian Church. Report has it that sections of the Church (perhaps wealthier members) are not waiting for another section (perhaps poorer members) before celebrating the Communion meal. Instead, they gorge themselves on the food and drink (perhaps provided by the wealthy members themselves) so that by the time the 'poorer' Church members arrive they are met by over-indulgence and empty tables. Paul considers this an affront to all that Communion is supposed to be about, and so he calls upon the wealthier to think about what they are doing and to order the sacrament in a more Christ-honouring way. Such blatant disregard for the 'poor', for the unity of the Church, and for the reputation of Christ in and beyond the Church, profanes the Lord. Self-examination (28) and self-control (33) are required to ensure a more appropriate celebration. Two approaches can be taken to this text, as follows.

#### Interpretation 1

9. If the position is accepted that the sacrament is a covenant meal it seems natural to include in it all who are embraced by the covenant. However, 1Cor 11:27ff demands that some sort of discriminating faith is present before full participation is possible. This raises questions concerning how children can be permitted to partake of the elements when they cannot discriminate as adults can.

10. On the basis of this passage people have justified the adult duty and obligation to protect their children from the terrible judgment of God that may befall them in their ignorance.

<sup>23</sup>For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, <sup>24</sup>and when he had given thanks,



he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”<sup>25</sup> In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”<sup>26</sup> For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

<sup>27</sup>Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.<sup>28</sup>*A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.* <sup>29</sup>*For anyone who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.* <sup>30</sup>*That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.* <sup>31</sup>*But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.”*

11. The italicised section provides the strongest scriptural grounds for ‘fencing the Table’, not least from children who, out of ignorance, might bring judgment upon themselves. This text underlies the theological conviction of the seriousness of the Eucharistic celebration. This degree of seriousness has been lost to an extent in the contemporary Church. “The key issue, rather is parental and ecclesiastical responsibility to protect children from unworthy partaking of the sacrament” as Gregory Johnson writes.<sup>1</sup> Part of this responsibility is to remind Christians of their identity in Christ resulting from conversion, not from baptism.<sup>2</sup> The Lord’s Supper is a blessing but can also be a judgment. As Letham notes: “If the means of grace can become a means of judgment, discipline, and even damnation, it is essential that those who partake of the elements are duly qualified.”<sup>3</sup> It is unacceptable ever to put infants and young children in the position where they are bringing judgment on themselves because they have not sought and found forgiveness and there is no recognisable faith present. This line of thinking leads to the conclusion that they should not participate until they can make the necessary credible profession of faith, adding it to their baptism, and coming to the Table trusting solely in Christ.

12. Berkhof summarises well classical Reformed thinking here:

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1 <http://gregscouch.homestead.com/files/Paedocommunion.html>

2 The prayers of the earliest Churches used the word ‘remember’ throughout, a word that has a specific meaning. “We tend to translate this word as “memory,” a mental action that brings to mind something from the past. This is questionable. The word may also mean “re-calling” or “re-presenting” before God an event, so that its effects become operative here and now. In this sense the remembrance places before God the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ and makes it operative in the present to the believer who by faith received Christ under the signs of bread and wine. In this way the remembrance is no empty act but a powerful proclamation of the sacrifice of Christ.” Robert E. Webber, *Worship Old and New*, Revised Edition. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan: 1994), p.181.

3 Robert Letham, *The Lord’s Supper* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2001), p.56.

“Children, though they were allowed to eat the Passover in the days of the Old Testament, cannot be permitted to partake of the table of the Lord, since they cannot meet the requirements for worthy partaking of the elements. Paul insists on the necessity of self-examination previous to the celebration, when he says: ‘But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup’, I Cor 11:28, and children are not able to examine themselves. Moreover, he points out that, in order to partake of the Supper in a worthy manner, it is necessary to discern the body, I Cor 11:29, that is, to distinguish properly between the elements used in the Lord’s Supper and ordinary bread and wine, by recognising those elements as symbols of the body and blood of Christ. And this, too, is beyond the capacity of children. It is only after they have come to years of discretion that they can be permitted to join in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.”<sup>4</sup>

13. The kernel of this argument is that children simply do not have the capacity to understand or appreciate deep spiritual things and, because of this inability, cannot fulfil the Corinthian command to self-examination as a precondition of worthiness for partaking of the sacrament. Presumably it is not denied that children can discern and appreciate deep things even if they cannot always articulate those things to adults. As one writer on the subject put it: “Children apprehend before they comprehend.”<sup>5</sup> Their childlike innocence and simplicity can actually make such apprehension possible and this ought to be emulated by sophisticated adults. But this does not amount to self-examination.

14. Although simply one interpretation is described here, it is perhaps helpful to make one comment on the question of children eating or drinking to their own condemnation. Even before he embarks on the main portion of his lengthy (three-volume) treatment of Christian doctrine, Charles Hodge lays it down as axiomatic for all evangelical Protestants that all infants who die in infancy – not just children of the covenant – are saved. The logic appears to be this: the atoning blood of Jesus Christ covers the original sin in which they are born and delivers them from its condemnation.<sup>6</sup> Hodge’s understanding of the Reformed position may certainly be challenged, but even when challenged on the ground of excessive dogmatism, it can be regarded as a position that “is as legitimate and as logical” as any “on Reformed postulates”.<sup>7</sup>

## Interpretation 2

15. Another interpretation of ‘discerning the Lord’s body’ (29) is to take it to refer to the body of believers, the Church, rather than to the fleshly body of Christ nailed to the Cross and remembered in the bread and wine. Jeffrey

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4 Berkhof *Systematic Theology*. p656.

5 See Iris V. Cully in *Christian Child Development*. (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan: 1979).

6 See Hodge’s *Systematic Theology*, vol.1, 26-27.

7 B.B.Warfield, ‘The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation’ in *Studies in Theology*, chapter 14 (p.444).

Weima<sup>8</sup> offers three reasons for preferring this interpretation. (1) It fits the historical context, to a Congregation where the rich are celebrating the sacrament in a way that marginalizes the poor. So Paul issues the challenge to “recognise the body” – that is, to pay attention to the welfare of our brothers and sisters. (2) There are important differences between Paul’s use of the word “body” here in verse 29 and earlier in verse 27, where the apostle is, indeed, referring to the fleshly body of Christ he adds the fuller descriptions “and the blood” and “of the Lord.” Since neither of these additions occurs in verse 29, Paul may well be using “body” here with a different meaning. (3) “Body” as a reference to the Church occurs both in the immediately preceding chapter (10:17, “Because there is one loaf, we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf”) and in the immediately following chapter (12:12-26, Paul’s famous metaphor of “many parts, one body”).

16. According to this interpretation, when Paul exhorts the Corinthians to “recognise/discern the body”, he is calling them to examine their relationship to their fellow-believers and to celebrate the sacrament in a manner that does not humiliate other Congregational members. It is, first and foremost a *horizontal* rather than a *vertical* self-examination. If this is true, then, Weima speculates, we may actually be guilty of sin by excluding our covenant children/youth from the Lord’s Supper.

*That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.* (11:30) – Paul’s comment here implies that the detestable error in the Corinthian Church was habitual rather than a one-off. Whilst Acts does record a summary execution of divine judgment at the earliest stages of the Church’s formation (Ananias and Sapphira, 5:1-11), reference to illness, weakness and *some* deaths, does suggest protracted mismanagement of the sacrament prior to the Apostle’s intervention and a divine judgment that is somehow related to physical health. With the obvious exception of those fatalities to which Paul refers, the suggestion is, and verses 31-32 support this, that God is primarily interested in *correcting* rather than *punishing* sacramental deviance:

“But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.” (11:31f.)

17. As the text stands, it provides a stark warning to local Congregations that they honour the Lord of the Table best when they honour the ‘least of the brethren.’ It is not an extended sacramental theology, so too great an edifice should not be built on it. Admittedly, children may be no more capable of ‘horizontal’ than of ‘vertical’ self-examination, but if this interpretation of Corinthians is correct, should they be too swiftly excluded from participation? Could the children be regarded as being numbered with ‘the least of the brethren’ whose attendance and incorporation would actually please the Lord?

18. Even if this interpretation is not accepted, the danger, for the Reformed tradition, is an inconsistency in interpreting Scripture, if 1 Corinthians

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8 Jeffrey A.D. Weima, “Children at the Lord’s Supper and the Key Text of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34”, *Forum*, (Calvin Theological Seminary, Spring 2007)

11 is used to prove that the ability to examine oneself and discern the Lord's body and blood is a necessary pre-requisite for communion, and yet it is insisted that those Scriptures that require repentance and faith for baptism (Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12; Rom 4:11) apply only to the baptism of adults. If covenant children can be baptized without repenting, why can they not partake of the Lord's Supper without self-examination?

### **Conclusions**

19. It seems clear that there is a case both for and against the practice of paedocommunion and that good biblical and theological reasons can be given on both sides of the argument. If the Church became persuaded of the case for paedocommunion, there would have to be some explicit statement of this in the light of our subordinate standards, following the precedent in PCI when it modified the Westminster standards in the cases of (a) the civil ruler and (b) the Papal Antichrist (although these were formally dealt with in different ways). However, until and unless the Church is so persuaded, it is necessary to adhere to our subordinate standards, even if it is acknowledged that there is a plausible case for paedocommunion. It is not remitted to the Committee to propose how any debate on this matter should be carried forward in the Church, if the Church deems it desirable.

20. However, although the Committee does not recommend the practice of paedocommunion, it wishes not only to underline the importance of children's presence at the Lord's Supper, but also to propose that their presence should be acknowledged in some significant way. Further, in all of this discussion it is of vital importance to grasp the opportunities for teaching and nurture that go along with the increased participation of children in the liturgy surrounding the sacrament. The command to explain the meaning of the Passover to children is very relevant. All actions can be misinterpreted and must be carefully explained. Equally, all actions can lead to searching questions on the part of those who participate in the liturgy as a whole and those who observe. Such opportunities ought not to be missed.

### **Summary and Resolutions**

21. In summary:

- (i) On the subject of children and the Lord's Table, Scripture gives no clear, unambiguous direction. The relevant Biblical material considered above has room for a range of interpretations, some of which would make it impossible for children to be accepted at the Lord's Table while other interpretations make it impossible to bar the children of believers from the Lord's Table. Therefore a solution must be sought that is consistent with a reasonable, measured interpretation of Scripture.
- (ii) On the subject of children and the Lord's Table, the history of the Church gives little direction as practice has varied widely. Within the Reformed tradition the usual practice has been to keep children from the Table until they make a credible profession of faith in late childhood, adolescence or early adulthood. In PCI the law of the

Church also demands that admission follows instruction by the Minister.<sup>9</sup>

- (iii) On the subject of children and the Lord's Table, our Subordinate Standards present what some will regard as a paradoxical position in which children are clearly members of the community, being described in terms that come very close indeed to those applied to a believing adult. On the other hand, the Subordinate standards clearly state that children should not share in the sacrament.
- (iv) Current practice is very varied although most Congregations do not allow children to be present at Communion and only a very few allow any type of active participation in the service. Whatever practice is adopted, it will not be possible to implement a perfect system or a system that avoids all pastoral dilemmas. This must be clearly recognised and embraced. It may be necessary to embrace the 'best available option' remembering that this option is never to be glibly identified with maintaining the status quo.
- (v) The Committee recommends that greater and more creative effort be made to have our children present at Communion.
- (vi) The Committee recommends that our Church consider how children may participate in the Communion service as a whole, on the assumption that they are not partaking of the sacrament.
- (vii) The Committee recommends that greater consideration be given by Congregations to all that surrounds admission to the Lord's Table for children and young people. Although the term, 'Confirmation',<sup>10</sup> is not normally used, the idea of confirming the vows taken on behalf of the child at Baptism should be explored with a view to making admission to the Lord's Table a more meaningful event for all involved.
- (viii) The Committee recognises that a distinction already exists in PCI between admission to the Lord's Table and adult Church membership, with voting rights etc. Adult membership, with voting rights etc. is reserved for those who both come to the Lord's Table on profession of faith and make a financial contribution to the work of the local Congregation.
- (ix) The Committee recommends that broad consistency of practice is to be sought rather than uniformity and that families who move between Congregations be treated with pastoral sensitivity.

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<sup>9</sup> Code: Par 40.2

<sup>10</sup> However, see John M. Barkley, *Book of Public Worship of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, (Belfast: General Assembly of PCI, 1965), (p.184ff) and the Church of Scotland's *Book of Common Order* (pp. 95, 109), which do use the term.

## APPENDIX A

**Calvin and Paedocommunion**

John Calvin was adamantly opposed to paedocommunion. In answering critics who accused him of being inconsistent in permitting one sacrament (baptism) to children yet denying them another sacrament (Communion) Calvin writes;

“Furthermore, they object that there is no more reason to administer baptism to infants than the Lord’s Supper, which is not permitted to them. As if Scripture did not mark a wide difference in every respect! This permission was indeed commonly given in the ancient Church, as is clear from Cyprian and Augustine, but the custom has deservedly fallen into disuse. For if we consider the peculiar character of baptism, surely it is an entrance and sort of initiation into the Church, through which we are numbered among God’s people: a sign of our spiritual regeneration, through which we are reborn as children of God. On the other hand, the Supper is given to older persons who, having passed tender infancy, can now take solid food.

This distinction is very clearly shown in Scripture. For with respect to baptism, the Lord there sets no definite age. But he does not similarly hold forth the Supper for all to partake of, but only for those who are capable of discerning the body and blood of the Lord, of examining their own conscience, of proclaiming the Lord’s death, and of considering its power. Do we wish anything plainer than the apostle’s teaching when he exhorts each man to prove and search himself, then to eat of this bread and drink of this cup (I Cor 11:28)? A self-examination ought, therefore, to come first, and it is vain to expect this of infants. Again: “He who eats unworthily eats and drinks condemnation for himself, not discerning the body of the Lord” (I Cor 11:29). If only those who know how to distinguish rightly the holiness of Christ’s body are able to participate worthily, why should we offer poison instead of life-giving food to our tender children? What is the command of the Lord: “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19; I Cor 11:25)? What is that other command which the apostle derives from it: “As often as you eat this bread, you will proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (I Cor 11:26)? What remembrance of this thing, I ask, shall we require of infants when they have never grasped it? What preaching of the cross of Christ, the force and benefit of which their minds have not yet comprehended? None of these things is prescribed in baptism. Accordingly there is a very great difference between these two signs, as we have noted in like signs also under the Old Testament. Circumcision, which is known to correspond to our baptism, had been appointed for infants (Gen 17:12). But the Passover, the place of which has been taken by the Supper, did not admit all guests indiscriminately, but was duly eaten only by those who were old enough to be able to inquire into its meaning (Ex 12:26). If these men had a particle of sound brain left, would they be blind to a thing so clear and obvious’.<sup>11</sup>

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11 Calvin, *Institutes* Book 4, Chapter 16.30

In his Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances, agreed on 13 September 1541, Calvin makes it clear in his comments upon how the Lord's Supper should be celebrated, that no-one can partake of the elements unless able to pass an examination on the Catechism.

'Since the Supper was instituted for us by our Lord to be frequently used, and also was so observed in the ancient Church until the devil turned everything upside down, erecting the mass in its place, it is a fault in need of correction, to celebrate it so seldom.

Hence it will be proper that it be always administered in the city once a month, in such a way that every three months it take place in each parish. Besides, it should take place three times a year generally, that is to say at Easter, Pentecost and Christmas, in such a way that it be not repeated in the parish in the month when it should take place by turn.

The Ministers are to distribute the bread in proper order and with reverence; and none are to give the chalice except the colleagues or deacons with the Ministers. Hence there should not be a large number of vessels.

The tables should be beside the pulpit in order that the mystery be more conveniently set forth beside the tables.

It should be celebrated in the Church at the most fitting time.

The Sunday before the celebration, intimation is to be made, in order that no child come before it has made profession of its faith as proved by examination by the Catechism, and also that all strangers and new-comers may be exhorted first to present themselves at the Church, so that they be instructed and thus none approach to his own condemnation."<sup>12</sup>

## APPENDIX B

### **Ideas for participation of children in a Communion liturgy**

If the case has been made in favour of children being *present* at Communion, consideration as to how this might be accomplished is demanded. The following suggestions are neither prescriptive nor definitive; instead they are illustrative of practical measures that might be employed to reverse the extensive practice of excluding children from the communion service. A variety of ideas is offered to stimulate creative thinking within the particularity of Congregational settings.

Children may participate in the service as spectators. This would easily be achieved either by keeping children in Church for the duration of the service, or returning them from Children's Church/Sunday School prior to the Sacrament being celebrated. If they do go out, then some teaching about the Sacrament would prepare them to watch intelligently on their return. When the children stay for the whole service, provision could be made to help them participate meaningfully in the service.

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12 Calvin, Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances: Of the Supper

### **Making more of the ‘Communion Season’.**

*At home before a Communion Service:* a workbook or resource book might be produced for families to use at home in the week(s) coming up to Communion (this could include some form of liturgy for an agape meal in the family home); within the Jewish tradition books have been written to introduce very young children to the Passover (e.g. *Passover* by Adam Fisher and *The Mouse in the Matzah Factory* by Francine Medoff), similar books could be commissioned within our denomination (songs and Communion plays could also be commissioned); Congregations could develop contemporary expressions of the traditional ‘Communion Season’, perhaps with agape meals taking place in several homes (or using whatever small-group/cell-group system that already exists in the Congregation), the Congregation having agreed a common liturgy for such meals.

*At Church before a Communion Service:* Congregations could develop contemporary expressions of the traditional ‘Communion Season’ by organising an agape type meal for the whole Congregation in advance of a Communion service; a week or two before Communion (during Children’s Church/Sunday School etc) the Communion furnishings (glasses, trays, cups etc) could be shown and the children talked through the service and their questions answered; they could be involved in baking the bread that will be used (most Congregations use yeast bread, some use shortbread – perhaps there is a case for ‘unleavened bread’); they could be invited to come the evening before and help set up the Communion Table.

*During a Communion Service:* children might sing as a choir while the elements are being distributed; they might carry the elements to the Table during the ‘hymn of approach’ or help to distribute the elements; a child might be brought to the fore and declaring before the Congregation – ‘unless you come as a little child, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven’; younger children might receive a picture to colour in, show to the rest of the Congregation and retain in a little folder.

*At Church after a Communion Service:* the children could formally or informally take the elements from the Church; they could help collect and wash up the glasses (where these are used) and help tidy away the table/ tablecloths etc.

*At home after a Communion Service:* a short liturgy could be prepared for families to use at their Sunday lunch as a follow up to the Communion; the Congregation could organise a communal meal to follow the service.

Many ideas will arise naturally in Congregations and creativity is to be welcomed so long as all innovations are authentic to the culture of the Congregation and to the Gospel proclaimed in the sacrament.

### **Distribution of the elements**

The Reformed Churches are called upon to be always reforming themselves according to Scripture and one area in which change could be considered is regarding coming forward to receive the elements. There has been a change in many Congregations over the years from tables set in the aisles to remaining in the pews and the elders serving the members. There is no reason to



reject the practice of the Congregation coming forward to receive the sacrament from the elders, when a covenant child, as yet not having made a profession of faith, could come forward and a blessing could be prayed upon them.

### ‘Confirmation’

It may be appropriate to look at a more robust and formal ‘confirmation’ rite to be taken at first adult communion which links baptism with the Lord’s Supper. The PCUSA Book of Common Worship, for example, offers six different services for reaffirming the baptismal covenant.<sup>13</sup> John M Barkley also suggests a service for Confirmation within PCI.<sup>14</sup>

## APPENDIX C

### Hodge’s comments referred to in the body of the report.

*What the Scriptures teach as to the Salvation of Men. Salvation of Infants. (vol 1: 26f)15*

What the Scriptures teach on this subject, according to the common doctrine of evangelical Protestants is first: —

1. All who die in infancy are saved. This is inferred from what the Bible teaches of the analogy between Adam and Christ. “As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many (οἱ πολλοί = πάντες) were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many (οἱ πολλοί = πάντες) be made righteous ” (Rom v. 18, 19). We have no right to put any limit on these general terms, except what the Bible itself places upon them. The Scriptures nowhere exclude any class of infants, baptized or unbaptized, born in Christian or in heathen lands, of believing or unbelieving parents, from the benefits of the redemption of Christ. All the descendants of Adam, except Christ, are under condemnation; all the descendants of Adam, except those of whom it is expressly revealed that they cannot inherit the kingdom of God, are saved. This appears to be the clear meaning of the Apostle, and therefore he does not hesitate to say that where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded, that the benefits of redemption far exceed the evils of the fall; that the number of the saved far exceeds the number of the lost.

This is not inconsistent with the declaration of our Lord, in Matthew vii. 14 that only a few enter the gate which leadeth unto life. This is to be understood of adults. What the Bible says is intended for those in all ages, to whom it is addressed. But it is addressed to those who can either read or hear. It tells them

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13 *Book of Common Worship*, for the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Kentucky, London, England, Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.

14 John M. Barkley, *Book of Public Worship of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, (Belfast: General Assembly of PCI, 1965), p.184ff.

15 <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/hodge/theology1.iii.ii.iii.html>

what they are to believe and do. It would be an entire perversion of its meaning to make it apply to those to whom and of whom it does not speak. When it is said, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36), no one understands this to preclude the possibility of the salvation of infants.

Not only, however, does the comparison, which the Apostle makes between Adam and Christ, lead to the conclusion that as all are condemned for the sin of the one, so all are saved by the righteousness of the other, those only excepted whom the Scriptures except; but the principle assumed throughout the whole discussion teaches the same doctrine. That principle is that it is more congenial with the nature of God to bless than to curse, to save than to destroy. If the race fell in Adam, much more shall it be restored in Christ. If death reigned by one, much more shall grace reign by one. This "much more" is repeated over and over. The Bible everywhere teaches that God delighteth not in the death of the wicked; that judgment is his strange work. It is, therefore, contrary not only to the argument of the Apostle, but to the whole spirit of the passage (Romans v. 12-21), to exclude infants from "the all" who are made alive in Christ.

The conduct and language of our Lord in reference to children are not to be regarded as matters of sentiment, or simply expressive of kindly feeling. He evidently looked upon them as the lambs of the flock for which, as the good Shepherd, He laid down his life, and of whom He said they shall never perish, and no man could pluck them out of his hands. Of such He tells us is the kingdom of heaven, as though heaven was, in great measure, composed of the souls of redeemed infants. It is, therefore, the general belief of Protestants, contrary to the doctrine of Romanists and Romanizers, that all who die in infancy are saved.

## **GLOBAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE**

### **Lifestyle Report**

1. Responses to last year's report on lifestyle issues have been overwhelmingly positive and encouraging. The Committee on Global Concerns is deeply indebted to all those who have contributed to the debate and made many constructive comments. In total contrast to Presbyteries, actual returns from individual Kirk Sessions were disappointingly low in number. However, the Committee is also aware that Congregations have devoted their own time and space to the subject, covering it in special sermon series, Harvest Thanksgiving Services, mid-weeks and in one case at least carrying out an extensive environmental audit.

2. Particularly appreciated was the Biblical material in the report. The opening chapters of Genesis were used to highlight the importance of appreciating God's wonderful creation and caring for it. The generous heart of God leads us to respond sacrificially to the needs of others throughout the world. In the Western world where people live at such a frenetic pace there is the need to rediscover the unforced rhythms of grace, by making the clear distinction between work and rest. Throughout the report the priority of relationships was

stressed in terms of family, neighbours, the wider global community and, of course, Church. The tragic consequences of the Fall are also studied in terms of selfishness, greed and over exploitation of the earth's resources. Our redemption is purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, who is the hope of the world. In and through Him we need to hold out a vision of a society that is transformed by God's grace and power. It was CS Lewis who said: "Aim at heaven and you will get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither."

3. There was clear resonance with the very noble ideal of leaving the earth in better order for succeeding generations. Calvin was aptly quoted in this sense: "Let him who possesses a field, so partake of its yearly fruits, that he may not suffer the ground to be injured by his negligence: but let him endeavour to hand it down to posterity as he received it, or even better cultivated." In support of these sentiments Dean Jonathan Swift was mentioned as having said something to the effect that the greatest service any man could render his country would be to learn how to grow two blades of grass where only one grew presently. One should not take the line of Hezekiah, who greeted deliverance from danger with the sentiment that all was well since there would be peace in his lifetime. While on the subject of quotes, Bishop Chartres generated some debate among Presbyteries as a result of his reference in the report to making selfish choices such as flying on holiday or buying a large car being a symptom of sin. Some were challenged to consider the consequences of their actions, no longer living a life turned in on itself (Luther's "incurvatus in se"). Others felt that Chartres was taking a step too far!

4. While describing the report as comprehensive and setting forth good Biblical principles, one Presbytery in its response quoted 2 Peter 3:10-11 to state that we are living in a fallen world where everything disintegrates and wastes away anyhow: "The heavens will disappear with a roar: the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the Day of God and speed its coming". The argument was the need to herald the Gospel trumpet to warn people of eternity, knowing that one day this earth will be disposed of like an old garment. While nobody would deny this clear Gospel imperative, other theological principles such as stewardship and giving generously to the poor throughout the world cannot be ignored.

5. Another Presbytery contended that the Gospel is not only about the salvation of souls but the salvation of all creation in our Lord Jesus Christ. "We realise that mostly we are choosing the popular, complacent route of short-term survival by committing long-term suicide. The challenge is a change of mindset – a metanoia (repentance). Neglect of the environment is ruinous to lifestyle, revere the environment and we will flourish and be fruitful. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'the desert shall blossom as the rose'."

6. Some Presbyteries raised concerns about the practical outworking of the report, feeling that it was altogether piecemeal. There was the feeling that a strategy should have been clearly developed to support an ethical Christian lifestyle. The authors of the report would argue that they did not want to be prescriptive or legalistic in their approach, preferring instead to suggest a few ideas to start people thinking. It was intended to encourage Christians, even to

take a few faltering steps towards examining their lifestyles. Again it was Edmund Burke who said: “Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.”

7. In the opening paragraphs of the report global warming was mentioned as a deleterious effect of man’s present unsustainable lifestyle. There are clearly those who do not believe that this is taking place and contend that the Lord will ultimately look after His world. In March 2009, as reported on the BBC website, scientists at a climate change summit in Copenhagen said that global sea levels actually look set to rise far higher than forecast because of changes in the polar ice-sheets. It was projected that sea levels could rise by a metre or more by 2100 which would have devastating effects for millions of people, given that ten per cent of the world’s population – about 600 million people – live in low-lying areas. The UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its 2007 Fourth Assessment Report, had said that the maximum rise in sea level would be in the region of 59cm. The scientific evidence would appear to be increasingly irrefutable, but whether or not it turns out to be factual, surely a campaign to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases will have a beneficial impact on our environment. Here is the reminder that God’s earth is often fragile and finely balanced, never intended to withstand the selfishness and greed of man’s exploitation. In accordance with God’s Word we have a duty to care!

8. One Presbytery mentioned the fact that Ireland had signed the UN/ECE Convention on environmental issues in June, 1998, but so far her record had been poor in this vital area. The commitment promised by the Irish at Kyoto had still not been attained. “Our greenhouse gas emissions per capita are the highest in Europe and the fifth highest in the industrialised world and we have bought Euro 650 million worth of carbon credits to offset this.” This was the conclusion: “On the next occasion, when a candidate for local Council, central Government, or European Government, comes to ask for our vote, let us have our hard questions ready and make it clear that we mean business.”

9. The report sought to assert the Lordship of Christ over every aspect of our lives, including choices about spending our money. One Presbytery asked the question why it is that we consume so much. Why do we hold on to what we have without being generous? Why do we spend so much on ourselves? What lies behind and beneath these sins? “Until this is identified and until it is shown how the Gospel relates to this, then we will not be motivated to heed the advice given here. For instance, one reason we cling to our money may be because we’re trusting in it instead of God for security (in other words, the problem is unbelief); but in the Gospel we discover God is our faithful Father who knows precisely what we need; once we believe that, then we become free to be generous.”

10. The same Presbytery felt that the report retreats from the “complex” and “difficult” issues of macro-economics, preferring instead to offer a few practical hints at being green. The Gospel, it argues, presents a cosmological Christ and a cosmological salvation. “Even if not everyone reading or responding to the report is capable of wrestling with complex economics, as a Church we MUST somehow attempt it ... The recent economic crisis makes it all the more imperative that we review our relationship to free-market

capitalism, for if we do not – if we get through this crisis and relax into the status quo, we could very well maintain the impression (held by Muslims and others) that capitalism is synonymous with Christianity.” The report did mention Mahatma Gandhi who was put off Christianity because “So many of you Christians are so unlike your Christ” and “Western nations were groaning under the heel of the monster god of materialism.” How, then, is it possible to live counter-culturally as followers of Jesus Christ and as citizens of another kingdom? What kind of critique is it possible to offer of free-market capitalism? Should the Church be drawing on experts within the denomination to help it grapple with these issues Biblically?

11. Of course, it is true that the report was written before the onslaught of the present economic crisis. Terms such as “credit crunch” were still looming on the horizon. The authors could not have foreseen the collapse in stocks and shares, falling house prices with consequent negative equity, soaring unemployment, deflation and global uncertainty. On the other hand, much of the report has turned out to be prescient, set against the background of spiralling personal debt and forecasting that levels of expenditure could not be maintained. Greed and recklessness in the banking sector, the unfettered pursuit of profit without regard for ethic, risk or consequence and the idolatrous love of money have plunged society into this present crisis. The Committee acknowledge that there is the need for it to continue monitoring these issues on the global level and to speak out against the effects of unbridled capitalism.

12. Generally speaking, the opinion was expressed that the report should not risk being shelved. Issues of lifestyle should be an integral part of Congregational and wider Church mission plans. Examples include areas of Church life and witness that need to be seriously reconsidered, including, for example, the extravagance with which Christmas and marriage are celebrated. As many of our Churches move away from simple meeting houses to expensive structures providing technological places of excellence, is it necessary to visit the old maxim about “living more simply than others in this world may simply live”? Church organisations perpetuate another level of busyness on top of lives that are often already at breaking point. The Church runs the risk of placing an even greater stress on our core workforce. What is the rationale behind many Church activities? How would Congregations look if members attended their local Church rather than travelling long distances? As one Presbytery concludes: “We have long recognised in our Reformed tradition that each of us is directly accountable to the Lord for our actions and our lifestyle is not exempt from this. We can no longer pretend ignorance of the issues which lie behind the report. When we purchase flowers out of season to decorate our homes and Church buildings, we should now be looking for the ‘Fairtrade’ logo; when our light bulbs fuse, we should be seeking to install long life replacements; when that announcement sheet or newsletter has served its purpose, we should be recycling them. All these little actions, when taken together, demonstrate to our Heavenly Father that we are grateful for this marvellous world in which He has placed us.”

13. One practical issue that was addressed was the insulation of our Church buildings. There was the request for clearer guidelines to be set out by the Church Architecture Committee to advise Congregations embarking on building programmes on the use of renewable energy sources and timber

products sourced from sustainable forests. There was the desire to lower the carbon footprint by lowering thermostats in present Church buildings.

14. A Presbytery noted that all new buildings in Northern Ireland are required by Building Control to provide a SAP test detailing energy efficiency of every element of the building, to provide a global estimate of tonnes of carbon dioxide emitted every year. Energy Proficiency certificates (EPCs) are part of an EU directive to assess existing properties. Notwithstanding the current dilemmas of property markets in the UK and Ireland, there was the comment that the Church should quantify energy use in all its buildings. An initiative might be for our denomination to participate in a collective scheme to implement double glazing and insulation schemes.

15. The Church is much more than a building – it is the Body of Christ. In such a fractured, lonely, hurting and empty world, there is the need for our Churches to be vibrant communities of faith, modelling Christian love in relationship with Jesus Christ and one another. One Presbytery made the very simple comment that “Especially as leaders we are urged to promote a Christian lifestyle where our relationship to God and then to one another is the priority; and where Christ can be seen in our lives and in our living, which attracts many to Him.” There was also this very moving response to the whole area of promoting friendship: “Create opportunities for people to meet and be together. Loneliness and isolation are soul destroying. Encourage the ethos of Sabbath, joy, simplicity and generosity. Have some fun with our families and friends and members of the Congregation. Discourage too many meetings so that people are under less stress and have more time to be with their families and to enjoy some rest: not imposed restrictions but liberated freedom. Those meetings we do have should not focus on projects at the expense of real interaction between people.”

16. There was consensus as well that the Church should encourage the culture of giving and receiving, re-use rather than consumption and wastage. Members should commit to giving at least ten per cent of their income to the Lord’s work. Generosity of spirit was universally encouraged.

17. It is, of course, true to say that there are many other lifestyle and discipleship issues not addressed in the present report. For example, faith cannot be separated from the world of work and Christians should not be expected to hide their convictions as soon as they enter the office, factory or classroom. Some commentators have been reflecting on what they describe as the long process of “disestablishment” with Christianity gradually being written out of laws and political institutions. Meanwhile public sector workers now risk being sacked if they talk about religion in the workplace, under “equality and diversity” rules. New NHS guidelines in the UK state that doctors and nurses face harassment charges if they are accused of “preaching” to colleagues or patients, while a draft code of practice for teachers in England could be used by schools to discipline those who discuss their beliefs with pupils. Caroline Petrie, a community nurse who is a devout Baptist, was suspended without pay for two months after she offered to pray for an elderly patient. A Christian registrar lost her job for refusing to take part in civil partnership ceremonies, while a relationship counsellor was sacked after he refused to give therapy to homosexual couples. Both have been unsuccessful in their claims for unfair dismissal. Latest figures show that courts dealt with 600 cases of workplace

discrimination on religious grounds in the year to April 2008, up from 486 two years before. This is an age where political correctness has gone crazy!

18. In a speech delivered at Holy Trinity, Brompton and reported in the Daily Telegraph, Dr John Sentamu, Anglican Archbishop of York, makes the point that Churchgoers are now “counter-cultural”, because their values are so opposed to prevailing behaviour. Dr Sentamu said: “Many Christians are living out their lives as the Church dispersed in the world of business and commerce every day. They are involved daily in building the Kingdom and have the daily challenge of living by a set of values that the world thinks are mad. Their counter-cultural work and calling needs to be recognised, affirmed and supported. We bring to the table a particular perspective – the vision of justice and righteousness that comes from a creative and generous God. It is not as if we are the only ethically minded people on the block – far from it. But what we are called to in Christ often asks of us more, and beckons us to a bigger vision. All of life is religious and there is a desperate need to reconnect the sacred and the secular. There is no more urgent time than now to break down the compartmentalised thinking that separates trust in God from the world of work. There needn’t be a separation between what goes on in Church and in our prayers – and what goes on in the office or in the boardroom or on the shop floor.”

### **Conclusion**

19. Altogether the report on lifestyle has been very positively received. There is the widespread feeling that as a Church we need to be giving serious consideration to the various subjects involved and taking appropriate action. In at least one quarter there was the assessment that the report was not nearly radical enough in its feel. There is the apparent danger that Christians, according to a phrase coined by Frank Lake, can suffer from “hardening of the oughterries”, meaning that they never succeed in carrying out their intentions. How serious are the readers about implementing some of the ideas in the report.

20. Overall again there was the desire that lifestyle issues should be incorporated into Congregational mission plans and any discipleship strategies adopted by the General Assembly Boards and Agencies. It is certainly the intention of the Committee to refer to any of the relevant issues raised in connection with Church buildings, for example, to the Environment Panel.

21. The Christian responds to the incredible fullness of life received in Jesus Christ with praise and thanksgiving. In celebrating His grace and favour, it is important to rejoice in His unfailing provision and to enjoy His marvellous creation all around. The Christian covenants with Him to cherish and look after the world in which He has placed us, promising to bequeath it in a much better state to our children. His amazing generosity compels us towards sacrificial giving to the needs of others. As followers of Jesus Christ we need to be constantly reminded that we are citizens of another Kingdom. Consequently, it is important to prioritise worship and relationships over constant toiling and stressful daily living; giving away rather than endlessly accumulating; appreciating what has been given rather than selfishly squandering resources; and cultivating a servant-heart in preferring the needs of others.

### Christian Muslim Relations

22. In many parts of the world there is an interface between the Church of Jesus Christ and Islam. Relationships can often be fraught and tense. Similar to many other European countries Ireland, both North and South, has been enjoying an influx of workers from many diverse countries, cultures and religions. The Committee has begun discussing ways of relating to the growing numbers of Muslims in our island home. It has called together a meeting of representatives from BMI and BMO as well as its own relevant Panel Conveners to discuss ways in which we can relate to the Muslim community in a neighbourly way. A conference is one possibility that is being mooted.

### International Relations

23. Next session the Committee will consider establishing another Panel to comment on international issues of importance, including the global economy and peace and peacemaking.

## PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

*The Rev Dr Robert Buick reports:*

1. Climate Change/Global Warming has been rarely out of the news headlines during the past year, accompanied by dire warnings of the impact upon the Environment, wildlife and mankind across the world. Despite the misgivings of some, including the Northern Ireland Assembly's Minister for the Environment Sammy Wilson MLA, Climate Change is an established scientific fact, even if the factors causing it and the magnitude of its effects may be disputed. Those who are already suffering and are likely to suffer most from the effects of such Climate Change are the world's poor. The Environment Panel calls upon Congregations to consider their witness to Christ in this area, examining our:

**Theology:** Respect for our Creator and His Creation, the root of the current crisis is actually not environmental but spiritual.

**Witness:** Christ came into the world to give life not death and Christians need to preach this good news to all creation.

**Action:** Love for our fellow human beings must be shown by living in a manner which does not hurt or disadvantage them. Our rejection of consumerism must be demonstrated in favour of a simpler but sustainable lifestyle. Bridges need to be built between the religious and secular in society and it is necessary to work with politicians to reshape society.

2. During the year, two members of the Panel attended the European Christian Environmental Network conference which focused on Climate Change, while one of our members attended a Conference on Faith and the Environment.

3. The Panel would encourage individual Congregations contemplating building/renovating their property to ensure that appropriate energy saving measures are incorporated into the plans at an early stage (General Assembly Reports 2008, p 137, res 10). Such measures can often reduce running costs as



well as having a positive impact upon the environment and grants are often available to encourage and support such work.

4. Panel members paid a visit during the year to just such a carbon neutral demonstration project in Edenderry, where the Church/Hall heating system uses wood pellets as the fuel source instead of the more usual fossil fuel based oil burner.

5. The Panel was also involved in providing input into other issues affecting the local environment such as fishing policy in the Lough Foyle and Carlingford areas.

### PANEL ON RACE RELATIONS

*The Rev Richard Kerr reports:*

1. The global economic downturn is inevitably having an impact on immigrants and race relations. Tensions between immigrants and indigenous people have been evident, as jobs and resources become more limited.

2. This has been most graphically illustrated in South Africa where tensions between local people and immigrants from other Sub-Saharan African countries erupted in May with the loss of some 60 lives. Our partners in South Africa, the Diakonia Council of Churches and the Vuleka Trust were in the frontline of providing emergency support for immigrants and in defusing the xenophobia.

3. Immigrants in the Republic of Ireland are struggling to find work and many are returning to their home countries. However there is also an increase in homeless migrants especially from the A8 Eastern European countries.

4. Government cutbacks in funding of institutions that provide protection for vulnerable people and seek to address racism, have exacerbated the situation. Further, more draconian immigration legislation and enforcement procedures in both jurisdictions have given rise to concerns that governments are implementing ever-increasing controls at the expense of vulnerable immigrants.

5. Two aspects of this cause greatest concern:

- (a) the effective end of the Common Travel Area between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and
- (b) increased powers being granted to immigration officers without the provision of corresponding safeguards.

6. One result of this increased legislation and more rigorous enforcement is to create a significant and more vulnerable 'irregular' underclass of immigrants who have no legal protection, virtually no hope of getting their immigration status regularised and who are particularly open to exploitation by unscrupulous employers.

7. Presbyterian Congregations, especially in the Republic of Ireland, but also increasingly in Northern Ireland, are coming into contact with these people. The paper entitled "Irregular immigration, responding to a dilemma facing Congregations and individuals" is an attempt to provide a resource to encourage Congregations to engage with the underlying issues.

8. At the 2008 General Assembly the Rev Peter McDowell, at that time Minister of Christchurch in Limerick, gave an impassioned address to the Assembly regarding the plight of a Pakistani man attached to his Congregation

who sought asylum in the Republic of Ireland on grounds of religious persecution. The Panel is delighted to report that he has now been granted asylum. To what extent the Church's lobbying of the Justice Department of the Irish Government had an impact is impossible to say.

9. The Race Relations Panel continues to meet regularly and keeps a watching brief on developments in both jurisdictions. It also works closely with other Church and inter-Church organisations involved in immigration issues. For example, the All Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) produced a directory of migrant led Churches which is a useful snapshot of an ever changing Church landscape on this island.

10. As always the Panel is grateful for the wealth of often unheralded work being done by Congregations, both North and South, in welcoming immigrants and engaging with many of the issues that arise.

### **Race Relations Grants**

Vuleka Trust (South Africa)	£750
Diakonia Council of Churches (South Africa)	£750
Embrace (NI)	£1,000
Churches' Asylum Network (ROI)	£500
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£3,000</b>

## **APPENDIX**

### **Irregular Immigration: responding to a dilemma faced by Congregations and individuals**

#### **Rationale**

**The purpose of this paper is to provide Presbyterian Congregations and individuals with information and suggestions to help them engage with those whose immigration status has become irregular, undocumented or illegal.**

- Basic information is provided on the nature, causes and implications of irregular immigration.
- In a society where we are so frequently influenced by the media or government spin; especially regarding immigration issues, we have included some pointers from scripture to stimulate biblically based engagement.
- Finally, we have suggested some pointers for engaging with people, and sources of information and assistance.

#### **Setting the Scene**

**John** is a Christian from a predominantly Muslim country. He came to Ireland on a tourist visa four years ago, but did not return home when his visa expired. He works casually but struggles to find continuous employment due to his immigration status. He is very open to exploitation by unscrupulous employers and has a poor quality of life, as he is very wary of where he socialises.

In his home country John was clearly discriminated against because of his faith, and suffered torture in detention while under investigation for proselytising. John has considered applying for asylum, but has been advised that due to the time which has elapsed since he has come to this country, that his story would most probably be discounted. He does not see voluntary repatriation as an option, even to another part of his home country, as he fears for his safety.

John has been to a number of Churches in Ireland but is reluctant to confide his immigration status for fear of rejection.

**Donna** is from Uganda. She applied for asylum here two years ago, shortly after she arrived. Recently she heard that her application for asylum has been refused. Further she has received a letter informing her that she will be removed from the country. An appeal is pending.

Donna regularly worships with a Presbyterian Congregation in the provincial town in which she lives. She has been welcomed and accepted. However she has recently been reticent about attending because she is embarrassed by her status and reluctant to talk about how she feels. Further, she was stung by a comment made by one member inferring that she was bogus when her asylum claim was initially refused.

Scarred from previous experiences of rejection, Donna withdraws into herself and becomes quite depressed. Her Minister is sympathetic but simply doesn't understand the situation. In any case he is caught between influential others who feel the Church should take a tougher line on failed asylum seekers.

**Paul** came to Ireland from Canada five years ago to complete his Master's degree. After graduation he stayed on, working from home in IT. He is heavily involved in his local Presbyterian Congregation, playing guitar in their praise group. However Paul has never addressed the fact that he has no regular immigration status.

Paul, Donna and John's stories, although fictional, are based on the lives of real people who live in Ireland today and who have sought a home in the Presbyterian Church. Their stories serve to highlight some of the challenges faced by immigrants and the members and leadership of Congregations that come in contact with them.

### **Issues involved**

Many of the problems that arise regarding immigration status have to do with a lack of understanding about the way the system works, the factors that have brought immigrants to this country and the way terminology is used; particularly by the media.

The terminology of legality and illegality are highly emotive. Even the term 'asylum seeker' which should carry with it the connotations of refuge and protection has become a term of abuse. As a label it is frequently unhelpful and masks the fact that everyone has the right to seek asylum, and indeed that every person seeking asylum is a person in their own right. It should also be noted that anyone within the asylum system, even if they are appealing a rejection of their application, is not illegal.

As the three examples above suggest, whether someone is legal or illegal in terms of their immigration status is invariably more complex than we might at first imagine. Of course, there are those who knowingly and willingly exploit the

system. There are others whose status is 'illegal' or 'irregular' may have become so through no fault of their own, by circumstances beyond their control or indeed through a lack of understanding of how the immigration system works.

A trafficked person will most probably have had no say in what jurisdiction they find themselves. Even a smuggled person, at the mercy of people smugglers may arrive in a country other than where he or she had intended.

Frequently, people from African, Asian and South American countries, due to the political and administrative systems in their home countries assume that immigration status can be 'negotiated'. Many are surprised to discover this is not possible.

As noted, the term illegal is frequently an emotive rather than a descriptive term. Therefore we must be cautious about using the term 'illegal' of any person. "Irregular" or "undocumented" are possible alternatives.

Further we need to consider why people are deemed legal or illegal. Who makes this decision and on what rationale is it based?

It would appear that present government policy (regarding immigration) is based on economic and political considerations over concern for the individual immigrant; regardless of their need for protection, dignity or financial security.

Examples of this include denying some non-EU immigrants the opportunity of having their families join them and the constant emphasis on reducing the numbers of people applying for asylum. Providing refuge for those with a well-founded fear of persecution cannot be based on numbers. Every case must be considered in its own merit.

The situation is not helped by Government immigration legislation and policy and the frequent changes that have been implemented over the past few years. Some of these changes have been 'imposed' from a central European administration that is increasingly closing its borders to those from outside the EU. The term "Fortress Europe" is a reflection of this trend.

As Christians we must take care with the labels we attach to people. We must also be prepared to challenge the perceptions of the (dominant) culture in which we live in the light of scripture.

### **What the Bible has to say?**

The Bible provides a number of important principles which are applicable to immigrants, whatever their status.

### **The value God places on every human being**

In His creative and redemptive acts God has a great deal to say about the value of humanity. Human beings are created in His image, for relationship with Himself and with each other, and as such have an inherent value and dignity. This stands for every human being; whether they are a follower of Jesus Christ or not.

The incarnation; God with us, and Jesus' sacrificial death are a reminder of the lengths to which God is prepared to go to bring a rebellious and broken humanity back into relationship with Himself. If therefore, we believe that God placed such a value on humanity, should we not likewise reach out to people regardless of who they are or where they are from?

### **Welcoming the Stranger**

The book of Exodus is the account of God's intervention in the lives of His people to take them from slavery and bring them into a new future. The people are commanded to welcome the alien and stranger in their land because of their own past as strangers in Egypt. (Ex 22:21)

This is reiterated in Leviticus 19:33-34 "when an alien lives with you in your land, do not ill-treat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God." (NIV)

God defines Himself as being a God who is concerned about justice and righteousness in society, particularly for those who have no power and no voice. He expects His people to share this commitment.

### **Jesus as Stranger**

Jesus lived as a stranger on earth (John 1:10-11), spending time in Egypt as a refugee (Matt 2:13ff) and living a life of misunderstanding and rejection.

Peter reminds His followers that they too are aliens and strangers; reminding them that their citizenship is in heaven rather than earth. (2 Peter 2:11)

### **Hospitality**

Hospitality is a thread running through scripture. It is highlighted in the life of Abraham (Gen 18 and Heb 13:2) and expanded in the life of Jesus. Jesus' hospitality was open and inclusive, frequently bringing Him into conflict with the religious leaders. In His teaching and by His action Jesus included those on the margins of society and made it clear that it was to people such as these that He came. (cf: Luke 7:36-40, Luke 19:1-10 and Luke 15:11-32)

### **Submission to Human Authorities**

However we cannot ignore the fact that there are commands in scripture to submit to civil authorities. Peter tells his recipients to "submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men." (1 Peter 2:13) Paul instructs the Roman believers to submit themselves "to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established." (Rom 13)

Jesus Himself told His disciples to "give to Caesar what is Caesar's." (Matt 22:21)

Jesus, Paul and Peter are all speaking in a context where a pagan and frequently unsympathetic empire was impinging on the life of the individual and the community of God's people. It is clear that human authorities, no matter how corrupt or un-Christian they may be, are not simply to be rejected or opposed.

### **Obedience to God's commands**

Jesus, Peter and Paul all appear to advocate submission to some degree to the authorities. However as we delve into the context we do discover that giving to Caesar what is Caesar's is also paired with giving "to God what is God's" and submission to authorities for Peter is for the Lord's sake.

So too for Paul; implicit for understanding Romans 13 is the fact that it is to God that we are to ultimately submit.

It must also be understood that Jesus, and most probably Peter and Paul went to their deaths because they were not prepared to submit to earthly authorities at the expense of obeying God.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we have a responsibility to critique the immigration system in the light of God's word.

### **How do we respond?**

Congregations in Ireland are privileged to come in contact with and receive people from many different nations, people groups, with different languages and cultures. This is a great opportunity and must be seen as such. We have so much to learn from others and we need to be open to be challenged by different ways of doing Church and living the Christian life.

It also poses many challenges. People who have different approaches will inevitably challenge our perceptions and attitudes. Those who are seeking asylum and who may have suffered persecution or hardship may need considerable support and perhaps healing.

The immigration status of those with whom we come in contact – through our Congregations or elsewhere – may be far from clear. Others may be irregular or undocumented. How are we to respond?

We would suggest various pointers:

### **Welcome**

- Welcome immigrants with compassion and understanding. Prying into people's immigration status may well frighten them away from somewhere where they can feel accepted as people. Many immigrants feel especially vulnerable as they are far from home and the familiar.
- Be sensitive to the complexities of their situation and to what they may have come through. Therefore don't make sweeping judgements.

### **Get Informed**

- Get informed about the immigration system and how it works. A useful place to start is to visit the websites of or contact the organisations listed at the end of this document.
- Find out about the immigrant's home country, background, reasons for coming to Ireland and their immigration status. Within a Congregational context, while ensuring that an immigrant is included in the community, it may be best if one person acts as a contact point regarding immigration issues.
- Be aware that only a small number of agencies are permitted to give immigration advice. Should you have specific immigration queries (NI) contact the Law Centre helpline on 90244401. In the ROI contact the Immigrant Council of Ireland. Tel: 01 6740200 and website: [www.immigrantcouncil.ie](http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie)

- Providing a welcome, including food and accommodation for an ‘irregular’ migrant is perfectly legitimate and should be encouraged. Providing or arranging employment is in breach of immigration legislation.

### Consider

- Weigh up the situation based on the information you have gathered and in light of scripture.
- Respect people’s confidentiality and pastoral sensitivities.
- Don’t be naïve about the complexities and potential implications. As noted above there are a wide range of reasons why people’s immigration status is irregular.
- Put yourself in the shoes of the immigrant. How are they feeling? Are you their only confidant? What options are open to them? What are the implications of those options?
- Consider what is best for the immigrant. This may include attempting to regularise their status or assisting repatriation. Do be aware that the immigration system mitigates against people with irregular immigration status, even where it may appear that they have valid grounds for an asylum claim.
- Take advice from experienced professionals such as the Law Centre or the Immigration Council of Ireland.
- Discuss with the person(s) the implications of their situation and the options open to them. Remember that they may well feel very vulnerable.
- Enable people to make their own decisions with as full an understanding as possible of the implications.
- There are a number of organisations who can help with repatriation, including the International Organisation for Migration. (see contact details below)

### Useful Contacts

- Frequently when a Congregation or an individual comes in contact with a person with irregular immigration status they are unsure what to do. There are many people and organisations who have considerable experience in this area.
- The Convener of the Race Relations Panel; the Rev Richard Kerr: E-mail: [rkerr@presbyterianireland.org](mailto:rkerr@presbyterianireland.org). Telephone: 028 94439447 or 07816837500

### Northern Ireland

- **The Law Centre (NI)**  
E-mail: [admin.Belfast@lawcentreni.org](mailto:admin.Belfast@lawcentreni.org). Telephone: 028 90244401  
*Provides legal advice and has a confidential immigration helpline (mornings only Mon-Fri)*
- **Bryson One Stop Service for Asylum Seekers**

E-mail: [infor@brysononestopservice.com](mailto:infor@brysononestopservice.com). Telephone: 028 90439226  
*Information regarding asylum claims and support*

- **Embrace**  
 E-mail: [infor@embraceni.org](mailto:infor@embraceni.org). Website: [www.embraceni.org](http://www.embraceni.org).  
 Telephone: 07969921328  
*General information regarding immigration and how Churches can respond.*
- **STEP** (South Tyrone Empowerment Programme) Telephone: 028 87739002  
*Migrant Worker support services in Mid-Ulster area.*
- **International Organisation for Migration**. Website: [www.iomlondon.org](http://www.iomlondon.org).  
 E-mail: [jshort@iomlondon.org](mailto:jshort@iomlondon.org). Telephone: 0141 5488111  
*Repatriation services.*

### Republic of Ireland

- **Immigrant Council of Ireland**  
 Tel: 01 6740200, Website [www.immigrantcouncil.ie](http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie)  
*Their Information and Support Service can be contacted by telephone on (01) 674 0200 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10am to 12.30pm and 2pm to 4.30pm. Tend to deal with complex cases and have a legal team.*
- Vincentian Refugee Centre  
 St Peter's Church, Phibsborough, Dublin 7,  
 Tel: 01 8102580 E-mail: [refugeecentrephibsboro@eircom.net](mailto:refugeecentrephibsboro@eircom.net)  
 Website: [www.stpetersphibsboro.ie/vrc.htm](http://www.stpetersphibsboro.ie/vrc.htm)  
*Seek to provide practical help.*
- **Irish Refugee Council**  
 2nd Floor, Ballast House, Aston Quay, Dublin 2  
 Tel: 01 764 5854, E-mail: [info@irishrefugeecouncil.ie](mailto:info@irishrefugeecouncil.ie), Website: [www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie](http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie)  
*Deal with matters relating to policy and advocacy.*
- **Migrant Rights Centre Ireland**  
 55 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1  
 Tel: (01) 889 7570 E-mail: [info@mrci.ie](mailto:info@mrci.ie) Website [www.mrci.ie](http://www.mrci.ie)  
*Provide advice on all issues to do with immigration.*
- **Refugee Information Service (RIS)**  
 18 Dame Street, Dublin 2, Tel: 01 6453070 Website: [www.ris.ie](http://www.ris.ie)
- **RIS Galway**  
 Canavan House, Nun's Island, Galway  
 Tel: 091 532 850, E-mail: [info@galway@ris.ie](mailto:info@galway@ris.ie),
- **International Organisation for Migration**  
 7 Hill Street, Dublin 1, Tel: 01 8787900, Fax: 01 8787901  
 E-mail: [iomdublin@iom.int](mailto:iomdublin@iom.int) Website: <http://www.iomdublin.org>
- **DORAS LUMNI Ltd**  
 Mount St Alphonsus, South Circular Road, Limerick  
 Tel: 061-310328, E-mail: [dorasluimni@eircom.net](mailto:dorasluimni@eircom.net)  
 Website: [www.dorasluimni.org](http://www.dorasluimni.org)



*Provide Advice, Assistance and Classes for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrant Workers.*

- **Nasc – The Irish Immigrant Support Centre**  
Enterprise House, 35 Mary Street, Cork  
Tel: 021-4317411, E-mail: info@nascireland.org  
Website: www.nascireland.org
- **Cois Tine**  
St Mary's, Pope's Quay, Cork  
Tel: 021-4557760, E-mail: coistinecork@eircom.net  
Website: www.coistine.ie  
*Give advice to asylum seekers and refugees*
- **Parish-Based Integration Project**  
Tel: 01 2690951 E-mail: Adrian@iccsi.ie,  
Website: www.iccsi.ie,  
*Useful resources for Churches*
- **Refugee and Migrant Project of the Irish Bishop's Conference**  
Tel: 01 5053157 E-mail: refproject@iecon.ie

#### PANEL ON PEACE AND PEACEMAKING

*The Rev Liz Hughes reports:*

1. This report is written at the end of March as headlines catch the eye – School closes in security alert – Man charged over soldier murders – City hoax bomb alerts condemned – Man shot in legs in city attack – Teenager charged with murder of policeman.

2. It is clear that the task of peacemaking in Ireland North and South remains an on-going and urgent challenge. While it is right to talk about being in a post-conflict situation – there is still so much to learn about living together and respecting each other as neighbours – neighbours who happen to come from different cultures but need to share this piece of land together. Members of the Church have more reason than most to be at the forefront of responding to this challenge – all of us are called to be out there in our communities following the gospel imperative of loving our neighbour.

3. Once again it has been a very busy year for the Panel – a hardworking “hands on” bunch of people who make the Convener's job very easy. Panel members helped organise, plan and in some cases tell their Church community's story upfront. At the Conference last November, “CSI Ulster”, Dr David Stevens a member of the Panel was also the main speaker. Next year's Conference is due to take place on Saturday, 7 November, 2009.

4. In addition tribute must be paid to Doug Baker and John Peacock for the detailed painstaking work they have done in attempting to find external funding to build on the work of the initial three year project.

5. The Panel has hugely benefited by the expertise and organisational abilities of the two programme officers – Laura Coulter and Deborah Erwin. Coming towards the end of their three year appointments both have produced significant reports on remarkable goals achieved in that time and the challenge of work yet to be undertaken. Deborah's Report will no doubt feature in the

Youth and Children's Board pages, but Laura's Report, which she produced for discussion under the wider heading "The future of peacemaking in PCI" is included here. Read in parallel the two reports make exceptionally challenging reading.

*Laura writes as follows:*

### **Introduction**

Funding for the PCI Peacemaking Programme (youth and adult) comes to an end in June 2009, with the loss of 2 full-time posts. A major strategic aim of the peacemaking programme was to help increase acceptance within PCI that peacebuilding and reconciliation are a priority in the ministry of the Church as a whole. To some extent this has been realised.

Yet, in order to build on progress made over the last 3 years, there remains a strong sense that this work must continue and be grounded within the denomination. The wider context in which we now find ourselves trying to deal with the past offers a valuable opportunity for PCI to engage with the issues facing our community. (See March 09 Herald, p19-21). Coming from these contexts, I will outline the key areas of work, which have developed since 2006. I will offer some suggestions, with the aim of integrating peace building and reconciliation work more fully into the life of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

**1. Gospel in Conflict course** – this 5 week course was produced during 2006 and launched in 2007. Since then, I have promoted the course throughout PCI and delivered it in Congregations and Presbyteries. I have trained a small number of facilitators to run the course.

*Post June 09, the Peacemaking Panel can continue to support the delivery of the course, although it may be helpful to have a contact person as a first port of call.*

**2. Transforming our Community** – this was developed as follow-on from the Gospel in Conflict, which was delivered in Lisburn in 2007. It is a 5 week cross-community course, which aims to enable participants to explore the links between faith, the Gospel and community relations in Lisburn. It has recently been delivered in Lisburn, in partnership with Lisburn City Council, Churches Together in Lisburn and Dromore Presbytery.

*I had hoped that this would be a pilot course, which could be developed in other areas along a similar model. It is unlikely that this will be taken forward post June 09. There is also a strong desire on the part of the Lisburn group to further develop the work – they are currently exploring how this might happen.*

**3. Peace Agents' Structure** – I have been working closely with many peace agents to support their work and to offer training opportunities. Training days for Presbytery peace agents and annual conferences for all have become an important part of the Peacemaking Programme. Some Work has also been done on the peace agents' structure and recruiting process.

*This can continue to some extent, under the Peacemaking Panel. I have set up a peace agents' Sub-Committee, which could continue to offer support and develop the peace agents' structure in PCI.*

**4. Resources** – I have produced Peacemaking News 2/3 times a year; I set up a new website as part of the PCI website. Other resources produced include the new conciliation leaflet and conference leaflets.

*The website and newsletter can be continued by dedicated personnel from the Peacemaking Panel.*

**5. Conciliation Service** – this currently sits within the Moderator's Advisory Committee. I have been co-ordinating this service jointly with the Rev Doug Baker. It is not clear who will take this on, post June 09. The number of conciliation cases being referred has been rising and, in my view, the present structure is unsustainable. We have been involved in 11 conciliation cases since 2007. Interventions have ranged from telephone support to formal mediation processes. There is a clear need for this service to be developed within the denomination. A working group to assess the service and how it might be developed would be helpful.

*One option could be to move it to the Board of Social Witness, where a link already exists with the Panel for Pastoral Care for Manse Families.*

**6. Conciliation Training** – this area of work has been also growing in the last few years and I have responded to requests for training in handling conflict in the Church both at Congregational and Presbytery level (see table 2). Again, there is a need for training in this area across the denomination, both at Congregational and Presbytery levels.

*One possibility may be to develop the existing link between the Peacemaking Panel and the Board of Christian Training, so that this training in the prevention of conflict in the Church would become more widely known and accessible to PCI Congregations.*

**7. Engaging with Loyalist Communities** – this piece of work developed from a peacemaking conference in 2007. Some Ministers working in loyalist areas expressed a desire for a support group and think-tank to assist them in developing their ministry and mission in these areas. Through the Peacemaking Panel, I helped to set this up and consequently was asked to do something similar in North Belfast. This is a developing work, which requires further strategic thinking and exploration.

*There is some overlap with BMI's strategy for urban mission, so it is possible that this work could be taken forward by BMI and the Peacemaking Panel working collaboratively.*

**8. Peacemaking Overseas** – I was asked by BMO to help train their new peacemaking officer in Nairobi, while he was living in Ireland. This subsequently led to an invite from PCEA to deliver training on conflict transformation to Church leaders in Nairobi in July 2008. The training took place over 2 days to around 40 Presbyterian leaders in Kenya. Other global peace building work was recently highlighted at an evening in Union TC, organised jointly by both adult and youth peacemaking officers and BMO, when Joe Campbell spoke about his work in Nepal and the growing need for reconciliation work across the world today. BMO currently support 2 peace-building workers overseas.

*There is an opportunity for PCI to offer lessons learnt in Northern Ireland and skills in conflict transformation to conflicted countries. This is an area of developing work for BMO to consider.*

The final aim of the Peacemaking Programme is to encourage Boards and Committees in PCI to integrate peace building work into their structures. While some work has been done in partnership with the two mission Boards, the challenge still remains of how to ground the vital work of peacebuilding across the structures of the denomination. (*End of discussion paper*).

In March of this year the General Board at the request of the Panel, agreed to set up an ad hoc group to look at this issue and report to the Priorities Committee under the Convenership of the Clerk – this is to include Representatives from the Boards of Mission in Ireland, Mission Overseas, Youth and Children’s Ministry, along with Conveners of Church and Society and Global Concerns. By the time this report is read the Panel will have met twice, with all around the table recognising the gospel imperative of building good relations. As a Panel we are delighted that the whole Church is now taking this issue on board but deeply regret the absence of funding to provide full time staffing for the vital roles of advocacy, promotion and training.

CHARLES McMULLEN, Convener

## CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met twice during the year to consider the various aspects of its important remit. As part of the one Church of Jesus Christ, PCI has much to receive from and give to the wider Church, and in such mutual sharing, it is our belief and prayer that all will experience an enrichment that would not be possible if a more isolationist stance and ethos were promoted as a denomination. The Committee is grateful to those who, in this spirit, have participated in various inter-Church activities over the past year and who have kept the Committee abreast of the important issues involved.

2. **Irish Council of Churches.** The AGM was held on 2 April, 2009 at Gracehill Moravian Church. The theme was ‘Living for Tomorrow’s World – Green? Global? Greedy?’ at which the keynote speaker was Dr Lorna Gold, Trocaire, with a response from the Rev Dr Mark Gray. The meeting was chaired by the Rev Tony Davidson, in the second of his two years as ICC president. His successor will be the Most Rev Richard Clarke, who will preside on behalf of the Church of Ireland from 2010-2012, and from 2012-2014 the presidency will be undertaken for the first time by the Lifelink Network of Churches. The new website has seen an increase of 45% in the number of users. A resource called ‘Directory of Migrant-led Churches and Chaplaincies’ has highlighted the noteworthy fact that there are 361 new faith communities in existence in Ireland. The Irish School of Ecumenics (ISE) is launching a three-year research initiative entitled ‘Visioning 21st Century Ecumenism: Diversity, Dialogue and Reconciliation’. Its focus will be on case studies and empirical research in both jurisdictions. It is also to be seen as a contribution to celebrating the centenary of the 1910 Edinburgh World Mission Conference. Details were drawn up for the hoped for appointment of an Ecumenical Officer to work part-time in the Republic of Ireland based in Dublin.

Draft wording for an agreed policy and process for those Churches considering membership was considered by the Executive since several

Churches have joined in recent years, and others are considering doing so – the key aspects of this are as follows:

- (1) ‘The Irish Council of Churches (ICC) seeks to create spaces where Irish Churches from all traditions may pray, dialogue and act together.’
- (2) The ICC invites written applications for membership from:
  - Churches or recognised associations of Churches within one Christian tradition having a reasonable spread of Congregations on the island of Ireland, and
  - Churches which, while only having a few worship centres on the island of Ireland, are part of much larger historic Churches with significant membership in other places of the world and who
  - Accept the constitution of ICC;
  - Accept that membership of the ICC involves active participation with the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland in the Irish Inter-Church Meeting;
  - Have demonstrated evidence of inter-Church engagement and commitment on this island;
  - Have their own Church policies in place to protect children and the vulnerable using their facilities or service ministries (templates of which are available from the ICC office);
  - Are willing to test out their commitment and understanding about membership by journeying with the other member Churches of ICC over a 12 month period with opportunity to participate in meetings of the ICC Executive with the freedom to speak but not vote;
  - Are committed to participate in the life of the Council’s activities; pay an annual subscription and attend the Annual General Meeting;
  - Are broadly acceptable to the ICC member Churches.
- (3) Although the Irish Council of Churches was from its inception (1922) based on a *co-operative* rather than a *credal* model for ecumenical endeavour, it would nevertheless understand itself as basing its fellowship around an affirmation of Christian faith which – in company with other ecumenical bodies – proclaims Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures and seeks to fulfil a common calling to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**3. Irish Inter-Church Committee.** Cardinal Sean Brady gave a report on the visit of ‘The Four Church Leaders’ visit to the Holy Land back in 2008. Father Kieran McDermott was appointed by the IEC (Irish Episcopal Conference) to replace the late Monsignor Paddy Devine as a member of IICC. Much discussion took place on the three ‘fora’ which are part of the IICC – (1) Churches and Society; (2) Board of Overseas Affairs and (3) Theological Questions. The issues raised in these discussions require further clarification and decision.

**4. Irish Inter-Church Meeting.** Preparations are being made for a special conference on ‘Baptism’ to be held at the Emmaus Centre near Dublin

on Thursday 22 October, 2009. This theme was studied extensively back in the 1980's but a fresh look at this crucial topic has been urged upon the Churches as result of EEA3 (Third European Ecumenical Assembly) held by CEC (Conference of European Churches) in Sibiu in September 2007.

**5. Conference of European Churches.** The 13th CEC Assembly is due to take place in Lyon, France, 15-21 July, 2009. Three delegates are already intending to attend on PCI's behalf with the possibility of a fourth delegate (specifically a young person) being pursued at the time of writing.

**6. World Alliance of Reformed Churches.** Plans for the merger of WARC and REC (Reformed Ecumenical Council) to become a new body called WCRC (World Communion of Reformed Churches) are continuing apace for the Uniting General Council Meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, 18-28 June 2010. Four delegates have been chosen to represent PCI at this important event. As part of the preparation process for this the convener attended a very informative and stimulating European area theological consultation in Rudlingen near Zurich, Switzerland, 8-12 March, 2009 in place of the Rev Dr Donald Watts who was committed to PCI Board meetings that week.

7. Two appendices follow in the report. The first is from the Rev Charles McMullen who reports on the work of the 'Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages'. The second is from the Rev Alan Martin who reports of his 'observer' status on the 'Covenant between the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Church of Ireland'.

## APPENDIX I

### Inter-Church Standing Committee on Mixed Marriages

1. A meeting of the Committee was held in Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, Newry, Co Down, on Thursday, 13 November, 2008. Bishop Anthony Farquhar acted as Chairman. Apologies were received from Bishop Gerard Clifford, the Rev Elizabeth Hewitt and Father Brendan Leahy. Those in attendance were Dr Kenneth Dunn, the Most Rev Anthony Farquhar, the Rev Charles McMullen, the Very Rev Brendan Murray, Father Eamon Martin and Canon Victor Stacey.

#### Update on Membership

2. The Rev David Turtle has retired after many years of service to the Committee as the Methodist representative and has been succeeded by the Rev Elizabeth Hewitt. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland was in the process of appointing a new member of the Committee after the recent resignation of the Rev Elizabeth Hughes. The Rev Eamon Martin was welcomed as the new Executive Secretary of the Irish Episcopal Conference, replacing the Rev Aidan O'Boyle.

#### Minutes

3. Members perused the minutes of the last meeting which was held two years ago on Thursday, 16 November, 2006. There were no matters arising.

### **Joint Preparation for Inter-Church Marriage**

4. Reference was made to a recent course organised in the Greater Belfast area for couples preparing for Inter-Church marriage. It was agreed that similar courses organised by ACCORD remained very valuable, although it was unfortunate that numbers participating seemed to be in decline. ACCORD was currently undertaking an evaluation and major review of its courses. The perception was that some Inter-Church couples were still participating in marriage preparation courses organised by individual Congregations, but this removed the valuable cross denominational element. A wider discussion ensued about trends in society, including secularisation and the move away from traditional weddings in a Church setting. There was the evident need for the four Churches to defend the sanctity of Christian marriage. The comment was made that the ever more aggressive onslaught of secularism rendered the differences between the four Churches on marriage much smaller.

### **Recent Trends in Inter-Church Marriage**

5. Dr Kenneth Dunn reported on the work of the Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association (NIMMA). Support from the Reconciliation Fund of the Anglo Irish Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin had enabled the employment of a Development Officer. Unfortunately criteria did not permit grants from Community Relations in Northern Ireland.

A grant from the Columbanus Community Trust had been used to send copies of the NIMMA booklet on mixed marriage to parishes and Congregations, from which there had been considerable feedback. Some of the comments reflected hurt, grievance, and the need for more dialogue across the main Church divide.

There had been a marked increase in couples discussing Inter-Church baptism. There was some advocacy for concelebrated baptism, but the majority opinion of the Committee was that although there was one baptism, the sacrament was administered within the context of the local faith community. Sometimes children of Inter-Church couples were baptised in one tradition and then confirmed or received into full membership in another. There was also some discussion about the role of baptism amongst couples presenting themselves for marriage.

Dr Dunn spoke about a NIMMA Conference which was held recently in Dromantine and that representatives had attended equivalent events in England and the United States of America.

He also expressed the concern of some Inter-Church couples who find difficulties when completing equal opportunities' monitoring questionnaires, where they are asked to indicate the community to which they belong by ticking Protestant or Roman Catholic. This was because they saw themselves as belonging to both categories.

Mention was made to the Civil Partnership legislation currently being prepared in the Irish Republic and there was discussion of possible implications in relation to marriage as we understand it.

### **Pastoral Care of Inter-Church Families**

6. It was agreed that trends remained generally positive in both preparation for Inter-Church marriages and the arrangement of wedding services. It was noted, however, that some individual Ministers and members of the clergy appear to remain opposed to Inter-Church marriage, leading to considerable distress in the families involved. Dr Kenneth Dunn urged deeper pastoral concern, greater understanding, flexibility and conciliation. The comment was made that Inter-Church couples can sometimes approach the Church with misapprehension or preconceptions, and misunderstanding can easily occur.

The point was made in the course of the discussion that the pain was often greater in terms of compromise for Inter-Church couples or individuals within the relationship who were most committed to their particular faith background.

### **Date and Venue of Next Meeting:**

7. It was agreed to meet again in two year's time on 18 November, 2010 again at Dromantine. The Committee would be called together should any pressing issues emerge in the meantime. Members shared the grace together.

### **Membership of Committee:**

Most Rev Gerard Clifford  
 Dr Kenneth Dunn  
 Most Rev Anthony Farquhar (Co-Chairperson)  
 Rev Elizabeth Hewitt  
 Rev Brendan Leahy  
 Rev Charles McMullen (Joint Secretary)  
 Very Rev Brendan Murray  
 Rev Eamon Martin (Joint Secretary)  
 Canon Victor Stacey

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Covenant between The Methodist Church in Ireland and The Church of Ireland**

It is now 18 years since the Presbyterian Church pulled out of the Tripartite talks with the Church of Ireland and Methodist Churches. Since then there has been considerable movement in the relationship between the C of I and Methodist Churches. In 2002 they entered into a covenant that is drawing them closer together in a shared life and common mission. This is the Covenant between The Methodist Church in Ireland and The Church of Ireland.

1. *We acknowledge one another's Churches as belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and as truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God.*

2. *We acknowledge that in each of our Churches the Word of God is authentically preached and the sacraments of baptism and holy communion authentically administered according to the command of Christ.*



3. *We acknowledge that both our Churches share in a common faith set forth in the scriptures and summarised in the historic creeds.*

4. *We acknowledge our common inheritance in traditions of spirituality and liturgy. We rejoice in our diversity from which we may mutually benefit as we continue to develop varied forms of worship as appropriate to different situations.*

5. *We acknowledge each other's ordained ministries as given by God and as instruments of his grace by which our Churches are served and built up. As pilgrims together, we look forward to the time when our ministries can be fully interchangeable and our Churches visibly united.*

6. *We acknowledge that personal, collegial and communal oversight is embodied and practised in both Churches, as each seeks to express continuity of apostolic life, mission and ministry.*

*Therefore:*

*We believe that God is calling our two Churches to a fuller relationship in which we commit ourselves*

- *to share a common life and mission.*
- *to grow together so that unity may be visibly realised.*

*As the next steps towards that goal, we agree:*

1. *to pray for and with one another and to avail of every opportunity to worship together;*

2. *to welcome one another's members to receive Holy Communion and other ministries as appropriate;*

3. *to share resources in order to strengthen the mission of the Church;*

4. *to help our members to appreciate and draw out the gifts which each of our traditions has to offer the whole people of God;*

5. *to encourage the invitation of authorised persons of each Church to minister in the other Church, as far as the current disciplines of both Churches permit;*

6. (a) *to encourage united Methodist/Church of Ireland Congregations*
- (i) *where there are joint Church schemes,*
  - (ii) *where new Churches are to be planted,*
  - (iii) *where local Congregations wish to move in this direction;*

(b) *to encourage united Methodist/Church of Ireland chaplaincy work;*

7. *to enable a measure of joint training of candidates for ordained and lay ministries of our Churches where possible and appropriate and to encourage mutual understanding at all levels in our Churches;*

8. *to establish appropriate forms of consultation on matters of faith and order, mission and service;*

9. *to participate as observers by invitation in each other's forms of governance at every possible level;*

10. *to learn more about the practice of oversight in each other's Churches in order to achieve a fuller sharing of ministries at a later stage of our relationship.*

The Covenant Council was established with representatives of the two Churches to implement the Covenant. The Council has engaged in theological

reflection on a number of issues one of which is ministerial interchangeability. The Council has recommended that the Churches now “move purposefully towards a position of the full interchangeability of all its ministries.” It is clear that the two Churches have also significantly reshaped their approaches to episcopate. For example, the 2007 report of the Council states that “Anglicanism no longer embraces the “pipeline” theory of apostolic succession.”

While these theological issues are important the Covenant Council have also seen the importance of Local Covenant Partnership. Guidelines have been produced to encourage and guide many forms of local partnership between Congregations, sharing buildings, chaplaincy partnerships, mission partnerships and education partnerships. It will take time for these to develop but both Churches are committed to making the Covenant between them as real as possible for members of both communities.

ALLEN SLEITH, Convener

## RECOGNISED MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

1. Following the decision taken in principle in 2007 to phase out the category of “Minister in recognised service”, last year’s Assembly passed overtures to remove the possibility of calls being issued to work in appointments lying outside the jurisdiction of the Assembly. However, the Assembly also asked that legislation be prepared to require that a “Minister without charge” shall be invited to sit and deliberate at Presbytery and the General Assembly. Suitable overtures are therefore appended this year.

2. The list of Ministers without charge as reported by Presbyteries was adopted as follows:

<i>Presbytery</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
Ards	Rev Dr SI Dennis	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev CD Mawhinney	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev David McKee	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev DM Spratt	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Ballymena	Rev JD McGaughey	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
North Belfast	Rev CI McKnight	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev WA Shaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev WM Smyth	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev FW Vincent	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev LH Eagleson	To be retained as Minister

South Belfast	Rev Simon Henning	without Charge. To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Belfast East	Rev RA Crooks	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Dr Eliz Jamison	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev Rex Pedlow	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev DR Baker	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev W J Harshaw	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Carrickfergus	Rev DJ Paul	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Derry/Strabane	Rev Dr LWH Hilditch	Not to be retained as Minister without Charge. (see Par 3)
	Rev JC Teeney	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Down	Rev Samuel Armstrong	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev RN Stewart	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
	Rev GR Stockdale	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev JM Casement	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Dromore	Rev JD Mark	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Foyle	Rev KG Patterson	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
Iveagh	Rev EG McAuley	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).
Route	Rev Dr Victor Dobbin	To be retained as Minister without Charge.
	Rev William Brown	To be retained as Minister without Charge (retired).

3. One Minister without charge has accepted a full-time appointment which is not under the jurisdiction of the Assembly and is therefore deemed to have resigned from his position in the Church (Code Par 219(3)(a)).

4. The following reports were received from Ministers in Recognised Service.

## Ministers in Recognised Service

### *The Rev Desi Maxwell reports:*

While still a senior teaching fellow of Belfast Bible College, I am now on the road full time with a new teaching ministry called Xplorations. ([www.xplorations.org](http://www.xplorations.org)). It has been an exciting step, fulfilling a vision to take teaching out of the classroom to a wider audience. Doors have been opening all over the place and I have been able to teach series in many Presbyterian Churches as well as other denominations. I count it a real privilege to have the freedom to respond to the real hunger among people to learn more of Scripture.

### *The Rev Dr Ruth Patterson reports:*

In 2008 Restoration Ministries celebrated its twentieth anniversary. We are grateful to God for his provision over the years and for the quiet, faithful contribution to peace and restoration that he has enabled us to make throughout the years. Our biggest event in the past year was in September 2008 when we organised 'Forward Together in Diversity', a one day event facilitated by Jean Vanier, held in Dromantine for ninety Church leaders from all over Ireland. The day to day work of praying, listening, teaching and hospitality continues to provide the structure through which people are welcomed, encouraged and blessed.

### *The Rev WJP Bailie reports:*

Mission Africa (The Qua Iboe Fellowship) is one of Ireland's oldest mission agencies. It is an unambiguously evangelical mission agency, working in partnership with like-minded missions and Churches in Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Chad. Through our daughter agency, African Christian Textbooks, we have a strong representation in Kenya, with plans to enter Ethiopia and elsewhere. The mission concentrates on four areas of ministry: evangelism and Church planting; the strengthening of existing Church bodies through theological education and Christian literature distribution; medical mission, with particular emphasis upon HIV/AIDS work; and compassionate ministry amongst disadvantaged and abused children. The mission has around 22 full time staff in the field, 3 full time staff in training, around 4-8 volunteer missionaries on 6 months – 1 year placement at any one time, and operates a thriving short term programme.

As Chief Executive I continue to have responsibility for strategic planning, administration of personnel, finance and partner relations.

Mission Africa was founded by Irish Presbyterians, so I am especially glad to report an excellent and growing relationship with the Board of Mission Overseas through the Mission Agencies Partnership. We have been delighted to see the number of strong partnerships develop between the Mission and several Congregations, such as First Carrickfergus, Second Donegore, Newmills and Lowe Memorial, to name but a few. In July 2009 a team from Tyrone Presbytery will visit Burkina Faso under the auspices of the mission. We are always at the disposal of all members and Congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland who wish to deepen their engagement in mission.

We appreciate deeply all those who maintain an interest in our work and remember us in prayer.

I am also grateful to be able to record that my status as a minister in recognised service permits me to play an active role within my Presbytery and beyond.

## **RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES COMMITTEE**

1. The Committee meet once during the year.
2. Some 18 queries were received regarding ministry in PCI but only one person officially applied and was not interviewed.
3. The Vacancy Commission of the Presbytery of Omagh requested that the Committee interview a Minister with a view to him being placed on a list for hearing by a Congregation under Code 285(4)(f). A special interview was held and the Rev Alistair Gordon, a Minister of the Church of Scotland, was approved as eligible to be placed on a list for hearing by the Congregation concerned.

IVAN J PATTERSON, Convener

## **CHURCH AND SOCIETY COMMITTEE**

1. In our ever changing society the Church and Society Committee continues in its efforts to make contributions to debate and decision-making which influence and help shape public policy from a Christian perspective. As one among other denominations, Christian lobby groups and para-church organisations the Committee is aware of the importance of committing time and resources to the task in order that public policy reflect a Christian world-view. The Committee is also aware of the broad diversity of perspectives, cultures and aspirations within Irish society, North and South. The challenge of presenting a Christian perspective without ignoring, overlooking or diminishing other perspectives is ever present.

2. In its task the Committee strives to clearly hold on to Christian values in a manner which can be understood by those who shape and make policy and in a way which is respectful of others but adamantly Christian. Unlike politicians the Committee is not tasked with representing every perspective, yet the gospel requires that the Christian should bless those who persecute them, mourn with those who mourn, rejoice with those who rejoice, while not being conceited or resisting associating with those who are considered to have little importance, being careful to do what is right and earning the respect of others and living in harmony with others. (Romans 12 vv14-17) It is, then, no small challenge to present a Christian perspective in a public arena teeming with different agendas and perspectives.

3. The Committee is conscious that its work can be driven by the world rather than by proactivity arising from gospel concerns. This is particularly true

in Northern Ireland where the number and variety of public consultations requires considerable time and energy to respond to. In the past year the Committee has responded to 7 consultations and areas of public debate: Strategic review of Parading in NI Interim Consultative Report (Appendix 1); Consultation on Widening the Jury Pool (Appendix 2); The Review of the Civic Forum (Appendix 3); Eames/Bradley Keynote Speech, 29 May 2008 (Appendix 4); The Future of Tobacco Control (Appendix 5); Consultation on Local Government Boundaries (Appendix 6); OFMDFM: Outline draft approach for Victims and Survivors (Appendix 7).

4. It is out of a concern to be more proactive in addressing concerns that the Church has about society that the Committee has agreed a number of working groups focussing on what it believes to be important in building a healthy society rather than being driven by what arrives on its agenda from the public consultation process. The working groups at present focus on Human Rights, a Shared and Better Future, the Economy, and Dealing with the Past.

5. As a first step the Committee has agreed to meet in two panels throughout the year, one addressing issues in the Republic of Ireland and one addressing issues in Northern Ireland. These panels will meet separately throughout the year but also meet together regularly to keep one another informed. The Committee will also ensure a common value base for its work and think theologically about what is on its agendas. All responses and reports will be processed through the full Committee and General Board as they have been in the past. (See Supplementary Reports). It is hoped that this structure will enable members of the Church to engage more effectively with the Committee but particularly in the Republic of Ireland where the public consultation process does not regularly put items on the Committee's agenda.

6. In Northern Ireland's post-conflict society there remain matters from the past yet to be resolved. The Eames/Bradley Consultative Group on the Past reported in January 2009. The Committee took the opportunity to engage the Group at every possible opportunity. A response to the Speech given in May 2008 was submitted (Appendix 4) and a working group has been established under the leadership of the Rev Norman Hamilton to provide a further response. At the time of writing this report the working group is still drafting its response and it is hoped that this will be completed in time for the Supplementary Reports.

7. A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland has long been a matter of discussion and debate and with the consultation period on the way forward complete there is little sign of any new insight. The Committee believe that it is time to develop a position paper of some depth on the issue of Human Rights taking a broader focus than that of a Bill of Rights. The work will be headed up by the Very Rev Dr Sam Hutchinson whose energetic work in this area has been greatly appreciated by the Committee. This working group will continue to report through the Committee and its paper will become available to the wider Church in due course. It is hoped that the work done will enable the Committee and members of the Church to provide theologically informed debate in the public arena.

8. The need to move through this post-conflict period in our history with an eye to laying the conflict to rest and building firm foundations and structures

for the future was brought home to everyone by the appalling murders of Sapper Mark Quinsey, Sapper Patrick Azimkar and Constable Stephen Carroll. These shocking reminders of what the past was like leaves no doubt that the Christian should be ever vigilant in building for a better and shared future in which the violence of the past has no place. The Committee are seeking to envision this future from a Christian perspective through a working group on a shared future led by the Rev Dr Lesley Carroll. This will enable the Committee to develop some key ideas and conversations to contribute to the debate about our future as a society which, sadly, has fallen into the background in light of political wrangling about the devolution of criminal justice and policing and in light of the economic recession. Any progress made in the area of a shared future will be reported in Supplementary Reports.

9. The economic news has shaken individual and institutional securities. The Committee reported a foundation paper to the General Board in March which will inform the Committee's working group on the economy led by the Rev John Kirkpatrick. The paper is included at Appendix 8.

10. In the Republic of Ireland the economic crisis is perhaps exceptional because of the degree to which it has reversed the fortunes brought by the rise of the Celtic Tiger. The national debt, the increasing cost of national borrowing, the banking system with its practices and debts all contribute to a lack of confidence in government and future alike. Immigration and migration both remain challenges, particularly in the present economic crisis and the Rev Alan Boal continues to maintain a watching brief on the progress of the Immigration Bill 2009.

11. The economic situation impacts people at all levels of society and the formation of a Social Justice Network in Northern Ireland is timely. The Network is at present drawn mainly from the Churches and meets on a monthly basis. PCI is represented by the Rev Dr Lesley Carroll, the Rev Norman Hamilton and Mr Lindsay Conway. At present the Network is moving towards a social audit to reveal the extent of social justice work carried out by the Churches and to provide a resource for the Churches of good practice where Churches have effectively responded to social need.

12. For some years the Rev Matthew Ross (Church of Scotland) has been employed by the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches to, among other responsibilities, keep the British Churches briefed on proposed European legislation and developments which may ultimately affect them. He has done so with commendable diligence but is now about to return to Scotland to take up parish responsibilities. His post was partly funded by PCI and a recommendation will be brought to the General Assembly.

13. The European elections, to be held in June, are an important opportunity for Christians to make their voice heard on vital issues of European policy which will affect the way we are governed in Ireland. All are encouraged to take part in the democratic process by voting.

14. Over the year the Committee has been glad to be involved in helping to draft a letter sent by the Four Church Leaders to all members of Westminster regarding the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill urging that the NI Assembly be permitted, in respect of devolution, to make its own decision on the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act. It has also processed letters from

Presbyteries and Congregations regarding the situation of members of the Presbyterian Mutual Society who find themselves without guarantees as those who have savings in Banks and Building Societies have guarantees.

## APPENDIX I

### Response to the “Strategic Review of Parading in Northern Ireland Interim Consultative Report”.

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland recognises that this is an Interim Report but perceives much within it which is useful and which provides evidence of the careful listening to and consideration of the many representations made to the Commission for the Strategic Review of Parading.

2. The Presbyterian Church emphasises what it has said in the past:

- (a) That there needs to be strong relationships between people of difference if structures and legislation are to be effective and the explicit building of these relationships must, therefore, be a key aspect of any response.
- (b) Relationships need to take account not only of freedoms and privileges but also of mutual respect, tolerance and responsibilities.
- (c) The amount of effort given to the matter of Parading in the recent history of Northern Ireland is evidence that the relationships are not yet sufficiently strong. If they had been then there would be no need for this review.
- (d) In seeking to resolve the difficulties and build the relationships there is always the potential to overwhelm society with bureaucracy, both necessary and unnecessary. For example, the notification process has the potential to swamp with paperwork and may seem, at least, to apply to situations in which such notification is unnecessary. There should, therefore, be the potential for review of the bureaucratic systems around transparency built in.

3. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland welcomes the following:-

- The Report’s emphasis on the need for transparency and openness to be worked out in the various stages of the new process. [4. 6 (x), 4.7 (vii) 6 (iv)]. Such transparency and openness will encourage confidence in the proposed process.
- The Report introduces clarity into the process. For example, reasons for objections have to conform to defined parameters and adjudications must have regard to specified matters, rights of respective parties are comprehensively summarised and guidance for Monitors is clearly specified. [3.7, 4.6 (vi +viii), Appendix B]. This will again encourage confidence in the process.
- The Report widens the definition of a “Public Assembly” to include all assemblies of 15 or more people in a public place, all public processions and all protest meetings. [4.1] This is helpful as it will remove the perception that only one group in society is being targeted by public assembly regulations.



- The Report specifies a process of up to three stages between notification and the holding of a public assembly, or protest against it. The emphasis on facilitated local dialogue is welcomed as it should provide a useful and reasonable first stage [4.4]. The separation of the Mediation and Adjudication processes is also sensible and welcomed. [4.5 + 4.6]
  - The proposal to address the existing lack of cultural understanding through a cultural understanding education programme is welcomed. [3.4 (iii)]
  - The proposal for a review (mandatory in the case of an adjudicated event and optional in the case of all other events) involving all stakeholders no later than 35 days after an event provides an opportunity for useful reflection and is welcomed. [1.2 Step 8]
  - The Report outlines a simplified, easily accessible and coherent system of administration, and this is welcomed. [4.3 (ii), (iii), (vii) + (ix). 4.4 (ii), 4.6 (ii)]
4. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland would highlight the following concerns:-
- The Report envisages a “Rights based approach” to the process. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has always called for an equal attentiveness to responsibilities as well as rights. While we recognise that this may be implicit in the “Standards of Conduct for Public Assemblies in Northern Ireland” we would like a stronger emphasis on this. [Appendix A]
  - The Report contains a useful and comprehensive list of requirements applying to the organisers of and third party organisations and participants in public assemblies, there seems to be little applying to objectors. [p 33-36]. While it is recognised that protest meetings are included within the definition of a public assembly [4.1] it would be helpful if this was explicitly stated on p 36.
  - There may be an imbalance in the amount of personal information, about parties involved, made public. Sections B [p 38] and D [p 40-41] will be made public with respect to the organisers of an event, but it would appear that only Section F [p 42] will be made public with respect to objectors. (Section G is unspecified). The Presbyterian Church in Ireland would ask for parity of treatment for all parties involved.
  - The Presbyterian Church in Ireland learns with regret that the Review Body has not yet reached conclusions on parades at Drumcree and Ormeau Road. [p 2] The Church would express concern at the implications of specifically excluding these events from the procedures specified in the review, and urges the Review Body to continue its efforts to resolve these issues. Failure to do so could seriously jeopardise an otherwise welcome process.

- There is no definition of ‘public place’ within the report. We are concerned that this may impact the delivery of resolution as, without definition, what a public place is could become a matter of delaying contention.
5. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland would ask that further consideration be given to the following:-
- Clarification of available sources of funding, if any, which may be accessed to permit challenges to adjudication through the courts.
  - Clarification as to whether individuals associated with groups and organisations seeking to organise public assemblies or to protest against them may be recruited as Monitors. [4.7 (ii)]. To exclude them may be discriminatory.
  - Clarification as to who will be responsible for delivering the cultural education programme and the sources from which information will be obtained. [3.4 (ii)]
  - Clarification of the procedures to be used to establish a register of candidates for adjudication panels and a definition of the term: “Suitable candidates.” (3.4 (ii))
6. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland would thank the Review Body for the usefulness of its work thus far and would wish to be able to offer constructive guidance and opinion as opportunity presents in the future.

## APPENDIX II

### Response to the Consultation on Widening the Jury Pool

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, through its Church and Society Committee, welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on widening the jury pool, not least because of the potential impacts on Ministers and members alike.
2. The Committee welcomes the on-going signs of ‘normalisation’ in Northern Ireland and is committed to the establishment and development of a responsible society. As has already been seen in the removal of diplock courts, society and its structures have experienced change in Northern Ireland. This change needs to continue and it is in the context of positive change that we welcome this consultation.
3. At the outset the Committee emphasises that it is important for Ministers to be free to act pastorally and we express some concern that jury service could compromise that freedom. This concern should not, however, be seen as running counter to the Church’s dedication to good citizenship, which we have both taught and sought to practice. We are aware that there could be tension between pastoral freedom and good citizenship and would urge that both be protected in whatever system is put in place.
4. We note that the Morris Commission 1965 concluded that requiring certain persons to act would be against the public interest. Public Interest is a category that is too easily brought into play and should be carefully defined, not least because of the difficulties of adjudicating public interest claims.

5. We believe that the time is right for change, as evidence of the on-going process of allowing a more normal and responsible society to flourish. However, we do not think that change should be driven without care. There may be some changes that cannot be made as yet and we should satisfy ourselves with the value of an unfolding process rather than hoping to achieve everything at once.

6. With regard to the alignment of The Juries (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 it seems to us to be both fair and reasonable to align the Orders, taking account of both the offence and the rehabilitation of the offender.

7. Whether or not further vetting should be put in place for some offences is a vexed question. While it may seem unfair and perhaps even unjust to have special circumstances or identify certain offences as different from others it may also be wise to do so. For example, with regard to sex offenders being prohibited in serving on juries where sex crimes are being tried it is important to consider that

- (a) Some offences, while allowing a measure of rehabilitation if the offender complies with treatments and procedures, are of such a nature that a genuine seeing of the world differently cannot be guaranteed thereby making judgement skewed. That skewed judgement would be unlikely to be effected by any weight of evidence, no matter how strong
- (b) That there are human rights considerations, not only of the offender but also of the society in which the offender takes their place and
- (c) That a fair and rigorous trial must be guaranteed if society is to have confidence in the judicial system.

We therefore believe that in certain instances further vetting is essential.

8. If those involved in the administration of justice were to serve we believe, with others before us, that they could unfairly influence their fellow jurors. But this is not the only consideration. The special knowledge of those involved in the administration of justice, together with their experience may unduly influence them as jurors and, therefore, their decisions. To include those involved in the administration of justice may have an effect counter to what this consultation is aimed at – rather than increasing confidence on the judicial system their inclusion could militate against that confidence and lead to more claims of unsound convictions. Such claims need to be guarded against at all costs if the system is to withstand public scrutiny. We neither seek nor advocate a judicial administration beyond the influence of society and would want to see ways in which the system can more effectively see itself as a part of civil society but, at the same time, trust in those who administer justice is crucial as is trust in the independence of trials. Such trust is still being built and we believe that the inclusion in the jury pool of those who administer justice could undermine that trust.

9. Those who work in prosecutors offices and civil employees of the PSNI should be permitted to serve on juries but only where specific and clear guidelines are set down so that there can be no question of unsound convictions.

10. Members of the PSNI should not be able to serve on juries as they are too closely involved in the investigative process and even if they are not

personally involved in an investigation they will have more access to information, both factual and hearsay, than others within society. Their inclusion could compromise unnecessarily both their professional status and the integrity of a trial in the public mind.

11. Members of the judiciary should not be included in the jury pool.

12. The Committee welcomes the fact that no change is proposed to the status of those suffering from mental disorders and those who do not speak the English language.

13. Those who come from the occupations which traditionally have been automatically excused from jury service will, inevitably, find any change difficult to countenance. Such change needs to take account of the time required to serve on a jury and what giving that time will take away from the development of a responsible society as well as what will be contributed to its building e.g. if teachers are taken out of classrooms the negative impact on those whom they educate could be greater than the positive impact of their serving. We recognise that it is almost impossible to adjudicate which work is most important but believe that the balance of taking from and giving to the development of responsible society is an important one.

14. All those previously excused as of right by occupation should now be included for jury service; those in the age-range 65-70 should be included while those 70+ should not. The time lapse between services should be at least 5 years – 2 years seeming unnecessarily short given the constraints on time that some professionals may experience.

15. The guidelines for deferral or excusal need to be rigorous and clear and need to take account of the concerns that Ministers have that jury service will constrain their freedom to act pastorally.

### **APPENDIX III**

#### **Response to the Review of the Civic Forum**

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is grateful, through its Church and Society Committee, to be afforded the opportunity of responding to the Review of the Civic Forum. As a Committee we have particular interest in society – its relationships, structures, and informing values. We are, therefore, concerned to develop a strong, articulate and effective Civic Society which engages debate about those matters which inhibit or enable human flourishing. The Committee believes that a health Civic Society contributes to the health of all its citizens.

#### **COMMENTS**

2. Each sector in society has structures and procedures for consultation and discussion. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, for example, relates to other denominations through the Irish Council of Churches, a variety of ‘para-church’ organisations, and through other structures dialogue as decided by the Church.

3. We believe that there is debate and discussion within other sectors but that there is a need for structured and effective cross-sectoral debate and discussion which could be provided by a Civic Forum.

4. We believe that debate and discussion, while valuable in itself, needs an avenue to impact the decision-making process. In this way a Civic Forum can develop an authoritative voice, representing the variety of sectors which together are the building blocks of society. This is important in light of past criticism of the Civic Forum, namely that it achieved little if anything.

5. Northern Ireland society still feels the impacts of the years of conflict. We are concerned that much discussion in the political realm still adheres to the old lines of conflict. It is essential, therefore, that a space be created for thinking to emerge which is not constrained or determined by the old fault lines, we believe that with an appropriate structure a Civic Forum could help to achieve this.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

6. We recommend that a Civic Forum should:
- Meet twice/three times each year for cross-sectoral encounter and new thinking
  - Be structured to enable fresh thinking
  - Consist of a smaller number of people than before, perhaps 7 or 9 rather than 60
  - Be similar to a commission in that it would be served by a staff and have a clear remit
  - The remit of the Forum should be to identify key issues in society and to proceed to address them or to challenge and engage others to address them. These issues would include, for example, sectarianism, the failure of education in loyalist communities. In other words, the Forum would become an initiator of processes in civil and political life. The remit, while given in the first place, should be adapted by the Forum and should be focussed in order to demonstrate achievement
  - Should have broad societal issues as its concerns, not simply the social, economic and cultural issues which may be referred to it by OFMDFM, this function being retained
  - Should not undermine the democratic process but should, from time to time, engage political representatives but should also have some commitment from the politicians to engage with what emerges from the work of the Forum. An explicit commitment from the Executive would be important
  - Should consider its 'cost-effectiveness' e.g. by not doing work which is already being done elsewhere
  - Should have relationships with civic fora outside Northern Ireland for sharing and receiving learning.

## APPENDIX IV

**Committee Response to the Eames/Bradley Keynote Speech 29 May 2008**

1. We reiterate our deep thanks to the Consultative Group (CG) individually and collectively for their work to date and the keynote speech of 29 May, 2008.

2. We are very disappointed however that there has been so little public debate about the profound issues raised in the speech – and accept our own responsibility for contributing to that situation. The reasons for this may be many and complex, but by its substantive silence, wider society has done little to forward progress on the many issues raised. Therefore we fear that the final report may be less accepted than it otherwise should be, and the responsibility for this will not lie with the group itself.

3. The speech shows that the CG clearly understands the needs of victims and survivors very well. We have no further comment to add except one. Reference is made to the *'silent thousands we did not meet, who carry their grief in private'*. Many of these are people to whom our Church (and other Churches) continue to minister. We have a deep concern that their self effacing silence will lead to their being effectively forgotten in the attempt to provide structures and funding for long term programmes of support. We urge the CG to make the strongest possible recommendation that the Commissioners for Victims and Survivors pay as much attention to these *'silent thousands'* as to any other organised group or groups.

4. The role of the state in the conflict is extensively explored in the speech. We sense that our theological commitment to Biblical teaching on the state may well have dulled us to the equally Biblical truths in the doctrine of the Fall. Amongst other things, this means that there is no innocent place to start, for anyone or any structure – the state and political parties included – on anything. Therefore, in no case should purity of intention or action be assumed.

5. We well understand that any acceptance of guilt by the State would almost certainly further open the floodgates of litigation and compensation. Yet we also believe that the ethics of providing for the future (schools, hospitals, flood management, agricultural support) are every bit as important as trying to sort out the ethics of the past.

6. One way of balancing such competing ethics might be for the UK government to invest more heavily in the welfare of future generations by a time limited and ring fenced substantial improvement of our infrastructure. We appreciate the great difficulty of doing this in a time of increasing financial stringency. Nonetheless, the stewardship of scarce public funds would be much better served by seeking the welfare of the whole community rather than that of the very limited number who would benefit though endless court battles.

7. Since the speech was delivered, serious further doubt has been cast on the likelihood of the criminal justice system delivering justice and truth from the past. For example, in August 2008 the Chief Constable is quoted as saying about the Omagh bombing *"Unless we get something new, it is highly unlikely that the families will ever get a successful judicial outcome in terms of a criminal trial."*

8. Once again, it seems that the truth is both unpalatable and unavoidable. We believe that the CG must not back away from setting this out clearly if it believes this to be the case.

9. The speech has important sections on the scourge of sectarianism. We believe it is crucial for the CG to call loudly on government, political parties and their leaders, and all sections of civic society (including Churches, the business sector and Trades Unions) to reinvigorate their public commitment to a 'shared and better future'. That call has scarcely been heard in 2008, yet without it, the reconciliation that is needed cannot and will not take place.

10. We commend the on-going work of the CG to the prayers of all our people.

## **APPENDIX V**

### **Consultation on the Future of Tobacco Control**

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Church and Society Committee is tasked to respond to societal issues both North and South of the border. We welcome, from the Northern Irish perspective, the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the future of tobacco control. We view this consultation as a step on the way to a new national tobacco control strategy covering 4 key areas.

2. A responsible society must take account of all of its members, in this case both smokers and non-smokers, while at the same time actively discouraging its members from engaging in self-destructive behaviour. We believe the strategy takes all of these concerns seriously.

3. The matter of health care is no small consideration. While individuals carry some responsibility for their own health, the advertising of that which negatively effects health is ultimately more responsible. Those who permit and boundary advertising, as well as those who benefit from the advertising i.e. the production companies, must take their accountability seriously.

4. Children and young people are among the most vulnerable in society. The strategy sets out clear steps to protect them. We welcome and support the development of these steps.

5. Individual choice and freedom is also a matter for consideration. Policy should, therefore, be aimed at assisting people to make informed choices rather than at making those choices for them. In this respect the Committee welcomes on-going and broad consultation on tobacco control and wider reflection on the convergence and divergence between government policy and individual choice.

6. As smoking is damaging to the health of both the smoker and the passive smoker, and as smoking increases the strain on health care services we welcome the proposed strategy and support its intentions.

## **APPENDIX VI**

### **Response to the Consultation on Local Government Boundaries**

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the proposed changes in local government boundaries. This response

comes from the Church's Church and Society Committee which is made up of representatives from all over Ireland many of whom are working in parish ministry and are, therefore, aware of local needs and the effectiveness of local councils.

2. The Church and Society Committee is concerned that we develop, as a society in Northern Ireland, strategies and arrangements which are sustainable into the future as well as effective for the people of Northern Ireland.

3. The cost of maintaining, staffing and servicing 26 councils would appear to be unnecessary given the size of the population and the geographical size of Northern Ireland. We therefore welcome a streamlining of administration in order that delivery of local services can be cost effective.

4. We are aware that there is some concern that local identities will be undermined by the joining of local councils or the redrawing of boundaries. However, these local identities can be maintained in other ways, for example through local community groups or historical societies, and the proposed new arrangements will provide the opportunity for small localities to place themselves within a wider context.

5. The Committee appreciates that the Commissioner has taken natural geographical boundaries into consideration and welcomes his proposals for 11 councils. We view this as a mature response to a changed and changing society.

6. The Committee notes that other agencies, such as policing boards and the health boards, have already drawn their boundaries and in some instances there may be unhelpful clashes with the new council boundaries. We want, therefore, to highlight this concern and to ask that strategies for managing clashes and for realignment where that is possible, should be considered and addressed appropriately. The concern here is for a joined up approach to the governance of Northern Ireland, so that the needs of citizens are at the forefront of administrative arrangements.

## APPENDIX VII

### **Response to OFMDFM : Outline draft approach for Victims and Survivors**

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, through its Church and Society Committee, welcomes the opportunity to respond to the outline draft approach for victims and survivors. We are particularly glad to be able to make an input given the experience of the Church in responding to the needs of victims and survivors over the years. We know that the needs of victims and survivors last and change over many years and that they may impact future generations.

2. In drafting this response the Committee drew on the pastoral and direct experience of its members. Knowing the sector to be complex, representing many different views and opinions, we then brought our draft response to the General Board of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This Board is the most representative of the whole Church, drawing its membership from every geographical area of Ireland and, therefore, providing a firm sounding board for our views.



## THE PROPOSED APPROACH

3. We welcome the commitment to clarity in aims and objectives. Victims and survivors have enough to contend with without the added confusion which arises from lack of clarity and the subsequent disappointment and anger that individuals and groups may experience when their hopes are raised and not met.

4. We welcome the recognition that measurable outcomes, in line with the aims and objectives, are essential while at the same time being difficult to define. We believe that the Commission for Victims and Survivors will play a crucial role in establishing these measurable outcomes.

5. We are concerned that the approach is 'needs' driven. Demands are often defined as needs and care must be taken that real needs, rather than politically shaped demands, are met.

6. We welcome recognition of the variety of individual victims and survivors and the variety of groups which represent them. However, there are many victims and survivors who do not come forward to seek the support they need. This is for a variety of reasons and we would request that thought be given to accessibility for those many victims and survivors who have not so far sought help.

7. We welcome the commitment to reconciliation. We believe that this difficult area provides a means of healing for many. While this cannot be forced upon anyone we believe it should be a clearly stated goal of any approach, together with the recognition that victims and survivors must be allowed to move at their own pace.

8. We welcome the attention to funding, including during the bridging period until the new arrangements are in place. Within the context of the proposed ten year approach we believe that the burden of seeking short-term funding should be lifted and that core funding should be offered, although with strict and clear criteria for the achievement of that funding. Long-term funding will enable victim and survivor groups in particular to put their focus in the best place – on the needs of victims and survivors.

9. We welcome the provision of support for victims and survivors as they input into the comprehensive needs assessment and the Forum.

10. We are concerned that the draft approach gives the impression that everyone's various hopes and needs can be met. With clear aims and objectives and measurable outcomes this will not be possible and care should be taken not to give the impression that it is possible.

11. We welcome recognition of work done by victim and survivor groups, Trauma Advisory panels and other organisations and support the view that their work should be built upon. Their learning and experience is invaluable in both the strategic development of an approach and in its delivery.

12. We welcome the long-term vision for mainstreaming services to victims and survivors. For many this is an important aspect of removing any stigma attached to being a victim or survivor. For wider society it is important that victims and survivors should not be marginalised and mainstreaming services, in our view, is an important means of enabling society to be inclusive of victims and survivors.

### **THE COMMISSION FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS**

13. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, at its General Assembly in June 2008, has welcomed the appointment of the Commission and assured them of our prayerful support. We believe that their role is both strategic in the sector and co-ordinating. The dispersed services to and requirements of victims and survivors needs to be more focussed around common aims and objectives and the Commission are pivotal in this.

### **THE FORUM**

14. The input of the Forum as advisor to the Commission and in delivery of the comprehensive needs assessment, dealing with the past and building for the future, is key in linking what happens and what is experienced on the ground with the strategic level. The structure of the Forum should not be such that it can hinder the Commission to the extent that there is stagnation in the sector.

### **VICTIMS AND SURVIVOR SERVICES**

15. Co-ordinated funding will be invaluable to many victim and survivor groups. It's independence of government will be crucial for its credibility and clear and transparent processes are essential. We commend the commitment to the highest possible standards.

### **CONCLUSION**

16. Responses to the needs of victims and survivors have been dogged by political wrangling, not least with regard to how a victim or survivor is defined. We have been concerned, along with many others, that matters relating to victims and survivors have become politicized to the point that this sector has become the site for an on-going conflict clearly connected to the conflicts of the past. This is, quite simply, an abuse of the weak and suffering. The proposed approach from OFMDFM, with its commitments and vision, goes some way to alleviating our concerns. We believe its implementation will require determination and a clear focus on the real needs of victims and survivors, including those whose voices are not often heard.

## **APPENDIX VIII**

### **Report to the General Board on the present Economic Crisis**

1. The present economic crisis has brought a sense of, hopelessness, despair and fear to many within our society. For us as Presbyterians our minds have been focussed by the issues connected to the Presbyterian Mutual Society and the resultant worries on individuals and Congregations. These difficulties should not be underestimated and the dependence on a situation which is beyond immediate control can cause Congregations to atrophy as they wait to see what will happen. For individuals the day to day cost of living and the necessary planning for the future falls prey to the complex economic situation and the hope required to keep on going fades with each bill which comes through the door. Values which have been high on Presbyterian agendas as a matter of honour and

good stewardship are compromised and the sense of failure permeates the worry and deepens the crisis e.g. providing for our children, independence as the years pass and self-sufficiency.

2. The present economic crisis, which impacts people across every political aspiration and faith tradition, has levelled us all and as God's people we find ourselves in the same situation as our neighbours. But as people of faith we are called and challenged to hold firmly to the teaching of scripture and not to slip into greed or self-interest.

3. As Christians we come to any consideration of the present crisis and its implications from the firm foundation of our faith which cannot be shaken, though the earth should be moved from beneath us. This firm foundation provides a starting place for Christians as they think their way through the situation, attempting to respond in a Godly way.

4. We come with convictions about God's ordering of the world which are based in the grace and mercy which we hold as central to the good news which comes from God. This mercy and grace never fail us and underpin all that we believe about the necessity of repenting of all that has been wrong within us and around us, all that has been done on our behalf or all that we have permitted which we should not have permitted. We believe that repentance is followed by forgiveness, a new start, a fresh beginning provided by God as the past is put behind us in the commitment to do better in the future. For this we depend on nothing short of the grace and mercy of God together with the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit who speaks to us through the pages of the Scriptures from which we are taught how to live as Christian people in a world which is often confusing, messy and unkind. It is within the economy of God that we must live, guided by the Scriptures and given courage and strength by the Holy Spirit.

5. The question of how God orders the world focuses our thinking on how God chooses to administer His household on His terms and invites us to consider how the household of God should manage itself in the present crisis. The words of Paul to the Church at Ephesus ring true for us in our time and situation: *And so here I am, preaching and writing about things that are way over my head, the inexhaustible riches and generosity of Christ. My task is to bring out in the open and make plain what God, who created all this in the first place, has been doing in secret and behind the scenes all along. Through followers of Jesus like yourselves gathered in Churches, this extraordinary plan of God is becoming known and talked about even among the angels!* (Ephesians 3 vv 8-10 The Message)

6. Behind all of our present crisis God is at work as He has always been at work from inexhaustible riches and generosity in Christ and our task as the people of God is to manage our household in a way which brings out into the open all that God is and has been doing so that the extraordinary plan of God for the salvation and redemption of the world is seen.

7. Thus in this time of crisis we, as the people of God, affirm that God's economy has not run into the sand, nor does it need shored up or bailed out. We hold to the doctrines of the faith as true for us today as they have always been true – that God created the world, that God was made flesh in Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ was crucified, dead and buried and that on the third day he rose

again from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God the Father. These truths cannot be shaken.

8. Alongside these truths, these key doctrines which summarise the economy of God, we also hold to the truths of humanity's fall, persisting waywardness and need of salvation. We cannot approach each day in celebration of God and God's economy without also acknowledging that we have gone astray and that we, each individual, has made some contribution to an economy which ballooned out of all proportion into a make believe world of money that didn't exist and which bought a lifestyle we could not afford. From retail therapy to colluding with inflated valuations and participating in risky financial adventures all have played their part and we continue to play our part in a virtual world of finance when we believe that we are entitled to discount. It is easy to moralise retrospectively but there is no denying that Presbyterians were no better than anyone else when tempted by a culture in which limitations of income were no barrier to acquisition. To experience the salvation of God we must face the economy of our own humanity which is affirmed throughout the New Testament as consisting in immorality and greed, all of which amount to the worship of idols. (1 Corinthians 5; Ephesians 5)

9. As the household of God we are confronted with the call from Ephesians: You used to be like people living in the dark, but now you are people of the light because you belong to the Lord. So act like people of the light and make your light shine. Be good and honest and truthful, as you try to please the Lord. (Ephesians 5 vv 8-10) We are confronted with the challenge to be good stewards of the gospel in the times in which we find ourselves and also to be good stewards of our resources.

10. We cannot be good stewards without sensitivity to the situation in which many individuals and Congregations find themselves. Pastoral care will be provided to many people who are in financial distress of a kind that most of us cannot imagine. There will be many unrecorded acts of kindness, prayer and action will be, and have been, initiated. But we must also reflect robustly on the gospel as it both sustains and challenges us and in this particular time on what we learn from scripture to apply to our understanding of the economy.

11. The gospel sustains us by providing that fixed foundation of God's economy which has not and cannot run dry or reach a crisis. God remains the same yesterday, today and forever. God's grace remains inexhaustible and God's generosity in Christ is untouched. The unchanging God remains real in the promises made to us before the foundation of the earth, among them the promise that God can bless us with more than enough for ourselves, enough to give something to others: *God can bless you with everything you need, and you will always have more than enough to do all kinds of good things for others.* 2 Corinthians 9 v8.

12. The gospel challenges us to think of others who may well have even less than we have, to think of those who are obscured by this economic crisis just as they were obscured by the wealth and success that seduced us over the years of economic boom e.g. the homeless, the people of developing countries. The gospel challenges us to take thought for today and to allow God to look after tomorrow (Matthew 6); to care for the widows and orphans (James 1); to be sure

to lay up treasure in heaven and not in places which will prove themselves not to be permanent or lasting (Matthew 6).

13. The present crisis also warns us that, as the people of God, we cannot withdraw from the world as if it had nothing to do with us while at the same time reaping the benefits of living in that world. In *The Wealth of Nations* Adam Smith explores an understanding of the economy as being about exchange for benefit. This understanding is grounded in the notion that individuals cannot go it alone. In this sense he affirms the economy as a moral reality, taking shape from how individuals participate in it for mutual benefit.

14. Christians can, therefore, look to the economy as a test of their moral values. While scripture affirms that a worker is worthy of their wage, that reward follows labour, and that thrift and investment are good things it also affirms the dangers of greed. This greed is seen when individuals or groups seek unrealistic gain at the expense of others. We live in a fallen world and should expect the temptation to greed. Such greed leads to the poor being obscured from our sight, the poor who have always been with us. Greed also leads to dishonest practice, to an overbearing individualism and to a tendency to take irrational risks in the hope of greater gain. The resulting collapse of trust robs the economic community of the very commodity necessary to its functioning.

15. As Christians we believe that we are called not to be reckless economic actors but to be stewards. We are called to be at the purposes of the Kingdom of God for our treasure is not here in this world and we believe in a God to be glorified. The present economic situation is, therefore, an opportunity for witness.

16. In this time of economic crisis we believe ourselves to be called to see that justice is done to defend widows and orphans and to help those who are in need. (Isaiah 1:17) We therefore affirm the Christian value which urges us toward the common good and away from an ethic of everyone for themselves. We realise that the call to live out our Christian values in a time when we feel as helpless, despairing and hopeless as others is a very real challenge but we affirm that with the grace and mercy of God we will be able to bear witness to the Kingdom and its values in this difficult time.

17. In light of the present economic situation the Committee agreed to set up a panel, under the leadership of John Kirkpatrick, to consider a Christian response to the economy.

LESLEY CARROLL, ALAN BOAL, Co-Conveners

## PANEL ON PASTORAL CARE OF MANSE FAMILIES

*The Rev Gabrielle Farquhar reports:*

Although the Panel has not met recently because of the Convener's illness, work continued regularly towards the launching of our new '*Caring for Manse Families*' support system during Assembly week.

This includes a concise leaflet, designed for (and available to) every Manse occupant in Ireland. It will have a number for a contact person, when a listening ear with *assured confidentiality* is needed. A mini-directory will be included, reminding families, spouses and ministers of helpful contacts, covering topics such as Sabbatical leave, Bereavement, Conflict resolution. By circulating this

information it is hoped that Manse families will be familiar with what is available before it is really needed.

The Panel's prayer is that all whose present home is a Manse, from teens to those nearing retirement, will avail of the support offered by the *Care Panel*.

The Board of Social Witness is commended for launching their Care Call Counselling service for Ministers; and the Board of Christian Training for their work on the provision of on-going care for Ministers recently left college and those approaching retirement.

## PANEL ON MINISTRIES

*The Rev Dr WP Addley reports:*

1. The main business of the Panel has been to study the responses of Presbyteries to its report to the 2008 General Assembly and recommend appropriate action. Responses were received from all 21 Presbyteries, from 3 Kirk Sessions, and from 2 Assembly Boards – the Board of Mission in Ireland and the Board of Christian Training.

### Reader

2. All respondents saw the need for suitably gifted and trained people to conduct services of public worship and preach, in addition to Ministers of the word. One Presbytery, short of Ministers, wrote, "The Presbytery welcomes the plans to introduce the office of Reader within the Church. The latent gifts of preaching and leading worship, which exist within the membership of the PCI should be encouraged and developed." However, the 3 Kirk Sessions and 6 of the Presbyteries did not favour the creation of Readers. On the other hand, and this may seem paradoxical to some, from within this group of respondents came detailed plans and programmes for training ruling elders to lead worship and preach.

The main points given against the introduction of Readers are:

- (i) It is presbyterian;
- (ii) It demeans the office of ruling Elder;
- (iii) It is unnecessary; and some added
- (iv) It is unbiblical and pragmatic.

16 Presbyteries and the 2 Boards supported the outline plans but raised issues and concerns which fall generally into 3 categories:

- (i) The title 'Reader'. This was suggested because it was used for those who read services and sermons when Ministers were not available in Scotland just after the Reformation. Another option is 'recognised preacher'.
- (ii) The extent and content of training required.
- (iii) The relationship of this ministry to the ruling eldership – the question being simply, "should recognised preachers be drawn **exclusively** from or **mainly** from the ranks of ruling elders?"

It should be noted that *The Form of Presbyterian Church Government* restricts the preaching of the word to pastors. The role of ruling elders, called Church-governors, is "to join with the Minister in the government of the

Church”. This means that, for those who take seriously the Westminster Standards, to permit anyone other than Ministers of the word to preach is to be both unpresbyterian and pragmatic.

As training to become a “Reader” would be the responsibility of the Board of Christian Training its response is appended.

### **Non-Stipendiary Ministry**

3. The proposals for NSMs received a negative response from the 3 Kirk Sessions and 14 of the Presbyteries. Neither the Board of Mission in Ireland nor the Board of Christian Training was convinced by the report, but each made detailed suggestions should the General Assembly accept its proposals. These respondents had many concerns and some set them out at length.

7 Presbyteries gave support to the proposals but here again there were concerns raised and the support given was often qualified – support “in principle” though with many modifications, or “general support but with little enthusiasm”.

From this it seems clear that the Church at large is not prepared to accept the proposals regarding NSMs. Accordingly, the Panel recommends that no further action be taken on these.

On the other hand, the respondents recognised the difficulties which the Church faces today with regard to ministry. A number of suggestions were offered for further consideration. These focused on:

- (i) Developing the ministry of some ruling Elders.
- (ii) Greater flexibility in ministry of word and sacrament.
- (iii) More vigorous presentation of the call to full-time ordained ministry.

The Panel is convinced that, although the NSM proposals have proved unacceptable, further consideration should be given to the important ministry issues acknowledged by the respondents.

## **APPENDIX**

### **RESPONSE OF THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING TO THE MINISTRIES PANEL REPORT**

#### **‘Recognised/Accredited Preacher’/‘Reader’**

1. The Board of Christian Training (BCT) welcomes the introduction of such a position within PCI, but recommends that its name should be more appropriate to both the culture of PCI and the 21st Century.

2. While affirming that all Elders should be “apt to teach”, the Board recognises that a pool of individuals who have had formal training in the overall conduct of worship, including preaching, and who could be recognised to ‘take supplies’ etc, would be of great benefit to the Church as a whole. Added to this, such training and recognition would enable individuals gifted by God to exercise those gifts more fully within the wider Church, which is worthwhile in itself.

3. The Board recommends that the basic training course should be as follows :

- (a) It should involve four units, normally taken over one year, delivered through a combination of regional courses and two weekend residentials.
- (b) There should be 2 units on preaching, including aspects of biblical theology, and 2 units on worship, including aspects of historical theology.
- (c) The one-year course should include practical assignments, both in the individual's home Congregation and in other Congregations. These would be assessed through reflective reports, by the trainee and by an appropriate person who was present during the trainee's conduct of worship.
- (d) After successful completion of the one year course, the individual would enter a probationary period, during which an agreed number of practical sessions would be undertaken, prior to full recognition.
- (e) On-going in-service training would be required to keep recognition.
- (f) Admission to the process of training for the office of Reader would be by formal application, nomination by the local Minister and Kirk Session, followed by Presbytery endorsement of that nomination. Those candidates endorsed by a Presbytery would be interviewed centrally by a BCT Panel prior to final approval. In the light of the relatively short training period, the selection process should seek to identify relevant existing 'giftedness' which could be enhanced through training.
- (g) Costs could be covered in two ways – central funds could cover the cost of providing trainers, with the trainee covering other costs. The local Congregation and/or Presbytery should be encouraged to support the trainee in meeting these costs. The establishment of a bursary fund for particular cases where finance is an issue, could be considered.

The Board recommends that oversight of the training course for such a position should be the responsibility of the Director of Christian Training, with the courses approved by the relevant BCT Committee and accredited by Union Theological College. Recognising that there could initially be a large demand for such training, the Board will attempt to prioritise resources to meet that demand and will seek additional funding to enable it so to do.

## **CENTRES REVIEW PANEL**

### *The Rev Dr Donald Watts reports:*

The Centres Review Panel continued to meet to keep under review the implementation of previous decisions of the General Assembly. It accepted with regret the resignation of the Very Rev Dr Russell Birney as Chairman, who had brought much wisdom and patience to the discussions.

**Rostrevor:** The phased hand-over of the Centre from the Youth and Children's Ministry Board to Rostrevor Congregation continues as planned.

**Lucan:** The Youth and Children's Ministry Board is in the process of transferring the residential centre site to the Dublin and Munster Presbytery. While the Board of Social Witness has had some discussion about the provision



of sheltered accommodation on the remainder of the site, the economic conditions mean that progress may be held back in the immediate future.

**Guysmere:** The Youth and Children’s Ministry Board is progressing plans to develop Guysmere as the one residential centre location for our Church. Further detail of this is included in the Board report.

As its work is largely completed, it is hoped that the Panel will be able to ask the General Board to discharge it in the near future.

## **CHURCH HOUSE PANEL**

*The Rev RA McLernon reports:*

### **Introduction**

1.1 Having considered the future of Church House and Fisherwick Buildings for a number of years the General Assembly in 2007 agreed to retain Church House and Fisherwick Buildings and proceed with the refurbishment of Church House.

### **Terms of Reference**

1.2 Following the General Assembly’s 2007 decision the Church House Panel were tasked with the following remit: “Seeking to minimise any direct assessment on Congregations, to proceed with the refurbishment of Church House under Option 2 (*External Stonework/Widows/Roof Repairs and Minimal Internal Refurbishment*), and to develop a business plan for further consideration under Option 3 (*External Stonework/Windows/Roof Repairs and more Extensive Internal Refurbishment*).” (Minutes 2007, p91, res 60)

### **Developing a Vision for Church House**

1.3 In the Church House Panel Report to the General Assembly in 2008 the Panel favoured “ethos related” retail on the ground floor together with conference facilities on the remainder of the ground floor and at first floor level. Additionally the conference facilities such as “break out” rooms on the first floor would be used by PCI for Board and Committee meetings. The remainder of the space in Church House would accommodate the administrative work of PCI.

1.4 Since June 2008 the Panel has sought to refine its vision for the future use of Church House based on the following principles –

- (a) Church House is primarily the administrative headquarters of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
- (b) Any re-development work is for the benefit of the Church, its mission and work, and secondarily for financial return.
- (c) Conference/lettable space will provide additional income but will not necessarily fund the entire capital project.

1.5 Taking account of the above principles the Panel envisages the future use of Church House as follows –

- (a) Ground Floor/Mall – a unique space in the midst of the City Centre that conveys our heritage and present witness/identity.
- (b) First Floor – the present office accommodation, concourse and other meeting rooms are re-configured into a suite of meeting and “break

out’ rooms that would facilitate the work of PCI and be available for conferencing and flexible, lettable meeting space.

- (c) Second and Third Floors – the present administrative offices of PCI would be accommodated on these floors creating a self-contained and secure working environment.

1.6 In order to help progress this vision ASM Horwath were appointed as Consultants to deliver the following brief –

- (a) Provide an analysis of the current state of the market in Belfast for Conference facilities and flexible lettable space.
- (b) Identify the future trends for those facilities and advise on the size and number of meeting and conference rooms required, should a programme of upgrading be initiated.
- (c) Prepare financial projections as to the income that may be generated from the current facilities and the upgraded facilities.

1.7 Additionally a Design Team were appointed to help develop a Design Brief. The Design Team includes Kennedy Fitzgerald and Associates (Architect and Lead Consultant), Hastings and Baird (Quantity Surveyors), Taylor and Fegan (Mechanical and Electrical Consultants) and White Young Green (Structural Engineers).

### **ASM Horwath Report**

#### **Current Performance, state of the market and prospects**

2.1 There is a comprehensive range of facilities on offer but the following limitations are noted –

- (a) Facilities are located across four floors
- (b) Décor is dated and key features hidden
- (c) Meeting room circulation areas are shared with office accommodation
- (d) Insufficient “break out” space to complement the capacity of the Assembly Hall
- (e) Smaller scale meeting rooms are basic
- (f) Temperature control in the lettable rooms is a ‘challenge’
- (g) Limited storage for chairs etc.

#### **Assessment of Bookings**

Despite the limitations outlined above, the Spires Conference Centre (Spires CC) has a degree of success in attracting regular users.

2.2 Almost all of the room hire generated relates to the Assembly Hall. There appears to be very limited demand for other meeting rooms. They are scattered across different floor levels and secondly their existence is not well known in the market place. However this also represents a real growth opportunity provided the right facilities are developed and appropriately marketed.

2.3 The primary revenue generator is the Spires Mall. While the income generated from room hire is welcome, even in a ‘good’ year, that level of income is modest. When compared to rates charged by hotels and similar venues room

hire rates quoted by the Spires Conference Centre are at the lower end of the range of hire rates.

2.4 The majority of the events hosted by the Spires were large events. However the majority of the events in the market place are smaller scale than those which are typically drawn to the Spires. The location of the Spires CC, close to major transport networks and hotels, means it is very well placed to attract large scale and small scale conference and meeting bookings.

2.5 Our initial view is that the Spires CC could perform much better than is the case at present with appropriate redevelopment.

### **Consultation with stakeholders and conference/events organisers**

#### **Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau (BVCB)**

2.6 Mr Gerry Lennon, Chief Executive BVCB made the following observations about the Spires CC –

- It is very well located within the primary business district of the City being close to Belfast City Hall, the Grand Opera House and the major hotels serving the city centre.
- It is one of a limited number of “unusual” and interesting venues in the City and this broadens its appeal to inbound visitors particularly.
- It needs better and wider range of break out rooms to complement the main Assembly Hall.

2.7 Mr Lennon is very supportive of any proposed enhancements to the Conference facilities. He views such a development as adding value to the choice of host venues in the city and this will be important in driving new business into Belfast.

#### **Northern Ireland Tourist Board**

2.8 William Loughed, Manager of the Business and Activity Tourism Team offered the following observations –

- In the current economic climate larger commercial organisations are developing their own conference/meeting space rather than transporting staff to regional meetings.
- The recent Arena and Convention Centre development in Liverpool and the National Convention Centre, Dublin (due to open in 2010) will make it more difficult for Belfast to compete for large scale national and international conferences in the future.
- He is not convinced that a large sum of money should be spent.

#### **Hotel representatives**

2.9 The following observations were offered about the venue and conferencing in general –

- Had visited the Assembly Hall but were unaware of smaller meeting rooms.

- Assembly hall is a great feature but the concourse is too small to be practical.
- Parts of the facility look dated and require refurbishment.
- Having all the meeting rooms on a single floor will add to the appeal of the venue.
- All such facilities must be in a position to respond immediately to enquiries, offer quality, catering and an overnight accommodation solution.

### **Conference Organisers**

2.10 These organisations provide arrangement and support services for larger scale events. Their views on the Spires CC are summarised as follows –

- For a city centre location the prices were considered to be “very competitive”
- Interior looks tired and dated.
- Assembly Hall is main selling point.
- Significantly such users would consider booking Spires in the future if improvements were made to the décor, the availability of exhibition space and a greater degree of flexibility.

### **Future Prospects for the Spires Conference Centre**

2.11 The proposed refurbishment of the facilities will enable it to compete more effectively in the corporate events market and it will create the opportunity to broaden the appeal of the facility.

2.12 There appears to be little doubt that the conference meetings and special events markets are important to local hotels, dedicated conference and other venues. Consequently there are a significant number of “providers” to these markets who are offering a high quality product. As many of these facilities have recently undergone refurbishment or modernisation it will be difficult for PCI to compete with such facilities.

2.13 Therefore the key conference markets in the future for the Spires Conference Centre will be the markets that it currently serves. The Consultants also consider that an opportunity exists to drive new business by creating a single floor of meeting rooms and facilities that will appeal to smaller scale meetings, conferences and in some cases, social events and increasing the space in the concourse area to complement the Assembly Hall and provide an area for smaller sized exhibitions.

### **Possible Options to be Considered for the Spires Conference Centre**

- 2.14 There are a number of possible options for the Spires CC –
- (a) “Do nothing” – continue to operate the Spires Conference Centre as it is with little or no expenditure on the facilities in the short term.
  - (b) “Do the minimum” – continue to operate the Spires Conference Centre with minimal expenditure on the facilities but undertake proactive marketing.
  - (c) “Undertake limited investment” – refurbish/reconfigure the first floor area to better position the Spires Conference Centre in the market

place as a conference, meetings and events venue capable of attracting a broader range of clients.

- (d) “Develop the Spires Conference Centre as the premier conference, meeting and events venue in Belfast.” – Facilities are best in class and state of the art and that all services can be delivered ‘in house’ with dedicated staff.

2.15 On balancing each of the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ associated with the range of options, the Consultants are of the opinion that developing the Spires Conference Centre as the premier conference venue is not the way forward nor is the “do nothing” option. Given that the layout of the conference and meeting facilities is disjointed and generally the interior is getting ‘tired’, the inevitability is that, in the absence of investment, the number of potential bookings will diminish over time as a range of better alternatives is in plentiful supply.

2.16 This leaves the choice between “Do the minimum” and “Undertake Limited Investment”. Doing the minimum may have short term benefits through proactive marketing, but in the absence of investment interest in the Spires is likely to diminish. The “Limited Investment” option offers the prospect of improving the range of facilities and developing the first floor area as a dedicated conference and meeting centre that presents new opportunities for the Spires, but recognises that it is not at the “cutting edge” of facilities. Rather it can offer something different in the marketplace given its uniqueness and associated features.

2.17 Primarily the Consultants are of the view that this will enable the Spires Conference Centre to play to its strengths by positioning meeting rooms along the exterior envelope of the building. Expansion of the concourse area will improve conference “break out” space and create exhibition space

## **Facilities Enhancements**

### **Spires Conference Centre**

2.18 If Church House is to compete more effectively in the conference and meeting markets the range and features of those facilities must change. The following provides an outline of the changes required to the conference and meeting facilities to enable the Spires to best position itself to secure the market opportunities available to it –

- (a) Central reception desk to guide visitors to the correct meeting rooms
- (b) Redecoration of stairways and meeting rooms
- (c) Dedicated kitchen facilities
- (d) Built in/drop down AV aids
- (e) Wi-fi enabled
- (f) Appropriate storage facilities
- (g) Replacement tables and chairs

### **Spires Mall**

2.19 Our recommendations with regards to the Mall are set out as follows–

- (a) Continued retail use is the best option in the short to medium term, but other options should be revisited in advance of the expiry of the long term leases of the Mall
- (b) Pro-active approach to the marketing of the Mall
- (c) Realistic marketing budget to be allocated
- (d) Destination retailers should be targeted who wish to have a presence in the city centre
- (e) Flexible lease arrangements should be offered to attract tenants

### **Conclusion**

2.20 In summary, opportunities exist for the Spires CC to ramp up its level of trading, but PCI should seek to limit its investment in the facility to only those aspects that are absolutely necessary. In other words the Conference Centre must look well and have sufficient facilities and equipment to meet customer's expectations, but it should play to its strengths rather than try to compete "head on" with purpose built facilities.

### **Church House Panel Recommendations**

3.1 Having carefully considered, the requirements of PCI, the ASM Horwath Report and the wider economic climate, the Panel is agreed that its vision is still as outlined in paragraph 1.5. Namely –

- (a) Ground Floor/Mall – a unique space in the midst of the City Centre that conveys our heritage and present witness/identity.
- (b) First Floor – the present office accommodation, concourse and other meeting rooms re-configured into a suite of meeting and "break out" rooms that would facilitate the work of PCI and be available for conferencing and flexible lettable meeting space.
- (c) Second and Third Floors – the present administrative offices of PCI would be accommodated on these floors creating a self-contained and secure working environment.

3.2 However, since there are a number of lease agreements with tenants on the ground floor Mall which stretch well into the next decade the Panel is of the opinion that the use of the ground floor should be re-examined in 2014, and in the meantime every effort should be made to maximise income from the shopping mall.

3.3 The Panel has also considered the future of Fisherwick Buildings and recommends that it be retained for the following reasons –

- (a) Property Values are currently depressed
- (b) The potential sale of Fisherwick Buildings would undermine the viability of the Mall
- (c) Much of the Mechanical and Electrical Plant for Church House is housed in Fisherwick Buildings

3.4 It is therefore recommended that the following work commence (subject to approval of the General Assembly) in January 2011, as Phase 1 of the vision of paragraph 3.1 above –

- Ground Floor –** New entrance, reception and display area
- New lift installation

<b>Assembly Hall –</b>	New Chair store and lift to Assembly Hall Audio (speech only) and visual update New lighting/necessary rewiring Comfort Cooling Redecoration
<b>First Floor –</b>	Limited refurbishment/upgrading of Board Room including storage Offices to have air con cassettes replaced and new fire alarm New ceilings New doors with vision panels
<b>Second Floor –</b>	As above for offices in terms of specification
<b>Third Floor –</b>	Open plan office arrangement as far as possible and as above in terms of specification
<b>General –</b>	Revisions to heating controls to provide satisfactory heating and cooling to current standards on all levels, with environmental impact considered.

3.5 The Architects and Quantity Surveyors are currently working at detailed construction costs which will be available in Daily Minutes, together with projections as to how these costs may be met.

3.6 Phase 2, which should be considered in detail in 2014, would seek to implement the vision for the ground and first floors as outlined in paragraph 3.1 above.

### MEMORIAL RECORD

**The Rev Walter Herron, BA**, died on 8 June, 2008 in the 86th year of his age and the 57th of his ministry. Born in the city of Belfast in 1922, he was brought up within the fellowship of Agnes Street Congregation and, further to his primary and secondary education, he studied at Magee and Trinity University Colleges where he gained a “first” in his Bachelor of Arts degree. He undertook his theological studies at, what was then, Assembly’s College Belfast. Before studying for the ministry he gained qualifications in accountancy and spent some years working for a local accountancy firm in Belfast. His experience there proved invaluable throughout his ministry and was especially evidenced in his immaculate “minutes” during his years as Clerk of the Synod of Dublin and Clerk of the Monaghan Presbytery. On completion of his studies for the ministry he was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast in 1951 and ordained and installed to his first charge of Clontibret in that same year. It was during his years in Clontibret that he gained a love for Monaghan and its people which remained throughout his life. Called to the Congregations of Millisle and Ballycopeland in 1958, he moved back to his beloved Monaghan in 1965 when he accepted a call to the Congregation of First Monaghan. In addition to his responsibilities for First Monaghan he was also “stated supply” for Smithborough and, from 1972 until his retirement in 1987, the Congregation of Drum. His genuine interest in people, not least children, is remembered with great affection as is his readiness to help people of any age or persuasion who

were facing hardship or difficulty. His many acts of kindness and love were carried out quietly and known only by those whom he helped. His sharp, clear mind served him well in all aspects of his ministry not least in the field of education. In this regard he served as the General Assembly's Director of Secondary Education for the Republic of Ireland from 1970 until 1979. He also gave valuable service to County Monaghan Vocational Education Committee. Privileged indeed were those who benefited from his wise council, his meticulous pulpit ministry, his warm pastoral heart, his sense of humour and his loyalty as a friend and pastor. To his wife Olwyn, his daughters Jennifer and Alison and his sons James and Jeremy, the sympathy of the General Assembly is directed at this time of sorrow and loss.

**The Very Rev Professor Robert Finlay Gregg Holmes, BA, MA, MLitt, DD, DD**, died on 14 July, 2008 in the 82nd year of his age and the 54th of his ministry. Although born in Belfast in 1926, he was brought up and received his early education in Ballymena, having attended the local Model Primary School where his father was Principal. He then progressed to Ballymena Academy and subsequently Coleraine Academical Institution. His university education was undertaken at Trinity College Dublin, Westminster College and Fitzwilliam House, Cambridge. Upon completion of his studies and serving his assistantship in Belmont Congregation, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena and under Par 314 of the Code was ordained in 1954 as a Chaplain to HM Forces (RAF). He remained in the RAF until 1960 when he became Chaplain in Campbell College, Belfast. In 1963 he was appointed lecturer in Church History and Systematic Theology in Magee Theological College where he served until the union of Magee Theological College with the Presbyterian College Belfast in 1971 – forming Union Theological College. Here he remained as Professor of Christian History and Doctrine until his retirement in 1996. During his time in Union College he occupied the position of Principal, Convener of the Doctrine Committee, Convener of the Continental Mission and Convener of the University Education Committee. In the year 1990/1 he was Moderator of the General Assembly. Although recognised throughout the Church as an effective preacher, Finlay Holmes was essentially a teacher with a tremendous capacity to communicate the great doctrines of grace as interpreted by the Christian Church down the ages. At the launch of his book – *“Our Irish Presbyterian Heritage”* – the Rev Professor Buick Knox declared, “he takes his place in the succession of Presbyterian historians – Reid, Killen, Witherow, Latimer, Stewart, Davey, Anderson and Barkley – and he has written the story (that is, of Presbyterians) for the present generation.” It is confidently envisaged that this book, together with his centenary history of the Magee Colleges and his biography of Henry Cooke, will remain essential reading for as long as the story of Irish Presbyterianism is told. Much loved and highly respected by his students down the years he will be remembered for his scholarship, his warmth of personality, his humanity and his humble walk with God. Only eternity will reveal the debt of gratitude owed to him by his many friends within and beyond our denomination. His wife Josephine, his daughter Philippa and sons Richard and Patrick can be assured of the sympathy and prayers of the General Assembly at this time of great sorrow and loss.



**The Rev James Tolland, MA**, died on 10 August, 2008 in the 73rd year of his age and the 44th of his ministry. He was born in Dundonald in 1935 and brought up in the Congregation of Kirkpatrick Memorial where his grandfather had been the first Minister. Matriculating from Methodist College to Magee University College he gained both a Bachelors and Masters Degree from Trinity University College, Dublin. His theological studies for the ministry were undertaken at, what was then, the Assembly's College Belfast. Before entering the ministry he spent some years teaching in the primary school sector. This proved invaluable throughout his subsequent ministry particularly in his skills and methods of communication to children and young people. He was licensed by the East Belfast Presbytery in 1964 and on completion of his assistantship in First Bangor Congregation where he was ordained, he was installed to his first charge of Fourtowns and Poyntzpass in 1967. He remained there until, having responded to the call of First Donegore, he was installed there in January 1971. It was from First Donegore that he retired in September 2001. James Tolland maintained throughout his ministry a lively interest in education and, for several years, was a most useful member of the General Assembly's Board of Education. He also loved to teach and, when time permitted, was frequently on the temporary staff of some local secondary schools. A further extension of his ministry was his involvement as a Major with the Army Cadet Force. One of his closest friends and colleagues referred to him as "a faithful pastor and teacher who was always available to any within or beyond his Congregation who needed his help." He will of course be missed most by those who knew him best and loved him most. Here we think of his wife Mavis, his daughter Anne and son Andrew. To them and all members of his family circle the sympathy of the General Assembly is extended at this time of sorrow and loss.

**The Rev James Luke** died on 16 September, 2008 in the 85th year of his age and the 47th of his ministry. He was born near Ahoghill in 1923 and his home Congregation was Trinity, Ahoghill. Further to his education at Paton College and Nottingham University from which he was awarded a Certificate in Theological and Social Studies he proceeded to, what was then, the Assembly's College, Belfast. On satisfying the Board of Studies he was licensed by the Presbytery of Magherahoghill in May 1961 and, having completed assistantships in St Andrew's Nottingham, St Andrew's Knockbreda and Woodvale Park, he was ordained and installed to his first charge of Carnlough and Cushendall in November of that same year. Here he remained until, responding affirmatively to a call from the Congregation of Dungiven in 1977, he was installed in October of that year. He retired from Dungiven in August 1993. It is said of Jim that he was a most conscientious pastor – always willing to help people in whatever way he could and, in his own quiet, loving way, endearing himself as a shepherd to his people. His innovative skills were appreciated in many aspects of Congregational life. For example, the Harvest of the Sea Service which he started in Carnlough in 1968; the introduction of a Girls and Boys Brigade Company in Dungiven and his involvement with Chaplaincy in the Armed Forces which was influential in the introduction of a special interdenominational Remembrance Day Service. Shortly after moving to Dungiven he organised a Congregational mission during which approximately

seventy persons were converted to Christ. This has had lasting benefits for the Congregation and indeed led to the provision of a residue of valuable leadership down the years and to this very time. His wife Jean and members of his family circle can rest assured that Jim is remembered within the fellowship of the General Assembly with great affection and that genuine sympathy is extended to them at this time of sorrow and loss.

**The Rev James Henry Harrison, BA**, died on 22 November, 2008 in the 85th year of his age and the 46th of his ministry. He was born in the Shankill Road area of Belfast and brought up within the fellowship of Ulsterville Congregation. He received his education at the China Inland Mission Training Home, London Bible College, Magee and Trinity University Colleges where he graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1960. Before entering the ministry he worked for some years in the retail drapery trade and later as a Lay Assistant in the Shankill Road Mission. He served his assistantship in Sinclair Seamen's Congregation and, on completion of his studies for the ministry, was licensed by the Belfast Presbytery in 1962. Later that year he received a call to Cavanaleck and Aughentaine Congregations – his ordination taking place simultaneous with his installation. Here he remained until 1971 when he moved to be Minister of Craigavon Congregation. Eleven years later he took on the additional responsibility of ministering to Vinecash. He retired in 1990. For much of his ministry in the Craigavon area Jim was the Presbyterian Chaplain in Craigavon Area Hospital. Here he exercised a most effective ministry both to patients and staff. His quiet gentle disposition endeared him to all who had the privilege of knowing him and sitting under his ministry was to many a benediction. He was ably supported in all aspects of his ministry by his late wife – the former Edith Elizabeth Martin – whose passing he mourned deeply. He is remembered within and beyond the family of Irish Presbyterianism with much affection and the sympathy of the General Assembly is with his wider family circle at this time of sorrow and loss.

**The Rev Harold Boyce, BA**, died on 28 November, 2008 in the 70th year of his age and the 40th of his ministry. A Belfast man born and bred, his home Congregation was Mountpottinger within whose fellowship he was, at an early age, converted to Christ. Beyond his primary school years he attended the Belfast Technical High School and Magee and Trinity University Colleges where he graduated in Arts in 1966. His theological training was undertaken at, what was then, the Assembly's College, Belfast. He served his Assistantship in the Shankill Road Mission where he was ordained in 1968. He was installed to his first charge of Dervock in 1971 where he remained until his call to Strand Congregation in 1977. In the year 2000 the General Assembly appointed him to be Director of Evangelism – a position which he held until retirement in 2005. In this capacity the whole Church is indebted to him for his efforts in encouraging many Congregations towards making "outreach" a bigger priority in their overall life and witness. Harold's winsome personality, sparkling sense of humour, generous spirit and wholesome friendship endeared him to all who had the privilege of knowing him. He loved the great doctrines of grace, he delighted in preaching the doctrines of grace and he lived a life that reflected that grace. This resulted in him being greatly used by God in bringing many into a

living encounter with Jesus Christ. It was while studying at Magee that he met the girl who was later to become his wife – the then Eileen Patrick. As a couple they set an example of a truly Christian marriage whose delight it was to be involved in the work of the Church and the up-building of Christ's kingdom. To Eileen, their daughter Judith and sons Peter and Andrew, the sympathy of the General Assembly is directed at this time of sorrow and loss.

**The Rev John Watson Morrow, BSc, MAgr, PhD**, died on 1 January, 2009 in the 78th year of his age and the 49th year of his ministry. Born of farming stock in the Gilnahirk area of Belfast, he was brought up within Gilnahirk Congregation and attended the local Gilnahirk Primary School. He progressed on to Campbell College and subsequently to Queen's University where he gained a "first" in a joint Science/Agriculture honours degree. He went on to achieve a Masters in Agriculture before proceeding to his theological studies at the Queen's University Belfast, New College Edinburgh and, what was then, the Assembly's College, Belfast. He gained his PhD through the Queen's University Belfast. He served his Student Assistantship in St John's Congregation, Newtownbreda and his Licentiate Assistantship in Richmond Craigmillar Congregation Edinburgh. He was licensed by the then Comber Presbytery in 1958 and ordained to his first charge of Seymour Hill Church Extension Congregation in 1960. Here he remained until 1967 when he was appointed to be Chaplain to overseas students in Glasgow. In 1971 he was installed to the Presbyterian Chaplaincy of Trinity and other Colleges in Dublin where he remained until his appointment to be Presbyterian Chaplain in Queen's University Belfast in 1976. In 1980 he left Queen's and became Leader of the Corrymeela Community. He held this position until 1993 when he was appointed to a lecturership with the Irish School of Ecumenics from which he retired in 1997. John Morrow never lost his love for the "wide open spaces" of his rural upbringing and this love for "space" was reflected on his whole attitude to life and indeed his theology. He loved the challenge which went with the curiosity and idealism of youth and was in so many ways ideally suited for the constituency among which he worked for so much of this ministry. He will be remembered among his many friends and acquaintances as one who took time to understand the problems with which people wrestled and the patience he showed to those of a different point of view – theologically, politically or culturally. He detested intolerance of all sorts and especially when found in religion or politics. This was particularly evident during his many appearances at the rostrum during Assembly Week when the debates centred around some aspect of inter-church relations. He will be remembered with love and respect by his many friends within the General Assembly. John was predeceased by his wife Shirley, whom he mourned deeply. His daughter Alison and sons Duncan, David and Neil can be assured of the sympathy and prayers of this supreme court of the Church.

**The Rev Robert James Magee, OBE, MA, BRed, DMin**, died on 31 January, 2009 in the 79th year of his age and the 51st of his ministry. He was brought up within the fellowship of Ballysillan Congregation and educated at Belfast Boys Model School, Belfast College of Technology, Magee and Trinity University Colleges and, what was then, the Assembly's College, Belfast.

Before entering the ministry he spent some years in a local Estate Agents office and also some time as a draughtsman with a Belfast Textile company. On completion of his studies for the ministry he was licensed by the Belfast Presbytery and, before embarking on the challenge of his first charge in Donacloney in 1960, he served his assistantship in Mersey Street Mission. He remained for six years in Donacloney before moving to Sinclair Seamen's Congregation where he served for the next four years. In 1970 he moved to First Saintfield Congregation and, after a short ministry there, he received a call to Dundonald Congregation, from which he retired in 1995. His quiet, reserved, gentle and yet firm disposition endeared him to his people wherever he went or ministered. It was obvious to all who knew him that he loved his Lord, he loved God's Word and nothing pleased him more than to preach that Word and show its relevance to all the spiritual, moral and ethical implications of living in today's complex world. He loved the city, the province and the island of his upbringing and, with all right thinking people, he agonised over what happened during and after what we now call "the years of the troubles". Because of the man that he was – his utter sincerity, his integrity, his unique ability to understand and be understood – he won the confidence of some of the most hardened loyalists and, in the opinion of many within all shades of the religious and political opinion, was very influential in brokering the loyalist ceasefire. Only eternity will reveal the enormity of gratitude owed to him, not just by the Church that he loved so well and served so faithfully, but by the Island of Ireland for the contribution he made towards peace and reconciliation. It was no great surprise to his friends and admirers when, in recognition of this contribution, he was awarded an OBE by Her Majesty the Queen. Sadly, the last years of his life were far from easy. In addition to his struggles with a trying illness the dark shadow of a bereavement crossed his pathway twice in the loss of his wife Maureen and his son Royston. His surviving son Uel and daughter Donna can be assured of the sympathy and prayers of the General Assembly at this time of sorrow and loss.

**The Very Rev Thomas John Simpson, MA, LLB, DipEd, DD, DLitt**, died on 26 February, 2009 in the 85th year of his age and the 59th of his ministry. The son of a Ballymena farmer, he was brought up in Harryville Congregation and, before progressing to Ballymena Academy, he attended the local Harryville Primary School. His higher education was obtained at Magee and Trinity University Colleges, Edinburgh University and, what was then, Assembly's College, Belfast. In addition to a degree in Modern Languages and Political Science he also gained an LLB from Dublin University. In recognition for outstanding service to both Church and State he was awarded a DD by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty of Ireland and a DLitt from the University of Ulster. While studying in Edinburgh he served a Student Assistantship in the Nicholson Parish Church and, on returning to Belfast, was assigned to Fortwilliam Park Congregation as their Assistant Minister. On satisfying the Board of Studies he was licensed by the Ballymena Presbytery in June 1948, and ordained and installed to his first charge of Ballykelly in February 1950. Here he spent the next 15 years as their much loved Minister. While in Ballykelly he was a part-time RAF Chaplain and, in addition, lectured in Homiletics at Magee

Theological College. In 1976, he was appointed to the position of Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and assumed the position of Clerk in 1985. He remained in this position until his retirement in 1990. While Deputy Clerk, he was Secretary of the Home Mission and Education Boards and the Church Extension Committee. As Clerk, he convened several Boards and Committees, including the General Board, the Moderator's Advisory Committee, the Recognised Ministries Committee, the Judicial Commission and the Business and Nomination Boards. Tom Simpson was eminently qualified in heart and mind for the various positions he held throughout his ministry. His pastor's heart was evident and greatly appreciated as Minister in Ballykelly, where he and his late wife Pat were much loved and highly esteemed. Then, in his role in Church Administration, he was appreciated not just for the wise advice he gave but for his pastoral concern for those who shared their problems with him. No one ever left the "Clerks Office" without knowing that the Clerk genuinely cared. What a vital ministry this was to many. As Moderator of the General Assembly, going from Congregation to Congregation and from Manse to Manse, he was "Big" not just in stature but in heart. His ministry brought great encouragement wherever he went. His daughter Maude and sons Joseph and John can be confident that within and beyond our denomination their father is remembered with great affection and respect and that they have the sympathy and prayers of this Supreme Court of the Church of which their father was such an outstanding servant.

**The Rev William John Parkes, BA, BD**, died on 8 March, 2009 in the 58th year of his age, and the 31st of his ministry. A Belfast man, he was brought up in the fellowship of Bethany (later Immanuel) Congregation and, beyond his primary school education, he was educated at Annadale Grammar, Belfast College of Business Studies and the Queen's University Belfast where he graduated in Arts and Divinity. His theological studies were undertaken at, what was then, Assembly's College. In addition to serving summer Assistantships in High Kirk, Newcastle, Sinclair Seaman's and Alexandra, he served his student and ordained Assistantship in Megan Memorial/Mersey Street Mission. He was licensed in June 1977 by the Presbytery of North Belfast, ordained by the Presbytery of East Belfast in January 1978 and installed to his first charge of Donaloney in April 1980. After a short but much appreciated ministry he was, in September 1984, installed in Woodlands Congregation. It was from Woodlands that he was called to his final charge of St Andrew's Bangor, in June 1991. Here he remained until his death on the above date. In each of his charges he was known as a fervent evangelist, an able and winsome teacher of God's Word and a diligent and caring pastor. His many and obvious gifts – not least his clear mind and warm, evangelical heart, reflected his life of grace and made him a model of a Christ centred ministry. His lively interest in evangelism made him an ideal Convener for the General Assembly's Evangelism Committee – a position which he held from 1998 until 2004. John Parkes, throughout his life, never lost his sense of gratitude to the Congregation of his up-bringing where, along with the Godly influences of a Christian home, he was converted to Christ and received his early nurture in the Christian faith. Christian Endeavour was a great encouragement to him as a young Christian and

his sense of gratitude to this organisation was reflected in his contribution to it throughout his ministry. The death of his wife Doris in 2006 was an enormous loss, but, with faith and courage, he pressed on to serve his Lord with diligence and grace. His sons Jonathan and Andrew, his mother Ruby and members of the wider family circle can rest assured that they are much in the thoughts and prayers of the General Assembly at this time of great sorrow and loss.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly agree the Presbytery in the Coleraine-Limavady area be known as the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady.
3. That the General Assembly agree the Presbytery in the North-West be known as the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal.

#### **Priorities**

4. That the General Assembly note the goals identified by the Priorities Committee in section (6) of its report.
5. That an examination of all assessments be included in the remit of the General Assembly to the Panel appointed by the General Board to review the Church's position on pensions.

#### **Moderator's Advisory Committee**

6. That in the nomination of Moderator of the General Assembly, Presbyteries should use the process outlined in paragraph 1.
7. That the General Assembly, recognising the deep hurt felt by many at the events surrounding the Presbyterian Mutual Society, call the Church to continued prayer and concern for all involved.
8. That the General Assembly offer support to the Panel appointed to advise on the Church's response to the financial crisis and pray that it may be given wisdom.
9. That the General Assembly note the setting up of a Panel to investigate the spiritual and ethical issues that emerge for our Church from the history of the Presbyterian Mutual Society, especially in the light of recent economic developments that forced the society into administration.
10. That the General Assembly encourage the Moderator's Advisory Committee to identify ways to promote conciliation throughout the Church.

#### **Doctrine Committee**

11. That the Youth and Children's Ministry Board be charged with the responsibility of pursuing the objectives contained in the summary proposals.

#### **Global Concerns Committee**

12. That Lifestyle issues be incorporated in mission plans at Congregation, Presbytery and General Assembly levels.
13. That the General Assembly commend the paper entitled, "Irregular Immigration: responding to a dilemma faced by Congregations and individuals",

as a source of information and a contribution to encouraging engagement with this topical issue.

14. That the General Assembly approve the grants noted in the Race Relations Panel report totalling £3,000.

15. That the General Assembly gratefully acknowledge the extensive and effective work achieved by our peacemaking programme officers, Mrs Laura Coulter and Miss Deborah Erwin, and wish them well for the future.

16. That the Gospel In Conflict material be once again commended to the whole Church, with both Presbyteries and Congregations encouraged to make it part of their regular Christian discipleship programme.

### **Church Relations Committee**

17. That the General Assembly appoint the following:

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

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

18. That the following grants be made available from the Incidental Fund:

Irish Council of Churches	£19,000
Irish Inter-Church Meeting	10,000
Conference of European Churches	5,000
Church and Society Commission (Brussels)	11,000
Community of Protestant Churches in Europe	3,000
World Alliance of Reformed Churches	12,000

19. That the General Assembly agree to a request from WARC to increase funding over the next three years, in the following incremental manner: £13,000 in 2010; £14,000 in 2011; and £16,000 in 2012.

20. That the following delegates represent PCI at the 13th CEC Assembly in Lyon, France, 15-21 July 2009: the Revs Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie, Dr Allen Sleith; Mrs Helen Bond; Mr Paul Armstrong.

21. That the following delegates represent PCI at the Uniting General Council Meeting of WCRC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, 18-28 June 2010: the Revs Cheryl Meban, Dr Allen Sleith, Dr Donald Watts; Mrs Kathryn Viner.

### **Recognised Ministries**

22. That the General Assembly adopt the recommendations on Ministers without charge contained in the Recognised Ministries Committee report, par 2.

### **Church and Society**

23. That the General Assembly welcome the four working groups addressing human rights, a shared and better future, the economy, and dealing with the past and encourage the Committee to develop position papers to inform the Church's engagement in the public arena.

24. That the General Assembly encourage members of the Church in the Republic of Ireland in particular to use the new panel to bring matters of concern in the Republic to the fore.

25. That the General Assembly recognise the need to build firm foundations and structures for the future in Northern Ireland, addressing matters related to the conflict and moving towards a shared and better future in which the violence of the past has no place.

26. That the General Assembly recognise the impact of the economic recession on individuals and institutions and welcomes the timely formation of the Social Justice Network.

27. That the General Assembly encourage all voters to participate in the European elections in June.

28. That the General Assembly note the resignation of the Rev Matthew Ross from the Church and Society Commission in Brussels and thank him for his work.

29. That a budget of £2000 be made available from the Incidental Fund for the work of the Church and Society Committee.

### **Pastoral Care**

30. That the General Assembly continue to pray for all whose present home is a Manse, and encourage them to avail of the support offered by the *Care Panel*.

31. That a budget of £2,000 be made available from the Incidental Fund for the work of the Pastoral Care Panel.

### **Panel on Ministries**

32. That the General Assembly note the proposed training course for the position of 'Recognised/Accredited Preacher'.

33. That the Panel on Ministries be asked to continue its work, with power to co-opt, looking particularly at outstanding issues including 'tent-making ministries' and 'part-time ministries'.

### **Church House Panel**

34. That the General Assembly authorise Phase 1 of the internal refurbishment to proceed as outlined at paragraph 3.4.

35. That a budget of £15,000 be made available from the Incidental Fund for the work of the Church House Panel.

### **General**

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

## **OVERTURE ON THE BOOKS**

### **Anent Par 81(3) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 81(3) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

"It is the right of a minister to employ any minister or licentiate or accepted student of the Church as a temporary assistant. A minister of another Church



may be employed for a period not exceeding 12 months, after which the approval of the Committee for the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates must be obtained.”

RB SAVAGE

### **OVERTURES TRANSMITTED**

#### **Anent Par 33(4) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 33(4) of the Code the words “placed upon a roll of elders without charge.” be deleted and the words “placed upon a roll of elders without charge or, where appropriate and at the request of the Kirk Session, be placed upon a roll of elders emeriti.” substituted in their place.

DJ WATTS

#### **Anent Par 62 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 62 of the Code the words “but without a vote.” be deleted and the words “but without a vote, and shall invite ministers without charge under their care to do so.” substituted in their place.

DJ WATTS

#### **Anent Par 98 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 98 of the Code the words “but without a vote.” be deleted and the words “but without a vote, and shall invite ministers without charge under the care of Presbyteries to do so.” substituted in their place

DJ WATTS

# JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: THE CLERK

1. At the time of writing the Judicial Commission had met three times during the year. A further meeting is planned to deal with correspondence and a reference from a Presbytery. A report on these items will be brought in the Daily Minutes.

2. A letter was received from two members of the General Assembly following the Judicial Commission report in the private session of the Assembly in June. It expressed concern at the advice given on the procedure to record dissent, and also on the manner in which the Judicial Commission had reached its decision. The Commission recognised the strong feelings that are held by some members of the Assembly, but affirmed:

- (i) Members of Assembly cannot dissent from the findings or determinations of the Judicial Commission when they are reported to the General Assembly. “The Judicial Commission shall have Assembly powers to dispose finally of any cases of appeal or reference or any other matters which may be referred to it under or by virtue of this Code”. (Code Par 127(4)). A member of Assembly who has not been involved in the decision-making process of the Judicial Commission cannot dissent from it. Only “a member who has noted or spoken against any decision of a court may intimate his dissent from, or his protest against, the decision.” (Code Par 160(1)).
- (ii) On some occasions a section of the Judicial Commission Report may bring a recommendation for consideration by the Assembly. These are not findings of the Commission and may be debated by the Assembly in the usual way. In the case of resolution (1) – “That the report be received” – it is possible to send such a section of the Report back to the Judicial Commission for further consideration. In these circumstances it would be possible to dissent from a decision, provided the criteria of Code Par 160(1) have been met.
- (iii) In the debate at the private session in June 2008, the complainants spoke against the determination of the Judicial Commission from which they do not have a right to dissent. They also indicated that they were not in favour of the part of the report which was a recommendation, i.e. that the Doctrine Committee re-examine the issues of “The Church and the Homosexual Report” (1979). That resolution was defeated and so their dissent was not an issue.
- (iv) The Commission further noted the complainants’ dissatisfaction with “the manner in which their determination (i.e. that of the Judicial Commission) was reached”. The Commission is not in a position to examine the work of a previous Commission, but is satisfied that all was in order.

3. Two Presbyteries sought and received preliminary advice from the Commission.

4. The Commission met on two occasions to hear an Appeal against the decision of the Tyrone Presbytery Commission to uphold a decision of Molesworth Kirk Session. Following a full hearing, the Appeal was upheld and the decision of the Presbytery Commission reversed. To preserve the privacy of individuals a fuller report will be given in the private session of the General Assembly.

#### **RESOLUTION**

1. That the Report be received.

# UNION COMMISSION

Convener: Rev Dr S A Matthews

Secretary: Rev Dr I Hart

## INTRODUCTION

1. The period covered by this Report is from March 2008-February 2009.

## STEWARDSHIP OF OUR RESOURCES

2. The stewardship of the resources that God gives to us is an important biblical theme. Repeatedly the Scriptures confront us with the challenge that we should not waste the time and the talents and the material resources which come as God's gift, rather we are to spend them wisely and in such a way that they are fully used in the work of his kingdom. (Matthew 25:14-30, John 6:12, I Peter 4:10). The Commission is conscious that it must be part of that biblical stewardship through which the Church uses scarce human and financial resources effectively in providing ministry.

3. There are **human resources**. The Church can be thankful that there are students answering the call to train for ministry, however, as the report to last year's Assembly made clear, projections which have been done clearly indicate that if those students become eligible for call they will not quite make up the losses to the ministry of our Church through retirements, deaths and other circumstances. The Commission must therefore be sure that leave to call is only granted in situations where the talent and energy of a Minister will be fully used and where they will be clearly harnessed to the mission of the Church. With the shortage of Ministers, the failure to share ministry sometimes means that other vacancies will be extended and a few Congregations will be left without the prospect of calling a Minister.

4. There are **financial resources**. If leave to call is given in some situations where the stipend is below the Ministerial Minimum, then augmentation is needed to bring the Minister's remuneration up to that level. Sometimes it is absolutely essential that this is done because a small but vibrant community of faith is isolated and there is no prospect of sharing ministry, or because there is a great potential in the situation. However that does make a further claim on the resources of the Central Ministry Fund which funds both augmentation and also payments made through the Inadequate (ministerial) Expenses Grant Scheme. This year the Commission has engaged in consultation with representatives of the Board of Finance and Personnel about the fact that the CMF is faced with a declining retained balance. The Commission has also discussed the likely implications of the present adverse economic situation. It has been helpful for Commission members to learn more about the complicated financial system of our Church and the financial implications of the decisions to be made..

5. **The Commission has now adopted the following policy:** Working in partnership with BMI and the Board of Finance and Personnel the

Commission will keep before it the imperative to drive forward the mission of the Church, but to do it in such a way that unreasonable financial burdens are not placed on Congregations thus hindering their own mission and service.

### **DECISION TAKING BY THE COMMISSION**

6. Sometimes the Commission is urged to be more directive and visionary in promoting new arrangements for the delivery of ministry in areas where circumstances have changed. The Commission is very conscious that when it promotes the sharing of ministry it is often asking Congregations and individuals to make sacrifices, and to put the overall mission of the Church before personal feelings and preferences. The Commission records its gratitude to those who have made some new arrangements possible. On occasions however when Commission and Presbytery have mapped out a clear way into the future, that leadership and guidance has been rejected. The Church has to reflect deeply on how to proceed in those situations. The Commission seeks to give people time to adapt to new circumstances and it always tries to listen carefully to the views expressed. Our Church has traditionally operated on a consensus system, the powers of Commission, Presbytery and Congregation provide checks and balances; but it has to be acknowledged that there can be a price to be paid for that method of proceeding. The Commission covets the prayerful support and understanding of the Church as it seeks to balance direction and consensus in situations where changes need to be made.

### **CONVENERSHIPS OF COMMISSION WORKING GROUPS**

7. The Commission is indebted to **Mr Jack Hutcheson** for the many years of service he has given as Central Ministry Fund representative on the Commission. Mr Hutcheson provided an effective channel of communication between the Commission and the Board of Finance and Personnel and its predecessors. He also supervised the Inadequate Expenses Scheme and the annual production of figures for ministerial travel expenses; latterly doing that as Convener of the Expenses and Fees Sub-Committee. When Mr Hutcheson came to the end of his time on the Commission he was succeeded in his role as CMF representative and Convener of the Expenses and Fees Sub-Committee by the Rev RJA Bell.

8. The Commission also records its gratitude to the **Rev Roy Mackay** who has acted as Convener of the Additional Pastoral Personnel Sub-Committee for three years. With the rapid development of this form of full-time service in our Congregations it has been necessary to provide support to Ministers and Kirk Sessions, in writing job descriptions, agreeing selection procedures and in other aspects of recruitment. While carrying a very heavy commitment to the work of the parish ministry, Mr Mackay has provided valuable leadership as Convener of this Sub-Committee. He has been instrumental in the development of the new Additional Pastoral Personnel Guidelines which will continue to be an essential resource for our Congregations in the future. The Commission appointed the Rev Peter Gamble as Convener of the Sub-Committee from 31 March, 2009.

## **ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

*The Rev R McM Mackay reports:*

From March 2008-February 2009 approval was given for 22 posts (14 youth related and 8 pastoral/community). There continues to be a steady and increasing demand from Congregations for such staffing appointments.

Last year, the General Assembly authorised the Union Commission to draw up a comprehensive set of guidelines to assist Congregations with arrangements for the appointment of additional pastoral personnel. A new set of Guidelines was, therefore, published in June last year and forwarded to all Ministers. This seems to have been helpful to Congregations and has enabled a standardising of approach when making new appointments. Also, at the time of writing, a final draft of an up-dated Hand Book from Peninsula Services is being completed. This new edition should be issued shortly to every Congregation.

Congregations are again reminded that any new post or extension be approved in the normal way i.e. by Presbytery and then Union Commission.

## **SEVEN YEAR REVIEWS**

In the past it has been the practice not to include in the Commission's seven year review process the financial terms agreed in calls issued before 1996 when Par 236(2) of the Code was amended. This means that some Congregations have been excluded from this exercise and an amendment to Par 236(2) is presented to give the General Assembly the opportunity to address this situation.

## **PANEL ON PLANNING FOR THE STRATEGIC USE OF RESOURCES**

*The Rev TJ Stothers reports:*

The Panel has continued to meet. It has examined a scheme proposed to the General Assembly in the 1960's. This set Congregations in categories such as urban or rural, and set parameters as to how many Congregations of particular sizes should exist within certain distances. It has also continued to monitor trends (including future estimates) in the number of Ministers available.

Three members of the Panel, along with the Executive Secretary of the Board of Mission in Ireland, travelled to Edinburgh to meet with members of the Church of Scotland. Much was learned as to how the Church of Scotland seeks to provide an appropriate number of ministries in each Presbytery. The group also learned that the Kirk has a very different culture concerning matters which fall within the Panel's remit. At the time of writing what has been learned is being digested by the Panel which intends to make some recommendations to the Union Commission for debate and possible implementation.

Arising out of a situation where it was the opinion of the Commission that two Congregations should be united, and one of the Ministers involved was nearing retirement; the Commission came to see the value of "deferred union" status. An overture amending Par 274 is presented for the consideration of the General Assembly which would create the possibility of a deferred union in situations where it would further the mission of the Church.

**LEAVE TO CALL A MINISTER**

Note: This is only a summary; there may well be conditions attached to the Leave to Call which are not recorded here (e.g. Reviewable Tenure, Restricted List, additional income for the Minister). Expenses are “Initial Ministerial Expenses” and are to be kept under review and paid in accordance with the procedures agreed by the Board of Finance and Personnel.

<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Stipend</b>	<b>Expenses</b>
Brookside, Ahoghill	£31,000 [2008]	£7,000
Garnerville	£22,000 [2008]	£6,500
Newmills	£15,000 [2008]	£4,350
and Carland	£14,648 [2008]	£2,898
Ballyweaney	£23,000 [2008]	£7,000
Mosside	£17,000 [2008]	£5,000
and Toberdoney	£ 9,500 [2008]	£2,500
Donoughmore	€13,000 [2008]	€4,000
and Carnone	€9,000 [2008]	€2,000
and Convoy	€13,000 [2008]	€4,000
First Antrim	£37,500 [2008]	£7,000
Whiteabbey	£35,000 [2008]	£7,500
Killinchy	£35,000 [2008]	£7,000
Christ Church, Dundonald	£27,000 [2008]	£7,000
Ballygoney	£3,500 [2008]	£1,500
and Coagh	£10,250 [2008]	£3,000
and Saltersland	£10,250 [2008]	£3,000
Bannside	£32,500 [2008]	£7,500
Second Saintfield	£26,500 [2008]	£7,200
Dun Laoghaire	€33,917 [2008]	€12,520
Moy	£17,000 [2008]	£4,800
and Benburb	£7,350 [2008]	£2,400
Ballyblack	£18,200 [2008]	£7,000
First Ballymoney	£31,500 [2008]	£7,500
First Castleberg	£16,000 [2008]	£4,400
and Killeter	£9,500 [2008]	£2,200
Cliftonville Road Church Plant	£25,000 [2009]	
Ballynure	£29,000 [2009]	£7,200
Raloo	£19,000 [2009]	£4,320
and Magheramorne	£11,000 [2009]	£2,880
Gardenmore	£36,000 [2009]	£7,200
Fitzroy	£31,000 [2009]	£6,480

**LEAVE TO CALL UNDER URBAN MISSION CONGREGATION SCHEME**

Strand	£24,131 [2008]	£7,000
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**LEAVE TO CALL AN ASSOCIATE MINISTER**

Carmoney	Appropriate Minimum	£4,000
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## EXTENSION OF REVIEWABLE TENURE MINISTRIES

The reviewable tenure ministry in Ballymacarret was extended until 31 December, 2010 on the understanding that the Presbytery of East Belfast will take active steps to help plan the way forward for future work in the Ballymacarret area.

The reviewable tenure ministry in Sinclair Seamens' was extended until 31 May, 2011 on the understanding that the Presbytery of North Belfast will take active steps, along with the Minister and Kirk Session, to help plan the way forward for future work in the Sinclair Seaman's area up to and beyond this date.

## STATED SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS

**Gortnessy:** The Commission extended the Rev AMcM Kerr's term for 6 months, until 31 March, 2009.

**Stranorlar:** The Commission nominated the Rev S Stewart.

**Donoughmore, Carnone and Convoy:** The Commission nominated the Very Rev Dr Rodney Sterritt for 1 year, until 30 September, 2009.

**Second Newtownards:** The Commission extended the Rev RT Anderson's term by up to a further year, until 28 February, 2010.

**Second Killyleagh:** The Commission nominated the Rev Ian Dennis for a period of 12 months from 1st March, 2009.

**Boveedy:** the Commission nominated the Rev TJ McCormick.

The approval of the Committee on the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates is now required for the appointment of any non-PCI Minister or Licentiate being proposed as a Stated Supply. It has been made clear that any Child Protection checks required in connection with any Stated Supply arrangement are the responsibility of the appointing body which is the Presbytery.

The Commission produced guidelines concerning the terms of Stated Supply arrangements.

## DISSOLUTION OF UNIONS

The union of Donoughmore and Stranorlar was dissolved as from 1 June, 2008 or other appropriate date.

The union of Second Kilrea and Boveedy was dissolved as from 1 March, 2009 or other appropriate date.

## CONGREGATIONS UNITED

### **Carnone, Convoy and Donoughmore**

The Commission united these Congregations on the following terms:

1. That the Congregations of Carnone, Convoy and Donoughmore be united as from 1 June, 2008 or other appropriate date.
2. Each Congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and Finances.
3. Each Congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the superior Courts of the Church.



4. In the choice of a Minister the three Congregations shall act as one Congregation and the three Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.

5. Genuine efforts will be made to reduce the number of meetings of Session and Church Committee attended by the Minister, including the scheduling of a sequence of meetings held in one venue to reduce the amount of travel and time involved.

6. There shall be three stated services each Sunday: (a) at 9.45 am in Carnone (b) at 12.15 pm in Convoy (c) at 11.00 am in Donoughmore. The times of these services may be varied as the three Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine; notwithstanding this will allow for the sharing of services during the summer months and on other occasions.

7. A supply will be available to the Minister every two months. It is understood that in a year this amounts to 6 supplies additional to the usual four holiday supplies and one supply after Easter and one supply after Christmas. The cost of these additional supplies will be shared by the three Congregations on the same basis as holiday supplies.

8. The Minister will reside in Convoy Manse.

9. Donoughmore Manse remains the property of Donoughmore Congregation, however the Commission will look very sympathetically at proposals to use the money generated by the letting of the Donoughmore Manse to provide for an additional pastoral personnel (youth/family worker for example) to work in all three Congregations, or some other purpose that would benefit all three Congregations.

10. That the Stipends be (a) Carnone €9,000 [2008] (b) Convoy €13,000 [2008] (c) Donoughmore €13,000 [2008] and Initial Ministerial Expenses per annum (a) Carnone €2,000 (b) Convoy €4,000 (c) Donoughmore €4,000.

11. Shared expenses, including supplies, Manse Telephone Rental and Business Calls and upkeep of Convoy Manse, to be shared on the basis of Carnone 20%, Convoy and Donoughmore 40% each.

### **Raloo and Magheramorne**

The Commission united these Congregations on the following terms:

1. That the Congregations of Raloo and Magheramorne be united as from 1 February, 2009 or other appropriate date.

2. Each Congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and Finances.

3. Each Congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the superior Courts of the Church.

4. In the choice of a Minister the two Congregations shall act as one Congregation and the two Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.

5. From Sunday 19 April, 2009 or other appropriate date there shall be stated services each Sunday as follows: (a) Raloo at 11.30 a.m. (b) Magheramorne at 10.00 a.m. or at such other times as the two Kirk Sessions acting together shall determine.

6. That the Stipends be (a) Raloo £19,000 [2009] (b) Magheramorne £11,000 [2009] and initial ministerial expenses (a) £4,320 (b) £2,880.

7. That Rent, Rates, Taxes and Maintenance of Raloo Manse be borne in the proportions (a) three fifths (b) two fifths.

8. That Holiday Supplies and other shared expenses not included in 7 be borne in the proportions (a) three fifths (b) two fifths.
9. That the Minister shall reside in the Raloo Manse.
10. That the directions of the Union Commission be observed in respect of Magheramorne Manse and Manse property.
11. That the income from Magheramorne Glebe be used at the direction of the Congregational Committee.

### TERMINATION OF HOME MISSION STATUS

Lucan Congregation being in the financial position of paying Appropriate Ministerial Minimum as Stipend, requested the termination of their status as a Home Mission Congregation.

### ULSTERVILLE AND WINDSOR

Throughout the period covered by this report there have been on-going consultations between representatives of the South Belfast Presbytery and the Commission concerning the possible amalgamation of Ulsterville and Windsor Congregations.

### REVIEW OF THE TYRONE MEMORIAL

Representatives of the Commission continue to be involved in the Panel on the Review of the Tyrone Memorial which reports on its work through the Board of Finance and Personnel.

### MANSES

- Through its Manses Sub-Committee the Commission dealt with a wide variety of matters, of which the following are the most significant:
- **Ballyclare Congregation** was given permission to purchase a suitable replacement manse and then to demolish the existing one.
- **Ballykelly Congregation** was given permission to sell some glebe land and to use the proceeds towards the cost of building new Church halls.
- **Corvally Congregation** was given permission, in consultation with BMI, to sell their former manse and surrounding lands, and to use some of the proceeds to refurbish a building located within the Church grounds.
- **Brookside Congregation** was given permission to sell the existing manse and part of the land around it, and to build a new manse on the remaining land.
- A number of Congregations were given permission to let their manse during a vacancy.
- The decision was taken to allow the non-manse-owning Congregation in a union to pay either a fixed but indexed-linked annual sum, or a fixed proportion of the total annual maintenance costs incurred, to the manse-owning Congregation.

- In addition the Manses Convener gave advice on a variety of issues connected with manses or manse land.
- Congregations are reminded that, before letting a manse in a vacancy, the permissions of both Presbytery and the Union Commission are required, together with the drawing up of a proper legal agreement. It is also strongly recommended that the required detailed professional survey of the vacant manse be carried out before any tenants move in so that the eventual Leave to Call is not delayed.

The Commission also reminds Presbyteries that in the case of a major building or refurbishment scheme involving a manse, even when there is not a vacancy in the Congregation concerned, it remains its strong recommendation that another Minister of the Presbytery should chair all meetings relating to manse issues until the work is complete and the manse is ready for occupation.

## **EXPENSES AND FEES SUB-COMMITTEE**

*The Rev RJA Bell reports:*

### **Travel Expenses**

The Commission, through its Expenses and Fees Sub-Committee, each year gives guidance to Congregational Committees on the amount to be included for Car Allowance in the Minister's Expense Allowance as defined in the circular produced by the Board of Finance and Personnel in January 2007.

The average distance a Minister travels on business is 14,400 miles, and for that mileage the recommended figure for 2009 is: NI £5,752; ROI €8,841.

Ministers doing a higher mileage should be paid more, and those doing a lower mileage should be paid less.

### **Supply Fee**

The Commission set the Supply Fee for 2009 at £60 (€100) single, and £90 (€150) full. Travelling expenses should be paid in accordance with the rate set for attendance at Assembly Boards, currently 14p (22 cents) per mile.

**ASSESSMENTS ON FULLY CONSTITUTED CHURCH EXTENSION  
CHARGES — 2009**

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

<i>Church</i>	<i>Fully Constituted</i>	<i>Families (†)</i>	<i>Assess 2009 £</i>	<i>Spec. Sources £</i>	<i>Income £</i>
Burnside	1995	156 (137)	205	66,872	242,199
Movilla	2001	234 (180)	270	63,897	154,307
New Mossley	2005	100 (83)	124	25,966	73,975
Ballysally	2007	158 (66)	99	34,313	235,221

† Families contributing at least £5.00 per annum

**ASSESSMENTS ON CHURCH EXTENSION CHARGES — 2009**

<i>Church</i>	<i>Building £</i>	<i>Spec. Srs. £</i>	<i>Stip. £</i>	<i>C.M.F. £</i>	<i>Ch. Ext £</i>	<i>H.M. £</i>	<i>Total £</i>
Taughmonagh	—	14,708	4,412 (30%)	2,206 (15%)	1,471 (10%)	882 (6%)	8,971 (61%)

## LICENTIATES — 2009

Licentiates are paid 75% of the ministerial minimum = £16,812 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, 2009

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Maze	R Agnew*	01.06.08	24,580 (25%)	6,646	11,168
Newtownbreda	C Anderson*	01.06.08	33,191 (30%)	10,458	7,356
Kilbride	N Bingham*	27.07.08	30,856 (30%)	9,758	8,056
Newcastle	J Browne*	15.06.08	32,405 (30%)	10,222	7,592
Glengormley	T Bruce*	08.06.08	33,390 (30%)	10,518	7,296
Newtownards — First	M Carney*	25.05.08	30,189 (30%)	9,558	8,256
Ballymena — First	E Chestnut*	22.06.08	35,000 (30%)	11,001	6,813
Holywood — First	G Connor†	25.05.08	35,000 (30%)	10,751	6,763
Newtownards — Regent St	G Fowles†	13.06.08	35,190 (30%)	10,908	6,606
Ballyholme (to 15.03.09)	W Harkness*	13.06.08	30,468 (30%)	2,003	1,698
Granshaw (from 16.03.09)	W Harkness*	13.06.08	29,995 (30%)	7,541	6,572
Larne — First	L Keys*	22.06.08	35,508 (30%)	11,153	6,661
Banbridge Road	R McElnea*	23.05.08	38,974 (30%)	12,193	5,621
Rathcoole	J McKay*	29.06.08	24,596 (s/a)	0	17,814
Legacurry	R McKibben*	30.05.08	33,000 (30%)	10,401	7,413
Mourne	A Mullan#	25.05.08	43,510 (30%)	13,053	3,759
Kilfennan	R Orr*	06.06.08	30,534 (30%)	9,661	8,153
Cammony	M Russell*	30.05.08	37,288 (30%)	11,687	6,127
McQuiston Memorial	JL Rutherford*	08.06.08	29,381 (30%)	9,315	8,499

\* Married House Allowance † Single House Allowance

# No House House Allowance — House provided by congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

## LICENTIATES — 2009

Licentiates are paid 80% of the ministerial minimum = £17,160 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, 2009

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Greenisland	Andy Carroll*	08.06.07	28,750 (32%)	9,701	8,461
Craigy Hill	David Clawson†	03.06.07	32,500 (32%)	10,751	7,111
Ballywalter	Molly Deatherage†	24.06.07	24,537 (27%)	6,976	10,886
Harmony Hill	Clarke Deering*	01.06.07	34,712 (32%)	11,609	6,553
1st Larne	Martin Gracey*	17.06.07	35,508 (32%)	11,864	6,298
Hamilton Road	David Leach*	24.06.07	40,312 (32%)	13,401	4,761
1st Bangor	Karen Mbayo*	20.05.07	36,611 (32%)	12,216	5,946
Abbot's Cross	David McCarthy†	01.06.07	28,387 (32%)	9,435	8,427
Greenwell Street	Michael McClenahan*	01.06.07	34,923 (32%)	11,676	6,486
Ballygilbert	Ben Walker*	27.05.07	31,943 (s/a)	2,500	15,662
St Andrew's Belfast	Dario Leal*	27.05.07	27,035 (s/a)	0	18,162

\* Married House Allowance

† Single House Allowance

# No House Allowance — House provided by congregation

s/a Special Arrangement

LICENTIATES — 2009

Licentiates are paid 85% of the ministerial minimum = £18,232 plus House Allowance p.a. (single — £702; married — £1,002) if applicable. House Allowance is shared equally between the Congregation and C.M.F.

THIRD YEAR — From 1st January, 2009

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Licensing</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>Congregations Contribution</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Ebrington	Richard McIlhatton†	28.05.06	31,192 (32%)	10,332	8,602

**ORDAINED ASSISTANTS — 2009**

**From 1st January, 2009**

<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Assistant</i>	<i>Date of Ord.</i>	<i>Ministers Stipend</i> £	<i>% Min.</i>	<i>Salary</i> £	<i>House Allow.</i> £	<i>Total</i> £	<i>Cong. Cont.</i> £	<i>C.M.F.</i> £
Hillsborough West Church	Kiran Wimberly*		37,060	95	21,295	1,002	22,297	15,325	6,972
Bangor	Annes Nel		37,500	100	22,416	1,002	23,418	16,438	6,980
Stormont	Warwick Smart		39,877	100	22,416	1,002	23,418	17,449	5,969
Harryville	AJ Dunlop	13.05.07	33,869	100	22,416	1,002	23,418	23,418	0
O C Randalstown	CWA Jones	01.06.08	29,913	100	22,416	1,002	23,418	2,000	21,418

\* on maternity leave during which time total cost will be met by C.M.F.



**ASSOCIATE MINISTERS 2009**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Congregation</i>	<i>Salary</i>		<i>House Allowance Paid</i>	<i>Annual Assessment Recovery</i>
		<i>Paid</i>	<i>Recovery</i>		
		£	£	£	£
JE McDowell	Wellington Street	22,575.00	15,159.00	2,250.00	4,289.91
G McFadden	High Kirk	24,000.00	17,024.00	3,000.00	7,741.45
J Rogers	Whiteabbey	22,650.00	14,804.40	2,000.00	4,330.65
CWP Kennedy	Knock	27,044.00	25,394.40	n/a	2,962.66

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That CMF be authorised to pay grants towards expenses incurred by Ministers in Congregations, up to a limit of NI £5,752 or RI €8,841, within the terms of res 3, p 70, General Assembly Minutes, 1988.
3. That the Congregation of Ulsterville be amalgamated with the Congregation of Windsor on terms agreed by the Union Commission on 30 September, 2009 or some suitable date.
4. That the Union Commission be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with par 128 of the Code as follows:

### OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

#### **Anent Par 236(2) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 236(2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(2) “The stipend of each Congregation shall be reviewed by the Union Commission every seven years or if the application of the rule in sub-paragraph (1) gives rise to serious difficulty. The Union Commission shall have power to vary the amount payable so that an equitable arrangement may be made.”

SA MATTHEWS

#### **Anent Par 274(6)(e) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 274 of the Code the following sub-paragraph be added:

274(6)(e) “Where it is decided that within five years from the date of the leave to call the vacant congregation/s shall unite with another congregation or congregations where there is still a minister in active duty (hereafter referred to as “the other congregation or congregations”), the Commission may issue leave to call to the vacant congregation/s on deferred union terms.

- (i) The Union Commission shall have power to direct that in the choice of a Minister the vacant congregation or congregations and the other congregation or congregations shall act as one congregation and the Kirk Session or Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.
- (ii) The rights and entitlements of the active minister/s in the other congregation or congregations shall not be adversely affected by this arrangement.
- (iii) When the minister/s in active duty retires or ceases to be minister/s of the other congregation or congregations in the deferred union the Union Commission shall agree final terms of union and the Presbytery arrange a service of installation in the other congregation or congregations.
- (iv) If the minister called to the original vacant congregation in the deferred union resigns his charge, the same procedure as above shall be followed.”

SA MATTHEWS

# BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS

Convener: Rev SJ HANNA

Secretary: Rev WS MARRS

## ‘The Global Christian Family’

1. In keeping with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland’s (PCI) longstanding and distinctive practice, the Board of Mission Overseas (BMO) Review in 2005 placed a special emphasis on God guiding our engagement in mission through existing and creative new partnerships with Churches, united mission agencies and institutions. Since then BMO has continued to reflect on partnership as a guiding principle of the Board.

2. BMO’s report to the General Assembly in 2008 sought to respond to some key questions on the subject of **partnership in mission**: What kind of God calls His people to serve in mission partnership? What kind of partners does BMO have? What kind of partners does BMO seek in the future? What kind of partner has BMO been and want to be? What kind of partnering is sought internally as a Church? These questions were addressed in the 2008 report. (See BMO Report to the General Assembly 2008 pages 116-117, paragraphs 1-10).

3. In resolution 2 of the Board of Mission Overseas (BMO) Report 2008 the General Assembly requested BMO to continue its work on partnership in mission and to bring findings to the General Assembly 2009. Accordingly BMO continued its discussions on partnership, making it the focus of a Steering Committee ‘Day Away’ in September 2008. Arising from these discussions, additional questions were considered.

4. **What should be the focus of PCI’s partnerships?** In and of itself partnership can be an effective witness to a fragmented world, and with this in mind, relationships with the Church worldwide have been explored extensively not simply by BMO but by many in the wider PCI at every level. Sometimes the focus has been on matters of doctrine and unity, social issues, and political upheaval, at other times it has been the challenge of sharing and engaging together in mission. All areas of focus have their place, and from BMO’s perspective it is important that proactive mission engagement is kept very much in the picture. PCI is one small part of the universal Church and not minded to ‘go it alone in mission’. Rather, with gifts to give and receive within the global body of Christ, BMO seeks prayerfully to join together with other partner Churches, united mission agencies and institutions to discern opportunities, pool resources and develop a shared mission-focused agenda. Indeed over the years the view has been expressed within BMO that Churches sharing together in mission activity can quite often prove to be one of the most helpful contexts for on-going discussion on doctrine and unity.

5. **Further reflection on what kind of partner in mission does PCI want to be?** Further to last year’s report BMO has been reminded that our partners are first and foremost our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. It is inevitable that relationships will ebb and flow, sometimes being closer and

busier, other times less active and more distant; sometimes in focus, other times out of focus, but always there should remain that sense of being family. It is important that PCI is available, approachable, reliable, and versatile, displaying the permanency and patience, honesty and openness that is sought in family life.

6. **What about partnership within PCI?** In striving for mutuality with our global partners, BMO has been reminded of the need to work together more closely with the other mission and service Boards, Presbyteries and Congregations within PCI as a denomination. It is important that PCI, at every level of Church life, shares creatively and with commitment in global mission.

7. In the past year BMO was invited by the Board of Mission in Ireland to consult with them on the preparation of resources to be offered to Congregations for mission planning. Helpful co-operation ensued in this area with the result that as mission plans are developed by Congregations, they will be encouraged to think of mission in both the local and global contexts.

8. Unless the wider Church is committed to wide-ranging support for and creative engagement with those partnership relationships highlighted by BMO, the links will not be easily sustained or grow. Where other PCI mission Boards, Presbyteries, and Congregations independently initiate their own relationships with Congregations, mission agencies and institutions around the world for the sake of the Kingdom, BMO will seek to offer consultation and encouragement, as part of its twin-track approach of being both agent and adviser in mission. This is important, not least because overseas partners have expressed their desire to know about linkage between BMO and any teams visiting them.

9. **What about the key challenge of dependency?** Every Church, like every Christian, is called to place their total dependence upon God. In times of difficulty and need one partner Church may lean heavily upon another, yet BMO aims to avoid the situation where one partner develops an unhealthy, long-term dependence upon another. BMO seeks genuinely reciprocal relationships of inter-dependency and mutuality in which partners help each other to fulfil their calling.

10. The aim is for flexibility, negotiation, stimulating each others thinking, being open to change, to learning from one another, and to relationships that are developing and going places. With most partners BMO is able to identify one or more areas of shared priority, but most importantly seeks a heart connection and like-mindedness that permeates all that is done together. Serving together in mission in this way, partners have the potential to share a broad range of resources, including the sending and increasingly the receiving of mission personnel.

11. In acknowledging the mission needs of Ireland, BMO sees the importance of PCI being open to learn from others, especially from Churches in the southern hemisphere currently playing a strategic role in world mission. Indeed, we consider receiving and learning in this way to be as important to us as giving and sending. In this regard it is important for PCI's mission Boards to increasingly work together especially where non-UK personnel may be employed to take forward strategic mission opportunities that arise locally.

12. As a result of examining these questions, coupled with the report on partnership to the General Assembly in 2008, **BMO has agreed that the following steps should be undertaken:**

- Arising from BMO's Audit/Appreciation of existing overseas partners, an Information Database on Partners should be developed.
- Further attention should be given to the number of partnerships that BMO is able to sustain centrally at the denominational level. Does BMO require a stronger focus on fewer partnerships?
- Acknowledging that at every level of PCI there are on-going relationships with the Church worldwide and that these have a wide range of foci, further consideration needs to be given to whether or not PCI should categorise its partnerships (for example, should we distinguish between confessional partnerships and mission partnerships?), and to the value of publishing a definitive list of BMO partners.
- Regarding centrally initiated and highlighted partnerships, BMO should continue to publicise opportunities for mission engagement as they become available and encourage support by the wider Church for such initiatives.
- BMO should seek to offer consultation, information and advice to the wider Church, especially Congregations, regarding partnerships they have initiated independently of BMO.
- As part of its overall mission training programme for the wider Church, BMO should prepare a strategy and resources for mission education, including material on the theme of partnership. In doing so it should be remembered that direct engagement at Congregational level has been strongly weighted to 'sending' rather than 'sharing' in mission; and that there is a need for education in areas such as teams, twinning, and project support.
- BMO should contribute towards a more co-ordinated approach by all PCI mission and service Boards.
- While multi-level relationships with BMO's partners are to be encouraged, BMO needs to identify and relate in a more focused manner to the mission Boards of PCI's partners.
- BMO need to encourage a wider range of PCI leaders to participate in carefully thought out visits to overseas partner Churches that encourage listening, learning and sharing in mission.
- BMO should encourage wider representation of its ex-officio Board membership to be present at roundtable conversations with partner Church visitors to Ireland, allowing PCI's partners to gain a broader exposure to our Church and vice versa.
- BMO need to explore further the role of missionary personnel in the development of partnership, and highlight the importance of this role during missionary orientation/briefing.

- BMO should continue to relate to mission networking bodies such as the Irish Council of Churches' Board of Overseas Affairs, Global Connections and the Global Mission Network. The model of partnership adopted by the Council for World Mission (CWM) is worthy of further consideration.
- The Board should not lose sight of holding a partner's symposium. This would encourage the testing of criteria for partnership and working towards shared, compatible mission strategies.

## OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

13. In the General Assembly Report 2008 it was anticipated that this year the Outreach Ministries Committee (OMC) would be in a position to present guidelines on Church planting and evangelism and also on how BMO relates to **Specialist Service Agencies (SSAs)** such as those engaged in Scripture translation, distribution and literacy work. Throughout the year working groups made good progress in both these areas, however BMO asked OMC to give further consideration to the report on Church planting and evangelism and delay bringing guidelines until the 2010 General Assembly. The focus, therefore, of this year's OMC report is Specialist Service Agencies.

14. The term Specialist Service Agency is a rather slippery term and could be defined in various ways, potentially covering a wide range of missional activity. For example, children's work, student work, mission aviation, maritime mission, relief and development work, medical mission, mass media, Bible translation, literacy work and tentmaking ministry. BMO has agreed, however, that the following criteria, such that any SSA that the Board might seek to partner would be:

- not normally confined in focus to one category of people, ethnic group, country or continent;
- doing what no one local PCI or overseas partner Church (Congregation, Presbytery or denomination) would easily be able to do alone;
- developing technical expertise in their specific field of service and/or relying on specialised plant/equipment to carry out their work;
- often found to be leading the way in innovative projects;
- working where there is little or no Church or Christian presence;
- working where the Church is persecuted;
- working where the Church is under the shadow of Islam.

15. **Relating to SSAs in general.** The Presbyterian Church in Ireland already relates at a number of levels to many different SSAs. At a Congregational level, individual members are involved in working for SSAs and supporting them prayerfully and financially. Some 137 members of PCI serve as missionaries with around 30 mission agencies and societies, many of whom are SSAs. At a denominational level there are many relationships and links into

different SSAs. For example, traditionally the Secretary of the Bible Society would address the General Assembly, presenting our Moderator with the gift of a Bible.

16. At Board level, the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry relate to a number of different mission agencies specifically focused on children and youth mission. Within BMO there is a long history and deep commitment to working with and through many different SSAs. There has been an important focus on medical mission, and relief and development work. Financial and prayerful support is also given to Tearfund and Christian Aid through BMO's World Development Committee, and the World Development Appeal has a very significant place in our Church's life. The Board makes annual grants to organisations like The Bible Society and Sat 7 and we currently have missionaries in Spain involved in student ministry with Grupos Biblios Unidos (GBU). The back pages of Points for Prayer each year highlights the work of members of our Congregations engaged with other missionary societies many of whom fall under the categories of SSAs.

17. This brief review brings into focus a number of key issues. Much has already been going on in regards to relationships with SSAs but it has been largely piecemeal and some very important and strategic areas of work have not had a particularly high profile. For example as a Reformed Church the Bible and its message are central and yet Bible translation and literacy work have received only a limited degree of support from BMO.

18. Relating to SSAs in particular takes place against the backdrop of how we work with and relate to other agencies and societies in general. Up to now BMO has not been a sending body that seconds personnel to other mission agencies and societies, and at present it is not envisaged that this policy will change should partner SSAs be sending out specialist workers. There is a need, however, to highlight a wider discussion that should take place. One of the key questions is how should BMO relate to Presbyterians serving with independent agencies and societies? This question has arisen from time to time over the years and is one that needs to be raised again here. How might BMO give a higher profile to Presbyterian missionaries with other agencies in our Congregations and through our Board? Is it enough to simply include them at the back of Points for Prayer or can they be given a much higher profile? There is a limit to how much the Board can do but the Church of Scotland has developed the role of Associate Missionary and it is important that PCI explores this also. The Steering Committee have been tasked by BMO to further explore these questions and also look at the whole area of tentmaking mission which again has to do with relating to missionaries who are not sent or supported by BMO centrally but are serving the wider mission of PCI.

19. **Developing a twin track approach to SSAs.** It is the agreed responsibility of BMO to adopt a twin track approach in facilitating the mission of PCI in the global context. BMO is to be both agent and adviser. It is the Board's role to guide the Church in how to partner, and also to lead the way by strategically developing specific partnerships.

20. First of all, BMO has the task of providing guidelines and criteria for the wider Church in how to choose partner relationships with Churches, agencies and societies. The aim here is to give shape to (though not taking

control of) Presbyterian and Congregational involvement in the overseas mission context. This is important so that we avoid being too congregationalist and instead present a measure of unity and togetherness in our involvement in the wider world. With regard to relating to and partnering with SSAs, it is important that BMO continue to provide guidance and support to individuals, Congregations and Presbyteries.

21. It is also BMO's responsibility to lead the way in strategically choosing specific partnerships with Churches, agencies and societies, that in the first instance are supported and developed centrally, but with the recommendation and encouragement that the whole Church add its support and involvement. An example of how BMO is already doing this with SSAs is through the World Development Appeal where Christian Aid and Tearfund are given a central focus and importance and Congregations and individuals are encouraged to support their work and witness.

22. **Support for specific SSAs.** Based on its priorities, OMC has identified SSAs engaged in core global missional activities of strategic importance that meet the above mentioned criteria. BMO aims to work more closely with these SSAs with a view to offering additional support largely complimentary to that which already comes from PCI at a Congregational level. In terms of development work, BMO is already doing this through the World Development Committee's partnering with Tearfund and Christian Aid. It is recommended that the following four key areas be affirmed: Bible translation (literacy); Bible printing/distribution; Radio ministry; and Satellite television ministry. These services are at the heart of mission today yet to some extent have been overlooked in terms of the level of support required. It is recommended they now need to be better supported centrally with publicity, encouragement, and grants, especially funding those areas of work that are not attractive to individuals and Congregations. The agencies/societies working in these key areas and identified for support are:

- Bible Society of Northern Ireland and Ireland
- Wycliffe Bible Translators
- FEBA Radio
- SAT 7

23. Within BMO and indeed PCI these agencies need to be given a higher priority as they are vitally important areas in the world of mission and also very much in keeping with the priorities highlighted by the BMO in its review. Among other things this will mean an increase in grant allocations, higher profile of the work in publicity and prayer materials. In regard to funding, BMO agreed that the Priorities Committee of the General Board should be asked to look at the place of centrally launched Church wide appeals; who can launch them; and for what areas of work?

STEPHEN RICHMOND, Convener

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

24. To work, together with PCI's partners and on our Church's behalf, for the development of key leaders, committed to the mission of Christ to the world,



whether in ministry (ordained and otherwise) or in the fields of education, health and sustainable development and agriculture, is a great privilege for which the Leadership Development Committee (LDC) is immensely grateful. Thankful for God's provision to the Committee in 2008-09, BMO wishes to commend LDC's on-going work for the coming year to the prayers of the whole Church.

25. **Leadership Development Guidelines:** Having undertaken collectively, in 2007-08, a comprehensive exploration of what good leadership development practice ought to involve, LDC's working groups (as reported last year) devised a starter tool-kit – in the shape of draft *Guidelines* – for undertaking leadership development work and for ensuring that its thrust and focus would be constantly missional. These draft *Guidelines* sought to address what LDC considers to be three inter-related aspects of its work: *Vision and Purpose; Strategic Resources; and Partnership Issues*.

26. The last of these – *Partnership Issues* – has figured prominently on the wider BMO agenda this year and does so in this Report. Accordingly, partnership will surely provide a key context for LDC work during the coming year. In particular, it is anticipated that relevant aspects of the LDC *Guidelines* will be a key feature of forthcoming bi-lateral discussions between PCI and her partners. PCI has much to share about her journey in mission, coming out of BMO's review; the hope is to encourage partners to journey with us, telling their own story, so that mission can be at the heart of all projects for the development of their leaders.

27. Conscious that the detail of LDC's remit needed further refinement, as part of this year's work the Committee, through its Convener, undertook production of a fully edited and revised version of our draft *Guidelines*. Although in the course of its work LDC envisages continuing to add new tools, while keeping existing ones sharp, the now updated and finished *Guidelines* – as presented to BMO in March 2009 – nonetheless represent a significant landmark for LDC as it approaches the end of its third year of existence. Committee members have already proved the usefulness of such a practical guide for the formulation, pursuit and review of a comprehensive range of missional LD objectives.

28. 2008-09, therefore, has already been a year for applying the knowledge gained to all aspects of LDC work. For example, the Committee has once more engaged with this year's leaders in training (hosted in the UK and Ireland), both through the organisation of an informal reception and via a welcome to one of our stated meetings allowing some first-hand insight into our work. Similarly, when joining executive staff in the challenging task of awarding study scholarships and other grants, members have been able to bring clear missional convictions and priorities to bear upon the decision-making process.

29. LDC's *Guidelines* are also of assistance to members of sister Assembly Committees and to all members of BMO. However, as intimated last year, LDC is aware of having a role in helping PCI as a whole get to grips with partnership in mission, and helping Congregations in particular to develop a direct involvement in mission in the global context. At time of writing, therefore, it is planned that core aspects of LD practice will find their place in user-friendly materials on mission practice as a whole to be made available, by

this summer, to target groups in the wider Church such as Congregational mission Committees.

30. **Congregational involvement:** The Committee should like to remind Congregations that there is always opportunity, in any given year, for becoming 'hands-on' in LD work: one way is through 'adopting' a leader in training as a focus for Congregational interest and support. Another is via 'extra mile' giving, over and above the Congregation's United Appeal target, in order to fund a particular leadership development project involving one of PCI's partners. Both are practical ways of contributing to the training of mission-minded leaders for the worldwide Church while putting a face, a name and a story to mission; either can be pursued by simply liaising with the Mission Overseas Office.

31. **Working with Partners:** In the last year executive staff have completed a valuable country-by-country audit of PCI's partnership relations with Churches, agencies and institutions in 25 countries around the world, using criteria supplied by several Assembly Committees. As LDC, for its part, undertakes leadership development projects today and tomorrow, there is everything to gain from the lessons learnt in past practice with our partners. The process of audit means that important and up-to-date information from our partners' situations is available for review. This will enable LDC, and sister Committees, progressively to engage with PCI's partners in promoting and designing opportunities to share together in holistic mission. To this end LDC hopes to assist executive staff, increasingly, in the task of engaging face-to-face with partners and in setting and pursuing, co-operatively, missional leadership development goals.

32. **Grants awarded:** The grants schedule to which LDC is working for 2009-10 cannot remain immune to the financial difficulties affecting our society. Nevertheless, there is reason to be thankful to God that a considerable increase in bequests received in 2008 has allowed us both to increase some current grants and also to improve other 2009-10 grants incrementally. Around a third of the LDC budget, both this year and next, relates to the African continent; just under a third is earmarked for the Asian context; and a quarter is designated for Europe and the Middle East. This leaves around ten percent for pending projects that may reach fruition, or to cover various contingencies. With theological education as LDC's number one priority, and as a flavour of what is involved, LDC will be supporting: Nile and Giffen Colleges in Sudan; various training initiatives of the three CCAP Synods in Malawi; The Gujarat United School of Theology (GUST) and the United Bible Training College (UBTC) in Pakistan; the training undertaken by our partner Churches in Halmahera, Sumba and Timor in Indonesia; The Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut, and Bethlehem Bible College; our partners in France and Spain; and Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary in Riga, Latvia, with a new grant which reflects a developing commitment to this work.

33. **Leaders in Training:** In 2009-10 LDC expects to host leaders in training from each of three districts of the Hungarian Reformed Church. Two of these will study by scholarship at Union College, where we expect them by their presence and contribution to have a significant impact upon ministerial students and others. One of them is already ordained and the other, whose core theological studies are not yet complete, has experience in the Hungarian

mission to the Roma people. We hope that a Congregational placement of 1-2 years can be found for the third candidate, whose desire is particularly to gain experience in children's and youth work. At time of writing prospective scholarship applications are also being processed in relation to candidates for funding, or part-funding, from partner Churches or agencies in Kenya, Malawi, Nepal and Pakistan.

GORDON CAMPBELL, Convener

## WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

34. **World Development Appeal:** Advent and Christmas 2008 saw the third and concluding year of a series of appeals under the general title **Whose Earth?** The strap-line for the 2008 appeal was **Cut the Carbon.** The heart of the appeal over the three-year period consisted of drawing attention to the interface of authentic sustainable development and sound ecological stewardship. The projects highlighted in the final appeal of the series were in Honduras (one Christian Aid, one Tearfund), the Philippines (Christian Aid) and Ethiopia (Tearfund). The material from Honduras strongly underlined the benefits in a development perspective of cutting carbon use and demonstrated how the lives of the poor can be transformed.

35. It also challenged us in the wasteful western world to adopt more sustainable, less carbon dependent lifestyles. As a small step in the direction of better stewardship, World Development Appeal materials were, as far as possible, distributed on CD in order to reduce use of paper. Also in line with this, the World Development Committee Convener wrote to the General Secretary, Assembly Board Conveners, Union Commission Convener, and Clerks of Presbytery encouraging them, as people strategically placed within the structures of the Church, to take seriously two World Development resolutions passed by the General Assembly: one related to stopping climate chaos (General Assembly Reports 2007, p 119); the other to cutting carbon emissions (General Assembly Reports 2008, p 137).

36. In 2008, the World Development Committee disbursed £365,000 to Tearfund and £365,000 to Christian Aid. As a result of the most recent World Development Appeal, in January and February 2009, £508,000 was contributed to the World Development Appeal. Comparatively, in the same period in 2008, £580,000 was contributed. Given the harsh economic climate, the World Development Appeal has weathered the storm relatively well and it is hoped that further contributions will come in during the course of the year. Initial allocations of £250,000 have been made to Christian Aid and Tearfund respectively for 2009.

37. **Board of Mission Overseas:** In 2008 the Board of Mission Overseas allocation of the World Development Appeal was £38,000. Of this, £23,000 has been used in support of a "Livelihood Security" project of the Blantyre Synod Development Commission (CCAP), and £15,000 in support of the Galana Project of the PCEA.

38. **Credit...Where Credit's Due:** Looking to the future, the World Development Committee has decided to entitle its next series of appeals

**Credit...Where Credit's Due.** The series will last for two years and will focus on projects that illustrate the developmental benefits of micro-credit schemes based on the idea of the Grameen Bank.

39. Given the recent and continuing crisis in the western/global commercial banking sector, caused in large measure by unscrupulous business practices driven by greed and speculation, it is salutary to note that when credit is extended to the poorest of the poor they overwhelmingly repay their loans. In addition and most significantly, with access to small amounts of money, the poor are able to dramatically improve their lives.

40. At the deepest level, the present financial and economic collapse raises serious questions for western Christians about where ultimately our hope really lies — in the God who made heaven and earth, to whom we pray, as taught by Jesus, for our daily bread, or the systems of this world, especially the ones which have tended to benefit us and are governed by western business values.

41. Our creeds begin: "We believe..." The words "creed" and "credit" come from the same Latin root. In a sharply focused way, the financial and economic crisis of our times is also a spiritual crisis, asking us what we ultimately believe about God, the way the world works and the economic values that shape our lives: those of the economy of the kingdom of God or those of the exploitative economy of this world.

42. There is also a teleological dimension to this, which emerges in the question: what is the purpose of all our economic activity? In a development perspective, part of the answer must be the creation of a world in which justice is practised to the poor so that life abundant can prevail.

MARK GRAY, Convener

## MISSION INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

43. Reflecting biblically during the past year, it has been good to be reminded that we have an amazing God who loves us! (1 John 3:1-3). Christians should not be surprised then if the world misunderstands them; it's because the world misunderstands their God and His great purposes for mankind and all He has created. Being assured of God's great love for them, enables His followers to be passionate about Him and His mission, and despite difficult and testing times, encourage others to likewise make known His love for a needy and sinful world, becoming more fully engaged in different facets of mission so that His Name is glorified and His Kingdom established in all the earth!

44. **The Connect-4-Mission Conference**, held in May, is becoming an established event on the annual Church calendar. Once again, MIC is keen to emphasise that this Conference is not for BMO members per se, though they are welcome to (and do) attend. Rather, its primary aim is to inform, envision, challenge and encourage those in leadership roles, along with 'involved' mission enthusiasts, as they seek to help members of their Congregations to engage more widely in God's mission to the world.

45. The pattern continues of holding four regional **Celebration of Global Mission** evenings each year; two in the spring and two in the autumn. 'Celebrations' were held in Church House and First Cookstown in October

2008; and in Hill Street, Lurgan and First Coleraine in March 2009. Venues for the autumn of 2009 have still to be confirmed. Attendances have been encouraging and feedback positive with many appreciating the choice of a venue outside Belfast. So far, 'Celebrations' have only been held in venues north of the border but MIC is anxious to see one or more suitable events being held in the Republic before too long.

46. Working jointly with staff from PCI's Peace and Peacemaking Programme, BMO co-hosted a special event at Union Theological College in late January 2009, on the theme of **Peacemaking as Mission**. The main speaker was Joe Campbell who, with more than a decade's experience of mediation and peacemaking in Northern Ireland, is now Peace and Conflict Transformation Adviser to the United Mission to Nepal. It was a challenging evening, highlighting the clear biblical mandate for Christians to be peacemakers; and emphasising that the Church's mission can only be effective when it engages with the issues that affect a society and, in regard to conflict, takes a lead in bringing about peace. Surely this is part of what it means to be 'salt and light' in today's world?

47. With more than 30 PCI Congregational, as well as BMO and YAC, teams going overseas each summer, BMO's **Overseas Teams Training (OTT)** day is an important event. OTT aims to provide relevant, practical advice and training on topics not normally covered by individual teams in their pre-departure preparations. Feedback year-on-year has enabled the programme to be fine-tuned to suit needs. Overall, OTT has been well received and appreciated by those who have attended.

48. For the fifth year running, BMO will be sending an 11 strong **all-age team to Ukraine** in July 2009, under the leadership of Edith Holmes, a member of Greystone Road Congregation in Antrim. The joint BMO-YAC team to Cameroon (to engage with a Wycliffe Bible translation project) had to be cancelled because there were not enough applicants to make it viable. Despite this setback, BMO is committed to continuing to work with YAC in developing suitable opportunities for those aged 18-35 to be part of a short-term mission team overseas.

49. The '**Strategy on BMO Teams**' is for BMO to focus on doing what Congregations aren't able or choosing to do, and offering team opportunities that complement what's going on at Congregational or Presbytery level. In addition, BMO wants to help PCI's Congregations to be as proficient as possible in sending teams; to encourage them to stand back and take time to think about the 'why' and 'when' of sending teams overseas (to answer the question: "To go or not to go?"); to offer '**Guidelines on sending teams overseas**' that provide amongst other things checklists that will help Congregations be better prepared and less likely to make mistakes. In all this, there is a need to emphasise that **working in partnership is vital**; as is being prepared to '**receive**' and '**learn**' as well as to '**go**' and '**do**'. Work on producing guidelines for sending teams overseas is progressing well and is expected to be completed before the General Assembly in 2010.

50. Work which began with a review of deputation and Presbytery mission tours has evolved and now developed into a broader agenda. It continues to be a work-in-progress with development taking place in three areas:

identifying mission mobilisers; training about mission; and cross-cultural training.

51. Across PCI, the demand for deputation speakers now generally exceeds the number of those available at any point in time; hence the need to find a way (or ways) of meeting this demand, by using a broader spectrum of deputation speakers than the limited selection of available missionaries on home assignment. This need has given birth to the idea of building up a pool of '**Mission Mobilisers**' — a group of volunteers, over and above our missionary personnel, who are available, willing and able to share 'the story of God's mission in the world'. Mission Mobilisers are likely to be people, who are in touch with what's happening in mission overseas; make regular visits overseas; have a passion for a particular place or people; have a heart for God's mission in the world and want to encourage others to catch this vision. How we select Mission Mobilisers is important, needing clear criteria and discernment.

52. The need for this '**Training about Mission**' comes from a desire to equip all those involved in mission mobilisation with a 'deeper awareness' of the Biblical basis for mission, and of PCI's particular emphases in mission and expectations of its missionaries. This training will complement the current tailored pre-departure training provided for those who serve under the Board, normally by Bible or theological colleges. The aim in developing this course would be to provide training for missionaries, and for Mission Mobilisers who may not have served as a missionary of the Board.

53. '**Cross Cultural Training**' will be an integral part of the training offered to Mission Mobilisers (as well as to Congregations). Plans are well advanced for a pilot training seminar with the following aims:

- to explore the issue of culture and cultural differences;
- to help 'new residents' understand the process of cultural adaptation;
- to help individuals to examine their own culture;
- to equip attendees to run a similar seminar in their Congregations;

The types of people BMO wishes to 'target' for this pilot training are:-

- Personnel going overseas
- Church/Congregation leaders
- Missionaries on Home Assignment
- Team members
- Non-Irish/UK nationals

54. It is hoped the initial pilot course will take place before the end of June this year, and that ultimately this training will become a useful tool for Congregations that have contact in their fellowships and communities with significant numbers of foreign nationals.

55. Taking time to debrief teams (or individuals) after they return home from overseas is very important, even if they have only been away for a week or two. The Mission Agencies Partnership (MAP) organised **Debrief Day** (D-Day) aims to help 'team members' appreciate that 'Re-entry' can have its difficulties; to learn how to cope with any that may crop up; and to know how to move on. During the day, time is set aside for 'team senders' to meet with and debrief their 'team members'.

56. Despite letters being sent to all of the 30 or so PCI Congregations that sent teams overseas in 2008, only one was represented at D-Day by just three members who came without any 'senders' to debrief them! This would indicate a lack of awareness among Congregational leaders ('team senders') of the importance of 'Debriefing'; and that training is needed to help them understand its importance, while also giving them the 'tools' to enable them to debrief their own team at a time and in a place that suits them best. Consequently, BMO is planning to run a training course on **Debriefing for Senders** in June 2009.

57. Two new **publications** (leaflets) were launched in December 2008. One is an overview of the Cowans' work with the Samburu Awareness and Action Programme (SAAP) in Northern Kenya; the other covers the work of the Aksza Mission to Street Children in Cluj with which Ilona Veres is involved. Further project leaflets are likely to be produced over the next year or two. The missionary poster, launched at last year's General Assembly, has been well received across PCI. An updated, 2009 version, should be available in late August.

58. At the time of writing, work is well advanced on the development of a **new BMO website** which, it is hoped, will be officially launched at this year's General Assembly. The site is aimed primarily at PCI members, and will be a comprehensive source of information and news about the overseas mission work of PCI – covering the countries, places and partners with which PCI and its missionary personnel are linked. In addition, information, advice and guidelines will be built up over time covering a range of topical issues relevant to individuals or Congregational teams preparing for, or considering, a period of mission involvement overseas.

59. It is with regret that BMO has received the resignation of the **Rev Peter Lyle** who has served as Convener of the **Mission Involvement Committee** for the past three years. Peter brought to this role a longstanding interest in and enthusiasm for overseas mission, and a deep desire to see congregations enthused and equipped for outreach, both locally and globally. BMO expresses its gratitude to Peter for the way in which he guided the Mission Involvement Committee through its business and for his on-going commitment to the work of mission overseas.

NIGEL EVES, Secretary

### **SPUD Youth Assembly**

60. The Rev Uel Marrs represented BMO at the SPUD Youth Assembly on 24 January in High Street Congregation, Antrim and at the subsequent MASH UP at Moyallen Retreat Centre, Portadown on 28 February, 2009. Paul Armstrong, a representative of the Youth Assembly, reported to the Board of Mission Overseas on 11 March, 2009 and the Youth Assembly resolutions relating to BMO were agreed.

### **Personnel, Visits and Visitors**

61. Like the Psalmist the BMO family around the world continues to declare, "*Sing a new song to the LORD! Everyone on this earth, sing praises to the LORD, sing and praise His name. Day after day announce, "The LORD has*

*saved us!" Tell every nation on earth, "The LORD is wonderful and does marvellous things!" (Psalm 96:1-3)* Once again BMO records thanks and praise to God for His continued use of all **BMO mission personnel** who have been obedient to God's call on their lives to serve in different nations and continents of the world – see **Appendix A**. The Board stands with them, praising God in times when they see fruitfulness and as they persevere in the midst of injustice, insecurity, persecution and opposition to the outworking of God's good news story for His creation.

62. During the last year memorial minutes were recorded and sympathies expressed in respect of the Rev Dr Tom Lyle who, after several months of illness, passed away on 17 March, 2008, having served in India from 1950 to 1973. Mrs Isobel Kennedy who passed away peacefully on 22 August, 2008, having served in India from 1955 to 1997. Mrs Joan Stewart passed away on 25 September, 2008, having served in Jamaica from 1952 to 1971. Miss Dorothy Shannon passed away on 24 January, 2009, having served in India from 1961 to 1984. Full details of memorial minutes are held in the BMO office.

63. Appreciation is recorded for one missionary family, Mr Andrew and Mrs Debbie Soye (Malawi 2003-2008) who resigned from the service of the Board during the past year.

64. During the year a total of four adults were accepted to serve overseas under the Ignite category (service of up to one year), three served in Kenya and one in Malawi.

65. Continuing to be aware of the need to serve the wider PCI family as they equip and offer adequate pastoral care to members of their Congregations serving overseas with other different mission agencies, the Board continue to take an active role in **MAP (Mission Agency Partnership)**. During the past year the Board was able to offer training not only to BMO families but to other Presbyterian families preparing for overseas service with two other agencies. This approach continued in the form of a joint MAP Retreat in September and Quiet Day in January which brought pastoral encouragement to BMO mission personnel and to Presbyterians serving with five other mission agencies.

66. In the month of July 2008, a BMO Team made up of 11 adults from 10 different Presbyterian Congregations travelled to Transcarpathia in western Ukraine, where they helped lead an English Language Teaching Camp for local young people. The team worked in partnership with the Rev Gyorgy Szanyi and was lead by Miss Fiona Lawther, a member of Waringstown Presbyterian Church.

67. Over the past year, the following members of partner Churches have been training and studying in Belfast:

- Mr Patrik Horváth from the Church of the Brethren in the Czech Republic, undertook research at Union Theological College, Belfast, from mid September to mid December 2008.
- Mr Péter Sipos from the Hungarian Reformed Church in Hungary, commenced research at Union Theological College, Belfast for one academic year from September 2008.

68. In the past year the following **overseas visits** were made to attend consultations and Conferences called by partner Churches and missions



organisations, and to offer pastoral support and encouragement to BMO missionary personnel:-

- Ukraine: BMO's team to Ukraine went ahead as planned from 10 to 24 July, 2008.
- England: The Revs John Hanna and Uel Marrs visited the Macwan and Kibathi families in London on 26-27 May, 2008.
- England: Miss Helen Johnston attended the Global Connections AGM and Passion for Mission Day Conference on 1 July, 2008.
- Romania: The Rev Uel Marrs visited the Aitcheson and Veres families in Romania from 10-15 August, 2008.
- England: Mr Nigel Eves attended the IAM Media Seminar in Oxford from 20-22 August, 2008.
- Spain: The Rev Uel Marrs and Miss Helen Johnston visited Bilbao to meet Mr Francisco Mira, Grupos Biblios Unidos (GBU) General Secretary and the French family serving with GBU from 8-11 October, 2008.
- India: Mr Nigel Eves and the Rev Brian Wilson attended the CNI-CSI Partners in Mission Committee Meeting and CNI Synod meetings in Pathankot, Punjab from 15-21 October, 2008.
- Nepal: PW President Mrs Valerie Stewart and her husband, the Rev Stanley Stewart, visited UMN and BMO mission personnel from 31 October-12 November, 2008.
- Latvia/Lithuania: The Rev Prof Gordon Campbell and Mr Nigel Eves attended the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary's (BRTS) 10th anniversary celebration and graduation, 13-17 November, 2008, and in the course of their visit explored the development of relationships with the Reformed Churches in Latvia and the college.
- France: The Rev Prof Gordon Campbell to teach undergraduate and Master's level students at the Free Faculty of Reformed Theology (FLTR) from 3-10 January, 2009.
- Hungary and Romania: The Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr Donald Patton and his wife, Florence, from 20 February-2 March, 2009. The Rev Ivan and Mrs Maureen Patterson accompanied the Moderator and his wife, and the visit covered three districts of the Hungarian Reformed Church. They met with the Veres and Aitcheson families.
- Portugal: The Rev Uel Marrs visited the Cochrane family and met with representatives of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Portugal from 3-5 March, 2009.
- Kenya and Malawi: The Rev Uel Marrs attended and led the morning Bible Readings at the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) General Assembly in Nairobi from 13-18 April, 2009. He then continued on to Malawi to attend a CCAP partners' consultation from 28-30 April, 2009, meeting with BMO mission personnel in both countries.
- Poland: BMO Convener, the Rev John Hanna, joined a Bible Society delegation to Poland from 22-27 April, 2009.

- Pakistan: Miss Helen Johnston made a brief visit to pastorally support the McCartney family at Forman Christian College, Lahore from 29 April-4 May, 2009.
  - Nepal: Miss Helen Johnston attended the UMN General Assembly held in Kathmandu and met with the Hopkinson and Campbell families from 6-12 May, 2009.
69. During the past year BMO was delighted to receive the following **visitors from partner Churches and mission organisations:**
- Mr Pete Wildman from Woodstock School, India who visited Church House in Belfast on 11 June, 2008.
  - Mr David McConkey, from the United Mission to Nepal on 11 September, 2008.
  - Mr Dirk R Frans and Mr Harri Lammi, from the International Assistance Mission who visited Ireland from 17-18 September, 2008, meeting with representatives of the Board.
  - The Rev Silas & Mrs Helen Nebart, Joram & Barbara Kagombe, from Kahawa Farmers Congregation of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa on 14 October, 2008.
  - Prof Kihumbu Thairu, Vice Chancellor of the Presbyterian University, Kenya on 8 January, 2009.
  - The Rev Eric Sarwar, General Secretary of the Karachi Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (PCP), and his wife, Shumaila from 16 March-13 April, 2009, for a five-week visit to PCI.

### **THE HOME BASE**

70. BMO is once again very grateful to its **full time staff** who in handling a heavy workload, have carried out their work with great efficiency and enthusiasm. At present the executive staff team is composed of the Overseas Secretary; Mission Education Officer/Asia Secretary and Personnel Officer (Overseas). Over the past year they have been ably supported by an administrative staff team which has included a Senior Administrative Officer; (Acting) Senior Administrative Officer with special responsibilities for finance; two Senior Secretaries with responsibilities for mission education and mission personnel respectively; a part-time Secretary and a Secretary/Receptionist. We also extend appreciation to those who, from time to time, help out in the office on a voluntary basis. On 18 July, 2008 Mrs Paula Cooper, Senior Administrative Officer, took early retirement on the grounds of ill health. On 12 February, 2009 BMO hosted a reception for Church House staff at which warm appreciation and prayerful good wishes were conveyed to Paula. Mrs Rosie Moore took up the temporary appointment of Secretary/Receptionist on 27 October and finished work on 4 January, 2009. She was succeeded by Miss Colleen Bell who commenced work on a six month appointment in the Mission Overseas Office from 26 January, 2009. A review of the staffing needs of the Mission Overseas Office is presently underway.

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

is extended to all who, on behalf of the Board over the past year, have attended consultations with partner Churches, visited missionaries in their country of service and spoken in PCI Congregations about the work overseas.

72. Dr Moreen Gordon has resigned from the role of Pastoral Adviser to the Board of Mission Overseas, having recently moved house to Scotland. BMO records its deep appreciation to Moreen for her faithful service over the past six years, and is now seeking a replacement. BMO is also grateful for the on-going services on the **Pastoral Adviser Team** of Dr Moreen Gordon, Miss Dobbie McCaughan and the Rev Brian Hughes.

73. The on-going commitment by PCI members to support the work of mission in a wide variety of ways brings on-going encouragement. Thanks are recorded to individuals and Congregations who year after year have provided financial support through the United Appeal, and for all that the **United Appeal Board** does to ensure that the target of honour for the total appeal is reached each year.

74. Once again the Board of Mission Overseas is very grateful for the on-going support of **Presbyterian Women (PW)** whose office bearers, Central Committee and members continue to contribute faithfully to the work of the Board. In 2008, the Annual Grant made by PW to the work of the Board was £210,000. BMO commends the PW for their enthusiasm and commitment to the work of PCI in mission beyond the shores of Ireland, and thanks its members for their prayerful and practical support of BMO mission personnel.

75. The Board is glad to help individuals, Congregations and other mission Boards and organisations to identify **special projects** from a wide range of partner Church activities. On the understanding that United Appeal targets have been met, the Board continues to offer the service of channelling funds from 'extra mile' giving, ensuring that, where appropriate, a refund of tax paid by the donor is received under the Gift Aid scheme. Once again, appreciation is expressed to those who organised and contributed to:

76. By March 2009 **Presbyterian Women's Birthday Project** in 2008/2009 had raised over £41,000 to be apportioned between the work of Nightlight and the Christian Church in Timor, one of our partners in Indonesia.

77. **The Youth and Children's project** in 2007/2008 was entitled Rhythm and Rhyme and raised £94,000 for a literacy project of the Adult Basic Education Society (ABES) in Gujranwala and the Academy of Church Music in Karachi, Pakistan.

78. **The Junior Boys' Brigade Appeal** for 2007/2008 working in conjunction with the Livingstonia Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) has raised £12,000 for three projects benefiting primary age children in rural Malawi, with a donation of £6,000 to help re-establish the Boys' Brigade in Malawi.

79. BMO is once again indebted to the Board's Finance Officer (Overseas), Mr Mervyn Whittle, for his on-going commitment to monitoring income and expenditure, and finalising budgets and accounts, and for devoting a great deal of his time, energy and expertise to co-ordinating refurbishment and on-going maintenance and repair work at each of the BMO properties. We also express thanks to the staff of the Finance Office for their support and guidance.

80. BMO's membership of Global Connections enables it to keep up to date with new thinking and initiatives in world mission. The opportunity to work alongside other agencies and societies in the local context through the Mission Agencies Partnership (MAP) is valued. As members of the British and Irish Association of Mission Studies (BIAMS) BMO is further able to reflect upon mission. In the past year BMO have been represented at a number of forums and Conferences examining a broad range of mission related issues.

81. The Board gives all honour, praise and thanks to God for His guidance and sustaining grace over this past year, and ever seeks to bring glory to His Name.

## APPENDIX A

In the main report most of the names of BMO mission personnel have not been mentioned but their names, spheres and category of service are listed below and are to be taken together with this report.

### *INTEGRATE CATEGORY – service of two or more years*

#### **BRAZIL**

Naomi Keefe	2000/2004	Outreach programme, IPB, Casa Caiada
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#### **GREAT BRITAIN**

Christopher and Nivedita Macwan	1989	Ministry among Asians in Wembley, London
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#### **INDIA**

Linda Jackson	1996	Teacher, Woodstock School, Mussoorie
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#### **INDONESIA**

Mervyn and Raing McCullagh	1998 2007	Consultant – GKS Co-ordinator KOPPESDA, Sumba
Barry McCroskery	2004	International Partner Relations and Youth Ministry, GMIT Timor

#### **JAMAICA**

Heather Lennox	2002	Children's Ministry Co-ordinator, United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
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#### **KENYA**

Stephen and Angelina Cowan	1985 1989	Outreach and Development Work PCEA Tuum
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Naomi Leremore	1991	Co-ordinator of the District Centre for Early Childhood Education, PCEA, Nairobi
Derek and Linda Roulston	1998	Outreach and Development Work, PCEA, Galana
Gary and Mary Reid	2000	Outreach and Development Work, PCEA, Narok

**MALAWI**

Margaret Young	1995	Midwifery, Daeyang Luke Hospital, Lilongwe
Diane Cusick	1995	Pre-school teacher training, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Mzuzu
David and Maggie Steele	2002	Livingstonia Theological College and Scholarship Administration, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Mzuzu
Robin and Helen Quinn	2004	Lay Training Centre, CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Ekwendeni
Una Brownlie	2007	Nursing, David Gordon Memorial Hospital, CCAP Livingstonia
Neil and Sara Kennedy	2008	Senior Lecturer in Paediatrics and Child Health – College of Medicine of the University of Malawi and Consultant Paediatrician in the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital

**NEPAL**

Joe and Janet Campbell	2006	Lead Adviser in Conflict Transformation and Pastoral Care with United Mission to Nepal
Grenville and Georgina Hopkinson	2008	Strategy and Development Policy Director, United Mission to Nepal

**PAKISTAN**

Ron and Hilary McCartney	2007	Teaching, Forman Christian College, Lahore
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**PORTUGAL**

James and Heather Cochrane	2008	‘Algarve Project’ – Church Planting Ministry
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**ROMANIA**

Csaba and	2001	International Relations, IKE and Caleb House
Ilona Veres	1993	Aksza Mission House, Cluj
Darren and Nicola Aitcheson	2007	House Parents, Caleb House, Cluj

**SPAIN**

Derek and Jane French            2000    Student outreach with GBU, Bilbao

***INVOLVE CATEGORY – service of up to two years*****MALAWI**

Alastair Moles                        2008    Science Teacher, CCAP Mission School,  
Mulanje

***IGNITE CATEGORY – service of up to one year*****MALAWI**

Maurice and Helen Kennedy 2008    Blantyre Synod Schools Renovation and  
Refurbishment Programme

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly give thanks to God for PCI's partnering with Churches, united missions and institutions around the world and instructs BMO to implement the recommendations for the development of partnership relationships.
3. That the General Assembly give thanks for the faithful service and dedicated witness of BMO's missionary personnel and their families who serve in many different and challenging contexts, encouraging the Church to pray for their spiritual well-being and physical protection; and give thanks for the witness of all who come from partner Churches to study and serve here in Ireland.

**Outreach Ministries Committee**

4. That the General Assembly, acknowledging the guidelines employed for choosing partner Specialist Service Agencies (SSAs), affirms the importance of Bible translation, printing and distribution, and radio and satellite television ministry; and encourages support for the following strategic partners: The Bible Society of Northern Ireland and Ireland, Wycliffe Bible Translators, FEBA Radio and SAT 7.

**Leadership Development Committee**

5. That the General Assembly welcome the initiative to include issues of leadership development practice in mission involvement materials and encourages the wider Church, especially Congregations, to use the materials for guiding and developing their mission practice.
6. That the General Assembly welcome the Leadership Development Committee's support for executive staff in encouraging partner Churches and institutions to invest in the training of Christ-like and mission-minded leaders, for Church and society in their contexts; and listening to our partners' leadership

development concerns and objectives, and communicating these to the Church in Ireland.

#### **World Development Committee**

8. That the General Assembly give thanks that in difficult times the World Development Appeal has continued to be well supported.

#### **Mission Involvement Committee**

9. That the General Assembly give thanks for the support raised by the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry and the Junior Boys' Brigade for the mission of partners in Pakistan and Malawi; for every expression of 'extra mile' giving by the wider Church; and recognise especially the very generous grant received from PW in 2008.

10. That the resignation of the Rev Peter Lyle as Convener of the Mission Involvement Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and ..... be appointed in his place

#### **'SPUD' Resolutions**

11. That the General Assembly encourage the Board of Mission Overseas to explore, in consultation with the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, how to communicate their work, plans and issues more effectively to young people in order to educate, engage and mobilise the younger generation.

12. That the General Assembly request the Board of Mission Overseas to establish a network, which links children and young people of PCI Congregations with those of overseas personnel.

13. That the General Assembly encourage the appointment of youth representatives in Congregations and Presbyteries to promote engagement and participation of local Congregations in global mission.

#### **General**

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

# BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Rev RA PATTON

Secretary: Rev DJ BRUCE

1. Since the last Assembly, the Board has been working towards its purpose – Serving the Church, Enabling Mission – and to fulfil its vision of building vibrant communities of Christ, serving and transforming Ireland. The work of the six Committees of the Board and its Standing Committee reflects the Board's commitment to helping our denomination move further towards a mission mindset.

2. The Board wishes to thank the Rev Gordon Best for his convenership of the Worship Panel, which has been busy and productive since its inception. The Board is delighted that the Rev Karen Campbell has been appointed to succeed him.

3. The Board has welcomed Miss Lorraine Beatty on to the staff team as Support Officer, responsible for all aspects of property management, including grants.

4. The Administrative Staff team, under the management of Mrs Mandy Higgins, contributes enormously to the smooth running of the office, and the delivery of the Board's objectives. The Board expresses thanks to each members of staff.

5. The Board records its appreciation to those who are working in the field in its name: Home and Urban Mission Ministers, Deaconesses, including those in training and Irish Mission workers. Lists of all serving in these capacities can be found in Appendix A of this report.

## STRATEGY FOR MISSION COMMITTEE

### Mission Development

#### Irish Mission

1. A paper on the future of the Irish Mission adopted by resolution at the Board meeting in October 2008 is included as an Appendix B to this Report, with an appended resolution.

2. The Committee notes with appreciation the service of Mr Jim Laverty and Mr Peter Maitland who have retired from the Irish Mission.

3. Mr Eamon Doyle commenced work with the Irish Mission in Naas in December 2008, marking the end of his period of probation.

4. A service of Commissioning for Mr Tom Dowling in Kilkenny was held on Sunday evening, 1 March, 2009.



### **Home Mission**

5. The allocation of CMF resources to situations in the Republic is also under discussion, as is the wider question of the funding of missional situations, and their staffing.

6. An assessment group has been appointed to visit Sligo and north Co Mayo to discuss the long-standing vacancy in Ballina, Ballymote and Kilalla with representatives of the newly configured Monaghan Presbytery, and the vacancy Convener.

7. Steps are being taken with the BMI and Union Commission to reduce the number of services taken each Sunday from four to three in Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler.

8. Steps are being taken to transfer ownership of the St Patrick's Church, Waterford, building from the Presbyterian Church to the Methodist Church. It is proposed that the Methodist Church in Ireland take full responsibility for this charge. This change would be without prejudice to any future plans to plant a Presbyterian Church in Waterford city. A resolution is appended.

### **Capital Plans**

9. A major revision of the Board's capital spending plan has been undertaken in light of the economic downturn. This will be detailed under the Finance Committee report, but the implications for projects under consideration are significant.

10. Permission has been given for land purchases for new Church buildings in Drogheda and Mullingar to proceed.

### **Missional Plans**

#### **Presbytery Plans**

11. The Board records its appreciation to the chairs of working groups in each Presbytery who have produced the plans forwarded to the Board for comment. A full account of the process and its outcomes will be included in the Supplementary Reports, since the copy date for Assembly Reports precedes the deadline for mission plan submission. Resolutions are appended.

#### **Congregational Plans**

12. Three options will be offered to Congregations, of which Tearfund's Discovery is the most comprehensive. It is acknowledged that some Congregations may have their own programmes in place, which have already produced a missional plan.

13. Since most Congregations will not begin the process of missional planning until the autumn of 2009, it is proposed that the Assembly deadline for the completion of this work be moved back from the end of March 2010 to the end of May 2010. A resolution is appended.

### Urban Mission

14. Strand: The Rev Danny Rankin was installed and inducted to Strand Presbyterian Church, Belfast, on 21 January, 2009. Strand is an Urban Mission Congregation.

15. Discussions are on-going with the South Belfast Presbytery concerning mission plans for the centre of Belfast, following the resignation of the Minister of May Street.

16. Shankill Road plans are under discussion with the North Belfast Presbytery. Meetings were held on 10 February, 2009, and the Presbytery has appointed a small working group to draw up specific proposals, and report.

17. Interviews for the position of Church Planter on the Cliftonville Road were held on Friday, 27 February, 2009, after which Mr Dario Leal was appointed.

18. Urban Mission Unit: An initial meeting of the Urban Mission Unit was held on 12 February, 2009 and an agenda of work has been identified for the ensuing year.

### Nightlight Panel

Convener: Rev Alistair Bill; Director: Mr John Luke

19. **The Odyssey:** Brian Simons is the Development Worker in the Odyssey complex. Among the encouragements has been the impact of Celebration of Hope in April 2008, with many positive conversations ensuing and continuing with the events staff and nightclub doormen. On that same weekend a Billy Graham Emerging Evangelists group came and learned about work on the streets of the entertainment area. They showed a particular affinity with the homeless.

20. **Volunteers:** Without volunteers Nightlight could not operate. Accordingly the Panel continues to seek more volunteers for the various nights. Night Tours are still available for individuals or groups – contact the Nightlight office (Tel 9033 2777) to arrange a suitable date.

### Shankill Road Mission Panel

Convener: Rev Dr Ian Hart; Superintendent: Rev WMcB Campbell

21. Shankill Road Mission continues to fulfil its evangelistic and philanthropic ministry through its Cafe/Coffee Shop and Charity Shops. Various community groups have made use of the excellent facilities on a regular basis and Christmas was particularly busy.

22. In the difficult economic circumstances facing everyone in the community, the Mission provides good value for money for those on a tight budget.

23. The Mission itself faces a crisis due to the events unfolding in the Presbyterian Mutual Society. Substantial investment funds are held with the Society, and the Mission depends on interest received for on-going revenue expenditure. Unless there is a satisfactory solution to the current situation the future of the Mission is bleak.

24. The Superintendent would like to place on record his sincere thanks to all the staff who have worked tirelessly in the past year for the Kingdom's sake.

25. The Board has organised for an Assessment Group to visit the Shankill Road Mission and report.

### **Memorial of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery re Communion Tokens**

26. The late Rev Harold Boyce brought a report on this matter to the former Congregational Life Committee of the Board which was included in the 2008 BMI report to the Assembly, and is reproduced here as Appendix C.

27. An overture anent Par 40(4) of the Code is appended.

WILLIAM HENRY, Convener

## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

1. With the change of name to the Communications Committee at the 2008 General Assembly, the remit of the former Education and Promotion Committee also expanded and this has been reflected in its work during the year.

2. The website ([www.missionireland.org](http://www.missionireland.org)) continues to be developed and expanded to reflect the response to what is learnt from visitors to the site.

3. Prayerfocus is still being e-mailed to subscribers, and is also available for downloading in PDF from the BMI website.

4. The Publications Panel is an expansion of the former Editorial Panel for *'ReachOut'*, the Board's magazine. The Panel has been looking at how all printed material for BMI might have a distinctive look and feel whilst still retaining its PCI identity. One result of this work has been a refreshed format and appearance for the magazine. The Boards of Social Witness and of Youth and Children's Ministry continue to make contributions relating to their mission work to the publication.

5. There was an encouraging uptake of the "Mission in Ireland" evenings in seventeen Presbyteries with two more requesting a date later in the year than the traditional March time-frame. A promotional DVD of aspects of the BMI's work was produced for these evenings, as was a special promotional leaflet.

6. All practical arrangements for conferences and special events, e.g. "Engaging the Heart", the worship Conference in Stranmillis in August and training days for Deaconesses and Irish Mission Workers, are now also part of the Communications Committee's remit.

CHERRY POYNTON, Convener

## **RESEARCH AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

1. In its first full year of operation, the Research and Resources Committee of the Board has been working towards a definition, or at least a

fuller understanding of Mission in our Irish Presbyterian setting. To allow the Board time to fully consider this important task, an additional meeting was called during May 2009. The report of the working group on this subject will therefore be included in the Supplementary Reports.

CHRIS KENNEDY, Convener

### **Worship Panel**

*The Rev Gordon Best reports:*

1. The Panel has been working on three major projects during the year.
2. Engaging the Heart – a Conference on worship, 21-23 August, 2009, Stranmillis College: A resolution encouraging Congregations to send delegates to this important event is appended.
3. Revision of the “Barkley Book” on worship: A working group under the convenership of the Very Rev Dr David Clarke has been formed. It is envisaged that this work will take some time to complete. Four sub-groups have been convened, and the work is on-going.
4. Awake ‘09 prayer initiative: Following the passing of a resolution at the 2008 General Assembly that the BMI produce resources to help the Church pray during the 150th anniversary of the 1859 Revival, the Panel has produced the Awake ‘09 booklet, and in conjunction with the Board of Youth and Children’s Ministry and the Overseas Board, other resources on the Internet. This initiative has been well received across the Church.

### **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

*Mr Brian Knox reports:*

1. During the year the Committee and representative sub-groups have met together and carried out visits to numerous Church properties, meeting with Congregational representatives and reporting to the Board as appropriate. The following is a brief resumé of the work of the Committee since reporting to the 2008 General Assembly.

#### **Ballysally**

2. Building works to upgrade and extend the Church building have been completed and the Congregation are enjoying the facilities provided.

#### **Irvinestown**

3. The new Church building works are now well underway and it is hoped that these will be completed by November 2008.

#### **Mullingar**

4. Land suitable for erection of a new larger Church building has been identified and Appraisals Committee approval in principle has been given to purchase. Negotiations to purchase are underway with the owners, Westmeath Council.

**Waterford**

5. Positive discussions have been held with Methodist colleagues regarding the possibility of MCI taking over ownership of St Patricks, a listed building in need of essential repair and upgrading works. These negotiations are on-going.

**Mountmellick**

6. Due to the deteriorating structural condition of this listed Church building and adjoining manse, some essential maintenance works have had to be carried out in the interests of safety. Positive attempts to sell the buildings are continuing.

**Drogheda**

7. Planning permission for the new Church building on a site acquired in South Drogheda, has been granted and the Congregation is considering anticipated building costs and exploring the possibility of selling the present Church and adjoining former manse.

**Arklow**

8. Positive proposals to extend the facilities at Arklow were considered. However unfortunately in the light of the current economic climate, it is not anticipated that matters can proceed in the current financial period.

**Ballyshannon**

9. While the Church and adjoining orchard have been put up for sale, due to the downturn in the property market no offers have been made to purchase. The adjoining glebe farm has been taken off the market for the time being.

**Corvalley**

10. The sale of the old manse is on-going and planning permission is being sought in relation to the School House upgrading works, but this is dependent on a successful sale of the old manse.

**Howth and Malahide Manse/Donabate**

11. Work is complete regarding upgrading of the new manse in Malahide. Further discussions between the Board, the Union Commission and Presbytery of Dublin and Munster are required before property purchase decisions can be made regarding the proposed new Church Plant at Donabate.

**General**

12. Throughout the year numerous matters have been under discussion, in addition to those already referred to. These include; Irish Mission Workers' house Cork; Sligo/Boyle; former manse in Galway; Kells; manse in Lisbellaw; Strand Belfast; Fermoy. The preparation of a comprehensive database of BMI properties is well underway. The Committee continues to work in close co-

operation with the various relevant Committees within the Board in an attempt to be supportive in respect of property matters.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

*Mr Douglas Cowan reports:*

1. The Finance Committee has had additional meetings during this year, partly to deal with extra pressures on budgets, the collapse of the property market and the impact of the freezing of PMS investments.

2. Financial projections about the Board's capital programme are prepared on an on-going basis. These have been revised several times during the year as plans to sell some surplus land and houses have not materialised due to the collapse of the property market. As a result some houses formerly occupied by Irish Mission staff have been let. Expectation in moving forward some developments of new Church building projects have had to be reduced.

3. BMI held £699,937 invested in PMS as at 31 December, 2008. The value of this investment has been written down by 40% and this means a loss of £279,974. It is not expected that much of the balance of £419,963 will be received during 2009.

4. Extensive discussions with the United Appeal Board have been on-going about the use of funds raised from the sale of a former Church Extension plot of land. It has now been agreed that an amount of £1,741,588 be repaid to the United Appeal Board. The equivalent sum of money will be available immediately for BMI capital development projects, subject to the standard approvals. If capital assets are sold the proceeds can be used by BMI as it determines, subject to the normal Appraisals Committee approval procedures. This policy will be implemented in accordance with the General Assembly approved principle of "people before buildings".

5. The Committee is concerned that the Shankill Road Mission accounts have shown a running deficit for a number of years. As a result, past balances are being used up and will not be available for future mission development in the area as originally planned. The Board has agreed that this issue will be looked at urgently in consultation with Shankill Road Mission office bearers and North Belfast Presbytery.

6. The accounts for and the operation of the Home Mission Sick Supply Fund included in BMI 2008 accounts will be transferred to the Board of Finance and Personnel with effect from 1 January, 2009. An application has been submitted to the Incidental Fund to cover the costs of the Awake '09 prayer initiative.

7. The Committee is pleased that its accounts for 2008 are close to budget figures, after allowing for the difference in timing of capital projects. The budgets for 2009 have been revised and new budgets approved for 2010, ready for submission to the United Appeal Board. These budget figures include an element of a change of policy with regard to the figure included for Irish Mission Staff salary costs. At the start of 2009 two Irish Mission Workers retired and it is proposed to transfer the amount included for their salaries to a new Irish Mission Fund. This Fund will be used to provide grants for Congregations to

employ staff for mission and outreach. The amounts involved are £81,000 in 2009 and £90,000 in 2010.

### **Grants Panel**

8. A Grants Panel has been formed to administer all aspects of the Board's grant-making function.

### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

*Mrs Irene Young reports:*

1. The Committee has been acting on behalf of the Board on personnel matters relating to the Board staff, including Deaconesses, Home and Urban Mission Ministers, Planter and Irish and Urban Mission Workers.

#### **Home and Urban Mission Ministers and Church Planter**

2. The Rev Troy Morgan was installed as Minister to the Congregations of Clones, Newbliss, Stonebridge and Ballyhobridge on 11 October, 2008.

3. The Rev Danny Rankin was installed as Minister of Strand Congregation on 21 January, 2009.

4. Mr Dario Leal received a recommendation from the Board on 10 March, 2009 to serve as a Church Planter on Cliftonville Road under the supervision of North Belfast Presbytery.

#### **Irish Mission Workers**

5. Mr Jonathan Reid was commissioned as Irish Mission Worker on 25 September, 2008 in Newtowncrommelin to serve in the Glens of Antrim.

6. Mr Tom Dowling was commissioned to serve as Irish Mission Worker on 1 March, 2009 alongside the Rev David Moore in Kilkenny Presbyterian Church.

7. Mr Eamon Doyle was commissioned to serve as Irish Mission Worker alongside the Rev Colin Gamble in Naas.

8. Mr Jim Laverty Irish Mission Worker resigned from Letterkenny Congregation on health grounds.

9. Mr Peter Maitland Irish Mission Worker resigned from Cahir Congregation on health grounds.

#### **Deaconesses**

10. Miss Kathleen Spence was inducted to serve as a Deaconess in Scarva Street, Banbridge alongside the Rev Andrew Watson.

11. Miss Rosemary Spiers completed her training at UTC and is serving her probationary placement in First Saintfield Presbyterian Church.

12. Mrs Elizabeth Warnock completed her training at UTC and is serving her probationary placement in Ballyclare Presbyterian Church.

**Trainee Deaconesses**

13. Mrs Lynda McFaul commences her probationary year in First Carrickfergus on 1 June, 2009.

14. Mrs Lorna Lynn commenced a two-year course at Union Theological College in September 2008.

15. Mrs Eileen Black, Miss Amy Johnston, Miss Joanne McCourt, Miss Tracey Nicholl and Mrs Hazel Reid have been accepted by the Board to commence training at Union Theological College in October 2009.

**Resignation of Deaconess**

16. Miss Pat Shirley retired from her extended placement in Greystone Road Antrim Congregation.

17. The Committee gives praise and thanks to God for the faithful witness and service of Deaconesses, Home and Urban Mission Ministers, Church Planter, Irish Mission Workers, Tentmakers and Urban Mission personnel.

18. The Committee thanks them for their commitment and service in Congregations, hospitals and other placements.

**SPUD Youth Assembly**

Every Christian has a responsibility to be a 'missionary', and the so-called 'mission field' should in fact be any and every place that he or she finds themselves in. We cannot ignore this calling, and it is vital that our Churches stand out in our local communities to the extent that if they were not there, God's people would be missed. In order to allow all members of the body to engage with this mission, there is a real need to envision and equip people of all ages and giftings to share their faith. The Congregational Mission Plans can provide a meaningful opportunity for everyone to contribute; not only in the decision making process, but also in the implementation of the plans themselves.

**APPENDIX A****HOME MISSION MINISTERS**

Congregations in brackets are not in the Home Mission

Rev Michael Anderson – Arklow

Rev Samuel Anketell – First Bailieborough, Corranearny, (Trinity Bailieborough)

Rev Denis Campbell – (Blackrock) and Bray

Rev CFD Clements – Irvinestown, Pettigo and Tempo

Rev Colin Dickson – (Cavanaleck) and Aughtaintane

Rev JG Faris – Cork and Aghada

Rev Joseph Fell – (Ebrington) and Inch

Rev CJ Gamble – Naas and Athy

Rev TD Hagan – Carndonagh and Malin

Rev WJ Hayes – Tullamore and Mountmellick

Rev Kenneth Henderson – (Aughnacloy) and Ballymagrane

Rev John Honeyford – (Second Castlederg) and Alt



Rev KA Jones – (Waterside) and Fahan  
 Rev James Lamont – Carrigart and Dunfanaghy  
 Rev SJ Lockington – Corboy and Mullingar  
 Rev Robert Love – Taughmonagh {Church Extension}  
 Rev Dr DK McCrory – Maynooth  
 Rev GJ Mackarel – Drumkeeran, Killeshandra, Cavan, Bellasis  
 Rev David Montgomery – Greystones  
 Rev Katherine Meyer – Sandymount  
 Rev Dr JG Millar – Howth and Malahide  
 Rev NS Millen – (Dundalk, Castlebellingham) and Carlingford  
 Rev GA Mitchell – Sligo and Boyle  
 Rev DT Moore – Kilkenny  
 Rev John Parkin – (Methodist) Waterford  
 Rev Stephen Rea – Enniscorthy and Wexford  
 Rev DW Reid – (Ardstraw) and Douglas  
 Rev SJ Richmond – Donegal and Ballyshannon  
 Rev John Rushton – Drum, Cootehill and Kilmount  
 Rev Dr RB Savage – Kells and Ervey  
 Rev RB Thompson – (Badoney, Corrick) and Glenelly  
 Rev JD Woodside – Drogheda  
 Rev S Yamsu (Methodist) – Galway  
 Rev GP Young – Merville and Greenbank

Vacant – Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge, Newtownbutler  
 Vacant – Ballina, Killala, Ballymote  
 Vacant – Fermoy and Cahir (Stated Supply)  
 Vacant – Carlow  
 Vacant – (Frankford, Castleblayney) and Corvalley  
 Vacant – (First Monaghan) and Smithborough  
 Vacant – (Kerrykeel, Milford) and Rathmullan  
 Vacant – (Methodist) – Limerick

#### **Urban Mission Ministers:**

Rev Mervyn Gibson – Westbourne  
 Rev Danny Rankin – Strand

#### **Church Planter:**

Rev Dario Leal – Cliftonville Road

#### **DEACONESSES**

Jenny Clegg – Ballycrochan, Bangor  
 Amanda Cooper – New Row, Coleraine  
 Muriel Cromie – Belfast City Hospital (Social Witness Board)  
 Doreen Draffin – Whitehouse  
 Eleanor Drysdale – Wellington Street, Ballymena  
 Lynda Gibson – NI Prison Service (Social Witness Board)  
 Jean Gwyn – Royal Victoria Hospital (Social Witness Board)

Sharon Heron – Strand  
 Roberta Irvine – First Comber  
 Christine Kyle – Ulster Hospital (Social Witness Board)  
 Phyllis Linton – West Church Ballymena  
 Michelle McCauley – Ballygowan  
 Heather McCracken – Alexandra and locum Royal Victoria Hospital  
 Sonya McCullough – Shore Street, Donaghadee  
 Sadie McCullough – Whiteabbey  
 Carol McRoberts – Tullycarnet  
 Gillian Martin – Woodvale  
 Elizabeth Matthews – Hill Street, Lurgan and Craigavon Hospital  
 Carol O’Hara – Antrim Area Hospital and Musgrave Park Hospital  
 (Social Witness Board)  
 Jackie O’Neill – Joymount, Carrickfergus  
 Julie Peake – Portrush  
 Margaret Robertson – Gardenmore, Larne  
 Jenny Robinson – South Belfast Friendship House (Social Witness Board)  
 Kathleen Spence – Scarva Street, Banbridge  
 Sheila Sutter – Kells, Ballymena  
 Evelyn White – First Lisburn  
 Rosemary Spiers – probationer  
 Liz Warnock – probationer

**Probationary Deaconess:**

Lynda McFaul – First Carrickfergus

**Deaconesses in Training:**

Lorna Lynn 2nd year  
 Amy Johnston 1st year  
 Joanne McCourt 1st year  
 Tracey Nicholl 1st year  
 Hazel Reid 1st year  
 Eileen Black 1st year

**IRISH MISSION WORKERS**

David Boyd – Adelaide Road, Dublin  
 Tom Dowling – Kilkenny  
 Eamon Doyle – Naas  
 Kevin Hargaden – Maynooth  
 Harry Moreland – Fermoy  
 Billy Patterson – Drogheda  
 Keith Preston – Tyrone Presbytery  
 Jonathan Reid – Glens of Antrim, Newtowncrommelin  
 Stephen Wilson – Mullingar  
 William Workman – Athy  
 Philip Whelton – Arklow

## APPENDIX B

**The future of the Irish Mission within the emerging strategy for mission of the PCI**

This discussion paper is brought to the BMI Strategy for Mission Committee meeting on 24 September, 2008 for comment. It has been circulated to currently serving Irish Mission workers in addition to the Committee.

The stated purpose of the Irish Mission is defined in the Code as follows:

116(1) **The Irish Mission** shall seek to proclaim and share the blessings of the Gospel throughout Ireland, through the circulation and exposition of the Scriptures, and through evangelism, Christian training and education, in accordance with the evangelical witness of the Protestant Reformation.

The Irish Mission currently employs 13 full time workers.

David Boyd	Adelaide Road, Dublin
Tom Dowling	Kilkenny
Eamon Doyle	Naas (from autumn 2008)
Kevin Hargaden	Maynooth
Jim Laverty	Letterkenny (retires September 2008)
Peter Maitland	Cahir (retires February 2009)
Harry Moreland	Cork/Fermoy
Billy Patterson	Drogheda
Keith Preston	Dungannon/Tyrone Presbytery
Jonathan Reid	Glens of Antrim
Stephen Wilson	Mullingar
William Workman	Athy
Philip Whelton	Arklow

In recent times, and particularly since the formation of the BMI, the local Church has been understood to be critical to our mission – indeed the local Church has been described in BMI Reports to the General Assembly as “*the basic building block of mission*”. The Board wishes to reaffirm this conviction, and to strengthen the hand of the local Congregation in direct evangelism.

The following proposals seek to wed the strengths of the heritage of the Irish Mission with the needs of the current missional context in Ireland, north and south.

1. That the BMI identify funds within its budget for the work of direct evangelism in Ireland, and that these funds be designated the “Irish Mission Fund”.
2. That the BMI cease the recruitment of further Irish Mission workers under the existing arrangements.
3. That Congregations or Presbyteries seeking to appoint evangelists may make application for financial assistance to the Irish Mission Fund.

4. That the Union Commission regulations governing the funding and management of Additional Pastoral Personnel (APPs) positions apply to these appointments. (*Reports, 2008* Panel on Ministries, Appendix C pp 83-86).

5. That the criteria for grant assistance from the Irish Mission Fund be consistent with the stated purpose of the Irish Mission in the Code, Paragraph 116(1) and that this be reflected in job descriptions and personnel specification documents.

6. That where the BMI awards a grant from the Irish Mission Fund, the grant shall be to the Congregation or Presbytery employing the worker. Line management will normally be the responsibility of the local Congregation, or by such means as a Presbytery shall determine should Presbytery be the employer.

7. That existing Irish Mission workers remain in post under the same terms and conditions as at present. Should an existing Irish Mission worker be moved to another location by the BMI, the same terms and conditions will apply to their new posting.

8. That any existing Irish Mission worker will be free to apply for a new position advertised by a Congregation or Presbytery, but in this case their existing arrangements with the BMI will come to an end when they leave their current posting.

In making these proposals the Board also recognises that situations exist in Ireland where there is no local Presbyterian witness, or where the brief of work may extend beyond the parish of a local Church. In these situations the Board itself may become the employer and the same terms and conditions will apply as for all BMI field staff.

## APPENDIX C

### REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY FROM THE BMI COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL LIFE IN RELATION TO THE MEMORIAL OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DUBLIN AND MUNSTER

In 2007 the following Memorial was brought to the General Assembly containing the following paragraph upon which the BMI Congregational Life Committee was invited to comment:

*That a proposed change to Code Par 40(4) could read as follows: "The Session shall record attendance of communicants at the Lord's Supper and may do so by the use of tokens or some other appropriate method. ..."*

The use of communion tokens in Reformed Churches dates from 1560 when John Calvin advised the Genevan Council to use lead tokens "to prevent the profanation of the Table". This was not a complete innovation as tokens were often used in society as "counters, permits or IOUs". In some Church circles they were issued to the clergy for services rendered and could then be redeemed for currency.

When introduced in Geneva they were used as a means to show that the possessor should be admitted to the sacrament. Calvin's advice to the Council was that "Each person should receive tokens of lead for those of his household who were instructed; and the strangers who might come, on giving testimony of

their faith, should also receive tokens and those who had none should not be admitted to the tables.”

The use of tokens took its usual path, for us, from Geneva to Scotland and from Scotland to Ireland. And we may presume that for some time the same care was taken here over instructing and hearing testimonies. However, viewed from the standpoint of our own day we can see that, however slowly, things have greatly changed.

Small printed cards have replaced metal tokens. The reason for using tokens has also changed. Instead of being “tickets of admission” they are now merely a means of recording attendance.

The present Code does not directly state the purpose of tokens but simply says, “The Session shall distribute tokens of membership to communicants in the Congregation previous to the administration of the Lord’s Supper” (Par 40(4)). There is however the strong implication that they are a means of recording attendance, for the Code goes on to say, “The Kirk Session shall keep a roll of members of the Congregation in full communion” (Par 41(1)) and “The Session shall not remove the name of a communicant from the roll... unless he has been continuously absent from the Lord’s Table for two years” (Par 41(2)).

The instruction and pastoral visitation previously associated with the distribution of the tokens has virtually disappeared, with the obvious exception of new communicants. No longer does the Minister give a token to each communicant personally at the pre-communion service. Instead they are variously distributed; personally by elders or dropped through the letterbox of the communicant, or given out at the front door of the Church on communion Sunday, or even by the announcement that they may be lifted from the vestibule table on the previous Sunday.

In short, the nature and use of tokens has changed and continues to change within our denomination. When the Dublin and Munster Presbytery ask for further change they are simply aiding this evolution.

It seems that what is being asked would make our practise a little more flexible and help those coming into membership from other traditions or from a non-Church background for whom the practice may seem to smack of legalism and bureaucracy. It might be wise, however, to add a few words to any proposed change e.g. “or some other appropriate method *approved by Presbytery*”. Until other methods have proven themselves Presbyteries ought to ensure that they are working properly.

It is important too that continued use of the communion roll for pastoral and electoral purposes should continue. Absence from communion can often be an indicator of a spiritual problem, which can be addressed proactively.

We do not see it as our role to propose any changes to the Code, but if the Dublin and Munster Presbytery pursue this we offer the following suggestions:

- We see no insurmountable problem to the proposed change.
- We believe that an annually updated communion roll should be retained for pastoral and electoral purposes.
- We advise that any Congregation wanting to use an alternative to tokens seek Presbytery permission.

- Finally we think that Presbytery should maintain a supervisory role until satisfied that any alternative system is working adequately.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly thank Presbyteries for their work in producing mission plans, and that each Presbytery appoints an agent designated Mission Development Co-ordinator, along with a small Mission Development Committee, to continue the work of mission development at Presbytery level.
3. That during 2009, each Presbytery prioritise one task from their mission plan specifically geared towards supporting and stimulating Congregations in their task of mission planning.
4. That the Board of Mission in Ireland brings a detailed strategy for supporting mission development at Presbytery and Congregational levels for consideration at the General Assembly in 2010.
5. That the deadline for the completion of Congregational missional plans be 30 May, 2010.
6. That the General Assembly approve the proposals contained in the report (Appendix B) concerning the future of the Irish Mission and the formation of an Irish Mission Fund to support the work of face-to-face evangelism in Ireland.
7. That all Ministers and Kirk Sessions promote the forthcoming *Engaging the Heart Worship Conference* at Stranmillis College, 21-23 August, 2009 and encourage delegates from their Congregations to attend, and that £5,000 from the Church Hymnary Trust Fund be made available to help defray the costs of this event.
8. That the General Assembly agree that from this date, St Patrick's, Waterford be considered a Congregation under the care of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and all assets owned by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in connection with St Patrick's, namely the Church building and surrounding graveyard and the Manse be transferred to the ownership of the Methodist Church in Ireland and that the ministry arrangements with the Methodist Church in Ireland pertaining to St Patrick's be ended.

### SPUD resolutions

9. That the General Assembly consider their Mission Statement of 1992 and question what the Church has done to "*enable her members to play their part.... and encourage the exercise of the gifts of every member of the body*".
10. That the General Assembly encourage congregations in the process of formulating Mission Plans, to ensure that young people are involved in a meaningful way in the development of each local plan.

**General**

11. That the General Assembly commend the valuable ministry of Nighthlight under their Director, Mr John Luke, and encourage volunteers to offer themselves for service.

12. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations to set aside one Sunday in the year to celebrate our rich access to Scripture and in this regard, commend the online resources of the Bible Societies in Ireland to Ministers.

13. That the success of the Awake '09 prayer initiative be noted and that the costs of mounting this project be a charge on the Incidental Fund.

14. That the Board of Mission in Ireland with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 280 of the Code as follows:

**OVERTURES TRANSMITTED****Anent Par 305(9) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 305(9) of the Code, the word "sixty" be deleted and the word "sixty-five" substituted in its place.

RA PATTON

**Anent Par 40(4) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 40(4) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place: "The Session shall record attendance of communicants at the Lord's Supper and may do so by the use of tokens or other appropriate method approved by Presbytery."

RA PATTON

# PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

President: Mrs VALERIE STEWART

General Secretary: Mrs CAROLINE HAWTHORNE

## Theme for the year: NOW IS THE TIME

(This report should be read in conjunction with the reports of the Board of Mission in Ireland, Board of Mission Overseas and Board of Social Witness).

1. The theme for this past year has been **Now is the Time**. We realise that there are many things that we must do when the time is right. This year we learned from Bible characters about the time to ... obey, speak up, pray, forgive, believe, trust, encourage and go and tell. This theme challenged members to look at how we spend our time and to ensure that we are always ready to answer God's call, even though, as in Esther's case, it may mean tackling something difficult. It encouraged members to spend time being still before God and getting to know Him better.

2. The Presbyterian Women's (PW) office continues to be staffed by Mrs Caroline Hawthorne, General Secretary; Miss Fiona Bingham, Senior Secretary and Miss Naomi Campbell, Receptionist/Secretary. Mrs Charlotte Stevenson has been working as part-time Development Officer for the past three years. PW is very grateful for the staff team it has and records sincere thanks to them for their efforts over the past year. It records a special thanks to Mrs Pauline Kennedy who acted as General Secretary during Caroline's maternity leave.

3. The Resources Committee continues to be commended by members for the production of the resource pack. Groups are offered this pack each year to help with their programme – it is full of useful ideas relating to the theme for the year. PW records sincere thanks to Mrs Margaret Stevenson for convening this Committee and for the valuable contribution she and Committee members have made.

4. On 1 May, 2008 Presbyterian Women was launched, incorporating the former Presbyterian Women's Association (PWA) and Young Women's Groups (YWG). Central Committee has been encouraged by the positive response there has been to the change. Many groups have reviewed their programme to ensure it is relevant to all women in the Church. Central Committee has asked groups to familiarise themselves with the new Guidebook which highlights the Mission Statement and Aims of Presbyterian Women. It also contains details of how PW is structured and practical advice on how to run a PW Group or PW LINK.

5. The Guidebook contains guidance on how to amalgamate a PWA branch with a YWG. In Churches where there were two groups – PWA and YWG – many have amalgamated to form one new group under PW. It is our prayer that more will come together as one group at Congregational level.



6. A new website was launched following the Annual Meeting on 1 May, 2008. The website address is [www.presbyterianireland.org/pw](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/pw); it contains useful information relating to the organisation. Helpful resources and images are available on the website for members to download.

## 7. CENTRAL COMMITTEE 2008/9

### Office Bearers:

Central President:	Mrs Valerie Stewart (Donegal)
Home Vice President:	Mrs Phyllis Spence (Dromore)
Overseas Vice President:	Mrs Dorothy Marshall (North Belfast)
Former YWG Chairperson:	Mrs Valerie Tweedie (East Belfast)

### Committee Members:

Mrs Margaret Stevenson (Ards)	Mrs Elizabeth Moffett (Iveagh)
Mrs Edna McIlwaine (Armagh)	Mrs Nan Bradford (Monaghan)
Mrs Lynn Murray (Ballymena)	Mrs Ann Blue (Newry)
Mrs Evelyn Coleman (North Belfast)	Mrs Jean Donald (Omagh)
Mrs Jean Clarke (South Belfast)	Mrs Gwen Carson (Route)
Mrs Winnie Moffett (East Belfast)	Mrs Maureen Weir (Templepatrick)
Mrs Jane McClure (Carrickfergus)	Mrs Anne Thompson (Tyrone)
Mrs Hazel Clarke (Coleraine)	Miss Anna Morison (former YWG)
Mrs Glynis Hutchinson (Derry/Strabane)	Mrs Deborah Hyland (former YWG)
Mrs Georgina Hunter (Donegal)	Mrs Vera McLean (former YWG)
Miss Zena McAllister (Down)	Mrs Caroline Hawthorne
Mrs Vera Crawford (Dromore)	Mrs Charlotte Stevenson (Ex Officio)
Mrs Violet Miller (Foyle)	Mrs Anthea Harrison (Ex Officio)
Mrs Joan Hanna (Foyle)	Mrs Florence Patton (Ex Officio)

## 8. New Members of Central Committee 2009/10

Mrs Moyra Stirling (Armagh)  
 Mrs Edith Holmes (Templepatrick)  
 Mrs Lynda Stothers (Carrickfergus)

## 9. New Office Bearers effective from Annual Meeting, 7 May, 2009

President 2009/10: Mrs Dorothy Marshall (North Belfast)  
 Overseas Vice President 2009/11: Mrs Edna McIlwaine (Armagh)

10. The Central Committee met eight times during the year. As well as carrying the responsibility of steering the work of the organisation, the Central Committee continues to provide representatives to several Committees and Boards in PCI and various other organisations and bodies.

11. Mrs Winnie Moffett represents PW at Women's Link.

12. Mrs Maureen Weir represents PW at Women's Forum and The Olive Branch.

13. Mrs Caroline Hawthorne represents PW on Focusfest Committee.

14. Mrs Valerie Stewart has served as Central President 2008/9. During this year she has given generously of her time in attendance at meetings of

Boards and Committees and has travelled extensively throughout Ireland to fulfil her many speaking engagements. She has also given up a lot of her time to help with administrative duties during the General Secretary's maternity leave. Central Committee deeply appreciates the contribution Valerie has made to PW, especially during her term in office. Valerie travelled to Nepal from 31 October-12 November, 2008 where she visited Joe and Janet Campbell in Kathmandu and visited Rukum district, one of the 75 districts, which is in the remote mid-western region of Nepal where the Maoist conflict began. There she visited the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) Cluster Group and met members of one of their partners, the Christian Society Development Campaign (CSDC). The Birthday Project for 2009/10 will support an Integrated Programme for Widows' Empowerment which will be run by the CSDC supported and monitored by UMN. The main emphasis of the programme will be on income generation and will also include education, a savings programme, women's health check-ups, trauma healing and domestic violence workshops. This three year project aims to bring hope and new life to widows from both sides of the ten year civil war.

15. PW Central Committee continues to appreciate the support and advice given by the Clerk of the General Assembly, the Rev Dr DJ Watts.

16. The Committee also records its thanks to the Rev DJ Bruce, Secretary to the Board of Mission in Ireland; the Rev WS Marrs, Secretary to the Board of Mission Overseas; Mr Lindsay Conway, Secretary to the Board of Social Witness; and Mr Stephen Lynas, Secretary to the Board of Communications, for their help and expertise.

### 17. Events 2008/9

- The Annual Prayer Meeting was held on 3 April, 2008, in the Chapel, Church House. Prayers were led by Mrs Sandra Fleck.
- The Annual Meetings were held on 1 May, 2008, in Church House. The guest speaker was Mrs Alison McCaughan, First Dunboe Presbyterian Church and former editor of Wider World. The launch of Presbyterian Women took place at the Meeting.
- Prior to Central Committee in September 2008, the Rev Stanley Stewart conducted a Communion Service.
- A Conference was held on 6 September, 2008, in Church House, Belfast with the theme, "Making the Transition" which helped groups implement the Motto, Mission Statement and Aims of PW. The programme was presented by a group of fifteen women and included praise, drama, challenges from Scripture, interviews and media clips. Members of PW were encouraged to be Prepared Women, Praying Women, Participating Women and Pastoral Women. Worship was led by Mr Graham Hawthorne from Woodlands Presbyterian Church.
- PW Forum met on 5 February, 2009, in the Minor Hall, Church House. The new Birthday Project and theme for 2009/10 was introduced at the meeting.
- To celebrate the centenary of Deaconess work within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland a series of events was held throughout the year. On 26 February, 2008 a reception was

hosted by the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Jim Rodgers. The Lord Mayor expressed his thanks on behalf of the community for the service and dedication of Deaconesses over the last 100 years.

- On 30 April, 2008 a book entitled “A Century of Service” was launched. The book, which was written by Janice Holmes and Philippa McCracken, gives a brief history of Deaconess work in the Church and features personal stories from six Deaconesses.
- A celebration lunch hosted by PW and BMI was held at the Manor House in the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum on 13 May, 2008. The lunch was attended by almost fifty Deaconesses, past, present and students. It was a privilege to have the Moderator, the Rt Rev Dr John Finlay and his wife, Mrs Christine Finlay present on this occasion as well as representatives from BMI, BSW and PW. All the ladies received a small memento of the occasion which was very much appreciated.
- The final event, a Thanksgiving Service was held in the Assembly Hall, Church House on 25 September, 2008. The speaker, Mrs Ann Allen from the Church of Scotland gave an outstanding address as she encouraged all present to look forward with great trust and anticipation to what God will continue to do through this arm of the Church in the future.
- A Women’s Conference, “When the Going gets tough...?” was held on 7 March, 2009 in Orangefield Presbyterian Church. Central Committee were delighted to welcome Jill Briscoe as the keynote speaker. All 700 tickets for this event were sold out by early January. Jill was truly inspirational; her message was encouraging, challenging and greatly appreciated by all who attended. The three talks given by Jill were recorded and copies of the DVD made available to purchase. Rube Brunton led the worship and Prayer Ministry was available throughout the day. Central Committee would like to record thanks to all who were involved in organising the event and especially to Orangefield Congregation for hosting it.

### **South Belfast Friendship House**

18. The PW Central Committee continues to value the partnership with the Board of Social Witness in relation to the management of South Belfast Friendship House.

19. The Management Committee met on four occasions during the year.

20. The House continues to be a place of Christian witness for this area of South Belfast. This is evident by the number of people who call to share their news with the staff! The sick and housebound are visited regularly, as well as those who haven’t been in contact for a while.

21. The Committee is thankful to Mrs Jenny Robinson, Mrs Eunice Moore and Mrs Menita Cheesman for their continued faithful service and commitment to the work of South Belfast Friendship House and to the team of volunteers who give of their time and talents. It would record its thanks to Julie

Gibson, Lynn Guiney, Caroline Skelton and other volunteers who help out on a regular basis – their support is invaluable. However, the Committee is looking for more volunteers to help with various aspects of work at the House. Any help would be appreciated.

22. There was a two week summer scheme held in August 2008 – one week took the format of a Holiday Bible Club. This was a very positive experience for all involved. A clear biblical message was brought out of the programme each day. The relationships that were made during the scheme have encouraged children to attend the After School Club. There are plans to run a similar scheme in August 2009. This will be in alternative premises due to the building work.

23. The House is in the process of being extended and alternative premises have been sought in order to carry on with the usual activities. It is hoped that the building work will be completed by December 2009. The Committee thanks the design team who have worked hard on the extension plans. The Management Committee hope that existing and new projects will be developed as a result of this.

24. There was a wonderful response to the Christmas Appeal from PW Groups, Congregations and individuals giving money gifts, toys and household goods. More people were helped as a result of this generosity. It is also a huge encouragement to the staff team when personal contact is made with the House. In response to the 2008 Christmas Appeal, £3,790 was received. The Committee would like to record its thanks to all who contributed.

25. The Board of Social Witness and Presbyterian Women hope to source additional funding for the future development of the House.

### **Finance**

26. The PW Central Committee is very grateful for the on-going support of its members which enables PW to contribute to the mission of the Church at home and overseas. At the end of December, 2008 the Mission Fund for Home and Overseas was up by over £15,000.

27. PW gave a grant of £280,000 in 2009 to the Board of Mission in Ireland to support, in part, 26 Deaconesses and two probationary Deaconesses serving in Congregations, the Community, the Hospitals and the Prison Service. In addition, PW will support two Deaconesses who are being trained at Union Theological College and a further five who will begin their studies in September 2009.

28. PW gave a grant of £200,000 in 2009 to the Board of Mission Overseas.

### **Birthday Project**

29. This runs from 1 May until 30 April in each ensuing year.

30. The total amount received for the 2007/08 Birthday Project was £72,775 towards Deaconess training; this includes £6,000 from the YWG Home Project. The YWG Overseas Project for 2007/08 received £20,000 which will assist essential work at the Vocational Bible School in Vyara, India.

31. At the time of writing the Birthday Project (2008/09) for supporting Nightlight and Indonesia had received over £41,000.

### **Wider World**

32. The PW Central Committee records sincere thanks to the Editor, Mrs Anthea Harrison, Mrs Sheena Mulholland who compiles the children's page, the Editorial Committee and all who contributed to the magazine and its promotion.

33. The Family Focus section which covered issues on abuse, family prayers, use of time and priorities, and family finance continues to receive positive feedback.

34. Each issue has a different theme. The four themes for 2008 were, Rich Christians/Poor Christians; Shining as Stars; Now is the Time; Building Bridges – Bringing Peace.

35. Wider World maintains its readership of around 22,000. The Committee continues to promote Wider World amongst the members of our Church and would encourage more members to subscribe to this excellent magazine.

36. Selected extracts from Wider World continue to be available on audio tape for those who are blind or partially sighted.

## **RESOLUTION**

1. That the Report be received.

## **OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS**

### **Anent Par 114(2); 114(2)(a); 114(3) of the Code**

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

in Par 114(2) of the Code the words "The Presbyterian Women's Association Home Department, developing the work of the former Women's Home Mission" be deleted and the words "**Presbyterian Women**, developing the work of the former Presbyterian Women's Association Home Department" substituted in their place.

in Par 114(2)(a) of the Code the words "provide for the recruitment, training, organisation and support of deaconesses and women workers" be deleted and the words "support deaconesses" substituted in their place.

in Par 114(3) of the Code the words "**The Church Extension agency**" be deleted and the words "**The Board of Mission in Ireland**" substituted in their place.

DJ BRUCE

**Anent Par 115(2) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 115(2) of the Code the words “The PWA Overseas Department, developing the work of the former Women’s Missionary Association and Zenana Mission” be deleted and the words “*Presbyterian Women* developing the work of the former Presbyterian Women’s Association Overseas Department” substituted in their place.

DJ BRUCE

# BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev RA LIDDLE

Secretary: Mr LINDSAY CONWAY, OBE

## Strategic Objective 1

**“The Board shall deliver an effective service to The Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the wider community.”**

The phrase is often quoted, “If you have your health, you have everything.”

1. Of course, in terms of Christian theology, it is fundamentally wrong. Jesus pointed out that we have a debit balance even if we gain the whole world, including our health, but lose our soul. Health and Heaven are not synonymous terms. The greatest need of every human being is salvation through Jesus Christ.

2. However, followers of the One who healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and made the deaf hear and the lame walk, also believe wholeheartedly in life before death. The early believers rescued unwanted babies and elderly people abandoned and left to die under Rome’s bridges. They cared for the pagan as well as Christian sick during times of plague and in so doing they earned a hearing for the Good News. Their example was Jesus and their motivation that ‘People matter to God’. That same motivation opened hospitals and sent medical missionaries and teachers to every continent.

3. In a culture that is increasingly intolerant of Christianity and a province tired of ‘intolerant, shouting Christians’ people need to see the Gospel in action. How often are hearts opened to Christ through the love and care of God’s people demonstrated during a time of sickness? From providing Parents and Toddlers groups to the provision of respite care for learning disabled children, to visiting an elderly, sick or bereaved member of the Congregation, Social Witness is going on all the time in Congregations. The aim of the Board of Social Witness is to help the Church to be even more proactive, encouraging individuals and Congregations, *‘To live out the Love of Christ through a Caring Church within our Communities.’*

4. This time last year the names of Molly Morgan, Alfie and James Patten meant absolutely nothing to us – but they were soon to hit the headlines and attract attention from politicians, community leaders, Churches and the media. Molly was the 81 year old who was mugged and left for dead on the road outside her house and no-one came to her aid. Alfie was the 13 year old who became England’s youngest father, and James was cremated at Roselawn in a funeral service conducted by one our Ministers – with only him and the Undertaker’s staff present. Here is a modern society that does not want to get involved as it lets an old lady die on the street; a society that has a warped moral code – that has parents permitting 12 and 14 year olds to have intercourse; a society which lets people die and lie undetected, totally isolated in an ever too busy world. Put all that together with the Credit Crunch, Recession, The Presbyterian Mutual Society, Redundancy, House Repossessions, £600,000 plus pension packages for Banking Executives, the closure of Woolworths and MFI:

The world has changed and all of a sudden our priorities have changed. The well stated aim of the Board is "To Live out the Love of Christ through a Caring Church within our Communities". As the recession bites opportunities will arise. The Board recognises that the vast majority of Social Witness is carried out at Congregational level, individual Congregations responding to the needs of their local community: The bowling club that opens its doors to all, the Parents and Tots group which encourages all young parents to join, the counselling ministry available to non-members. Put these, plus all our other organisations together, and the Church offers some level of routine and stability to local communities.

5. **Robert Cunningham – The Impact of the 1859 Revival:** "The years that followed the great Revival of '59 and the sixties were the most fruitful of all the years of Christianity in this country since the Reformation. All the mission movements, home and foreign, humanitarian schemes and measures for the alleviation of poverty and suffering were mainly manned and maintained during the following fifty plus years by the converts of the Revival of '59 and the sixties, and those who sympathised with it. Fifty years on, there were men and women still active, a host of home Ministers, foreign Missionaries, Evangelists, and others who were converted, or received a never-to-be-forgotten quickening and impetus to their spiritual life during that time. Many of these gladly confessed that they owed all they were, had been, or ever hoped to be to that Revival. Many of them longed for a return of those days, and for "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord"; for although there had been many and great improvements in city and social life, in education, and many of the abuses of former times had disappeared, still, they missed much that made those former years memorable and blessed".

6. Opportunities will arise to which the Church must respond – no strings attached. As ambassadors of Christ, Christians must be ambassadors of Social Witness, enforcing the Biblical Imperative of "Loving God with everything we have got and loving our neighbour as ourselves".

7. **The Board challenged the General Assembly in 2004** – Now the Church is being challenged. How does it harness that spirit in communities which are well established and in Congregations which are in decline? So much of the solution lies within how the Church responds to the most basic of human needs and what attitude it takes to the sections of our communities which have been excluded. Fred Catherwood in his book, *It can be done*, puts it this way: "So there is a huge responsibility on the Church to win hearts and minds for a Christian moral order on which a new fairer and more benign social order can be based ... The Christian's duty to love our neighbour is quite clear, but duty is not a popular word, even amongst professing Christians, and people give all kinds of reasons for not following it." There is no doubt that the Church makes a huge difference to the lives touched through our social witness – by giving hope to a hopeless situation.

8. Matters of health are always high on the political and social agenda and people are often surprised when they hear what the Presbyterian Church does. Working alongside Health and Social Care Trusts and other agencies the Board of Social Witness provides quality care with a Christian ethos for the elderly, for the learning disabled and for those with addictions; it helps Congregations to take care of children and vulnerable adults and to know what



to do to help ex-offenders integrate into a worship context when the rest of society does not want to know them.

9. The area of mental health has been much in the media spotlight. Last year the Board ran a very helpful day Conference on ‘Suicide and the Church’, and the bi-annual Taking Care Conference took place in April. The launch of Carecall within our Church is an exciting development in caring for our own staff. Carecall is an independent and confidential counselling service retained by the PCI, which will gradually be rolled out to the whole Church.

10. The Board has now agreed to the development of Denegarh House as a centre for counselling and pastoral care. Together with the Pastoral Care Panel it plans to offer a comprehensive programme of training and support for Ministers, Manse families, Missionaries and the wider Church.

## **11. NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

- Continued work in the Republic of Ireland in Lucan and Ballybay. Funding for new developments is under constant review. This may result in no resources being available until 2012 at the earliest.
- On-going discussions in relation to local developments and funding opportunities.
- The on-going review of Taking Care material.
- Exploring new opportunities, together with our Web-site ([www.pcibsw.org](http://www.pcibsw.org)) to communicate more effectively our work.

## **THANKS**

12. The Board owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to the almost 400 staff who work in homes and projects, to the hard-working band in the BSW Office in Church House, to the many who serve so faithfully on the Board’s numerous Committees and Panels, and Secretary and Director of Social Service, Lindsay Conway, who carries an enormous weight on behalf of both Board and Church.

13. A large “thank you” is also extended to all the statutory and public agencies which work with the Board as it seeks to promote a ‘healthy’ Church caring for whole people who matter to God – the Department of Health, Social Service and Public Safety; Supporting People (Northern Ireland Housing Executive); Probation Board of Northern Ireland; Access (NI); Garda Siochana; our partner Housing Associations; Department of Education and many others for their continued funding and support.

14. A special word of thanks goes to those within the Presbyterian Family, to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, Financial Secretary, Head of Personnel, Communication Officer and their staff teams. To the United Appeal Board for their funding and support. To the Presbyteries and Congregations who invite representatives of the Board to visit and inform members.

15. During the year Mrs Zoe Valley stepped down as Convener of the Specialist Ministries Committee. Zoe was the first Convener of Specialist Ministries, a new Committee formed as a result of our reorganisation. The expertise, experience, good humour and graciousness which Zoe brought to the

Board was very much appreciated and valued and she has been missed. The Board wishes her every blessing in retirement.

16. The Board has agreed that PCI Counselling will replace its Committee with an Advisory Panel. The Board wishes to thank Mrs Rosemary Simpson who has guided our Counselling Service for the past 9 years. The new Panel will give support and advice to this growing service within our Church.

## FUNDING

Total income for the year 2008 was derived from the following sources (£000's):

Income from Services	6,195
United Appeal	400
Donations and Bequests	132
Grants	52
Other	436
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>7,215</b>

This enables expenditure across the following areas (£000's):

Older People	4,688
Addiction and Education Services	603
Ex-prisoners	420
Student Accommodation	357
Unemployed People	2
Deaf Community	92
Learning Disabled	164
PCI Counselling	24
Publications	2
Chaplains	139
Management Costs	317
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>6,808</b>

*\* These figures are preliminary figures and are subject to audit.*

## SPECIALIST MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

### Strategic Objective 2

**“Specialist Ministries shall promote and support the work of Chaplains and the Church’s ministry to the Deaf Community.”**

1. When news reports of accidents, injuries, violence and court cases end, the people mentioned in them often pass from the memory. It is at this point

that the work of hospital and prison Chaplains begins. Besides the newsworthy are the thousands who pass through hospitals and prisons each year. Working as part of the team alongside hospital and prison staff to provide pastoral care in highly sensitive and emotional situations, Chaplains play an essential role and are commended to the prayers of the Church.

2. The Committee gives thanks to God for the safe return of the Rev Dr David Latimer from active service with the Territorial Army in Afghanistan and expresses concern at the low recruitment levels of Chaplains to the Forces.

3. Chaplaincy in the ever-changing atmosphere of Universities and Colleges requires flexibility and adaptability. Challenges continue to arise both North and South and the Committee is grateful for the able serving chaplains and support groups.

4. The Committee is grateful to Mrs Anne Rodgers for her on-going service in the Kinghan Church and for the support of the Rev Dr George Grindle and Canon Will Murphy. The wider Church is invited to pray for long-term ministry provision for this unique and strategic ministry.

5. The Committee gives prayerful thanks for those at the coalface of these special ministries.

## CHAPLAINS

*The Rev Dr RFS Poots OBE reports:*

1. The Chaplains Committee continued its work of supervision and encouragement for those involved in hospital, hospice and prison chaplaincies.

2. The Rev David Nesbitt has retired from the chaplaincy of St Mary's Hospital, Castleblayney and his place has been taken by the Rev Christie Irwin who, in turn, has resigned from Monaghan General and St Davnet's Hospitals. The vacancy left by the Rev Christie Irwin has been filled by the Rev Daniel Reyes Martin.

3. In Northern Ireland the Rev Ken Simpson retired after many years in chaplaincy to various prisons. The Committee thanks him for his years of service and wishes him well in retirement.

4. It also welcomes the appointment of the Rev Rodney Cameron as Chaplain to Maghaberry Prison after a series of interviews conducted by a Panel representing both the Church and the Northern Ireland Office. He has taken up the post and is acting as Lead Chaplain.

5. The Presbytery of Derry and Strabane drew the attention of the Panel to the fact that a local arrangement had been negotiated by Carndonagh Hospital and asked for it to be made official on the retirement of the Rev Dr John Lappin. The Panel consequently nominated the Rev David Hagan for appointment on the recommendation of the Presbytery.

6. The Panel has visited the 'state of the art' Juvenile Justice Centre near Bangor. A similar visit to Magilligan Prison is in course of being planned.

## FORCES

### *The Rev Purvis Campbell reports:*

1. Being a Chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces is a multi-disciplinary ministry where a Minister is alongside others wherever they are in their lives and where the agenda is set by others, rather than by the Church. Chaplains often wear the same uniform as the members of their community and share the same tensions, dangers and celebrations, for where their parishioners go, they go – be it to war or other duties. Like everyone else in the Forces they never stay in one place for very long. Their work is infinitely varied and can be immensely rewarding, but is demanding in so many ways.

2. The Forces Committee is grateful to those who serve as regular or part-time Chaplains, and delighted to welcome to their ranks the Rev Heather Rendell who was ordained and inducted into the RACHD on 16 November, 2008. It prays for God's blessing on Heather in this new phase of her ministry.

3. The following Ministers of the PCI have served as regular Chaplains during the past year:

- Rev David Edgar (Royal Air Force)
- Rev Jonny Wylie (Royal Air Force)
- Rev Norman McDowell (Army)
- Rev Dr Paul Swinn (Army)
- Rev Stephan van Os (Army)
- Rev Mark Henderson (Army)
- Rev Heather Rendell

The TA Chaplains and Officiating Chaplains are as follows:

- Rev Prof Patton Taylor
- Rev Dr David Latimer
- Rev Derek Weir
- Rev Kenneth Crowe

4. The Committee is grateful to those organisations which support the Christian witness of the Chaplains: The Sandes Homes; The Officers' Christian Union; The Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association; The Naval, Military and Air Force Bible Society. Members of these organisations are available to speak at midweek meetings.

5. Each year the support of the Church is sought for The Royal British Legion, The Royal Air Force 'Wings Appeal', and the Royal Irish/UDR Benevolent Fund. In the past Congregations have supported these with generosity and the Committee trusts this will continue.

## KINGHAN MISSION

### *The Rev Maynard Cathcart reports:*

1. For over 150 years the Kinghan Mission has been serving the deaf community by providing friendship, fellowship, worship and pastoral care. Unfortunately the position of Minister/Superintendent has been vacant since the Rev Simon Henning left in October 2007. However, the Congregation remains

in good heart and services have been taken by Mrs Anne Rodgers, the Lay Assistant, the Rev Dr George Grindle, Minister Emeritus and the Rev Dr Will Murphy of the Church of Ireland.

2. Activities for Church members and their families are organised by a very active local Church Committee. These events are important in keeping the Congregation together, considering that the parish area covers most of the Province, and many members travel long distances to attend.

3. Like every other vacant Congregation, the folks at Kinghan are very keen to get a new Minister as soon as possible. The Board has advertised the position twice, either for a Minister from PCI or other denomination (where special arrangements may have to be made). Failing to get a response from an ordained person, the Board will then seek to appoint a suitably qualified non-ordained person to work alongside a local Minister from within the Presbytery. The Board's prayer, and that of the members of Kinghan, is that God will touch the heart of such a person who will feel the 'call' to minister to the deaf community.

4. The Board is indebted to Mrs Anne Rodgers, the Rev Dr George Grindle and the Rev Dr Will Murphy for their dedication and commitment to this specialist ministry, and for their willingness to go the extra mile in maintaining the Gospel Witness at Kinghan. Thanks also to Lindsay Conway for his interest and practical input.

### **STUDENT SERVICES COMMITTEE (incorporating War Memorial Hostel)**

*The Rev Dr Robert Buick reports:*

1. The Student Services Committee provides University Chaplains and chaplaincy facilities and seeks to promote the cause of Christ in institutions of third level education throughout Ireland. The reports of the individual University Chaplains are included elsewhere in this report.

2. PCI currently has no full-time Presbyterian Chaplains in the Dublin area, though we co-operate with both the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Church of Ireland (Dublin Dioceses) to provide joint chaplaincy services in Trinity College Dublin, Dublin Institute of Technology and University College Dublin. The Rev Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie was appointed as part-time Chaplain to the Rathmines Teacher Training College.

3. The Rev Steve Stockman (Chaplain in Residence), Lynn Guiney (Assistant Chaplain) and their team provide Chaplaincy facilities at the Presbyterian Chaplaincy Centre in Elmwood Avenue, serving Queen's University and Stranmillis College. The Rumours Café, which is an integral part of the chaplaincy effort at Elmwood, continues to prove difficult to adequately staff. The Presbyterian Halls of Residence at Derryvolgie Avenue provide excellent accommodation, with some 88 rooms available, within which is a strong, vibrant, Christian Community and centre for Christian life and service. Young people going to live and study in Belfast are encouraged to consider applying for one of the limited number of places available in the Halls.

4. The University of Ulster have recently announced that they hope to move many of their facilities currently located at Jordanstown to new premises near the Cathedral quarter in Belfast. The challenge is to ensure that Chaplaincy is kept high on the agenda when those facilities are being planned. The Rev Cheryl Meban, the PCI Chaplain at Jordanstown and Belfast campuses, continues to minister to staff and students as part of the joint chaplaincy team.

5. The Rev John Coulter continues to provide part-time PCI Chaplaincy duties at University of Ulster, Coleraine campus. It is anticipated that the Magee campus in Londonderry (with which our Church has had a close association in the past) is to expand both in student numbers and facilities and the Student Services Panel continues to examine how chaplaincy may be developed in association with local Congregations.

6. The Panel thanks the many “unofficial” Chaplains who serve our Church in the many Universities and Colleges throughout our island. Please pray for all our Chaplains, as they seek to reach out in the name of Christ to both staff and students in the various Colleges, that they may be encouraged in this very important work, which will have a lasting impact upon many young adults who will become the movers and shakers in tomorrow’s society.

## **University Chaplains’ Reports**

### **Queen’s University**

*The Rev Steve Stockman reports:*

1. Thanks to my staff, Lynn Guiney (Assistant Chaplain), Carol McMahon (Administrator) and the two interns, Caroline Skelton and Miriam Todd for a hard-working year’s programming and giving the pastoral foundations that chaplaincy is based upon at our two sites, Derryvolgie Hall and the Chaplaincy Centre on Elmwood Avenue.

2. The year has been packed with weekly teaching as well as various special events, recreational, musical, artistic, sporting and spiritual. At Derryvolgie we continue to maintain the buildings to be a contemporary setting for a vibrant Christian community. This last year has seen us add internet access in each of the 88 rooms. The Café in the Chaplaincy Centre has proved to be a challenge but we have at last found the right staff, which allows us to have a vital presence for students and staff at the heart of the University. This drop-in is beginning to prove a vital witness.

3. We continue to be involved in outreach projects like Late Love (with the Church of Ireland and Methodist Chaplaincies and Christian Union), Friendship House on Sandy Row and Adelaide House. A new event, The YARN, has allowed students to come and chat to us individually on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This has proved very helpful in various ways. We have also been very involved in three 24/7 style prayer events.

4. Last summer we took 50 students to Cape Town and had a profitable time building houses and investigating various ministries and projects, all enveloped in Bible study.

5. I continue to have a more influential presence in the University through relationships at various levels of the administration. This year it included helping organise the QUB 150th Anniversary Service at St Anne's Cathedral.

### **University of Ulster, Jordanstown and Belfast Campuses**

*The Rev Cheryl Meban reports:*

1. Eighteen months into my tenure as Chaplain at the University of Ulster and it still feels like early days. Each semester has been qualitatively different from the last, and many relationships are still new. I do feel that I am gradually learning how to work within the administrative system of the University, and growing relationships with staff at every level is making this process simpler and more rewarding.

2. Help for International Students is particularly critical during the summer months. If local Congregations are willing to offer hospitality to international students, this is a prime case of Mission on our doorstep. These students are open to learn about our culture and religion, and ready to receive warm hospitality in the name of Christ. And our culture needs to learn how to relate to people who don't share our values and perspectives – so the learning is two-way and profoundly enriching, but more than one Chaplain can manage!

3. My work continues on many fronts: deepening relationships with local Congregations; establishing and growing trust with staff, local students away from home, local students living with caring roles at home, students struggling with relationships, money, their studies; encouraging broader educational experience by cross-community engagement (our What's On The Other Side? Programme), Habitat for Humanity Building opportunities, the social justice imperative of the Christian faith (Simplicity, Love and Justice course), creating inclusive community through our groundbreaking multidisciplinary Water Exhibition in aid of Tearfund, at the Belfast campus. I continue to build relationships with Christian Unions and IFES Ireland, and with staff and alumni of the university at both winter and summer Graduations.

4. There are plenty of irons in the fire, but it will continue to take time to deepen relationships and know how to focus my efforts at any given time. Next semester I face another change: two of my chaplaincy colleagues are due to move on, creating new dynamics and requiring a shift in my emphasis, to adapt to the gifts (or absence) of new colleagues. Since I have not (yet) received the gift of omnipresence, I am on the look-out for appropriate "volunteers" to serve on the chaplaincy team, who will be funded through the Board of Social Witness volunteer scheme – perfect for a "year out".

5. Looking ahead, I pray for wisdom and opportunities to assist the university in fulfilling its vision for a new landmark university campus at the Belfast site. Please pray that the building will be so designed as to serve people and foster community, both within the university and as part of the culturally diverse Cathedral Quarter of Belfast. Just as God chooses the weak things of this world to shame the strong, may the Chaplaincy's tiny presence here contribute towards a spiritually rich city engaging with the world for justice, peace and

wholeness. I value the prayers of the Assembly, and your continued interest and support.

### **Magee College**

*The Rev Dr Robert Buick reports:*

1. I have been attending the Chaplaincy Office at the University of Ulster, Magee campus, on a regular basis two days a week in an attempt to provide an opportunity for staff and students to be able to make contact with the Presbyterian Chaplaincy and this has had some success. Along with the Chaplains from the other main denominations, just before Christmas we took part in both the Students' Union Carol Service on campus and a University/Community Carol Service in one of the local Churches, both of which were well attended. The recent announcement of the expansion of the Magee campus and associated expected rise in the student numbers requires that we examine our future chaplaincy provision at Magee.

### **University College, Dublin**

*Mrs Gillian Kingston reports:*

1. We enjoy excellent and inclusive relationships on the chaplaincy team, which currently comprises three Roman Catholic Chaplains and me as Presbyterian/Methodist Chaplain. The Church of Ireland chaplaincy position is vacant, pending appointment. We work closely and helpfully with the other student support services.

2. A number of Christian groups operate on the campus. We are working to bring them into closer contact. Father Leon O'Giolláin and I led a short service in the Chaplaincy building during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and were very pleased to note people from a variety of these groups present. During the year, we have had valuable in-service training with the Rev Peter McBride on self-care when dealing with cases of suicide and with Marie Murray on counselling skills.

3. As an effort to have students get together in what can be a very isolating environment, I have been organising informal meals in the Chaplaincy building on a monthly basis – students like food and this has been fun, encouraging fellowship, and something they like doing. The other Chaplains come along and this has strengthened the perception of us as a team.

4. Many and varied are the issues which present themselves – life in a university are a microcosm of the wider world. These are, however, made more intense by the transitional stage of life through which most students are passing. As Chaplains, and in the words of one John Wesley, we 'offer them Christ' – this is the best and highest we can do.

LINDSAY CONWAY, Secretary



## OLDER PEOPLE SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Strategic Objective 3

**“Older People Services will deliver a high standard of social and nursing care to all our residents and campaign on behalf of older people.”**

1. We live in an ageing world and there are now more older adults around than at any other time in history. Between 2000 and 2040 the proportion of people over 60 in Northern Ireland will double and there will be a 57% increase in the over 75 population as people live longer and healthier lives.

2. Older people in Northern Ireland have identified three main areas of concern and need: Poverty, Community Safety, and Health and Wellbeing (Age Concern Strategic Plan 2006-2011).

3. The Older People Services Committee is conscious of the need to continually keep these issues to the fore and actively pursue lobbying all relevant bodies to ensure elevation of need.

4. The year ahead promises to be an exciting, varied and innovative one when looking at financial demands for a year where we develop intergenerational work and bring younger and older people together to promote greater understanding between generations. A key part of this will be the production of a book entitled “Early Life Remembered”.

5. **60th Anniversary:** The Committee looks forward to celebrating in 2010, 60 years of providing residential care for older people.

6. **River House:** River House, Newcastle celebrated its 20th Anniversary in November with a special service which was held in Newcastle Presbyterian Church. This was attended by residents and staff.

7. At the February Board meeting, concern was expressed at the proposed closure of Statutory Residential Homes and we have been actively involved in the consultation with the Health and Social Care Trusts opposing these proposals. We believe that these closures are not appropriate at this time due to a lack of alternative models of care being in place.

8. The Committee is pleased that the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, the independent body set up by the government to help improve the standards of care in all sectors of Health and Social Services in Northern Ireland, continues to indicate that we are meeting and exceeding care standards whilst ensuring we provide a quality service.

9. The on-going registration and regulatory training of staff continues and we are committed to promoting continuous staff development as a way of ensuring high quality care.

10. The Committee is delighted to report a significant improvement in the recruitment/selection of staff within the homes, both in terms of numbers applying for positions and in the improved time for Access Northern Ireland checks being processed.

11. The past year has also seen an increase in occupancy levels particularly in Sunnyside House. It is imperative that we maintain high occupancy levels, as one empty bed equates to some £22,000 loss of income per annum.

12. Adelaide House, River House and York House have all now registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority for providing day care to people who currently live in their own home in the community. The Committee sees this as an additional means of assisting older people to live in the community along with it being a valuable respite for carers.

13. Although essential fire upgrading work was carried out in York House this past year the Committee is ever conscious of the urgent need to replace York House to ensure compliance with Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety standards. The Committee is currently looking at options to meet this objective.

14. The Committee is in discussions with Health and Social Care Trust staff and local political representatives looking at the need to replace Ard Cluan House.

15. In Harold McCauley House the Committee has carried out work to convert a double bedroom into two single ensuite rooms to protect people's privacy and respect their dignity.

16. The Committee would like to put on record their sincere thanks to all our staff in Church House, to the staff in the Homes and the some 130 volunteers who serve on the Local Support Committees and Friends of groups, who all work to enhance older people's quality of life.

JOHN NOBLE, Convener

## FAMILY SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Strategic Objective 4

**“Family Services will promote family life and the general well-being of our members, continue to develop services for the disabled within the Church, support the work of the Taking Care Office, PCI Counselling, PCI Family Holiday and South Belfast Friendship House.”**

1. The book of Timothy gives great advice on family life. In 1 Timothy 5 we have clear instructions on how to care for family members: “Don't be harsh or impatient with an older man – reverently honour older women – take care of the widow – anyone who neglects to care for family members in need repudiates faith. That's worse than refusing to believe in the first place.” Throughout scripture we are given clear instructions and at other times commanded to care for each other. There are many clear examples of how we are to give hospitality, comfort, and instruction, all in a Christ-like manner.

2. Our Church family can further cement those relationships, or at times drive a wedge, as many overstretch themselves with Church commitments. We have a duty to find a balance in all that we do both inside and outside the family.

## TAKING CARE

*Mr Ronnie Orr reports:*

1. **Consolidation.** Our denomination has been greatly blessed by the willingness of Designated Persons, trainers and the Co-ordinator for Taking Care, who have regularly been involved in providing training at Congregational, Presbytery and Church-wide events. A significant part this year has been the initiative to provide training for Ministers.

2. The day to day work of the Taking Care Office includes receiving regular requests for advice and much of this was competently handled by the administrative officer, Gail Gamble. The Committee was happy for Gail when she gained promotion within the Board of Social Witness and are glad that her knowledge and experience are close at hand. The Board has appointed a successor in the Taking Care Office, Amanda Cotter, and in addition have gained the assistance of volunteers.

3. Last year the General Assembly agreed that all concerns, complaints and disclosures be reported without delay to both the General Assembly's Designated Person and Presbytery Clerks. There will always be a Designated Person contactable through Church House, so that at the same time as a Congregation are dealing with an incident, disclosure or allegation and linking with the child protection agencies locally, there is an expectation of contact so that further advice is available and any wider and public implications can be managed.

4. The regular issuing of a News Letter by the office provides Congregations and Designated Persons with useful information and updates, e.g. the progress with POCVA checks for leaders, which thankfully have speeded up significantly.

5. The Taking Care Committee has experienced some change in membership during the year and Mildred McNarry, who had a useful background as a Designated Person and a career in nursing, resigned and we welcomed Bobby Orr, who brings useful insights into child protection from a policing perspective. A welcome is also issued to Ruth Craig, a Designated Person from the Dublin and Munster Presbytery.

6. During the year there have been several meetings of the Committee which have been attended by the Clerk, the Rev Dr Donald Watts, and the Convener of the Board, the Rev Bobby Liddle. Their interest and support have been appreciated.

7. The former Convener of the Board of Social Witness, the Rev Roy Vallely, has maintained his interest in this area of the Church's witness and has led the planning Committee for the Taking Care Conference held on 25 April 2009.

8. The Conference, which is held bi-annually in April, is an opportunity to reinforce the good sense approach to the care, instruction and well-being of children which is being deployed "week in, week out" in our organisations, as well as special events and outings/residentials. The fact that so many children are involved; some whose families have little other contact with our Church Family is a part of outreach and is both a privilege and a responsibility. The

themes in this last Conference were the experience of the Designated Person, vetting, internet safety and the launch of the parent's leaflet in the series of "We Care With U".

9. The Ministers' training programme has been well supported, targeting all active Ministers. This is vital not least because of the results of a survey across the Congregations to gauge their experience of operating in accordance with the guidelines. Out of 541 there were 236 who responded. This represents a proportion of 42%. Up to now the Presbyterian Church has had a good reputation in regard to having the Taking Care Guidelines in place; indeed it has been adopted as a model by other Churches and organisations. Moreover, the insurers have also been pleased with the impression that they have received. However, it is likely that they will be keen to have more specific evidence that all safeguards are being implemented and that these are kept under regular review.

10. One of the features of the work of the Taking Care Committee which was regarded as insufficiently tended was the specific experience and needs of Congregations in the Republic of Ireland. As a different jurisdiction, the members of these Congregations have their own set of statutory requirements to fulfil in relation to vetting and reporting of concerns of abuse. A couple of meetings since November 2008 have resulted in the formation of a Sub-Committee for the Republic of Ireland and the co-option of a representative onto the main Committee. This will enable a better flow of communication and better recognition of the issues that need to be addressed.

## **PCI COUNSELLING**

*Mrs Rosemary Simpson reports:*

1. PCI Counselling remains a very busy and worthwhile service of the Board of Social Witnesses, extending its work throughout the Church. Client referrals reached 100 in 2008 and the team of thirteen Counsellors is kept occupied throughout the year.

2. The Counsellors are busy people who devote a lot of time to the PCI Counselling service whilst leading active lives in many other areas of interest, at home and in business. Consequently a careful watch is kept to ensure that each Counsellor does not become overloaded with counselling duties, thus benefiting both Counsellor and client.

3. Throughout the year most of the counselling work is carried out in Belfast but some sessions are made outside Belfast where necessary, and with Counsellors living outside Belfast it is sometimes more suitable to conduct consultations in Churches province wide. The PCI Counselling service is very grateful to the Churches involved for welcoming Counsellors to use their facilities and is thankful to the Ministers and Kirk Sessions for their co-operation. Confidentiality is essential in counselling work and, where visiting outside Churches, members are very understanding of the need for privacy. Thank you.

4. The clients are often referred by their Ministers, friends or through Yellow Pages and this continues to help the service build and succeed. The

number of issues and problems faced are varied and met with the same dedication and concern by all the members of the Counselling team. Over the years there has been an increasing number of issues brought to the counselling room including relationship problems, the breakdown of marriage, sexual orientation, mental, physical, emotional and sexual abuse, eating disorders, and step-parenting. The service provides a safe and confidential environment for problems to be disclosed, discussed, faced and where scars exist, hopefully they can be healed.

5. A regular part of the counselling process is the Pre-Counselling Assessment session when clients are seen quickly, their problems defined and then they are seen by the most suitable Counsellor for each individual situation. During the last year many of our Counsellors have received an intensive course of training by Relate, which has involved 90 hours of training in Couple Counselling. Specialist sessions included managing conflict, communication, infidelity, rebuilding, addiction, step-families, and sexual issues.

6. The Counselling service is a vital part of the Boards work and over the last eighteen years since its inception in 1991 it has become a greatly valued service to many people in our country. Many hundreds of people have benefited from the caring and empathetic attitude of Counsellors. Originally four counsellors started the service and it says a lot for the service that two of the original counsellors are still part of this valued team. All Counsellors are given regular supervision by the supervisors, Mrs Susan Giffen and Mrs Lynn Farr, who are thanked for their guidance. Clients are expected to provide a donation towards the counselling service and this is often given with deep gratitude.

7. The Re-Marriage Panel is also an important part of the Board's work where Ministers can send couples before their marriage where at least one of the couple has been married before. Often couples appreciate this opportunity to talk through past issues with experienced panelists and this service is often very useful to the officiating Minister. The success of this service is seen by the number of couples waiting to be interviewed. The PCI Counselling Committee is very grateful to all who give their time to this worthwhile work.

8. The PCI Committee has been reconstituted as an Advisory Panel, responding to the demands of a professional counselling service. The membership of the Panel will reflect the skills required to advise on this valuable work.

9. Mrs Stephanie Windrum, as organiser of the Counselling Service and Re-Marriage Panels, has a busy time co-ordinating appointments and Counsellors and her work is very much appreciated by all concerned.

10. Finally, a most grateful word of thanks to all the Counsellors. Each member of the team gives his or her time voluntarily and graciously. Each member is dedicated to the work, to the Service and above all to the clients, whose wellbeing and peace of mind is uppermost in the Counsellor's mind. Thank you to each and every Counsellor whose work is done on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Glory of God and in His Name.

## **PCI FAMILY HOLIDAY**

*The Rev Stuart Finlay reports:*

1. The PCI Family Holiday takes place each year from Easter Monday through to Friday at the Share Centre, Lisnaskea.

2. Nearly 200 people can be accommodated in the Guest House, chalets and caravans. We are always pleased to welcome families sponsored by the Presbyterian Orphan and Children's Society. Together we enjoy a relaxed holiday atmosphere.

3. The Share Centre offers a good variety of activities and their staff deal very professionally with both able-bodied and special needs participants. There is a wide range of outdoor activities on offer – canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, banana skiing, climbing, archery, gorge walking and Laser Skirmishing. There are also indoor activities like T-shirt printing, handcrafts and drama. The Centre's indoor leisure pool and fitness suite are also very popular.

4. There is always a shopping trip to Enniskillen and, weather permitting, a visit to the Marble Arch Caves. The PCI Youth Team also organises games and activities for the children most mornings and afternoons. This Team of young Christians plays a vital role in making the Holiday a real hit with younger participants.

5. Every morning begins with a short time of worship for all ages before the day's activities begin. In the evening there is a time of worship together before the young people go off for their own time of Bible teaching with the Youth Team, leaving the adults to have their own time together. Every year there is a visiting speaker (and family). This year we were glad to have the Rev Gary Trueman, Minister of Banbridge Road Congregation, Dromore.

6. After supper each evening there is an "Evening Extra" for all ages. There is something for everyone – games, a Table Quiz, a Concert and a farewell Party. It's always good to see everyone mixing together in wholesome fun.

7. The week soon passes. New friendships are established, old ones renewed, and everyone has the opportunity to learn something new from God. We are always deeply grateful for the sense of His presence with us through the week and for many answered prayers.

## **LEARNING DISABILITY**

*The Rev Jim Waring reports:*

1. It is estimated that about 2% of the population in Northern Ireland have a learning disability and some 26,000 are registered on the Republic's Natural Disability Database. Further, a Church-wide survey indicates that on average some 64% of members with a learning disability attend Church regularly and almost 50% participate in a variety of organisations. Certainly people with a learning disability can bring much blessing to the Church family when they are recognised as individuals and given the opportunity to contribute to the life and witness of the Church.

2. The Committee continues to work at raising the awareness of the Church to the necessity of a real and effective ministry to those with learning

disability within the Body of Christ. A very practical outworking of our ministry lies in the supported housing which the Church provides.

3. At **Willow Brook** and **Topley Terrace** Anne Campbell and her dedicated staff continue to provide accommodation and personal support for the 12 tenants. The Friends of Willow Brook, drawn from the local Churches, provide valuable encouragement to both tenants and staff.

4. At **Aaron House**, Dundonald Denise Keegan and her staff provide residential and day-care facilities for those with profound learning disability. By the time the General Assembly meets the Board will have assumed full responsibility for this on-going work.

5. The Committee remains committed to a further supported housing project in co-operation with a group of Christians based at Harmony Hill Church in **Lisburn**. However, it is disappointed that progress in the development of this project has been considerably delayed by the restructuring of the Health Boards/Trusts. The Committee is hopeful that, despite present financial constraints on government, progress in this area will soon be possible.

6. The Committee continues to be concerned at the slowness of the government's response to the need for more adequate respite care and day-care facilities, especially for younger people leaving school. The Committee has been meeting regularly with other faith-based agencies in this field in an effort to speak to government with one voice on this matter.

7. The Committee is greatly encouraged by the prayerful interest shown in our work throughout the Church and is thankful for the practical support of so many individuals and Congregations.

8. Please continue to pray for that vulnerable group to whom the Church seeks to minister in the name of Jesus Christ.

### **SOUTH BELFAST FRIENDSHIP HOUSE**

See Presbyterian Women report – pages 167-168

LINDSAY CONWAY, Secretary

## **ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE**

### **Strategic Objective 5**

**“Adult Services shall manage the work of Thompson House, Carlisle House and Gray’s Court and promote an addiction-free society through our Addiction Services Committee.”**

1. The Committee continues to fulfil its stated remit as set out in the Board of Social Witness Strategic Objective 5 with the help of many professionals and volunteers.

2. High standards of best practice are reflected at Carlisle House, under the Directorship of Mr David Cuthbert and Thompson House, under the Directorship of Mr David Farrow, as reported in the findings of official and unannounced inspections.

3. Gray's Court continues to maintain a very stable and therapeutic environment for residents and meets inspection requirements.

4. Local support Committees as chaired at Carlisle House by Mr David McAuley and at Thompson House by Mr Brian Marshall (interim) continue to develop on the ground practical initiatives to the benefit of staff and residents.

5. The Thompson House sub-group, primarily responsible for the transition to an extensive renovation programme at the current Antrim Road location, meets regularly under the Chairmanship of Mr Billy Cairns. The Committee recognises the immense amount of work invested by Mrs Linda Wray, Residential Services Manager, in connection with this necessary health and safety related development. The Committee includes representatives from "supporting people" (Housing Executive and "BPNI" Probation Board). "Belfast Improved Housing" is the agreed partner organisation for the redevelopment scheme.

6. Addiction Services is convened by Mrs Wenda Bristow. Unfortunately a January Hope UK Drug Awareness Event had to be cancelled this year due to lack of registered interest by PCI employed Youth Workers. The Committee seeks the support of Ministers and Kirk Sessions so that PCI employed Youth Workers may attend such quality Conferences as part of recognised in-service training.

7. The Committee's Financial Report reflects in part increased expenditure at Carlisle House and Thompson House. This is mainly salary related and is kept under review. Specialist Centres require adequate levels of qualified staff and when risk assessments reflect the need more staff is employed.

8. Weekly Bible studies continue at Thompson House under the guidance of Brian Marshall. Devotional notes are also distributed to all residents.

### **CARLISLE HOUSE**

9. Carlisle House has continued to develop and improve its services to those with substance misuse problems and their families. A new aspect of the work is to offer Family Therapy. We have two members of staff trained to diploma level and one of those is currently training at Masters Level. This is proving very effective as the impact of substance use is not just restricted to the individual.

10. During the past year Carlisle House has also been commissioned as the Substance Misuse Treatment Centre for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. This has on the one hand brought stability with regard to funding, while on the other has presented the challenge of meeting statutory requirements. One of the most challenging of these is meeting the 13 week target for waiting-list time from referral to treatment. However, it is encouraging to recognise the confidence that the Trusts, both the Belfast and the Northern Trust, has in the service we provide. There are between 80-100 people enter the programme each year, as well as those who use our weekly support services, including ex-residents support groups, a family and friends support group and a public information group. A vibrant self help group also meets three times weekly. The



work is always both challenging and deeply rewarding as people choose to allow us to travel with them on their journey that is often both painful and joyous.

### **GRAY'S COURT**

11. Gray's Court is similar to Carlisle House and works within the same ethos that of acceptance, respect and compassion. It offers people the opportunity to build on the journey they have commenced in a Treatment Centre, and begin to explore opportunities of training, education, voluntary work and employment. A personal development programme is offered to facilitate the developing of self- confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness.

12. A highlight of this programme has been the building of a partnership with the National Trust, which has led to service users engaging in a dry stone walling project over the past winter at Tullyratty, Strangford. To quote the National Trust Project Director, "I am delighted with the dedication, excellent skills and enthusiasm your group has brought to this project. I would like to nominate your group for our Directors conservation award... I can only hope that what we have done has given some self-esteem to people to carry forward the rebuilding of their lives, to learning how good life can be, and the great things we can achieve together." Frances Craig, the project worker at Gray's Court, has to be congratulated for making this happen.

### **THOMPSON HOUSE**

13. Thompson House had an unannounced inspection on 8 March, 2009 by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate. The inspectors noted that Thompson House was functioning well at the time of inspection, despite having two difficult incidents during the previous 48 hours. Both dynamic and static security and file recording had been improved.

14. Occupancy has improved in the last year from an average of 66% up to 95%. Three staff have left in the last year to commence employment with PBNI. Two new staff commenced in January and short listing will take place in April for a third member of staff.

15. An application has been made for Thompson House to be rebuilt on its current site. Supporting People have agreed to support the application and a Housing Association has been appointed as our partner organisation.

### **ADDICTION SERVICES**

16. Everyone is reminded on a daily basis about the impact of addictive behaviours on our society. Concerns no longer be confined to alcohol, drugs and gambling. The problem goes much further and now involves addiction to internet activities, weight loss, fitness – and the list goes on, a symptom of a secular society being preoccupied with self.

17. Alcohol and drug misuse is very much on the top of our agenda. Alcohol continues to impact on the lives of our young people, family and work life, placing pressure on health and law and order budgets. It was disappointing that a new training course being run in conjunction with Hope UK had to be postponed as a result of a lack of participants.

18. The Committee aims to:

- place the concerns of addictions on the agenda of all youth workers within PCI;
- host a Training Programme for youth workers;
- use our web-site to inform young people, parents and Church workers of the issues.

19. The Committee welcomes the appointment of Chris Gruhn as Development Executive for the Inter-Church Addiction Project. ICAP continues to keep the issue of addictions on the agenda of the Churches and lobbies government. Currently the Committee is moving forward its proposal for a residential centre for young people with addictions.

COLIN MEGAW, Convener

### **SOCIAL ISSUES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

*The Rev Bobby Liddle reports:*

1. The Committee has updated the 'Challenging Issues Bible Study' on Disability which will be reprinted and available both on the BSW website ([www.pcibsw.org](http://www.pcibsw.org)) and in hard copy from the Board Office.

2. The main business of the Committee in the past year has been to produce guidelines for the Church with regard to the rehabilitation of offenders and particularly sex offenders into our Congregations. The Church of Christ has both the mandate to care for the outcast and marginalised and to provide a safe environment in which to Take Care of both children and adults. The Committee hopes that these guidelines will help us to be as wise as serpents while being as gentle as doves.

3. With increased discussion in the media regarding marriage and family the Committee is planning to revise the PCI resource booklet 'Getting Married'. It is hoped this may be sectionalised for more efficient use and effective updating.

4. The addition of Gail Gamble to the BSW Office and Amanda Cotter to the Taking Care Office has brought Church House staffing levels on a par for the first time in two years. The Board is indebted to Anna Johnston for her excellent work, having stepped into the breach until other staff positions were filled.

### **OLD AGE FUND, WOMEN'S FUND AND INDIGENT LADIES' FUND**

*The Rev W P H Erskine reports:*

1. The Directors report that during the last financial year, which ended 31 December, 2008, 92 beneficiaries (35 in the Old Age Fund, 39 in the Women's Fund and 18 in the Indigent Ladies' Fund) received grants.

2. The changes in beneficiaries during the year are as follows:

Beneficiaries	Old Age Fund	Presbyterian Women's	Indigent Ladies Fund	TOTAL
Receiving Quarterly Grant				Fund
At 1 January 2008	31	38	18	87
New Grants Provided	4	1	-	5

Deaths	(5)	(1)	-	(6)
Grants no longer required	(1)	(2)	-	(3)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
As at 31 December 2008	29	36	18	83
Beneficiaries receiving one-off donations	-	-	-	-
Deaths and Grants no longer required (as above)	6	3	-	9
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
No of Beneficiaries receiving assistance during the year	35	39	18	92
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

3. The total distribution of the Funds in Grants, Donations and Gifts was £105,551 (£35,410 from the Old Age Fund, £46,435 from the Women's Fund and £23,706 from the Indigent Ladies' Fund).

4. An annual grant of £1,040, paid quarterly, was sent to beneficiaries during the year (2007: £860).

5. A 'Special Gift' of £235 (2007: £215) was sent to every beneficiary prior to Christmas.

6. During the year the Directors responded sympathetically to various problems which had been brought to their attention. They gave one-off donations, as needed, to assist in particular cases where immediate financial aid was more appropriate than annual grants. Ministers are asked to bear in mind the possibility of help from these funds in similar cases connected with their own Congregations.

7. The Directors assure the Church that all monies that come to the Funds are carefully and wisely spent.

8. The Directors of the Funds deeply appreciate the kindness and thoughtfulness of those who have remembered the work of the Funds either by gift or bequest, and hope that their example may encourage others to support this vital aspect of the Church's outreach.

9. The Directors of the Funds wish to thank the Staff for the sensitive and sympathetic way in which they carried out the efficient administration of the Funds during the year.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the resignation of Mrs Zoe Vallely as Convener of Specialist Ministries be accepted, that she is thanked for her services and that the Very Rev Dr Donald Patton be appointed in her place.

3. That the Rev Anne Tolland be appointed Convener of the Family Services Committee

4. That the General Assembly encourage the Health Minister and the Health and Social Care Trusts to review their decisions of proposed home closures and focussing on maintaining people in their own homes; and for Health and Social Care Trusts to engage in further discussion to look at long-term options which are effective and of a quality standard of care.

5. That the General Assembly agree that Thompson House should be redeveloped in partnership with Belfast Improved Housing.
6. That Kirk Sessions together with PCI Youth Workers are encouraged to place “Alcohol, Drugs and other addictions” on their Congregational programmes for young people and to support appropriate training events.

#### **SPUD Resolutions**

7. That the General Assembly encourage the Board of Social Witness to develop social action teams, both short-term and long-term, to be focused on specific social issues linked to the Board’s on-going work.
8. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations and Presbyteries to reassess buildings and resources by June 2010 to see how they can most effectively be utilised in and by our communities.

#### **General**

9. That the customary grants made by the Board of Social Witness, up to a total of £2,000 be met from the Incidental Fund.
10. That the Board of Social Witness, with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 281 of the Code as follows:-

# BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Convener: Rev JONATHAN MOXEN

Director: Miss ROSALIND STIRLING

1. The Board of Youth and Children's Ministry is profoundly grateful for the grace and goodness of Almighty God as He has continued to bless the work of the Board throughout the past year. Young lives coming to faith and embracing a commitment to Him for the first time, children catching a vision for overseas ministry as they raise thousands of pounds for overseas projects, youth groups embracing the challenges of living as Christian citizens in our post-conflict society or youth workers and parents who have grown in their understanding of how to reach and nurture children and young people in the faith, are all evidence of this amazing grace. The task of facilitating and supporting this work at local Congregational level is a challenging responsibility but one that the Board embraces with enthusiasm and passion as it encourages and provides opportunities for the work of evangelism and discipleship and as it serves and equips the largest group of people within the Presbyterian Church.

2. The Board continues to focus on the biblical doctrine of covenant as the foundation from which all aspects of the strategy and structure of the work is generated. With a remit that embraces the range of ages from 0-25 years and a commitment to the support of those working with this age range, the Board is restructuring its staff team. The Volunteers' Co-ordinator post will be replaced with the post of Young Adults' Development Officer, complementing the Youth Development and Children's Development Officers who are already in place. With the continued support and nurture of parents and Congregations in the development of covenantal ministry, the Board asks for prayer and discernment as it brings before our denomination the teaching of covenant based family.

3. As a Ministry Board of the General Assembly, YAC exists to support the work among children, young people, parents and families within the local Congregation. While much of this work involves getting alongside Congregations in their day to day ministry life, the General Assembly has also recognised the incredible value and unique ministry opportunity of residential work with children, young people and families. YAC residential centres have been carrying out this work for many years. With the recent General Assembly review of these centres which designated Guysmere as the location for residential ministry for the denomination, radical plans for the redevelopment of the Guysmere centre are well under way. The planned facility will, God willing, provide a major resource for the whole Church that is fit for purpose for 21st century ministry.

4. The Board records its gratitude to the vast number of volunteer youth and children's leaders and teachers and to the growing number of full time youth workers and children or family workers in local Congregations. The many hours of work carried out by those who give sacrificially of their time and talents in

the service of God is deeply appreciated. Congregations could not provide the range of activities, programmes and ministry available to children and young people were it not for these dedicated leaders and teachers who serve week after week.

5. The Board is deeply grateful to those employed to serve the Church though the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry. Miss Roz Stirling, (Director), Miss Barbara McDade (Director of Programmes), and the team of administrative staff, Miss Lois McIlrath (Senior Administrative Officer), Mrs Claire Child, Mrs Janet Maxwell, Mrs Donna Thompson, Mrs Kathy Brown, Miss Pamela Patton, and Miss Liz Harrison. We thank them for their dedicated service. The Board is indebted to Mr David Pattison for his expertise and support in the preparation of Board accounts.

6. The Youth Development Officer, Mr Graeme Thompson, and Children's Development Officer, Miss Ruth Mitchell, continue to work with Congregations, seeking to bring relevant and discerning advice and support as Churches develop their ministry with young people and children. The Board thanks them for their dedicated work and encourages Congregations to make use of their services and expertise.

7. The Board welcomes the appointment of Mr Kyle Sampson as Youth and Support Worker in Donegal and is thankful for the continuing work of Mrs Jill Condell as Youth and Support Worker in Monaghan. These posts, and the support of Congregational volunteers within the Dublin/Munster Presbytery, are made possible by a grant received from the Department of Youth Affairs. The Board is grateful for this support.

8. Following twelve years of dedicated service Mrs Helen Bruce has resigned from her post of Volunteers' Co-ordinator. The Board is indebted to Helen for her visionary work and wish her God's blessing in the future.

9. The Board is indebted to Miss Deborah Erwin for her dedicated work as PYP Programme Officer during the past three years. Her time with the Board will come to an end in June 2009. Her achievements have been considerable within such a short time period. The Board will continue throughout the coming year to look for meaningful ways to source funding for such a post whilst seeking to integrate this vital ministry into all areas of its work through its Committee structure.

10. The Board wishes to thank and acknowledge the contribution to its work by Miss Christine McClelland during her time as Volunteer's Co-Ordinator. Christine took up this post in a temporary capacity during Mrs Helen Bruce's maternity leave.

11. The Board is also grateful to Miss Emma Maxwell for the support she gave to the Board during the past year providing temporary cover in a time of staff vacancy.

12. The Board has been greatly encouraged by the work of the Rev Craig Mawhinney as Training Officer. Strategic work has been established as he has co-ordinated the staff and volunteer team in the delivery of training. Together they have brought training events, programmes and courses the length and breadth of our island to those involved in youth and children's ministry. Training continues to be of strategic importance within the ministry of the Board

providing essential skills and nurture to those who deliver ministry on a weekly basis within Congregations.

13. The Board wishes to thank all those who support the Youth and Children's (YAC) Projects. The incredible sum of £94,000 was raised for the 'Rhythm and Rhyme' project which has supported two projects in the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan. The Board wishes to thank all the Sunday Schools and Youth Groups who worked so hard to raise this great sum of money to support a literacy project for girls aged 7-12 years, as well as a music project which provides quality praise for young people in their own language and context.

14. The Board is indebted to the Church for the finance received through the United Appeal allocation. The Board deeply appreciates the effort required by Congregations to meet their targets, permitting its work to continue and seeks to use this financial assistance with great prudence.

15. The Board congratulates the members of SPUD, the General Assembly's pilot Youth Assembly for their achievements and success. The innovative programme was meticulously executed by a team of young adults who formed the Working Group and who have successfully motivated their peers to engage in the demanding process of Church governance. Challenging and thought-provoking resolutions will be brought to this year's General Assembly by SPUD through the Mission Boards. To the co-chairs, Neal Wilkinson and Laura Hutcheson, the Board extends its congratulations and sincere thanks.

## RECOGNISED MINISTRIES

*The Rev John Peacock, Community Relations Manager at Youth Link: N.I. reports:*

1. Youth Link's core aims are:
  - **Meeting Churches Needs** – Youth Link, through dialogue, will be constantly aware of the changing needs of the Churches with regard to youth work and ministry and will respond effectively;
  - **Training** – Training in youth work and ministry, peace building and reconciliation, informed by the latest theory and practice, will be available to all those involved in work with young people;
  - **Active Citizenship, Peace Building and Reconciliation Strategies for Young People** – Youth Link will work with others to provide opportunities for young people of different traditions and cultural backgrounds to develop mutual understanding, tolerance, acceptance and respect and to be agents of transformation in a divided society;
  - **Prophetic voice** – Youth Link, through dialogue, will be constantly aware of critical and emerging issues in youth work and ministry, peace building and reconciliation, providing a prophetic voice to the Churches and the wider community;
  - **Networking** – Youth Link will network strategically with agencies, Churches and youth workers at local, national and

international level to enhance best practice in youth work and ministry, peace building and reconciliation.

2. As chairperson of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry Reconciliation Working Group which supports the work of the PYP Officer, I support the resolutions coming from the SPUD Youth Assembly, in particular 'that PCI ensures that funding is made available for peacemaking posts to co-ordinate both existing and potential peace building projects' and 'that Congregations actively seek to build relationships with all sections of the community, including those of a different religious, ethnic and socio-economic background.'

3. The year ahead will be an exciting one as we move to new premises which will enable us to develop the Centre for Youth Ministry degree programme, our OCN accredited Youth work and Community Relations training and our active citizenship work with young people. It will also place us in a situation of socio-economic need as a witness of the work of the Churches. We thank the General Assembly for their consideration of the Resolution that 25% of the 2009/2010 Youth and Children's Project income will be allocated to this new Training Centre.

4. A further development is the funding of two new staff members through the CRC Peace III funding to build community capacity in Belfast and the border regions through youth work and community relations training in these areas. The project will focus on areas where the infrastructure and confidence of the Protestant community has traditionally been weak i.e., Armagh, Monaghan, West Tyrone and Donegal. We look forward to working with and supporting Congregational youth work in these areas.

5. I would like to thank the Presbyterian representatives on the management Council of Youth Link for their on-going support and encouragement.

*The Rev David Stanfield, Interim Centre Director for the Centre for Youth Ministry Ireland, reports:*

1. Last year I reported that the CYMI course was due to commence in September 2008 subject to all the validation processes necessary for a degree course with professional recognition. After 10 years of work across the denominations to get to this point and firmly believing that it was God's timing that the course should run, there was very much a Joshua 3 moment of needing to step out in faith in the expectation that God would enable us to cross into this 'new land' as with our first cohort of 21 students already placed in 19 different Christian contexts and ready to commence the course, the validation process was only completed on the Friday at the end of the Community week in Oxford with teaching due to begin on the following Monday.

2. Still employed by Youth Link, I have been formally seconded to continue as the Interim Centre Director at the Centre for Youth Ministry Ireland (CYMI) for the next 2 years. This has meant that I am less available to deliver training in other contexts. However, I am able to continue to co-ordinate the Youth Ministry modules delivered through the Institute of Theology at the Queen's University, though I now teach less.



3. Year 1 began with 21 students from 6 different denominational backgrounds. The course is very practice based with students working in a Christian/Church based context for 14 hours per week as part of the course assessment, (11 are working in Presbyterian Churches). They each have a personal practice tutor to support their development. A team of 42 people have been actively involved in teaching, supervising and supporting the students and I am responsible for the co-ordination of this.

4. Demand for places continues to be high, we had over 40 applications for year 1 and this has been replicated in year 2, we anticipate a similar level of interest for next year.

5. I wish to thank a significant number of Presbyterians from across our Congregations who have supported the development of this work in the last 12 months, in particular Craig Mawhinney and Barbara McDade in the Youth and Children's Department.

## **TRAINING COMMITTEE**

1. The Training Committee has been working hard to assess its current work and to bring it in line with the aims of the Board which are to enable Congregations in the development of covenantal ministry with children, young people, adults and families. The work of the Committee has concentrated its efforts in the training of leaders for youth and children's ministry, however future developments will see the work of the Committee expand to include training for ministry with parents, families and young adults.

2. The Committee thanks God for His guidance and blessing on the Committee and the working groups during the past year.

### **Certificates in Youth Ministry**

3. The Youth Ministry Certificate Course has again been facilitated this year in Belfast. The course has run on Monday night with over 20 in attendance. A residential weekend has again been central to the implementation of the course.

4. The Children's Ministry Course ran at Union Theological College and Second Broughshane Presbyterian Church with 44 participants attending.

5. The Board continues working in partnership with Union Theological College to facilitate a Graduate Certificate in Youth Ministry.

### **Delivery of Youth Ministry Modules as part of BTh Degree at Union College**

6. Two modules have been facilitated this year. It is planned that these will once again be offered in the next academic year.

### **Professional Degree in Youth Ministry through the Centre for Youth Ministry**

7. This degree programme has begun and the first cohort of students are in their first year of study. The Committee has been delighted with the

commencement of the course and look forward to its development in the years to come.

### **'Building Blocks' Conferences**

8. The two Conferences, held on Saturday, 22 November, 2008 in Belfast, and on Saturday, 29 November, 2008 in Dublin, were once again very successful. Terry Clutterham was the keynote speaker at both events. This year's Conferences will take place on Saturday, 14 November, 2009 in Dublin and Saturday, 28 November, 2009 at Orangefield Presbyterian Church when Kathryn Copsey will be the keynote speaker.

### **Youth Ministry Summer School**

9. From 28-30 August, 2008 the annual Youth Ministry Summer School was facilitated at Greenmount College in partnership with the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Church of Ireland. The Committee was delighted to have a number of excellent youth ministry specialists teaching us, including Professors Kenda Dean and Marv Penner. The Committee is currently reviewing the event and hope to facilitate it once again in May 2010.

### **Road Trip Training**

10. Road Trip has again been on the road this year in 7 different locations around Ireland and we have been pleased to see good numbers of youth and children's workers attend the seminars.

### **Youth Link**

11. Youth Link continues to support and complement the Board's work and it is grateful to Youth Link's staff for their input into working groups and Committees.

### **Children's Ministry Consultation**

12. This is a new venture set up to allow Sunday School co-ordinators, agents and teachers to consult with YAC staff on the needs and opportunities within children's ministry. It is also an event which affords more training in issues related to leading and facilitating children's work.

### **Training Trevor**

13. The Training Committee is delighted to be running 'Training Trevor' again. This is a major training event offering top level training in a large array of areas relating to youth and family ministry. There will be major streams of training in the areas of parenting, starting as a student, missional Church, communicating with young people, community youth work, and the 'nuts and bolts' of youth ministry. The event will take place on Friday, 4 September, 2009 at Orangefield Presbyterian Church and on Saturday, 5 September, 2009 at Carnmoney Presbyterian Church.

### **Training Trainers in Youth Ministry**

14. Preparation has begun to train a number of trainers in youth ministry. This will mean that, once qualified, these trainers can be used by local Congregations to offer training in a variety of areas related to on-going youth ministry. These trainers will be assessed and validated by the Board and allowed to deliver material which the Board has developed. The first pilot of this scheme will commence later in the Spring of 2009. A similar Training the Trainers in Children's Ministry is being developed.

### **Parenting**

15. Prior to the last Youth Ministry Summer School a parent training night was organised and facilitated by Marv Penner, an experienced facilitator and author in this field. In the light of this and subsequent Board discussions the Training Committee has committed to investigating how it can offer more training in parenting and also in the area of family ministry. The Committee intend to offer many more opportunities, beginning with Training Trevor in September 2009.

CRAIG MAWHINNEY, Convener

## **RESEARCH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

1. The Committee continues to find a way forward that is thorough and strategic in feeding research and education into the work of the Board through its Committees and into the wider Church, hence enabling the Board to deliver its covenantal vision.

2. Crucial to the Committee's development are 'Think Tank' days when 20-25 practitioners come to hear research and to discuss, debate and decide ways forward. The hope is that these will be useful for education on the day itself, helpful in networking and sharing of resources as well as hoping to produce discussion papers as well as inspiring immediate vision and action at local as well as Board level.

3. The Committee is seeking to investigate the research work being done by Presbyterians, and to make available work that would benefit the Church.

4. Blog discussion is being developed and hopes to give another avenue for engagement and information.

5. A research survey was undertaken at the MAD weekend. Though useful in seeing trends it needs more work and will therefore be repeated at MAD 11 to enhance the value of the information received.

6. The Committee continues to sponsor Graeme Thompson's research that is specifically looking at youth work in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and how it needs to adapt to continue to maintain our covenant children in our Churches.

STEVE STOCKMAN, Convener

## MINISTRY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1. This year has been a period of developing ideas of the Board and of the Resources Committee. The Committee give thanks to God for the leading He has given to the Board. The Resources Committee is excited about the prospects of new resources being identified and developed for use in and by Congregations.

2. If the Board's vision of enabling Congregations in the development of covenantal ministry with children, young people, adults and families is to be fulfilled it is important to ensure that Congregations are properly resourced with up-to-date materials, sources of information, training and personnel who are equipped for and passionate about youth and children's ministry.

3. As ever the Committee is indebted to the staff, both in the Office and in the Field as they contribute an enormous amount to the work of our Committee and its various working groups.

### Youth Centres

4. The Youth Centres' Review Panel under the auspices of the General Board has continued its work this year. The phased handover of the Rostrevor centre to the local Congregation is continuing and the centre continues to be publicised through the YAC Office. Following the decision of last year's General Assembly to transfer part of the Lucan site to the Dublin and Munster Presbytery work continues to fulfil the Assembly's resolution. Guysmere continues to be well used and the Committee wishes to express its thanks to Gillian Brownlow, who has now stepped down from the post of Warden, for all the hard work she has done over the years. The Committee is delighted that Mrs Catriona Ross has been appointed as the new Warden at Guysmere and wish her well in her role.

5. The redevelopment of the Guysmere site is now the main priority for this Committee and a Guysmere Redevelopment Group has been set up to examine the way forward for the site. The vision for the redevelopment of the site is that *'the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry are seeking to put children, youth and family at the heart of the ministry and life of the Church through the development of a place of encounter with Jesus where people are nurtured and lives are changed.'* The Committee believes that the Church has an excellent site at Guysmere which can be developed to be used to its full potential for our whole denomination.

### Website

6. The website continues to be a valuable resource and the Committee intend to keep updating and developing this resource so that it continues to be of use to leaders and young people. It is hoped that in the near future the pciyouth and pciyac domain names can be brought together to form one new website. Discussions with GCD technologies are continuing to bring this about.

### **The Youth and Children's Project**

7. 'The Treasure Box' project is seeking to build on the significant missionary interest in Malawi within our Church. The money raised will be used over 3-5 years on Sunday School and leadership training.

8. The 'Rhythm and Rhyme' project has raised £94,000 for Pakistan. The Committee is delighted with the generosity of the Church and enjoyed the recent visit of the Rev Eric Sarwar and his wife to PCI.

9. Following the decision of the Board meeting in October the money from the 2009/2010 project will help support a peace and reconciliation project in Nepal through UMN and also help with the purchase of Youth Link's new premises. The premises will host courses for the Youth Ministry Degree and OCN courses for youth workers.

### **Preparing Youth to be Peacemakers**

10. Facilitator training is going well with seven people currently participating. Another round of training is planned for after Easter. First Bangor and Waringstown are both delivering the course to their young people and it is hoped to deliver a conflict transformation programme in Second Ballyeaston as a follow-up to PYP. In Down High School Debs Erwin will be delivering PYP in the SU.

11. PYP funding is coming to an end in June 2009, and PYP has by no means reached our whole Church. The Committee feel that it is important to ask a number of questions in the light of this development:

- Can we honestly say that we aren't sectarian/racist/prejudiced if we have never engaged meaningfully with someone from another community/race/social class?
- To what extent have we exercised Christian values such as sharing, justice, interdependence in the body of Christ, truth, justice, mercy, peace, forgiveness and grace and brought these to bear on our culture, society and everyday lives?
- If reconciliation is at the heart of God's mission in the world are our hearts beating in time with God's heart?
- The NI Executive seems to be moving further away from addressing the issues of a 'Shared Future'. Can we leave it up to our politicians alone to deal with division in our communities?

12. These questions are searching ones and the Committee recognises the importance of keeping peacebuilding and faith-based community relations work at the forefront of youth ministry in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Board needs to actively and urgently seek ways to further this work.

13. Debs Erwin's contribution to the promotion and development of PYP cannot be underestimated. The Committee is extremely grateful to her for the work she has done in keeping these issues at the heart of our youth work.

### **Youth and Children's Workers**

14. The Board continues to provide support for those employed as full-time youth and children's workers in local Congregations by arranging training days and retreats throughout the year. The Board is very grateful to all those who

provide vital support to our full-time workers. This year's retreat will take place from 27-29 April at White Park Bay Hostel and Mark Yaconelli will be the speaker. He will present a more contemplative style of youth ministry.

### **Discipleship Resources**

15. **Presbyterianism:** A small working group has drafted an outline for a six session course to give young people an understanding of what it means to be a Presbyterian. This resource will be able to be used in youth fellowship, bible class or communicants' classes. Issues such as Presbyterian identity, history, worship, sacraments and mission are included in the course which should be piloted soon.

16. The Committee is keen to ensure that Youth and Children's workers have access to the best available resources to help fulfil their remit. The website contains reviews of many resources and a small group from this Committee is working to identify and recommend resources on a range of discipleship issues for young people.

GRAEME KENNEDY, Convener

## **MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE**

1. The aim of the Ministry Opportunities Committee is to encourage Congregations in their work through direct involvement with them or by providing their young people and young adults with experience and training that will resource them for work in their home Congregations.

2. The scope of this work continues to be reviewed regularly to ensure that the opportunities provided are relevant to the overall purpose of the Board and the work of the Kingdom at local and international levels. This does at times lead to difficult conversations and changes in the scope and nature of the work.

3. At the outset a huge 'thank you' needs to be said to those who make these opportunities for ministry possible: the Programme and Office staff of the Board who provide invaluable support; and the many volunteers who help to co-ordinate the opportunities.

### **SWIM Programme**

4. Throughout the year the SWIM team and volunteers have been working in various locations throughout Ireland to encourage local Congregations in their family, children's and youth work. The SWIM programme however has been under review. The Ministry Opportunities Committee at their meeting on Wednesday, 18 February, approved the reorganisation of SWIM. From September 2009 the SWIM programme will continue to facilitate and support the provision of volunteers in individual Congregations. This initiative will be supported by the appointment of a Young Adults' Development Officer.

**Concorde Fund**

5. There will again be opportunities for financial support through the Concorde Fund for volunteers as they seek opportunities to serve God for longer or shorter periods overseas.

**Overseas Team**

6. A team of 13 young adults will be travelling to Romania this summer to work alongside PCI missionaries Csaba and Ilona Veres.

**Summer Outreach Teams**

7. At home, during the summer of 2009, there will be teams throughout Ireland seeking to reach out with the Gospel to those who regularly come into our Churches and those who have little or no contact with Congregational life.

**Camps**

8. Three camps will take place this summer providing challenging opportunities and spiritual instruction for young people aged between 11 and 17.

9. Through all these ministry opportunities our prayer is that everyone involved will experience the grace of God and grow in their relationship with our amazing Lord.

JOHN FLAHERTY, Convener

## MINISTRY EVENTS COMMITTEE

1. The Ministry Events Committee of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry continues, through its working groups, to organise and deliver a variety of events for children and young people. Through these events the Committee seeks to challenge, inspire, enthuse and equip young people, as well as often having opportunity to impact their parents, leaders and the whole family of PCI. The Committee desires to see our children and young people develop in their understanding of God and grasp more fully the significance of their position within His covenant community, the Church of His Son, Jesus Christ.

**Kids' Praise Party**

2. This event for children of primary school age is now firmly established in the PCI calendar and has been planned for the afternoon of Saturday, 6 June, 2009 in Carnmoney Presbyterian Church. Building on the themes of the past two years, this year's event is entitled "Shine for God" and the objective of the lively, interactive programme will be to exhort the children to seek ways to serve the Lord, even at their tender age. The speaker will be renowned international Christian storyteller, Bob Hartman, who made such an impact as keynote speaker at Building Blocks in 2007.

### **Youth Night**

3. Youth Night is also planned for the end of General Assembly week, taking place in Church House on the evening of Saturday, 6 June, 2009. It is again hoped that there will be a tremendous turnout of young people from all parts of our island, gathering for praise led by Rick Hill and his band, as well as to hear what God would say through our speaker, Andy Carroll, Assistant Minister in Greenisland Presbyterian Church.

### **MAD Weekend**

4. Following the very successful tenth anniversary MAD celebration last year, plans are well advanced for the usual vibrant and varied programme of seminars, teaching, worship and fun at “MAD 11”, to be staged in Coleraine later this year. MAD is a vitally important event under the Committee, given that it represents such a significant opportunity to engage with young people over a more extended weekend period. The Committee is thankful that, by God’s grace, many have been drawn to Him and stirred in their faith at MAD over the years and many of those young people who were reached in earlier times are now young leaders, some helping to run the event or bringing along a new generation of young people from their Congregations. The dates for MAD are 23-25 October, 2009 at the University of Ulster, Coleraine and the speaker will be Andy Fearon, a former Youth Associate in Portstewart Baptist Church.

### **Route 66**

5. The review process of the Route 66 Bible Conference, initiated after the tenth anniversary event last August, continues. The Committee is consulting with many of the young people who have attended and benefitted from Route 66 over the past decade and the overwhelming feedback is that this event has been significant in the spiritual journey of many of them. The Committee remains committed to developing this work and is seeking to understand how best this event might contribute to enabling the young people of PCI to “correctly handle the Word of truth”.

### **Future Events**

6. While remaining committed to delivering the present schedule of events, the Committee is constantly exploring new opportunities which will best serve the Board’s vision and equip our Church in fulfilling its responsibility to reach and nurture our children and young people.

### **Thanks**

7. The Committee remains grateful to God for all that He has done through our events in the past and we wait in eager and prayerful anticipation to see how He will bless us this year. Thanks are also due to our dedicated Working Groups, as well as the hard-working and efficient YAC programme and office personnel.

ANDREW THOMPSON, Convener



### SPUD YOUTH ASSEMBLY

1. The Board, in partnership with the Business Board and the other mission Boards of the Church, oversaw a pilot Youth Assembly which was known as 'SPUD'. The process began when each Congregation was invited to send two representatives aged between 15 and 25 to an event which was held in High Street Presbyterian, Antrim. An event in Dublin had been planned, but as the response was very low it unfortunately had to be cancelled. 260 young people attended the Antrim event on 24 January, 2009 where the Moderator was present, along with the Secretaries of the four Mission Boards. Delegates were able to attend three of the six sessions where they discussed an issue presented by one of the Boards, or one of their own issues, namely Peacemaking and Bridging the Gap. The discussions from these groups were taken forward to a residential event at the Moyallon Centre in Portadown from 27 February to 1 March 2009, attended by 30 delegates from the Antrim event and the working group. A lot of hard work and discussion at this weekend produced a series of resolutions which were brought to the appropriate Boards in March.

2. This SPUD Youth Assembly has been a very successful pilot, engaging with young people throughout our denomination who have embraced the goal to give them meaningful ways to engage in the decision-making of the Church. The 14 resolutions produced by SPUD are the most concrete outcome of this process, however the impact is already being felt in a number of other ways. Their positive and constructive contributions during SPUD have already started to have an impact at Congregational and Presbytery level and it is hoped that God will, in His mercy and grace, use this movement to empower young people to play an active role in our Church at every level.

3. The resolutions produced by the SPUD Youth Assembly can be found within the corresponding Boards' report and the resolutions associated with the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry follow. There are also additional resolutions regarding areas chosen by the SPUD delegates namely 'Peacemaking' and 'Bridging the Gap'. These are preceded by a brief explanation of how the delegates arrived at the resolutions for each area.

### Board of Youth and Children's Ministry

4. There is a growing concern among our young people about a number of issues which exist as part of today's youth culture, and in particular the response of PCI and local Congregations to these issues. The Church is not always addressing taboo issues where it could, and is subsequently failing to equip young people to deal with the pressures they face. Young people do not necessarily want to be told what to think, but rather *how* to think; this means giving them both guidance and space to make biblically informed choices, and accepting them even when they make mistakes. Too many young people on the fringes of Church life see Christianity as being a set of rules, when instead we should be showing them it is about relationship with Christ and with others as they serve and follow Him.

### **Peacemaking**

5. As God's people, we have a responsibility to reflect God's heart for reconciliation and be active peacemakers in our society. Although PCI is engaged in a number of peacemaking projects, more must be done to bridge the gaps in our society, whether they are of race, religion, culture or class. External funding for PCI's two full-time peacemaking posts is running out; this is cause for concern. We must ask ourselves what impact this will have on PCI's role as peacemakers, and find ways to ensure that we not only continue to be a positive force in our divided society, but that we seek to build on the work that is already being carried out. With the growing socio-economic divide, the increasing number of immigrants, and the remnants of the Troubles still stark enough for all to see, it is now more than ever that we must willingly engage with people from backgrounds different to our own. A vital part of this includes supporting our Churches which find themselves in interface and marginalised communities, both in a practical and pastoral sense. Furthermore, it is essential that our own ignorance is not passed on to our children; but rather from an early age children be taught how to be active peacemakers. There is surely no better way to do this than to lead by example.

### **Bridging the Gap**

6. From the very outset the SPUD process has identified the issue of a generational divide throughout the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Church is the body of Christ and a family of believers so therefore this generational divide must be bridged to ensure unity between all members of that body; in doing so we allow ourselves to be educated by one another, young and old alike. SPUD believes that Congregations must strive to integrate their young people into the decision making structures and one method of achieving this is the creation of a Youth Forum that would engage with the Session. Whatever method a Congregation decides to employ it should not be tokenistic but meaningful and authentic. Congregational mission plans are an ideal opportunity for Congregations to include their young people in discussion and decision-making. Bridging the generational divide is not simply accommodated by the inclusion of young people in decision-making but inclusion is required throughout all aspects of Church life and service. As part of this challenge young people recognise that they must be willing to engage in the less glamorous roles and to make sacrifices in order to devote themselves fully to the work of the Church.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That a grant of £9,540 be paid from the Incidental Fund to Youth Link: NI.
3. That the General Assembly approve the Youth and Children's Project 2009-10 to be split 75/25 between a peace and reconciliation project in Nepal and new Youth Link centre.

**SPUD Resolutions**

4. That the General Assembly request the Research and Education Committee of the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry to raise awareness about the pressures and issues affecting young people, both among young people themselves and the wider Church.

5. That the General Assembly encourage the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry to make available further resources and develop training, which equips youth leaders to empower young people both within and outside our Congregations in response to the challenges of contemporary culture.

6. That the General Assembly seeks to ensure that funding is made available for peacemaking posts to coordinate both existing and potential peace-building projects.

7. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations to actively seek to build relationships with all sections of the community, including those of a different religious, ethnic and socio-economic background.

8. That the General Assembly invite the Peacemaking Panel to explore ways in which Churches in interface and marginalised communities can receive pastoral and practical support from the wider Church family.

9. That the General Assembly request Congregations to ensure young people have the opportunity to contribute and participate in decision-making at local Congregational level.

10. That the General Assembly encourage Congregations to ensure the empowerment of young people in meaningful and appropriate participation in every aspect of Congregational life and witness.

11. That the Board of Youth and Children's Ministry, with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed as follows:

# BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING

Convener: Rev GEORGE MOORE

Secretary: Rev TREVOR GRIBBEN

1. The Board of Christian Training has had a busy but interesting year, the fruit of which is contained in this report and appendices.

2. The Training Co-ordination Panel, with representation from all the training agencies in the denomination, has had a number of useful meetings, and progress is being made in co-ordinating training throughout the denomination.

3. The Union Theological College Review Panel, set up by the Board and reported to the Assembly last year, has worked hard throughout the year and has produced a comprehensive report on revising the management structures of Union Theological College (see Appendix VI for report and recommendations). This is a major report with very significant implications for the future development of Union Theological College. The Panel's recommendations come to the Assembly with the unanimous approval of the Board of Christian Training.

4. The Board remains encouraged by the number of candidates seeking to explore God's will in regard to ordination, but realise that a steady supply of Ministers is essential for the Church's well-being. Believing that a sense of call usually emerges within the context of the local Christian fellowship, the Board would urge Ministers and Kirk Sessions to keep this issue before their Congregations as a matter for prayer. The Board would also encourage those members who have the appropriate gifts to listen for God's call.

5. The Board is indebted to those Ministers who so readily agree to facilitate applicants and candidates required to undertake congregational placements. The provision of such opportunities remains a vital component in the initial selection and training process.

6. The Board is happy to report that there has been yet another significant increase in the number of undergraduates who have chosen Union College for their course in theology. This is a most valuable opportunity to teach the Christian faith at this level, and will prove a wise investment in helping to train future teachers and Church leaders, hopefully helping some to hear God's call to the ordained ministry.

7. The Institute of Christian Training has had another busy year running a range of courses which appeal to a wide variety of Church members.

## **The Rev Dr WP Addley**

8. The Rev Dr WP Addley convened the former Ministerial Development Fund Committee of the then Board of Studies and Christian Training and for the past three years has convened the Board of Christian Training's Ministerial Development Committee. He has given wise leadership during this transition from a Committee simply administering a fund to a

Committee which seeks to proactively promote Ministerial development. He has led the Committee as they have developed the scheme of obligatory in-service training for Ministers in their first five years, which comes before the Assembly for approval this year. Bill is owed a great debt of gratitude for so willingly enabling the Board to avail of his time, his wisdom and, of course, his irrepressible wit.

### **Students' Bursary Fund**

*The Convener, the Rev Stewart Mackay, reports:*

9. The Students' Bursary Fund exists to make financial provision for students for the ordained ministry and their families.

10. In the year September 2008 - June 2009 there have been 41 students for the ministry. The cost of grants, fees and other expenses for this period is over £460,000. This is met through offerings at services of licensing, ordination and installation of Ministers and Elders, personal and congregational donations, and the United Appeal Fund. With an expected increase in students to approximately 57 in September 2009, there is obviously a need for increased income from these sources.

11. Thanks are due to those members of the Church who support the Fund in these ways. The Board would request that those involved in planning services of licensing, ordination and installation, would ensure that full use is made of the literature available at Reception in Church House: the bookmark and especially the Gift Aid envelope. Ideally these should be given out at the previous service to enable members to come with the information already written on the envelope. The more support the Fund is given through these services, the less will be needed from the United Appeal Fund, leaving more money available for other agencies.

### **ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE**

*The Convener, the Rev Dr DJ Watts, reports:*

12. This year the Committee has been able to assign 19 students and is grateful to those Congregations and Ministers who accept the mentoring of Student Assistants as an important contribution to the life of the Church. The Committee has also had to reassess three Student Assistants during the year.

13. The Committee notes the recommendations contained in the report of the Ministerial Studies Committee regarding the role of Supervising Ministers and will be taking these on board for assignments made from 2010 onwards.

### **QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE**

*The Convener, the Rev George Moore, reports:*

14. The Qualifications Committee met once during the year to deal with enquiries from a number of Ministers who had completed further study.

15. The Committee, in the light of the General Assembly Guidelines (Reports 2006, pp 223-224) instructed the Convener to write to each of the four Ministers concerned explaining that the qualification they had gained did not meet the criteria for recognition approved by the General Assembly.

16. The Committee agreed that in all future such queries the onus would be on the Minister concerned to demonstrate to the Committee's satisfaction that any qualification gained has met the criteria for recognition approved by the General Assembly.

## **COLLEGE AND MAGEE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

1. The work of the Committee in the past year has been dominated by two on-going projects, the refurbishment of what is now known as the Training and Resource Centre (and the building of a Student Common Room) and a review of College management structures. The latter will be reported on elsewhere, however, we would put on record the contributions made by staff to this review and the open way in which they allowed the discussion to take place. Thanks also to the Review Panel which went about its task with due care and professionalism.

2. The building project is going forward steadily with minimum disruption to College life and work, and it is hoped that it will finish on time in the middle of September 2009. It has been a difficult year to sell shares in the General Investment Fund as the stock market has been so depressed, and the Committee thank the office-bearers of the Trustees for their advice and guidance through this process.

3. The College has once again enjoyed teaching a large number of ministry and Queen's students, the figures below indicate the high numbers attending College and the need for more accommodation.

Students studying at UTC	2008
Undergraduates (BA, BTh, BD)	155
MDiv (begun in 2002)	47
MTh	14
PhD	16
MMin / DMin (begun in 2001)	14
PTFI BD (non PCI ministry)	3
Deaconess (begun in 2000)	2
A level access course (begun in 2001)	16
<b>Total number of students</b>	<b>269</b>

4. Also in the last calendar year the Director of Christian Training ran courses within UTC, ranging from three to ten weeks. These were attended by 432 individuals.

5. The Director of Ministerial Studies has supervised once again a large intake of Ministry Students and participated in a review of Ministerial

Development, which will significantly add to the scope of his work if passed by the General Assembly.

6. Once again the Committee would wish to place on record its thanks to the administrative staff for enabling the smooth running of College life.

DW BRICE, Convener

## **COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL STUDIES**

1. The Committee and its complementary Panel reviewing Ministerial Training has had a busy year and has considered some significant changes, which the Committee believes will contribute positively to the ministry formation of students.

2. The Director of Ministerial Studies (DMS), the Rev Ronnie Hetherington, continues to advise prospective candidates and carries out his duties in relation to students according to the Regulations of the General Assembly. He acts as Secretary to the Committee, which appreciates the professional and insightful nature of his work and his pastoral support of the students in training.

3. In the academic year 2008/2009 there were 46 students under the care of Presbyteries, as listed in the appended Schedule (see Appendix I).

4. Two students were granted permission to postpone the commencement of their studies for one year and two were permitted to defer for an additional year. A further student has had the commencement of his training delayed until he completes his part-time degree.

### **Training of Supervising Ministers**

5. The Committee presented a paper to the Board Christian Training (BCT) Conference in November 2008 on the Training of Supervising Ministers who have students assigned to them as Assistant Ministers. Generally the supervising of students is done to an acceptable standard, but the Committee has introduced some new arrangements and procedures to encourage Ministers to recognise their significant contribution to the training and ministry formation of the student. Guidelines for Ministers have been approved by the BCT and will be available to all supervising Ministers (see Appendix II 'The Role of Supervising Ministers').

### **Review of Ministerial Training**

6. The Panel to Review Ministerial Training presented its conclusions on the issue of the 'Piece of Trial to be heard by a Presbytery', which students are required to complete before being licensed. It was agreed that the 'Piece of Trial' would no longer be compulsory and that there would be more opportunities for regular reporting and consultation with Presbyteries regarding the progress of a student's training (see Appendix III). The BCT agreed to draw up a set of guidelines to assist Presbyteries to develop proper relationships with students under their care.

7. The Ministerial Training review panel drew up a new outline of the Course Requirements for those Training for the Ordained Ministry of PCI. It is intended that this information will be readily available in printed form (see Appendix IV, 'Course Requirements for those Training for the Ordained Ministry of the PCI').

8. The Panel to Review Ministerial Training considered further the question of the required standard of Biblical Languages. The College Faculty is being consulted on this issue, and at the time of completing this report no recommendation has been finalised.

9. Concern has regularly been expressed by interested observers regarding the students' general knowledge of the scriptures. A programme of Bible Reading is being drawn up which will be introduced to the Applicants' Course to assure a good knowledge of the scriptures before commencing training.

### **Pastoral Care**

10. During the past year the pastoral care of students and their families has been an issue concerning the Committee. The Convener of the BCT has accepted the responsibility to arrange for Pastoral Advisers. Two Ministers and their wives have been asked to fulfil this role for the Board, and it is hoped that this facility will be taken advantage of by students. The Board Convener will continue to monitor this arrangement.

11. The Committee has been made aware of the need to support students with 'learning difficulties' at UTC. Students studying for Queen's University degrees qualify for the support of the university's Disability Services. For students who are doing PTFI courses there has been in the past no such facility in place. The DMS has been advised by the Committee to provide as far as possible support similar to the Queen's University services for non-QUB students.

12. The interviews of 25 candidates were held in Union College on 7 April 2009. The Interviewing Panel comprised the Revs Robert Beggs, Robert Bell, Gordon Best, Robin Brown, Mervyn Burnside, Jim Campbell, Rob Craig, Kenneth Crowe, Mark Goudy, William Henry, Liz Hughes, John Hutchinson, David Knox, Philip McCrea, David McIlwrath, Adrian McLernon, Cheryl Meban, Adrian Moffett, Colin Morrison, Bill Parker, Ivan Patterson, Brian Savage, William Sinclair, David Thompson; Mr Basil McCorriston, Mr Mervyn Whittle; Dr Lena Morrow; Miss Ann Taylor; Mrs Mary Robinson and Mrs Jayne Wright.

Dr Joan McQuoid acted as Vocational Consultant, the Rev George Moore as Chairman, the Rev Noble McNeely as Secretary and the Rev Ronnie Hetherington as Co-ordinator. The Rev Trevor Gribben, Executive Secretary to the Board, was also present.

13. Having completed the interviewing process 21 are being recommended, with 3 additional candidates who, being previously deferred, were re-interviewed and satisfied their respective interviewing Panels.

JNI McNEELY, Convener



## **COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. The past year has seen an increased number of Ministers making use of the Ministerial Development Programme provisions. In 2007 there were 56 grants to in-service training and 15 to sabbatical leave. In 2008 the figures were 110 and 43.

### **Presbytery Responses**

2. Nineteen Presbyteries responded to the suggested alterations to the Ministerial Development Programme outlined in the 2008 General Assembly Report. Of these, 16 Presbyteries endorsed the proposal that certain aspects of in-service training should become obligatory during the first 5 years of ordained ministry. However, a number of responses asked how such an expectation could actually be made obligatory on all Ministers.

### **Criteria for Ministerial Development Programme**

3. Overseas Mission Visits: An increasing number of Congregations are forming links with overseas Congregations and mission agencies. Some Ministers have applied to the Scheme for aid in making visits to further such links. The current practice has not been to permit such visits to be funded through the Ministerial Development Programme, though the enriching and equipping benefits to Ministers have always been recognised. The Committee now recommend that such visits be deemed to fall within the Scheme, at least in so far as a particular visit would provide a new and enriching experience for the Minister, in line with the definition of Sabbatical Leave in the Ministerial Development Programme.

4. Academic courses: Support would normally be given only to courses of study which are clearly linked to an applicant's ministry and helpful to its further development.

### **Revised Scheme for the Ministerial Development Programme**

5. In the light of the Presbytery responses and the changes suggested in the above points, a new Revised Scheme for the Ministerial Development Programme is appended to this report (see Appendix V 'Towards the Development of Ministerial Development').

### **Course for Ministers in charge of Staff Teams**

6. The Committee considers that there is a need for a training course for Ministers in charge of staff teams. The Deputy Clerk is to form a small group of experienced Ministers and Ministers new to managing staff teams to work with Mrs Angela Bill, who has produced a draft training course on team management in conjunction with the former Congregational Life Committee of the Board of Mission in Ireland. It is proposed to run this course, initially as a pilot, for Ministers in charge of staff teams.

WP ADDLEY, Convener

## **COMMITTEE FOR THE TRAINING OF CHURCH MEMBERS**

### **Prepared to Lead**

1. There has been an encouraging response to the “Prepared to Lead” materials for the training of new Elders, which was made available last year. The Committee continues to commend this training course to Ministers and Sessions. Unfortunately, the updated video material has not yet been produced, and the Committee is hopeful that this will be made available very soon.

### **PCI Leaflets**

2. The Committee has been working on a leaflet on Giving, and this leaflet, as well as other additional resource materials on the same topic, will be prepared and placed on the Institute of Christian Training website.

### **Pastoral Care and Leadership**

3. At the Board of Christian Training Conference in November 2008 it was agreed that special attention should be given to training needs in the areas of pastoral care and leadership. It was recognised at the Conference that there was a need to encourage reflection on, and the development of, new approaches to both of these areas. This Committee has set up two working groups to consider how best to address these issues and to promote training for Church members in pastoral care and leadership. It is hoped that a significant start will be made in producing some new materials in the next year.

JS CARSON, Convener

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Schedule of Students**

ARDS	Peter Douglas	Union
	Andrew Conway	Union
	Andrew Galbraith	Union
	Graeme McConville	Union
	Owen Patterson	Union
ARMAGH	Ashley Graham	Union
	David McCullagh	Union
	Mark Proctor	Union
BALLYMENA	Mark Wilson	Union
	Norman Smyth	Union
	Rodney Moody	Union
NORTH BELFAST	Scott Moore	Union
	Ivan Ferris	Union
	Richard Houston	Union
	Jane Nelson	Union

	Jackie Spence	Union
	Lachlan Webster	Union
SOUTH BELFAST	Colin Millar	Union
	Ivan Steen	Union
	Lesley-Ann Wilson	Union
EAST BELFAST	Andrew Boreland	-
	Peter Bovill	Union
	Jonathan Boyd	Union
	David Gray	-
	Mark McKeown	Union
	Edward McKenzie	Union
CARRICKFERGUS	Nick Cooper	Union
COLERAINE	Jonathan Doey	-
	Stephen Hibbert	Union
	John Stanbridge	Union
	Neil Stewart	Union
DONEGAL	Jonathan Cowan	Union
DOWN	Kathryn Viner	Union
DROMORE	Colin McKibbin	Union
DUBLIN and MUNSTER	Damien Burke	Oak Hill
IVEAGH	Andrew Faulkner	Union
NEWRY	Alan Smyth	-
OMAGH	Jonathan Dunn	Union
	Daryl Edwards	Union
ROUTE	John McConaghie	Union
	John Mullan	Oak Hill
TEMPLEPATRICK	Stuart Morrow	Union
TYRONE	Stewart Glendinning	Union
	Bryan Kee	-
	Noel Mulholland	Union
	Graeme Orr	Union

## APPENDIX II

### Revised Scheme for Supervising Ministers

- A. Ministers/Congregations indicate their interest in receiving an Assistant (by end of December)
  - The Prospective Supervising Minister will be invited to meet with the DMS and one other as part of the application process (during January/February).
  - Formal application form will be submitted (by end of February).
  - The application form will include an undertaking by the Minister both to fulfil the role of a Supervising Minister and to attend consultation meetings with the DMS as required.
- B. Responsibilities to be covered by committed Supervising Minister:

- accept a new Manual for Supervising Ministers, which is to be followed;
- sign off the various elements of training when covered;
- complete evaluation forms;
- consult with DMS on any issues to be addressed (sooner rather than later);
- be prepared to receive guidance from the DMS on issues needing attention.

The agreement entered into by Supervising Ministers will be reviewed, and if the supervision of a student has not been carried out according to the expectations any future application for an Assistant would be considered in light of the previous experiences.

### **APPENDIX III**

#### **The role of Presbytery in overseeing the progress of Students for the Ministry**

In light of the changes that have already taken place in the way in which students for our ministry are trained, the Committee on Ministerial Studies believes that five things need to happen in respect of the Presbytery's role in overseeing the progress of students under their care and in preparing them for Licensure.

#### **1. Development of Meaningful Contact**

In the light of the fact that Presbytery is basically offering support to the student under their care, it is essential that the local Student Convener cultivates a meaningful relationship with them. Attention should be given to how the Presbytery might offer practical support to the student through such things as regular informal contact where concerns might be discussed and prayed over, offers of help with the purchase of books and study aids and encouragement to local Congregations to open their pulpits to students.

#### **2. Involvement in Annual Reviews of a Student's Progress**

During the course of theological training the DMS conducts annual reviews of each student's progress and he, along with the Professor of Practical Theology, is involved in the assessment of a student's ability to preach. The DMS is also in receipt of reports from supervising Ministers of student placements and is aware of the Faculty's views on the progress of individual students. In the future, Presbyteries should be made aware of this information and have an input to the final assessment, which takes place in the third year of study. This should be done in the following manner:

- (a) At the conclusion of each of the first two years, the Presbytery through its Student Convener would receive a written report from the DMS summarising his assessment of the student's progress and including appropriate excerpts from the reports on the student that he has received from others during that academic year. The Presbytery might

then meet with the student to discuss the report and offer advice and support. If a significant issue was developing with a student at this stage, the Presbytery, at the discretion of the DMS, might be represented at the annual interview with the student.

- (b) In the third or final year of the student's theological training, the Student Convener of Presbytery or other appropriate person appointed by the Presbytery, would be present at the interview of the student chaired by the DMS, and would have an opportunity to contribute to the assessment.

### **3. Interview by Presbytery**

Presbytery would conduct an interview with the student in the February of the final year. The questions at the interview would be based around those contained in the service of Licensure and would offer an opportunity to explore his/her understanding of the role of the Minister and their growing understanding of it and calling to it. If any major issues arise the Presbytery representative would convey these to the DMS and have them considered at the assessment at the conclusion of the final year.

### **4. Removal of the Requirement for the Piece of Trial**

In the light of the increased involvement of the Presbytery in the on-going assessment of the student and of the Interview which would be conducted in the final year, the requirement for the Piece of Trial should be removed from the Code and the receipt of a Certificate from the Board of Christian Training would become the only formal requirement for Licensure

### **5. Issuing of Guidelines**

The Board of Christian Training should draw up a set of guidelines to assist Presbyteries in developing proper relationships with the students under their care and to explain the revised role Presbyteries are being offered in their theological training and in the assessment of their progress. Training should also be offered to Student Conveners so that they might seek to continually improve the care being offered to students.

## **APPENDIX IV**

### **Course Requirements for those Training for the Ordained Ministry**

The standard Ministry Course comprises:

- 3 units from each of Old Testament, New Testament, Systematic Theology and Church History
- 4.5 units of Practical Theology (including Missiology), together with homiletics workshops and pastoral skills workshops
- elementary language courses
- all courses are 1 course-unit unless otherwise stated
- placements and assistantships are also an integral part of the course

**Old Testament (3 units)**

Old Testament Introduction; Old Testament – Selected Texts; Old Testament Theology (0.5 unit); Option Course (0.5 unit)

**New Testament (3 units)**

New Testament Introduction (Synoptic Gospels); New Testament Epistles (with Greek Texts); Johannine Theology (0.5 unit); Option Course (0.5 unit)

**Biblical Languages (2 units)**

Introductory Greek; Introductory Hebrew

**Church History (3 units)**

Early Church History; Christianity in the 16th Century; Christianity in Ireland since the Reformation

**Systematic Theology (3 units)**

Introduction to Systematic Theology; Key Doctrines; Christian Ethics (0.5 units); Westminster Confession of Faith (0.5 units)

**Practical Theology**

Introduction to Practical Theology; Homiletics (0.5 unit); Christian Education (0.5 unit); Theology and Practice of Pastoral Care; Ecclesiology (0.5 unit); Worship (0.5 unit); Missiology (0.5 unit)

**Practical Theology Placements / Practical Skills**

Congregational Placement (Year 1); Advanced Homiletics Workshops (Year 2); Pastoral Skills Workshops (Year 2); Student Assistantship (Year 3)

**APPENDIX V****Towards the Development of Ministerial Development****A. During the first five years of Ministry (following ordination):****1. In-service Training**

Attendance required at one residential conference per year (covering three days and two nights):

- In Years One and Two, this would follow a fixed programme organised by PCI and be in ‘year of ordination groups’ (See Appendix V(a)). The clear expectation would be that the remainder of the week, including the Sunday, would be taken off for preparation and reflection.
- In Years Three, Four and Five there would be a choice, in consultation with Presbytery, of one conference from two or three being organised by, or on behalf of, PCI. Each of these conferences would be on a different theme to offer a degree of choice in these years (See Appendix V(a)). Again the expectation

would be that the remainder of the week, including the Sunday, would be taken off for preparation and reflection.

- The Ministerial Development Fund (MDF) grant of up to £250 would not be available to the individual, but would be paid directly to cover the cost of the Conferences, which would include travel expenses if necessary. A supply fee would be available from the MDF for the Sunday.

## **2. Sabbatical Leave**

One week's entitlement may be 'banked' each year from Year One, with the opportunity to use this leave being available from Year Three onwards (following the Ministerial Development Guidelines, MDGs - see Appendix V(b)). A maximum of seven weeks' sabbatical leave may be banked. All Ministers are required to take a period of at least four weeks' approved sabbatical leave before the end of their tenth year following ordination.

### **B. After Year 5 of Ministry (following ordination)**

#### **1. In-service Training**

One week's in-service training entitlement available for each calendar year, to be used in that year, including an MDF grant of up to £250, plus accompanying supply fee, (following the MDGs - see Appendix V(b)).

Ministers may opt into the PCI conferences organised for Ministers in Years 3-5 or may follow their own course of study and reflection, approved by Presbytery taking account of the mission and ministry priorities of the Congregation (following the MDGs – see Appendix V(b)).

#### **2. Sabbatical Leave**

One week's entitlement may be 'banked' each year, with the opportunity to use this leave as appropriate (following the MDGs – see Appendix V(b)), recognising that all Ministers are required to take an approved sabbatical, of at least four weeks, before the end of their tenth year following ordination.

Guided residential retreat/renewal opportunities, which could form part of a period of Sabbatical leave, will be promoted, and indeed on occasions procured, by PCI. Pilots will continue to be developed, which will include the facility to pay funds directly from MDF to those organising such approved opportunities for retreat/renewal for Ministers.

### **C. From the age of 63 onwards**

#### **1. In-service Training**

As in Section B above.

#### **2. Sabbatical Leave**

The final year in which Ministers will be entitled to take sabbatical leave will be during the year in which they reach the age of 62. Sabbatical leave, even if previously banked, cannot be taken after this point, nor will there be any further entitlement to bank such leave.

All Ministers, and spouses where appropriate, will be entitled to attend one residential pre-retirement course from the year in which the Minister reaches the age of 63. The costs of this course, which will be organised by or on behalf of PCI, will be met by the MDF using the savings resulting from 'the no sabbatical entitlement' outlined above. (Up to £500 would therefore be available per couple).

### **Appendix V(a) – In-Service Training Conferences for Years 1-5**

Set in the context of worship, with space and time for Ministers to both relate and pray together, the conferences will seek to provide an opportunity to reflect on key issues relating to ministry. As well as those facilitating the exploration of the theme of the conference, there will also be a host who will be responsible for worship and have a pastoral role.

All Conferences will have a common residential format covering three days with two overnights, beginning with lunch on Day One and ending with lunch on Day Three. The Conferences will normally run from a Tuesday to a Thursday with all costs, including travel expenses, being covered by the Ministerial Development Fund. To facilitate both preparation and reflection, each Minister should take one complete week off congregational duties, including the three days of the Conference itself. A supply fee for the Sunday following a conference will be available from the Ministerial Development Fund.

#### **A. Years 1 and 2 (following ordination):**

In Years 1 and 2 the Conferences will be restricted to the particular 'year of ordination group', will be obligatory and will be on the following themes:

##### **1. Year 1 – 'Shaping the Vision'**

- (a) The Theology of Ministry:
  - clarifying the Minister's unique calling
  - identifying, releasing and equipping others for ministry
- (b) Ministry of the Word:
  - from text to pulpit in the real world – keeping preaching central in a busy ministry
  - creative use of opportunities for teaching, study and discussion throughout the week

##### **2. Year 2 – 'Delivering the Vision'**

- (a) Giving Leadership:
  - developing and maintaining good relationships in the Congregation
  - managing change
- (b) Ministry of the Word:
  - keeping our preaching faithful and relevant
  - the preaching plan – theory and practice



**B. Years 3, 4 and 5 (following ordination):**

There will be two or three conferences organised every year, each with a different theme, with attendance obligatory at one conference each year for all Ministers in Years 3, 4 and 5. These conferences will also be open to Ministers in later years of ministry. The following are examples from which a selection of the themes may be offered in any particular calendar year:

- Enhancing our Preaching
- Developing Effective Pastoral Care
- Maintaining Spiritual Fervour
- Leading from Maintenance to Mission
- There's a Big World Out There
- Reaching the Next Generation
- Managing Time, Paper and People
- The Minister as a Reflective Practitioner
- The Art of Conciliation
- Making Sense of a Changing World

**Notes:**

- (a) The General Assembly requires all Ministers in their first five years following ordination to attend one in-service Conference each year as outlined above. To facilitate planning it is envisaged that a programme of Conferences will be published by the week of the General Assembly each year.
- (b) Ministers will normally only become eligible for further in-service leave, and for sabbatical leave from Year 3 onwards, following completion of the required elements of in-service training.

**Appendix V(b) – Ministerial Development Guidelines****Introduction:**

The Ministerial Development Programme is “a mission oriented development programme ...”, designed to “enable Ministers to reflect on, evaluate and be refreshed in their ministry” (1998 General Assembly Reports pages 258-262). It will therefore enable Ministers to engage in:

- theological reflection related to mission
- development of additional personal skills for mission
- benefit from personal spiritual growth and inspiration for mission

The two aspects of the Ministerial Development Programme, though closely linked, are designed for different purposes:

**(a) In-Service Training:**

In-Service training has its emphasis on enabling a Minister to be further equipped for his/her ministry within the wider mission and ministry priorities of the Congregation. While recognising that this will include personal spiritual renewal, the emphasis is on enhancing the Minister's knowledge and skills base.

**(b) Sabbatical Leave:**

Sabbatical leave has its emphasis both on enabling a Minister to seek personal spiritual renewal and refreshment and also to have time and space to reflect on aspects of his/her ministry within the wider mission and ministry priorities of the Congregation. While recognising that this may well include the enhancing of knowledge and skills in a specific area, the aim of sabbatical leave is to enable Ministers to refocus on their calling under God both as a Minister and as a believer.

**The basic scheme:**

1. A Minister is entitled to up to one week's in-service leave each year. This carries with it the entitlement to a grant of up to £250 to reimburse legitimate fees and expenses and a supply-fee for the Sunday of that week to enable the Minister to be free of Sunday responsibilities. This week may normally not be carried into another calendar year.

2. A Minister is entitled to bank one week's sabbatical leave for each calendar year from ordination, up to a maximum of seven weeks.

3. In making an application for in-service training, and in deciding upon applications for in-service training, Ministers and Presbyteries respectively should take account of:

- The definition of in-service training, as outlined above
- The current needs of Ministers and their Congregations
- The context of a Minister's sphere of service
- The content of previous applications for in-service training

4. In making an application for sabbatical leave, and in deciding upon applications for sabbatical leave, Ministers and Presbyteries, along with the relevant Board of Christian Training Committee, respectively should take account of:

- The definition of sabbatical leave, as outlined above.
- The recognition that, in respect of academic courses, support will be given only to courses which are clearly linked to an applicant's ministry and helpful to its further development.
- The recognition that appropriate overseas visits or cross-cultural experiences are deemed to be within the remit of the Scheme, in so far as a particular visit would provide a new and enriching experience for the Minister, in line with the definition of sabbatical leave, as outlined above.

**APPENDIX VI****Report of the Union Theological College Review Panel****Background**

1. Over the past decade or more, Union Theological College (UTC) has gone through a period of remarkable growth and development. The increase in student numbers, the on-going improvement and expansion of the courses delivered and the renewal of the physical environs have all led to a College

which has evolved in positive and creative ways as it continues to seek to meet the needs of the Church in the 21st Century.

2. Much of what has been achieved has only been possible through the ready co-operation of the staff, both academic and support, and through the willingness of key individuals to accept an evolving and often increasing work load. The pace of these developments, and the relatively short time-scale in which they have occurred, have, however, resulted in added strain, both upon staff and upon the management structures of College. In light of this, the Board of Christian Training, at its meeting on Friday, 9 May, 2008, set up an ad-hoc UTC Review Panel with the following remit and membership:

**Panel Remit:** Having consulted with the Faculty, Director of Ministerial Studies (DMS), Director of Christian Training (DCT) and any other relevant stake holders, to draw up a report with recommendations on how the management effectiveness of Union Theological College, including the functioning of the DMS and DCT departments, might be improved and developed. This will include consideration of both the internal structures of the College itself and the structures within which the College operates.

**Panel Membership:** A Panel of the Board of Christian Training made up of the Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Convener and Executive Secretary of the Board of Christian Training; Conveners of the College and Magee Management Committee, Committee on Ministerial Studies, Committee on Training of Church Members and Committee on Ministerial Development; Principal of Union Theological College; John Hunter, John Magowan, Dr Lena Morrow, Mrs Evelyn Shaw; the Rev Dr Philip Wilson.

Convener: Convener of the Board of Christian Training

Secretary: Executive Secretary of the Board of Christian Training

3. The Panel held seven meetings, including two full meetings dedicated exclusively to listening to the issues which the staff at UTC wished to raise, and heard individually from each member of Faculty, the Director of Ministerial Studies (DMS), the Director of Christian Training (DCT), the Administrator and the Librarian. The Panel also had before it papers outlining the management structures of some other theological institutions, namely Highland Theological College (Scotland), Oak Hill Theological College (England), the Free Faculty of Reformed Theology (France) and Westminster Theological Seminary (USA). The Panel is indebted to those who provided the papers relating to the other Colleges and to the staff within UTC for many helpful observations and constructive suggestions.

#### **The current position**

4. The current role of Union Theological College (UTC) could be summarised as follows:

- (a) The training of Ministers, and a small number of others (e.g. Deaconesses) for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI).
- (b) The delivery of academic courses and research programmes as part of the Institute of Theology within the Queen's University of Belfast

(QUB), including both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Linked to this are a number of other academic courses, including access courses and those run under the auspices of the Presbyterian Theological Faculty of Ireland (PTFI).

- (c) The delivery of Christian training for the wider Church through the Institute of Christian Training. This includes courses run within the College environs, a limited number of regional courses and the provision of both material and courses for use at congregational level.

5. The growth in student numbers, and the current strength of UTC, can be clearly seen from the following figures:

<b>Students studying at UTC</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2008</b>
Undergraduates (BA, BTh, BD)	84	155
MDiv (begun in 2002)	0	47
MTh	13	14
PhD	13	16
MMin / DMin (begun in 2001)	0	14
PTFI BD (non PCI ministry)	0	3
Deaconess (begun in 2000)	0	2
A level access course (begun in 2001)	0	16
<b>Total number of students</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>269</b>

**Ministry students** comprise 39 students:

- 16 QUB undergraduate
- 17 QUB Master of Divinity
- 6 PTFI pathways

**Evening classes** started in 1999, enabling students to take their undergraduate degree over 5 years (min p/t length) by either 2 evenings per week or 1 afternoon and evening per week in term time.

Part-time degree courses commenced in 1999. Currently 35 of the 155 undergraduate students are part-time.

**Notes:**

- (a) Those training for ordained ministry and Deaconess work do so through PTFI Diploma and Certificate qualifications. This entails attendance at additional practical seminars in each academic discipline, attendance at seminars on the Westminster Confession of Faith and attendance at homiletics lectures and sermon workshops. The overwhelming majority of ministry students undertake QUB degrees as well, though a few do not.
- (b) The increase in student numbers has been managed, until this point, by five full-time Professors, supplemented by additional part-time

teaching staff. While the number and hours of part-time staff varies from year to year, both have been increasing.

- (c) Through the DMS, UTC also provides Licentiate Training, as required by the Board of Christian Training, for those in the first year of their assistantships. These courses are normally held on one Friday each month from October to May – from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm plus a three day Summer School in June.
  - (d) Through the DCT, UTC's Institute of Christian Training runs a series of courses for the wider Church, and also provides resource material for training at the local level. Each year a different range of courses are offered and developed. In the last calendar year courses within UTC, ranging from three to ten weeks, were attended by 432 individuals.
6. The current Management structure of UTC, based on the 1978 Act of Parliament and the relevant sections of the Code, has evolved over the years and is overly complicated.

### **Presenting issues**

7. In discussion and aided by input from staff and others, the Panel has discerned several presenting issues with regard to the management effectiveness of UTC:

- (a) **The Management structures** within UTC, and within which UTC operates, are somewhat ineffective in delivering the kind of proactive management necessary for the College, not only as it is today but also as it will be in the days ahead. The structure is overly complicated, lacks clear lines of responsibility and accountability. There also appears to be no framework for on-going strategic development.
  - Both the Code and the Act of Parliament give a major role to the Management Committee in the managing of College. However, this is often not happening in practice. It is apparent that over the years the Management Committee has neither fulfilled all the functions laid down for it by both the UTC Act and Magee scheme nor in fact taken the key strategic decisions, other than in relation to property, which have shaped the on-going development of the College.
  - The responsibilities in respect of corporate governance are not clearly delineated in either the Code or the Act of Parliament which brought UTC into being, or in the various working modifications which have evolved over the years. Specifically, the Management Committee's role in relation to the Faculty's role, to the Staff Committee's role and to the role of staff generally, is not sufficiently clear.
  - There is a need for the routine and systematic provision of comprehensive management information to enable informed decisions to be made at the appropriate level.
  - Assuming that the 'Staff Committee' is what the Report of the last Review Committee meant by the 'Training and Courses

Committee', it has never actually taken on the role envisaged for it (1998 General Assembly Reports, page 8 par 22).

- The different responsibilities of the Management Committee, the Committee on Ministerial Studies and the Committee for the Training of Church Members in relation to UTC have resulted in certain areas 'falling between stools'.
  - There is a clear need to clarify how the Management Committee and its policies and practices, relate to the structures, policies and practices of PCI as a whole, especially as these have evolved over recent years.
- (b) **The rotation of the office of Principal**, whereby different members of Faculty are appointed in turn for a five year term, has severe limitations.
- The system depends on each member of Faculty being willing to take their turn, and not all of the current Professors desire to do so.
  - With the Principal operating in a role similar to a Moderator of Presbytery (i.e. first among equals), there is neither the necessary proactive leadership nor the co-ordination necessary for the College to function and evolve as it should. Professors are not in practice accountable to the Principal, and Departments often operate as individual entities, even though the report of the last Review Committee set up the system whereby all staff would report to the Principal, who in turn would report to the then Board of Studies and Christian Training (1998 General Assembly Reports, page 9 par 26). At the very least there is confusion over what it means to 'report to' and at the worst an important envisaged means of management and co-ordination has failed to develop as expected.
  - Even if the Principal was given a much more proactive leadership role, the ability of a Professor with a full teaching load to take on such a role in the greatly expanded College is questionable.
- (c) **Departments within UTC**
- Recognising the progress that has been made over recent years in co-ordinating the work of Departments within UTC, and indeed the decisions of earlier reviews that this would happen, there is still room for much greater development in this area. The need for co-ordination is seen especially in the areas of approaches to ministry formation and the appointment of part-time staff.
  - The aspiration in earlier reviews that UTC would evolve to function as a seven department College reflecting the staff appointments, i.e., New Testament, Old Testament, Systematic, Church History, Practical Theology, DMS and DCT, has in practice not materialised.
  - The welcome increase in student numbers, coupled with the positive expansion of the number and type of courses offered, has meant that the work-load of teaching staff has increased to a level which is undesirable and which is inhibiting the further

development of UTC, quantitatively and, more importantly, qualitatively.

- (d) **The role of the DMS** needs to be further clarified and enhanced.
- The last Ad Hoc Review Committee clearly placed the DMS as a member of staff within UTC, and under the line management of the Principal, though with a continuing and significant wider role within the then Board of Studies and Christian Training. However the current structures of UTC have not assisted the work of the DMS in helping to proactively promote, develop and co-ordinate ‘ministry formation’ within the College.
  - With the DMS reporting to many bodies within the Board of Christian Training it has been hard to establish priorities and arrive at the correct balance of time spent between on-going work with prospective applicants and with applicants, work within College itself, work with Assistants, and work developing in-service training and sabbaticals for Ministers. Each of these areas of work is vitally significant and many of them will continue to develop and grow in the years ahead. This raises issues regarding both the structure of the post and the resources available to support the post-holder.
- (e) **The role of the DCT**, and indeed the work of the Institute of Christian Training generally, have not been well served by their integration into the structures of UTC.
- As with the DMS, the last Ad Hoc Review Committee placed the DCT as a member of staff in UTC and under the line management of the Principal, though with a continuing and significant wider role within the then Board of Studies and Christian Training. This has meant that the DCT has been answerable to several “masters”, resulting in a lack of clear strategic co-ordination and delivery of training for non-Ministers. There is a need for one body which sets the priorities for Christian Training and decides what courses should be developed and delivered and where and how they should be delivered.
  - With the coming into being of the new Board of Christian Training, and the renewed emphasis on the training of non-Ministers, a common view is that it no longer makes sense to see Christian Training as simply a department within a Theological College.
- (f) **The relationships which UTC has with QUB and with other Colleges** are very significant and longstanding. UTC is one of four active constituent Colleges of the Institute of Theology of QUB. The Colleges work together to construct, develop, deliver, assess and review the modules and pathways offered under the aegis of the Institute. Relationships between them are, in general, fraternal, workmanlike and warm. At times an individual College may co-operate with another to a specific end, for example, UTC and Belfast Bible College share responsibility for the delivery of the two Youth Ministry Modules. In addition, UTC and Edgehill College have

developed a closer relationship by which, in some respects, they act as one College. This longstanding relationship, though not without its problems, has in general worked to the mutual advantage of both Colleges. However, in recent years there have been indications that the form of this relationship might need to change. The Covenant between the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church, which included a commitment to co-operation in theological education, was one such indication. The Covenant may have had more of an aspirational character but this cannot be said of the very recent change in the outlook of the Methodist Church towards the training of its Ministers. Edgehill College is now operating under a model of theological education which is very different from that operated by UTC. As a result, at recent meetings of the Institute, representatives of UTC have found themselves directly opposing changes to important degree pathways and content suggested by Edgehill College. Consequently, it is difficult to envisage how the working relationship between the two Colleges can continue in its present form.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

8. After much discussion and deliberation, both internally and with others, the Panel has reached the following **conclusions and recommendations**:

8.1 There is a key need for empowered leadership within UTC, combined with more effective management structures. Such leadership will be responsive to the needs and policies of PCI and will be proactive in identifying the strategic direction of the College, in ensuring the delivery of agreed objectives and in further enhancing and developing the College as a whole. This will include the creation of a new permanent post of Principal with executive responsibility.

*It is therefore recommended that:*

A job description for a new position of Principal with executive responsibility be drawn up, the post advertised and an appointment made ideally to take up responsibility in August 2010. The areas to be covered in the job description are outlined in Appendix VI(a). All staff within UTC will become accountable to the Principal, who in turn will be accountable to the Management Committee, and ultimately the Board of Christian Training and the General Assembly, for all aspects of the work of the College. The post would have a significant teaching element, which will either be teaching in one of the academic disciplines of College or in the ministry track, or a combination of both. Appropriate academic qualifications to be a recognised teacher within QUB and also adequate experience of ministry, will be among the essential criteria for the post. This new post will require Appraisals Committee approval. It is envisaged that it will be funded partly through College surpluses but mainly through seeking approval for an amount of additional United Appeal funding. Eventually a significant amount of the cost will need to be funded through increased College surpluses.

8.2 The Management Committee needs to be reconstituted and restructured, initially in an ad-hoc manner, until the necessary legislative changes can be implemented. New structures for strategic development, corporate governance, oversight and support need to be developed in the way



Management Committee relates both to all aspects of the College and also to the wider Church, through the Board of Christian Training.

*It is therefore recommended that:*

A new management structure for UTC, as outlined in Appendix VI(b), should be established. The General Assembly, by resolution, should put in place an interim arrangement to enable this new structure to operate immediately, with the current Principal being asked to take on clearly agreed aspects of the role envisaged for new Principal, pending such an appointment.

8.3 The Faculty of UTC, both collectively and through its individual members, has an important and significant wider role to play outside of the confines of UTC, within the wider Presbyterian Church in Ireland and beyond. There is scope for this role to be further developed and a need for aspects of it to be more clearly defined. While recognising this, bringing detailed recommendations in this area is outside the remit of the current Review Panel.

*It is therefore recommended that:*

The General Board form a Panel, made up of representatives of the General Board, the Board of Christian Training and the Faculty, to report on this matter.

8.4 The current legislative framework, both civil and ecclesiastical, within which UTC operates, is restrictive and no longer adequate to facilitate the necessary structures for the corporate governance and strategic development of the College. There is also a clear need for certain specific policies and practices of UTC to be brought into line with the policies and practices of PCI as a whole.

*It is therefore recommended that:*

Work should begin immediately in drafting the necessary legislative changes to bring permanent effect to the new structures for corporate governance and strategic development. The new Management Committee should be tasked with implementing, in consultation with the Board of Finance and Personnel, a review of all relevant policies and procedures of UTC.

8.5 To enhance further development, particularly in the securing of necessary additional resources in staffing, the College needs to move towards a three department model, namely Department of Biblical Studies (OT and NT), Department of Systematic Theology and Church History and Department of Practical Theology and Ministry.

*It is therefore recommended that* the following new departmental structure should come into being on 1 September, 2009, or as soon as practicable thereafter:

Department of Biblical Studies

- Professor of Old Testament
- Professor of New Testament
- One additional full-time position (see note 1 below)

Department of Systematic Theology and Church History

- Professor of Systematic Theology
- Professor of Church History
- One additional full-time position (see note 2 below)

Department of Practical Theology and Ministry (see note 3 below)

- Professor of Practical Theology
- Director of Ministerial Studies
- Additional part-time members of staff (see note 4)

**Note 1:** To enable the Department of Biblical Studies to be strengthened with immediate effect, it is proposed that Dr TD Alexander be offered a permanent re-designation of role within UTC, and, by agreement, to take up the role of Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Director of Post-Graduate Studies in time for the start of the 2009/10 academic year.

**Note 2:** It is envisaged that a Junior Lecturer post will be created in the Department of Systematic Theology and Church History, but only when budgetary constraints permit.

**Note 3:** The new Department of Practical Theology and Ministry brings together two areas of College life that are inextricably linked and formalises the evolving co-operation of recent years. It regularises the aspects of the work of the DMS that are within College and is designed to facilitate the enhancement of ministry formation within the curriculum.

**Note 4:** It is envisaged that, following the appointments in the other two departments, a significant proportion of current part-time lecturer expenditure will be available to resource the Practical Theology and Ministry Department.

**Note 5:** In each case, the Heads of Department will be appointed by the Management Committee.

**Note 6:** All new full-time appointments will require Appraisals Committee approval.

8.6 In 1927 UTC entered a formal relationship with the Queen's University, delivering theological degree courses. This relationship has blossomed in the last decade as the intake of theology students has grown significantly. Today UTC plays the leading role within a vibrant and popular QUB Institute of Theology, and our ministry students have benefited from this positive stimulus. The time is opportune to alter the relationship between UTC and Edgehill Theological College. Each College has its own development plan and it is desirable that UTC, without favour to any one College, should be free to pursue agreed aims and objectives and have the same openness to co-operation with every College within the QUB Institute of Theology.

*It is therefore recommended that:*

To enable UTC to further develop, including co-operatively with all the Recognised Colleges of QUB and other relevant institutions, the current special, though informal, arrangement with Edgehill College should come to a conclusion at the end of the 2008/9 academic year. (Transitional arrangement may be required for students already 'in the system'). UTC should seek to maximise where possible, on an ad-hoc or project basis, constructive co-operation with all the Recognised Colleges of QUB, along with other appropriate institutions and organisations. Since UTC and Edgehill prepare candidates for the ordained ministry of their respective denominations, it is envisaged that close co-operation will continue on an ad-hoc and project basis and should be actively pursued where possible.

8.7 The standing of the DMS post within UTC needs to be further enhanced and with it the place given to proactive ministry formation. Ministerial formation should be a key priority for UTC, with the concept of the 'ministry track' further developed, co-ordinated and resourced, ensuring that the same professional rigour is applied to it as to all other aspects of the syllabus.

*It is therefore recommended that:*

The Director of Ministerial Studies, as a full member of College staff within the new Department of Practical Theology and Ministry, will have lead responsibility for the co-ordination of ministry formation within College and specifically of the Ministry track. The DMS will continue to have existing wider responsibilities within the Board of Christian Training, and the resulting 'dual accountability' to College and Board will need to be clearly understood and developed. The Principal and Executive Secretary of the Board will be responsible for ensuring that this works in practice, with priorities being set and workload kept within acceptable limits. Additional administrative support will be made available to the DMS in light of the expanding workload in the areas for which he is responsible, both inside and outside of College. This will require Appraisals Committee approval.

8.8 The work of Christian Training needs to be seen as separate to the direct work of UTC. While based within the physical environs of the College and having a close working co-operation with the College, Christian Training should no longer be viewed as a department within UTC. To enable this work to develop in a manner that will meet the needs of PCI as a whole both it and all associated staff should be managed through a separate structure within the Board of Christian Training.

*It is therefore recommended that:*

The Institute of Christian Training, while operating on the College site and in close co-operation with the College, will have a separate Management Committee under the Board of Christian Training (see Appendix VI(c)). The new Christian Training Development Officer will report to the Committee for Training and Resources and be line managed by the Executive Secretary of the Board of Christian Training. The Committee will be the body, under the Board of Christian Training, which sets the priorities for Christian Training and decides which courses should be developed and delivered, and where and how they should be delivered. The Institute of Christian Training will both provide and procure courses and resources for leaders and members within PCI and will co-operate closely with the DMS to help deliver and administer aspects of post-College ministerial training where appropriate. Careful liaison between UTC and the Institute of Christian Training will be necessary regarding management of the buildings and site. (It is envisaged that, for practical reasons, the UTC Management Committee will continue to incorporate the legal entity of the Magee Fund Committee and exercise the appropriate responsibilities. It will do so on the recommendation of the new Committee for Training and Resources, to which all available income will be assigned).

#### **Appendix VI(a) – Outline of the Post of Principal with executive responsibility**

It is envisaged that the holder of the post of Principal with executive responsibility, while also using a proportion of his/her time working within one of the departments of UTC, will perform the following tasks:

1. Be responsible to the Management Committee for the proactive leadership and development of the College, including the day-to-day

management of the College and its finances and the oversight of its students and staff.

2. Be the line-manager for all academic staff, the DMS, the College Administrator and the Librarian.

3. Be responsible for co-ordinating the integration of courses, ensuring that the delivery of ministerial formation is a priority within UTC.

4. Be responsible for the relationship with the Queen's University.

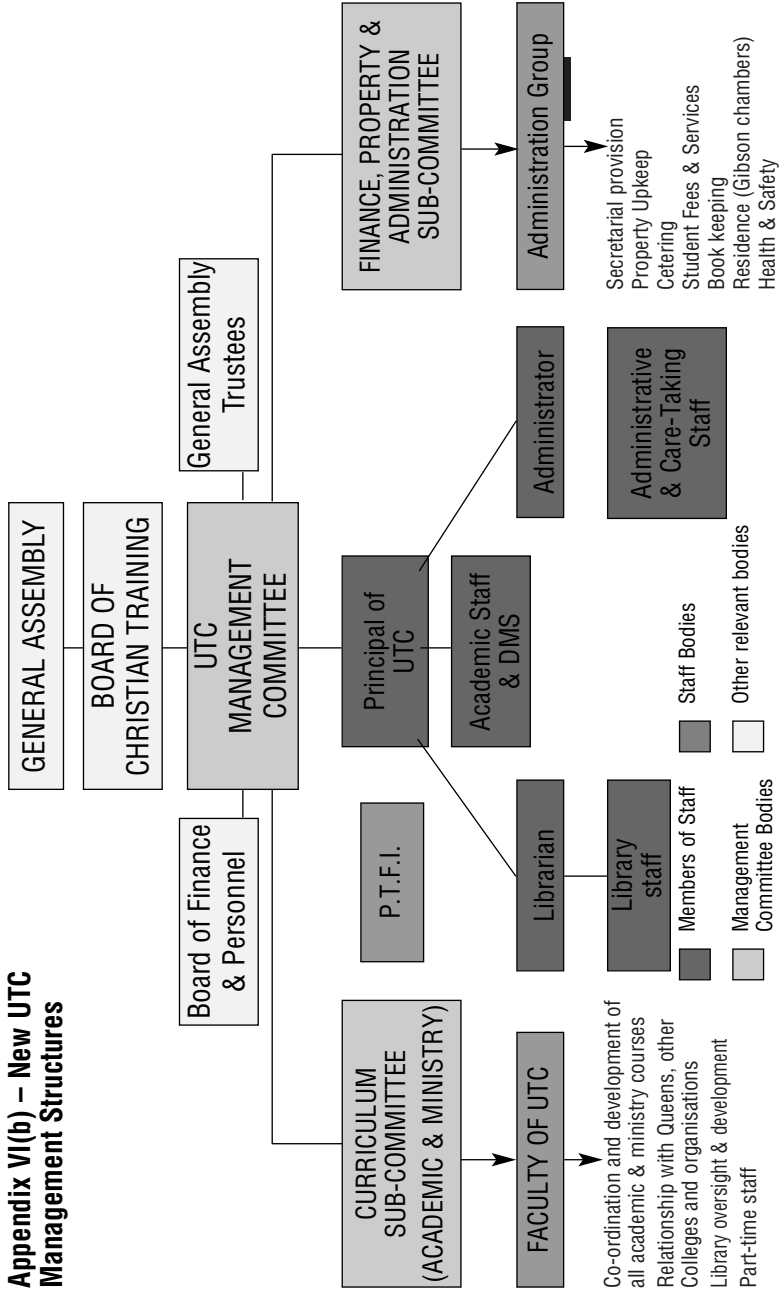
5. Be responsible for fostering co-operation with other Colleges and appropriate bodies and organisations.

6. Be responsible for representing UTC within PCI and its structures.

7. Be responsible for the development of UTC and for giving leadership in strategic planning.

8. Provide creative, inspirational and intellectual leadership within UTC, PCI and beyond.

**Appendix VI(b) – New UTC Management Structures**



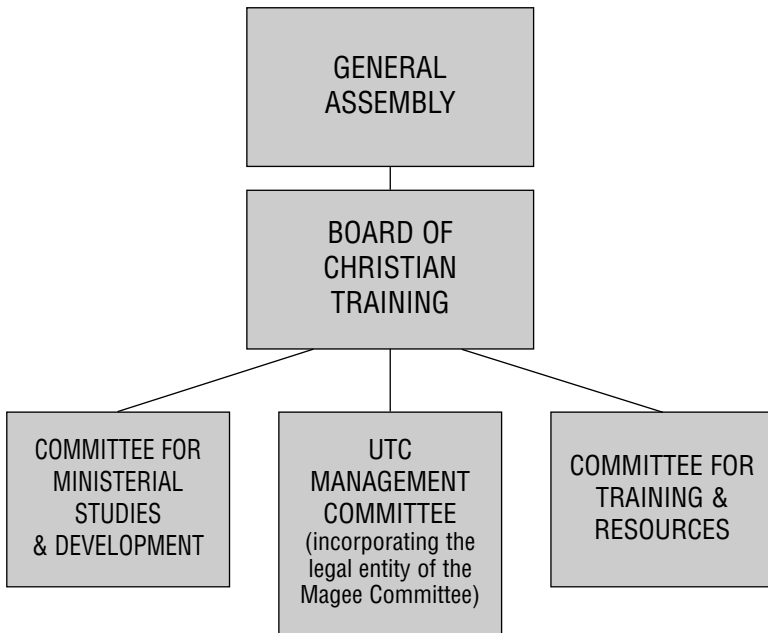
## Notes

1. UTC Management Committee will be made up as follows (initially 16):
  - Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly, Convener and Executive Secretary of the BCT, Principal of UTC, Convener of the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee, one member of Faculty (on annual rotation), Convener of the Management Committee;
  - Eight additional members (a range of skills required – Academic, Ministry, Finance and Administration, Property).
2. The Curriculum Sub-Committee (12):
  - Principal, DMS and one member of academic staff;
  - Convener of the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee plus two members of Management Committee
3. The Finance, Property and Administration Sub-Committee (12):
  - Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly;
  - Convener and Executive Secretary of the BCT;
  - Convener of the UTC Management Committee and Convener of Sub-Committee;
  - Principal, Administrator and one other member of staff;
  - Three members of Management Committee
4. The Management Committee will be responsible for strategic development, corporate governance, and general oversight of UTC. It will be accountable for these functions to the Board of Christian Training and through it to the General Assembly. It will operate through the two standing Sub-Committees, as outlined above, and through any additional Sub-Committees and ad-hoc groups that are necessary.
5. The Principal will be responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the Management Committee, for all aspects of the day to day organisation and management of UTC and for the leadership of all staff. All Academic Staff, the DMS, Administrator and the Librarian will be directly accountable to the Principal, with the administrative and care-taking staff accountable to the Principal through the Administrator and the Library Staff accountable to the Principal through the Librarian. The Principal will be accountable to the Management Committee for all of these functions.
6. The Principal will chair the Faculty, which will be responsible for the oversight and development of all academic and ministry aspects of UTC, under the Principal's leadership. The Faculty will be accountable to the Management Committee, through its Curriculum Sub-Committee for these functions and will report and bring development proposals etc to the Management Committee through that Sub-Committee. The Principal, DMS and all full-time members of academic staff will form the Faculty. It is envisaged that individual members of Faculty will continue to have areas of responsibility, outside of their departmental roles, as agreed from time to time with the Principal.
7. The Principal will chair the Administration Group within the College, which will be responsible for the day-to-day oversight and development of all financial, administrative, property, residential and student services matters, under the Principal's executive leadership. It is envisaged that the

Administration Group will be made up of the Principal, Administrator and one or two other members of staff, as decided by the Principal. The Administration Group will be accountable to the Management Committee, through its Finance, Property and Administration Sub-Committee for these functions and will report and bring development proposals etc to the Management Committee through that Sub-Committee.

8. The Principal may form other internal groups, both ad-hoc and standing, to assist in the organisation and development of UTC, or for specific tasks, as required.

**Appendix VI(c) – Board of Christian Training Structures**



Oversight of the selection process, course requirements, licentiate and in-service training and sabbatical programme for the ordained ministry.

Serviced by the Director of Ministerial Studies.

Oversight of the Institute of Christian Training in its provision and procurement of courses and resources for leaders and members within PCI.

Serviced by the Director of Christian Training.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly note with gratitude to God the continued increase in numbers of those making application for ordained ministry, and encourage ministers and Kirk Sessions to identify suitably-gifted members so that this increase may be sustained.

### Committee on Ministerial Studies

3. That the 'Revised Scheme for Supervising Ministers', (as outlined in Appendix II), become operative from the 2010 assignment round and that Ministers receiving Assistants prior to the full implementation of the Scheme be encouraged to follow, where possible, the Board of Christian Training's new Manual for Supervising Ministers.

4. That the proposals in the report on 'The Role of Presbytery in overseeing the progress of Students for the Ministry', (as outlined in Appendix III), be agreed, that they be implemented with immediate effect and that any necessary changes in the Code be presented to the 2010 General Assembly.

5. That the following candidates, their nomination having been sustained by the Board of Christian Training, be accepted as students for the Ordained Ministry, and placed under the care of their Presbyteries:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Presbytery</b>
Jonathan Abernethy	Kilmakee	South Belfast
Rodney Beacom	Fintona	Omagh
Trevor Boyd	Pomeroy	Tyrone
Alan Buick	Portrush	Coleraine
Seamus Burke	Richhill	Armagh
David Conkey	Greenwell St	Ards
Stephen Cowan	Bloomfield	East Belfast
Michael Currie	Killymurriss	Ballymena
Aaron Ditty	First Bangor	Ards
Fiona Forbes	Ballyholme	Ards
Jonathan Frazer	Ballywillan	Coleraine
Helen Freeburn	Lucan	Dublin and Munster
Simon Hamilton	First Portadown	Armagh
Kevin Hargaden	Maynooth	Dublin and Munster
Keith Hibbert	Main St, Garvagh	Coleraine
Philip Kerr	First Broughshane	Ballymena
David Lennox	First Castledawson	Tyrone
Gareth Maclean	Stormont	East Belfast
Stephen McNie	Trinity, Ballymoney	Route
Corrina McQuigg	Lowe Memorial	South Belfast
Paul Orr	Greyabbey	Ards
Ben Preston	Dungannon	Tyrone
Gareth Simpson	Rosemary	North Belfast
Brian Smyth	Trinity, Letterkenny	Donegal



**Committee on Ministerial Development**

6. That the new scheme for the Ministerial Development Programme, (as outlined in Appendix V 'Towards the Development of Ministerial Development'), be agreed and implemented from 1 September, 2009.

7. That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be 0.25p per £ of stipend.

**Union Theological College Review Panel**

8. That the General Assembly agree a job description for a new position of Principal of Union Theological College with executive responsibility be drawn up by the Board of Christian Training, (as outlined in par 8.1 and Appendix VIa), the post advertised and a nomination brought to the 2010 General Assembly for appointment.

9. That the General Assembly agree that the new Management Structures for Union Theological College be agreed and that they come into place with immediate effect, as the necessary formal legislative changes are implemented, (as outlined in par 8.2 and Appendix VIb).

10. That the General Assembly request that the General Board form a Panel to report on the wider role of Faculty, (as outlined in par 8.3).

11. That the General Assembly instruct the Clerk of the General Assembly to draft Overtures to give permanent effect to the agreed changes in the Management Structures for Union Theological College and to take steps to have any necessary amendments enacted to the 1978 Act of Parliament, (as outlined in par 8.4).

12. That the Union Theological College Management Committee, in consultation with the Board of Finance and Personnel, implement a review of all relevant policies and procedures of Union Theological College, (as outlined in par 8.4).

13. That the General Assembly agree that the new three Department model within Union Theological College be adopted, (as outlined in par 8.5), and that Dr TD Alexander's role within Union Theological College be re-designated to that of 'Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Director of Post-Graduate Studies', taking effect from 1 September, 2009.

14. That the General Assembly request the Union Theological College Management Committee to actively pursue new relationships with Edgehill College, with other Recognised Colleges of QUB and with other appropriate institutions and organisations (as outlined in par 8.6).

15. That the enhanced role of the Director of Ministerial Studies, (as outlined in par 8.7), be approved.

16. That the General Assembly approve the new management structure and role for the Institute of Christian Training, (as outlined in par 8.8), and that the Board of Christian Training be authorised to make an appointment to the new position of 'Christian Training Development Officer'.

17. That the General Assembly approve the new Committee structure for the Board of Christian Training (as outlined in Appendix VIc).

18. That the resignation of the Rev Dr WP Addley as Convener of the Ministerial Development Committee be accepted and he be thanked for his services.

19. That the Board of Christian Training, together with the appropriate working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 285 of the Code, as follows:

### **OVERTURE ON THE BOOKS**

#### **Anent Par 78(b) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 78(b) of the Code the word "Studies" be deleted (twice) and the words "Christian Training" substituted in its place (twice).

GEORGE MOORE

# COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

Convener: Rev WA KENNEDY

Secretary: Mr STW LYNAS

1. Seven years pass remarkably quickly! As a result this is the last report of the Board which the present Convener will write before becoming redundant! This final year has been an exciting one in which the Board has seen the realisation of some visions and the opening of the way into what is hopefully a more clearly articulated role for its work, leading to new structures and new activities under the incoming Convener.

2. The biggest single development results from the decision taken at the October meeting of the Board to approach the General Board with a proposal that the two Boards together should initiate a thorough review of the communications needs of the Church. The General Board was in agreement and a small steering group was set up to carry this forward, chaired by the Very Rev Dr HA Dunlop together with the Moderator, Clerk (Convener of the General Board), and the Rev WA Kennedy (Convener of the Board of Communications) and the Rev Dr Alan Russell (Convener Communications Administration Committee), with Mr Stephen Lynas (Communications Secretary) in attendance.

3. The crisis surrounding the Presbyterian Mutual Society, which has dominated the horizon of key members, has meant that the progress of the review this year has not been as rapid as hoped. However, to date this group has met four times and consulted with Board Secretaries and Conveners on their needs. It has been agreed that there is need for a Board which focuses on communications and the group has produced an outline of the responsibilities proposed for that Board. The remaining task of the review, and it is a big one, is to tease out the implications of this for staffing, systems and co-operation between the various Boards and Committees. The steering group will continue with this work during 2009 and possibly into 2010.

4. For some years the Board has carried a substantial cash surplus from the production of Points for Prayer which the United Appeal Board has asked that the Board of Communications “use or lose”. In the light of this necessity, and of things already evident from the review, the Board is exploring how it might spend this money over the next few years in ways consonant with the aims of *Points for Prayer*.

5. The *Presbyterian Herald* has continued to develop under the temporary editorship of Stephen Lynas. The Board’s aim is that the *Herald* should be a much more news and issue driven publication, whilst retaining its devotional and theological content. It has taken a while to get this into shape but this has now been almost achieved. The *Herald* continues to be self-financing but is towards the end of the present price cycle and an increase cannot be long delayed. The Board has also considered other ways in which the magazine might be distributed. Having established the new pattern of the Herald the hope is to relieve the Communications Secretary of this demanding and time-consuming

role by the appointment of a new editor (paid for from within the resources of the *Herald*).

6. The retiring Convener is grateful for the opportunity given him by the Assembly to work in this critical area. Seven years of involvement has hardened his conviction that as a Church we need to invest heavily in communications in an age which is characterised by communications. PCI has scarcely begun to reckon with the manner in which younger people, committed and interested alike, look for information and socialise, through the internet. Often the easiest way to contact and communicate with this generation is through electronic media. These years have also seen a massive uptake by Congregations of data projection for use in worship services and in Christian education. It remains a priority for the Board of Communications to provide audio-visual resources to communicate the mission and work of the central Church through this means. There is, furthermore, a huge task before the Church in countering the war on religion which rages in the media and through the evangelists of atheism. Never was the Christian Church more in need of effective apologetics and good public relations. In these tasks the Board of Communications must work with the Mission Boards to ensure that the life and work and message of the Church and of her Lord are articulated and portrayed to the very highest standard possible.

7. In these areas the appointment of Simon Kelly to work in video production was the fulfilment of an ambition the Board has had for some time. He will provide a facility through which the Boards and Committees of the Church can capitalise on the widespread adoption of data projection within Congregations. Short videos will enable them to make their work known more effectively within Church services and mid-week meetings for prayer and for reporting back to donors to the United Appeal. Simon is already showing his worth through the production of high quality video work for several of the Mission Boards. A second agreed staff appointment was deferred because the Communications review threw into uncertainty the areas in which an appointee might work.

8. Early in the year, the Rev Chris Glover tendered his resignation as Convener of the Communications Development Committee. This Committee has never really found its feet since it was renamed and redirected three years ago and the Board has not proceeded to nominate a new Convener, believing that it is better to await the outcome of the Communications review which may have implications for the roster of Committees under the Board of Communications. As a result it has not been possible to continue with the Excellence in Communications Awards which Mr Glover so usefully organised over the past two years.

9. The Board is also grateful to the other two hard-working Committee Conveners – the Rev Dr Alan Russell (Communications Administration) and the Rev George Simpson (Church Architecture). No Board Convener could have expected to work with such supportive colleagues and better counsellors.

10. Once again the Board expresses its profound gratitude to its professional staff through whom its day-to-day work is done, and done with efficiency and effectiveness. Stephen Lynas (Communications Secretary) has continued to provide the Church with a very professional press and public relations service and to juggle the many balls that the Board hands him. He has

alongside him a dedicated and skilled staff without whom the work of the Communications Department would be impossible. Thanks are due to Mrs Anne McCully (Administration Manager), Mr Edward Connolly (Production Manager), Miss Rebecca McConnell (Communications Secretary's Assistant during the maternity leave of Mrs Sarah Harding) and Mr Simon Kelly (Video Editor). It has been a genuine privilege for the present Convener to work with all of them.

## COMMUNICATION ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

1. The attention of the Committee focuses on the administration and finances of the Board, the Communications Office and the *Presbyterian Herald*. In addition the Committee is responsible for the role PCI within the Presbyterian Historical Society.

### Department

2. The Communications Department incorporates the offices of information, publication and the production of the *Herald* and the Committee endorse the thanks already expressed in the Board of Communications report for the work of Stephen Lynas and his team. The Committee appreciate the variety of skills and the conscientious application the staff bring to their work.

### Presbyterian Herald

3. Stephen Lynas has placed his own particular stamp on the *Herald* and his achievements have been in keeping with the developing demands and changes within our Church and surrounding society. However the Committee is aware that this is a temporary responsibility that he has accepted and the Committee will be considering the appointment of a permanent editor over the coming months.

### Historical Society

4. The activities of the Society continue to be represented within the Committee by the joint Convener, the Rev Ivor Smith. In this 150th anniversary year of the 1959 Revival, the Historical Society has been busy with the publication and reissue of various books and articles to mark the occasion. Members of the Assembly are encouraged to look out for various displays of items on sale and to visit the Society's office and library.

### Convener of the Board of Communications

5. The retirement of the Rev Alistair Kennedy, from his service as Convener of the Board of Communications, is noted with regret. His idealism and commitment to the importance of communications within the work of the Church and our witness to Jesus Christ. His insights and wisdom will still be

valued, based on years of faith, learning and experience, and the Board would wish him every blessing in Christ.

R ALAN RUSSELL, Convener

## **COMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

1. At its stated meeting in September the Committee received the resignation of its Convener, the Rev Chris Glover. The Board Secretary was appointed Acting Convener.

2. In the light of the review being undertaken by the General Board and a likely change in remit of the Committee no proposal is being made to appoint a new Committee Convener as yet.

3. The Excellence in Communication Awards run by the Committee for the past two years were reviewed. These have proved very successful, both in highlighting the quality of communication materials produced by Congregations and sharing good ideas more widely. In the absence of a Convener it was decided not to organise a competition this year.

STW LYNAS, Acting Convener

## **CHURCH ARCHITECTURE COMMITTEE**

1. The Committee has met on eight occasions since the last report.

2. Fifty-eight submissions were studied by the Committee and these ranged from a new Church, new halls, new manses as well as major and minor renovations.

3. The Committee would emphasise again the importance of sending plans at an early stage before working drawings are to hand. There are times when plans are received which are already at the planners. This means the Committee is in an impossible position to recommend any alterations.

4. If any Congregation is unsure about whether approval is required or not, please contact the Convener who will be happy to guide you as to the correct procedure.

5. In September, 2008, the Committee visited Geneva where members had a very informative and beneficial Autumn Tour. The Committee were shown around a number of temples which were undergoing or had recently undergone major renovations. It was a pleasure to meet a former PCI Minister, the Rev Dr Bill McComish, who was involved in the Cathedral. Major archaeological work was taking place at this Cathedral and it was a privilege to go underground and view this work.

6. If any Congregation would like some of the Committee to visit on site the Convener would be pleased to organise this if it was felt helpful.

7. A very sincere thank you to all the members of this hard-working Committee for their interest, dedication and enthusiasm, and to Anne McCully who faithfully sends out the minutes of each meeting. A special word of thanks

to our architects for the amount of time given and professional advice offered. The Convener appreciates all the help he receives.

GD SIMPSON, Convener

### **Minister in Recognised Service**

*The Rev Dr Bert Tosh reports:*

1. I continue to work as Senior Producer, Religious Programmes for BBC NI.

2. The portfolio of programmes for which I am responsible has changed little in the past twelve months. Sunday Sequence continues to attract a large audience for its exploration of that area where religious, ethical, social and cultural issues meet. The number listening to Morning Service continues to increase and, over the past twelve months, there have been some memorable and extremely relevant acts of worship. The arrangement whereby *Thought for the Day* is broadcast live on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays with the talks on four successive Tuesdays and Thursdays being given by two speakers has increased flexibility in the slot and allows us to react more readily to specific events.

3. We also contribute regularly to network radio with *Sunday Worship*, the *Daily Service* and *Prayers for the Day* on Radio 4; *Sunday Half Hour* and *Pause for Thought* on Radio 2; *Choral Evensong* on Radio 3.

4. As I have been writing for some time in these reports, the broadcasting industry is in something of a state of flux. The credit crunch will undoubtedly have a greater effect on levels of funding. This is not meant to imply that religious programming is at any particular risk but, like all programmes, it will continue to be under constant scrutiny.

5. I continue to play a full part in the life and work of the Presbytery of Dromore.

### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.

2. That the General Assembly commend and encourage the work of the Communications Review Panel.

3. That the Board of Communications explores ways to upgrade and develop the Church's core web presence and use of electronic media, so as to be better able to provide information for prayer and devotion and to undertake education on the use of electronic media.

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

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

6. That the resignation of the Rev WA Kennedy as Convener of the Board of Communications be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Rev Dr RA Russell be appointed in his place.

7. That the resignation of the Rev Dr RA Russell as Convener of the Communications Administration Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that ..... be appointed in his place.

8. That the resignation of the Rev MC Glover as Convener of the Communications Development Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that the Communications Secretary be appointed Acting Convener.

9 That the Board of Communications, together with its associated working Committees, be appointed for the ensuing year in accordance with Par 277 of the Code as follows:



# BOARD OF EDUCATION

Convener: Rev ROBERT HERRON

Secretary: Rev TREVOR GRIBBEN

1. The Board of Education has the wide remit of having a concern for the Church's interest in the various branches of education, from primary to university, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It is also charged by the Assembly to seek to promote the religious education of school children. At Board level, these responsibilities are met mainly by contributing to the public debate on educational policy.

2. In its Review of Public Administration, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland has produced some twenty policy documents and the Board has endeavoured to respond to those relating directly to the on-going contribution of the Church to the education system. The Board has also contributed to the post primary transfer debate. On a few occasions a decision was taken to issue a public statement and this was done through the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) or in the names of the education spokespersons of the Churches.

3. Since January 2009, the Department of Education and Science in the Republic of Ireland has discontinued many grants to schools under Protestant management and this has had a significant negative impact on the budgets of these schools. This matter is addressed later in the report but it is raised at this point because it brings into question the continuing commitment of the Irish Government to the education of minority communities and the difficulties they face in an educational system which largely reflects the religious ethos of the majority community.

## STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

### NORTHERN IRELAND

#### Introduction

1. In association with our Methodist and Church of Ireland partners in the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) the State Education Committee has continued to monitor and engage extensively with a wide range of educational matters. In the on-going bureaucratic challenges and complexities, the Committee's enduring focus is to advocate, develop and ensure a clear and shared vision of education shaped by the core values of the Christian faith.

2. The Committee remains ever mindful of the immense contribution made to the education of our children and young people by professional educators, Transferor Representatives on Education and Library Boards, and the volunteer legion of school governors. The Committee and Board seek to honour the work of these people by delivering whatever support is appropriate to strengthen educational provision which allows all our children and young people

to achieve their spiritual, moral, cultural, social, intellectual and physical potential.

3. Towards the end of 2009 Boards of Governors will be reconstituted. The Board thanks those who have served and who will serve. In a denomination working through its mission strategy, the Board would commend this opportunity for strategic involvement in the lives of young people and the local community.

#### **Future structure of the TRC**

4. With the dissolution of the Education and Library Boards, due to take place on 1 January, 2010, changes will be needed to the structure of the TRC. The TRC Executive can continue in its present form and proposals for new arrangements will be brought before the Assembly in 2010.

#### **Review of Public Administration (RPA)**

5. The gamut of issues encompassed within this statutory framework has yet again occupied most of the Board's and Committee's agenda.

6. The Education Bill was introduced to the Assembly in December 2008 by the Education Minister. The Bill is the key piece of legislation setting up the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). The TRC responded to this new legislation in a submission to the Assembly Education Committee in February 2009 (see Appendix I). Having given consideration to the wider implications of the proposals, the TRC highlighted several key areas of concern. The implications of the extensive powers of ESA covering ownership and governance of controlled schools were questioned, having regard to the complete lack of TRC representation on ESA. A structural over-centralisation, instead of improving efficiency, may actually endanger effective and comprehensive local delivery of direct services, support and advice. One area of particular concern is in the provision for the RE curriculum.

7. As a result of the TRC's extensive lobbying of all political parties, in tandem with representations by Church members to their local representatives, the Education Minister gave an undertaking that the Transferors' rights to nominate governors for Controlled schools would be unaltered. This was a reversal of the Department's previously stated position on future governance of schools. The TRC welcomes this as an acceptance of its contributions to educational leadership and its historic rights, based on the principle of equality.

8. The long-awaited "RPA Policy Paper 20 – Publicly Owned Schools – Ownership and Representation" has been responded to by the TRC (see Appendix II). Complex and not fully worked-out proposals are offered for a representative body AND a separate ownership body to deal with what is presently the Controlled sector. With the demise of the Education and Library Boards there does need to be some grouping to advocate for and offer strategic direction to the Controlled sector. The size of this task is placed in perspective when it is realised that this proportion of the schools estate is worth approximately £2.3 billion.

9. However, the TRC has strongly challenged a governance framework based on what it considers to be a deeply flawed ownership model. This model,

if pursued, will end up differentially removing Protestant input as a right into the school sector which was entrusted to the state, in good faith, by our forbears.

10. Amidst the legislative minutiae and governance frameworks the core concern of the Board is to secure the ethos of the controlled sector which, at the time of transfer and in generations since, was believed to be enshrined in legislation and upheld by solemn agreement.

11. Last year the Committee reported that the TRC had submitted a response to “RPA Policy Paper 21” which dealt with sectoral support – post RPA. It was reported that the TRC, representing the three main Protestant denominations, receives no financial contribution from government towards its secretariat unlike the Catholic maintained, Integrated and Irish Medium sectors. Without this support the ability of the Transferors to engage with the unremitting demands made by government is hampered. The Committee is indebted in particular to its office-bearers, who amongst other demanding congregational and denominational responsibilities, have sought to fulfil the considerable demands made upon them. Nevertheless, at a time in our history when detailed strategic leadership and guidance is required, the three Protestant Churches believe they have been disadvantaged. The Committee is concerned that this current inequality could become systemically embedded and magnified if present proposals regarding educational management proceed unaltered.

#### **Area Based Planning**

12. During the year, Transferor representatives have played a full part in the process of drawing up area based plans for access to the 14-19 curriculum to meet the requirements of the entitlement framework due to become law in 2013. This will require all pupils to have access to a broader range of subjects in Key Stages 4 and 5.

#### **Arrangements for Transfer to Post-Primary Schools**

13. In November 2008 the education spokespersons of PCI, Church of Ireland, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches made a public statement highlighting deep pastoral concerns for children, their families and teachers in the midst of a bewildering confusion over transfer to post-primary education (see Appendix III). This was a genuine attempt to create space for political movement between those holding ideologically opposed positions on academic selection age 11.

14. On the initiative of this Board and following a TRC Executive meeting, a further statement was issued on 19 March, 2009, by the PCI, Church of Ireland and Methodist Education Secretaries (see Appendix IV).

15. In the intervening period, and in the absence of political agreement, the Department issued guidelines for admission which did not allow for academic selection. However, these guidelines are not legally binding upon post-primary schools and many grammar schools have indicated their intention to set admission tests from a variety of sources. At the time of writing we are facing an ‘unregulated’ system, with many children and their parents facing uncertainty about post primary transfer in 2010. Moreover, teachers and school managers are being placed in an invidious position.

### **Special Education**

16. The Board now have a Panel of experienced and skilled people ready to respond to the promised “Review of Special Education Needs Provision in Northern Ireland”. However, once again, at the time of writing there has been little evidence of progress.

17. The Committee reiterates the comments and resolutions of the 2007 and 2008 General Assemblies. At the time of writing the promised Review of Special Education Needs Provision in Northern Ireland has not been forthcoming. We are concerned and deeply disappointed that, despite repeated Ministerial and Departmental assurances, the promised Review of Special Education Needs Provision in Northern Ireland has not been forthcoming. The General Assembly has made clear over the years its commitment to these children, young people and their parents and carers (Minutes 2007, p 103, res 6). The TRC continues to press for progress. (Reports 2008, p 223).

### **Religious Education in Schools**

18. The TRC values its regular meetings with the Education and Library Board RE Advisers. These Advisers have fulfilled a vital role in supporting and developing the professional provision of RE in our schools. However, with the stringencies of vacancy controls on RPA-affected posts there are now at least two board areas with no RE Advisers. Furthermore, as under ESA there will be a different model for the delivery of curriculum support for all school subjects, there is the real potential for a marked diminution of RE support, particularly within the Controlled sector. When ESA comes into being this matter must be kept under constant scrutiny.

19. The CCEA RE Advisory Group is currently looking for a support officer to continue the valuable work of Linda Coulson. The group is raising awareness of the support materials now available to cover “World Religions” and “Reconciliation”.

### **Proposed Stranmillis/Queen’s University Merger**

20. TRC representatives have been meeting with, among others, the Vice-Chancellor of QUB, the Head and other staff of the Department of Education QUB, as well as the Department of Education and Learning Education Committee. The Vice-Chancellor has expressed an openness to engage constructively with the Churches to arrive at a mutually acceptable outcome. In this spirit the TRC are currently working on proposals for further discussion with QUB.

21. There are valid educational reasons for the proposal producing a centre of excellence in teacher training. However, there are concerns that such a structure could limit the options for students who might be expected to teach within the Controlled sector in Northern Ireland. As a consequence the supply of suitable teachers for the Controlled sector could be undermined.

22. One of the questions being asked by the Churches is – how does the Queen’s University, which is by definition secular, propose to prepare professional teachers to work within schools with an historic and vibrant

Christian ethos? How will these same teachers be enabled to lead Christian worship and religious education?

## **REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

### **Primary Schools**

23. A small but significant number of Primary Schools in the Republic of Ireland are under Presbyterian Patronage. The Board is thankful to those who fulfil the responsibilities of oversight of these schools, especially those who are involved in very hands on ways in their management. The Board also recognises the support given to such schools through the Church of Ireland Board of Education and the particular contribution of the Rev Canon John McCullagh, until recently the Republic of Ireland Education Secretary for the Church of Ireland. The Board would wish Canon McCullagh well as he returns to parish ministry.

24. The Board has recently formed a Republic of Ireland Panel to help co-ordinate its work in that jurisdiction. The first meeting of the Panel focused particularly on the issue of support for Presbyterians involved in the management of Primary Schools and plans are being drawn up to seek to enhance this support.

### **Secondary Education Committee**

*Mr Brian Duffy, Director of Secondary Education in the Republic of Ireland, reports:*

1. I am pleased to report that the Secondary Education Committee has decided to increase grants for the school year 2008/09 on a scale from boarding €1,140-€6,699 and day €480-€2,505. The Committee, which represents the main Protestant denominations, receives an annual sum from the Department of Education and Science to fund the grants to parents. The Committee has, for many years, maintained a surplus of cash in hand from year to year to provide a safety net against having to reduce grants to parents in difficult economic times, or when the government does not provide an adequate sum in a particular year. This sound financial management has been questioned by the government in recent days and it has been suggested that the Committee should eliminate the surplus and act as government departments do, using up their budget at year end. Such a move would result in parents having a great degree of uncertainty about a guaranteed grant throughout a child's school career and the idea is currently receiving detailed consideration.

2. During the year, four schools, representing all of the voluntary secondary schools under Protestant management, undertook a legal action against the Minister and the Department of Education and Science concerning the imposition of a teacher redeployment scheme, without properly safeguarding the rights of patrons as employers, nor properly consulting with patrons in advance. Following certain agreements and the payment of legal costs by the Department the action was discontinued, but tensions remain and the new scheme has fundamentally altered the employment relationship between schools

and their teachers. It is now possible for the Department to impose a teacher on a school and a second scheme is currently under discussion which is to give the Department the power to remove teachers from schools which are over their allocated state paid quota and to re-employ them in a different school, perhaps of an entirely different ethos.

3. An unprecedented deterioration in the government's budgetary situation from the autumn of 2008 has resulted in the discontinuation of most grants to schools under Protestant management and to a worsening of the pupil teacher ratio from 18:1 to 20:1 in the fee-paying schools which comprise 21 out of 26 of the Protestant schools, and to 19:1 in the comprehensive schools (16:1 in the 1970s). The removal of the grants, without notice, from January 2009 rather than at the beginning of the school year as the Education Act stipulates, has caused hardship in many schools since budgets were unable to be altered in the middle of a school year. The withdrawal of much of the supervision grant for paying substitute teachers when other teachers are away on school activities has resulted in the curtailment of many activities and will have a detrimental effect on education in the long term.

4. The fact that grants which had been agreed between the government of the day in the 1960s and the main Protestant Churches have been summarily removed has caused deep disquiet in the sector. Some analysts have referred to the current situation as discriminatory. Until this move, governments in the Republic had been careful to recognise the disadvantage of the Protestant community which has such small numbers that many families must send their children to boarding schools if they desire an education in their own religious ethos.

### **School Chaplain's Report**

#### **Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe**

*The Rev Stanley Stewart reports:*

1. Work continues in School Chaplaincy and my role in pastoral care continues to develop.

2. During the past year a large part of my time has involved the development and implementation of a Mentor and Induction programme for our new students. The support and expertise of Tim Shiels and Roy Warke in delivering training and the commitment of senior students to the principles has done much to change the school environment for new students, helping them settle in quickly and motivating them to do their very best.

3. Ministry through Morning Assembly remains a challenge, but I give thanks for the reverence and respect shown and the opportunity of providing a school focused thought for the day. Lately a series on the theme of 'Mind your head' proved very relevant, reinforcing the 'Positive mental health and suicide prevention' strategy being promoted by our local Schools' Development Officer, Nicole Sihera.

4. As the many celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the founding of the 1608 Royal Schools drew to a close the legacy includes a proposal to

establish a sixth Royal School in Uganda. Development Education has always been an integral part of the senior Religious Education Programme and that is being extended by linking with Bombi School in Galana, Kenya – thanks to Derek Roulston for his help in this. My trip to Nepal in the Autumn of 2008 has helped me understand many of the issues and I am grateful to the Board of Management of our school who granted special leave of absence to enable me to accompany my wife Valerie on her PW Presidential visit.

5. The role in promoting ‘Faith Formation’ has been greatly assisted by the many visitors into school – especially the work of Scripture Union NI, Logos Ministries, ‘Love for Life’, Exodus (thanks to Andy Lamberton, Kyle Sampson and Jayne Stewart) and the Watoto Child-Care Ministries. It is great to see our students’ faith commitment grow and relationships built with many vibrant young Christian groups in the wider community.

6. I give thanks for the openness and support available within the school, the community and the local Churches and ask for continuing prayer that this work for God will continue to bring blessing.

COLIN McCLURE, Convener

## APPENDIX I

### **Transferor Representatives’ Council The TRC submission on the Education Bill to the NI Assembly Education Committee 20 February, 2009**

The TRC welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the Committee, outlining comments and concerns regarding the Education Bill 2008.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In previous submissions to this Bill, the TRC drew attention to the impact of earlier proposals regarding future governance of schools on existing transferors’ rights. The TRC now welcomes the reassurance of the Minister in November 2008, introducing this legislation to the Assembly, that ‘the right of the transferors to nominate school governors will remain’. The Protestant Churches had made representations to MLAs from all the political parties arguing that their long standing right to nominate governors for controlled schools should be retained on the basis of fairness and equality. The TRC is grateful to the political parties for listening to its case and to those making representations on its behalf.

This principle of fairness and equality in dealing with transferors does however arise in new issues under the RPA, particularly around Policy paper 20: publicly owned schools – ownership and representation. Transferors will have more to say about these matters in a separate consultation on this paper and will brief MLAs in advance of any draft of the second Bill. However, we have real concerns that the principles of fairness and equality are not applying for members of the protestant community in certain aspects of the current Bill and will outline these as relevant sections of the bill are addressed below.

**Schedule 1, Section 2 – Membership**

2. (1) *ESA shall consist of*
- (a) *a Chair, and*
  - (b) *not fewer than 7 or more than 11 other members, appointed by the Department.*

In existing legislation, transferring Churches have historic rights to nominate a certain proportion of governors of controlled schools and members of Education and Library Boards (ELBs). These important rights, enshrined in legislation, safeguarded the transferring Churches' guardianship of the schools which they transferred and enabled transferors to have a continuing decision-making role in the provision of schools within a local area.

This Bill provides for an interim transfer of ownership of the controlled schools' estate to the ESA; a body with no transferor representation upon its Board. The TRC believes this to be a serious injustice to transferors who in consequence have legitimate rights of decision-making about schools they established, taken from them. Transferors seek their continuing rights to act as guardians for the schools they transferred, rights granted by government at the time of transfer and legislated for, and also believe they have a justifiable case for continuing their historic role as a major stakeholder within the controlled sector, at both primary and secondary levels.

**Schedule 1, Section 2 – Membership**

2. (2) *In making appointments under sub-paragraph (1), the Department shall so far as practicable secure*
- (a) *that at any time a majority of members are councillors (within the meaning of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 (c. 9)); and*
  - (b) *that each member has experience in a field of activity relevant to the discharge of the functions of ESA.*

The TRC recognises that politicians believe that this provision safeguards democratic accountability. Transferors have found however from experience of working alongside Councillors on ELBs that often when difficult decisions are to be taken regarding closures of schools or reorganisation of schools, that Councillors can be caught between the balancing the desires of constituents with their responsibilities in delivering the most effective education service.

Transferors reiterate the point above that the legal agreements made at the time of transfer when Churches were given rights of nomination to area management committees (now ELBs), must not be disregarded. Transferors believe that a great injustice is being served by their omission from membership of the ESA Board by right. Transferors believe they have a continuing right within the new administrative arrangements, to guard and oversee the schools which they established and transferred to the control of the state. They believe this is a huge inequality of treatment, in the context of all schools in NI being fully funded by the state regardless of legal ownership. If membership of the ESA Board is not permissible then there must be full recognition of transferors continuing role in oversight of property in any ownership body established for the former controlled schools.



## **Main Bill – The Education and Skills Authority**

### **Clause 2 Functions and general duty of the ESA**

*It shall be the duty of ESA (so far as its powers extend)*

2. (2)(a) *to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, intellectual and physical development of children and young persons in Northern Ireland and thereby of the community at large ...*

The TRC welcomes the intentions of this clause expressing the aim of the ESA to contribute to a holistic view of education which includes the spiritual development of children and young persons. Transferors believe this to be an expression of the wishes of the community to ensure that children have an education within a faith context. Transferors have a particular commitment to presently designated controlled schools, and believe such schools should offer an understanding of the world and the place of humanity in it within the context of belief in God and the Christian faith. Schools should also foster tolerance of and respect for the beliefs of others and should also respect the rights of those with no religious belief.

*...by ensuring that efficient and effective primary and secondary education and educational services are available to meet the needs of such children and young persons;*

Transferors have long experience of delivery of services to schools by the present ELBs. The TRC welcomes the potential within a single education authority to deliver a comprehensive and consistent service across NI. However it is concerned that over-centralisation may endanger the efficiency of local delivery. MLAs must be assured by clearer detail on the local presence of the ESA for schools before proceeding with this Bill.

2. (2)(b) *to ensure the provision of efficient and effective youth services;*

The various youth departments of transferor Churches urge that the youth service remains under the remit of the ESA. Churches view youth services as an essential educational provision although carried on in an informal setting. It is an extension of the holistic education of the person as underlined in 2.1a. It is the Churches' contention that any move to shift its setting away from an educational basis would be detrimental to the service which they believe should be strongly linked with the revised curriculum.

2. (3) *In exercising its duty under subsection (2) in relation to schools, ESA shall ensure that schools whose premises are not vested in ESA are treated on the same basis as schools whose premises are vested in ESA.*

The TRC understands that according to proposals in RPA policy paper 20, initially ownership of publicly owned schools will transfer to ESA and in the longer term an ownership body is proposed. The TRC has indicated at 1.2 above that it believes that transferors should have ownership rights extended to them in oversight of these schools by representation on the ESA Board and/or within any ownership body established for publicly owned schools.

### **Clause 3 ESA to employ all staff of grant-aided schools**

Transferors historically are focussed upon issues relating to the presently designated controlled sector; however as Churches, their Boards of Education

have links with schools in the voluntary sector. Such schools perceive within this clause a loss of autonomy and freedom which is currently enjoyed and which underpins their essential ethos and rationale.

It is important that schools in all sectors are enabled and empowered by the ESA to provide an education which is consonant with their particular ethos. Transferors share with many schools an ethos with an historic Christian faith core and essential values. They believe that no school should feel that its ethos is threatened or disabled by the powers of a central employing authority.

## **Main Bill – Other functions of ESA**

### **Clause 13 ESA to provide or secure provision of training and advisory and support services for schools**

13. (1) *It is the duty of ESA to provide or secure the provision of –*
- (a) *such training, and*
  - (b) *such advisory and support services,*

*for the Boards of Governors of grant-aided schools as is necessary for the effective discharge of their functions.*

Transferors welcome the continued provision of governor training and support services. Such support will be all the more important given an enhanced role for governors in employment of staff and raising of standards. In the controlled sector at present general HR support from ELBs is available for governors in the employment of staff and a specific HR presence is required for appointments of principals and vice-principals. It is vital that such a level of local support and advice continues to be made available.

Under the duty of governors regarding the raising of school standards, transferors have a concern that unless adequately supported the intended challenge role envisaged will undermine the confidence of many potential governors in fulfilling the role. The perceived increase in responsibility may prove too great a disincentive and may deter many suitable volunteers.

Transferor governors have particular needs and interests relevant to the provision of religious education, assembly worship, and ethos support within the school. It is vital that a specific transferor governor support is resourced by the Department through a newly created support body to enable a programme of training to be provided on an on-going basis for such governors.

13. (2) *It is the duty of ESA to provide or secure the provision of*
- (a) *further training and advisory and support services for teachers in grant aided schools;*
  - (b) *training and advisory and support services for other staff in such schools.*

The TRC seeks clarity on the methodology of delivery of teacher advisory and support services. As Religious Education (RE) is a compulsory part of the curriculum it is vital that an adequately resourced service and accessible service is available for teachers in all areas of NI. We understand that an important component of advice and support will concern raising of standards, however it is vital that a curriculum support service is maintained which not only address the provision of RE but promotes relevant linkages with other aspects of the

revised curriculum. It is to be regretted that in this period prior to the transfer of responsibilities to ESA the level of such support provided through ELBs has in fact decreased. An appropriate level of curricular support must be re-established and indeed further developed.

### **Main Bill – Boards of Governors**

#### **Clause 34 Duties of Board of Governors in relation to achievement of high standards of educational attainment**

*34 (1) It is the duty of the Board of Governors of a grant-aided school to exercise its functions with a view to promoting the achievement of high standards of educational attainment by pupils registered at the school.*

*(2) In particular, it is the duty of the Board of Governors to co-operate with ESA in relation to actions undertaken by ESA with a view to promoting the achievement of high standards of educational attainment by those pupils.*

Transferors agree that it is an important role of ESA to improve standards of attainment in schools. The TRC has responded to two recent DE policies under the theme 'Every School a Good School'. A key critique made by transferors was that many aspects of the educative process cannot easily be reduced to measurable outcomes. Unfortunately the approach of much of the school improvement policy Every School a Good School suggests a rather functional and utilitarian view of education and at odds with the holistic aims in clause 2.2 of this Bill. It is wrong in our view to see the pupil as a learning object in a classroom where inputs and outputs can be measured, assessed and compared.

With reference to this specific clause, it is of concern to transferors that a challenge role may be difficult for many governors to undertake. Lay governors challenging professional teachers in their work could lead to a breakdown of trust, the work of the Board of Governors destabilised and the customary trust and courtesies undermined. Governors will require exceptional professional support at these moments of challenge. It is unclear whether this support will be available from the ESA or delivered through the relevant support body.

As mentioned at 13.1 above transferors have a concern that increasing the burden of responsibility for school improvement may appear off-putting and prove detrimental to the recruitment of skilled and well motivated governors.

### **Main Bill – Inspections**

#### **Clause 42 Assessors and lay persons**

*42. (1) Inspectors conducting the inspection of an establishment under section 37 or 41 or by virtue of paragraph 14 of Schedule 1 to the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 (c. 8) may be accompanied and assisted in the inspection by*

- (a) assessors appointed for the purposes of that inspection by the Department; and*
- (b) lay persons assigned for the purposes of that inspection under the following provisions of this section.*

TRC believes this to be a positive clause and could be of assistance in the inspection of RE. Transferors have a particular interest in the provision of RE and would encourage the inspection of standards of teaching and learning in the subject. This would not only provide governors with an evaluation of the teaching of RE in the school but would also have the effect of raising the esteem of the subject among teachers.

Over the years it is our perception that only a small number of RE departments in schools have received an inspection. This is partly caused by the application of present legislation which requires a Board of Governors to pass a resolution to request the inspection of the subject in advance of the next inspection of the school. It is noted that in some instances when this resolution is passed it has not in fact been actioned, especially when an inspection perhaps takes place a number of years later.

Transferors believe that it would be of assistance to the inspection process if a person with appropriate experience and skills in religious education could be assigned to accompany the Department's inspectors during a school inspection of the subject. However clarity is required on this matter as clause 42 (3) seems to preclude such a person being appointed.

*42. (2) The Department may appoint a panel of persons to act as lay persons in inspections conducted under section 37 or 41 or by virtue of paragraph 14 of Schedule 1 to the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.*

*(3) A person shall not be appointed to the panel unless that person is, in the opinion of the Department, without significant personal experience in*

- (a) the management of establishments to which those provisions apply; and*
- (b) the provision of education (otherwise than as a member of the governing body of such an educational establishment or in any other voluntary capacity)*

## APPENDIX II

### **Transferor Representatives' Council Response to the consultation on RPA Policy Paper 20**

#### **PUBLICLY OWNED SCHOOLS OWNERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION 23 March, 2009**

In its responses to the various policy papers issued by government in relation to the reorganisation of education the Transferor Representatives' Council has continued to argue that the proposals made by government based on legal ownership fail to provide parity of treatment in terms of protection of a Christian ethos to children from Protestant backgrounds by comparison with those from a Catholic background. Policy paper 20 merely replicates the same position and yet again marginalises the Protestant community. The Council has repeatedly argued that this lack of parity of treatment arises from a fixation by government on a flawed ownership model of the schools estate which ignores the 100% funding of the Catholic maintained sector. Previous responses by the Council to policy papers remain applicable.

The TRC submits that government has not set out the full picture in respect of the ownership of the controlled sector. It is estimated by the Transferor Representatives' Council that between 1926 and 1947 approximately 500 schools established by the Churches were transferred into state control. Schemes were framed under the Educational Endowments Ireland Act 1885 which set up endowment boards in which endowments were vested. Schools were transferred to local education authorities and contained re-transfer provisions to permit reversions of the schools estates to the endowment boards. In recognition of this important educational resource from the transferring Churches and to secure the Christian ethos in the schools a statutory role for the Churches on the governing bodies of controlled schools was established. The department has not, despite TRC requests, identified how many original Church schools remain within the controlled sector. The TRC however considers it has a continuing interest in contributing to the ethos of those schools which are attended by pupils from a predominantly Protestant background and ensuring the protection of its remaining reversionary interests in those schools within the controlled sector.

Churches were also given a right to oversee and safeguard their interests in the future controlled schools' estate by membership of Education and Library Boards. The proportion of their membership on such Boards is determined by the number of pupils enrolled in the controlled school population of the relevant Board area (1986 Order Schedule 1). This provision demonstrates the clear link between ownership and representation of a protestant ethos.

Paper 20 proposes to rupture fundamentally the trust and indeed agreement between the Churches and the State by the elimination of its governance role as of right in transferring the legal ownership of the schools in the Education and Library Board sector to the Education and Skills Authority. This will deny a voice as of right to the Protestant community of Northern Ireland in maintaining the educational ethos of schools which the vast majority of children from that background attend.

The government seeks to use equality arguments to betray its agreement and the principles underpinning its contract with the Churches and the Protestant Community. It fails to respect the principle of parity of esteem enshrined in the Belfast Agreement between the Protestant and Catholic communities of Northern Ireland.

The Ownership Body will have no place for Transferors as of right to whom the beneficial ownership of a proportion of schools in the controlled sector reverts. The new ESA board members will be appointed by the public appointments process and will have a majority membership of local Councillors. The paper argues that the ESA could not act impartially if it was also the legal owner of one sector of schools. The view of the TRC is that the proposals for the ownership of publicly owned schools do not deliver equitable treatment for transferors. This is a matter on which the TRC will seek legal advice in the proposed trammelling of its reversionary interest in order to safeguard their interests.

Paper 20 advises that the Representative Body will broadly have a role in leading for the sector in planning discussions, developing and maintaining the ethos of the schools, nominating foundation governors and building engagement

with other sectors. It has been suggested that this body will become the 'champion' of the publicly owned schools.

The basis for the composition of the Representative Body is set out in paragraph 9 and 10 of Policy Paper 20 and refers to

*“the requirement for the ESA to treat all schools equitably means it could not perform these functions for publicly owned schools. However without sectoral representation publicly owned schools could be left in the invidious position of being the least coherent “sector” without an effective mechanism for its governors and principles to provide mutual support and the only sector without an effective voice in relation to the provision of policy advice to DE and the planning and development of the schools estate”.*

The paper specially addresses the role of the TRC and states:-

*“10. Historically the Protestant Churches, represented by the Transferors Representatives Council (TRC) have been the sectoral voice for the controlled sector, with the seats for Foundation Governors or former owners filled by nominations from the 3 main Protestant (or Transferor) Churches.*

*11. The TRC will remain a prominent voice within the publicly owned school sector, and could discharge some of the above functions. However if the TRC were to be the sole voice of the sector, this could be perceived as equating all publicly – owned schools (including those that were not transferred solely with a Protestant ethos. This sector is clearly very rich in diversity. It serves a wide variety of faiths, beliefs, ethnic backgrounds and a broad cross section of the Section 75 Groups; therefore it is important that the arrangements for this sector can reflect this and cater for all those served by the sector equally. Therefore while the TRC clearly remains a key voice within this sector, it may be necessary to consider more broadly based arrangements for publicly owned schools.”*

The TRC has never argued that it should be the only voice to represent the controlled sector but rather that it should have a voice along with other stakeholders in the sector and that this voice should be as of right. Policy Paper 20 however proposes a “voluntary organisation” of which the TRC would have membership. It is also suggested that “there may be a need for Protestant Churches to play a complementary but separate role” (paragraph 13) and have a “direct relationship with government on issues that are of particular interest to the Protestant Churches”.

The problem with such a representative body is that it will only receive sectoral support funding from the Department if it fulfils conditions of a “grant” which requires “the organisation must be able to demonstrate that the way in which it is structured and operated reflects fully, and takes account of the broad spectrum of interest and backgrounds of those who are served by the sector. This may include for example demonstrating how it will represent those who are served by the sector and come from a range of faiths and ethnic backgrounds as well as those who fall within the various Section 75 categories taking into account the specific needs and requirements that those groups may have”.

In effect the life of the Representative Body is dependant on the grace and favour of a government which in the eyes of the Council has breached its agreement and trust. The lack of a statutory role for the TRC is unacceptable in light of its representation of the vast majority of the Protestant community.

However, it should be noted that the statistics from the 2001 Census and data in respect of the pupils attending schools in 2007/8 do not reveal the diverse richness emphasised in Policy Paper 20 as the rationale for its denial of any voice as of right to the Protestant community.

The population in Northern Ireland according to the 2001 Census was 1,685,267 people. Of that population 1,446,386 declared themselves to be of a Christian Denomination (85.8%). Whilst the Roman Catholic Sector is a homogenous group the Protestant community is by the very nature of its Reformed tradition, fragmented. However within the Protestant grouping of 45.5% the vast majority of those in Northern Ireland with a Protestant faith fall within the 3 Churches (86.68%) which make up the Transferor Representatives' Council (Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist). This leaves a small but significant proportion (14.1%) of the total population of Northern Ireland as members of a category expressing no religious affiliation and a small number from other religions.

The figures for 2007/2008 available from the Department of Education in respect of the religion of pupils by school and management type confirm the de facto segregation of the education system of Northern Ireland. Extracted from the data are the figures in respect of primary schools, secondary (non grammar) and grammar schools which make up the bulk of the school population. The vast majority of children from a Roman Catholic background attend a school under Catholic management if not ownership which few Protestant children attend. Further the vast majority of all children from Protestant backgrounds attend a school in the state or controlled sector which few Catholic children attend.

The total number of children attending all schools in Northern Ireland is 325,047 pupils. The numbers of children attending grammar, secondary and primary schools is 303,442 (93.35%). 78.5% of the pupil population of the controlled sector comes from the Protestant Community with at least 86.68% of that group made up of members of the three Churches which comprise the TRC.

The government is concerned to ensure its governance arrangements represent the diversity of its pupil population in the controlled sector. 4.1% of that population is Catholic. Pupils recorded as "other Christian, non Christian or religion not recorded" are more likely to attend schools in the controlled sector than Catholic sector make up 17.4% of the total attendees. It is believed that the 17.4% includes a significant number of members of the Protestant community and hence the figure is in all likelihood considerably smaller.

There is no doubt that these other groups amounting to 21.5% of the controlled sector population must be represented in any governance arrangements. However to deny any representation in the controlled sector to the 78.5% of the Protestant Community of Northern Ireland as of right is to deny parity of treatment between the two majority cultural and religious traditions in Northern Ireland. This is not the intention underpinning the Northern Ireland Act and indeed government has taken action to secure that parity of treatment in some of its legislative provisions.

Once again the Policy Screening Form from the Department of Education fails to identify the blindingly obvious inequity of treatment between Protestant and Catholic communities and other groups in its focus on the controlled sector in the context of the segregated education system of Northern Ireland. Set out

below is the statistical basis from which it is believed that the Department's Screening document misleads as to the impact of the government's proposed policy.

**Religious background of Citizens of Northern Ireland**  
**Appendix 5 Northern Ireland Census 2001 Table KS07C Religion**

<b>All persons</b>	<b>1,685,267</b>	100%
Catholic	678,462	40.25%
Transferors (PCI + CI + MCI)	665,703	39.5%
Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI)	348,742	20.69%
Church of Ireland (CI)	257,788	15.29%
Methodist Church in Ireland (MCI)	59,173	3.51%
Other Christian (including Christian related) (vast majority Protestant)	102,221	6%
<b>All Protestant Faiths</b>	<b>767,924</b>	<b>45.5%</b>
<b>All Christian Faiths</b>	<b>1,446,566</b>	<b>85.8%</b>
<b>Other religions and philosophies includes:</b>	<b>5,028</b>	0.29%
Muslim	1,943	
Hindu	825	
Buddhist	533	
Jewish	365	
<b>Religion not stated or no religion</b>	<b>233,853</b>	<b>13.87%</b>

Religion of pupils by school and management type (2007/2008 DE)

<b>Primary Schools</b>	<b>Protestant</b>	<b>Catholic</b>	<b>Other Christian</b>	<b>Non Christian</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
Controlled Schools	55,881	3,506	2,797	467	10,796	73,447
Catholic Maintained/ Other Maintained	747	73,248	197	159	525	74,876
Controlled Integrated	1,007	627	94	31	450	2,209
Grant Maintained Integrated	1,732	2,109	271	50	806	4,968
<b>Total</b>	<b>59,367</b>	<b>79,490</b>	<b>3,359</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>12,577</b>	<b>155,500</b>



<b>Non Grammar</b>	<b>Protestant</b>	<b>Catholic</b>	<b>Other Christian</b>	<b>Non Christian</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
Controlled	28,098	503	967	82	3,497	33,147
Catholic Maintained/ Other Maintained	240	40,739	64	52	174	41,269
Controlled Integrated	1,390	490	68	17	339	2,303
Grant Maintained Integrated	3,556	4,001	461	83	842	8,943
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,284</b>	<b>45,733</b>	<b>1,560</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>4,852</b>	<b>85,663</b>

<b>Grammar</b>	<b>Protestant</b>	<b>Catholic</b>	<b>Other Christian</b>	<b>Non Christian</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
Controlled Grammar Schools	11,363	978	900	62	1,546	14,849
Voluntary Schools under Catholic Management	235	27,056	77	36	91	27,495
Voluntary Schools under other Management	13,571	1,958	1,065	154	3,187	19,935
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,167</b>	<b>29,992</b>	<b>2,042</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>4,824</b>	<b>62,279</b>

This stark statistical data underlines why the government needs to consider alternative proposals which address the rights of all members of the community of Northern Ireland and secure continued respect for an ethos reflective of the Protestant community as the vast bulk of users of schools in a controlled sector which has ensured the delivery of a high educational standard of education.

The TRC's views of the consultation questions are set out below:

1. Assuming acceptance of the need to transfer ownership of controlled schools out of the ESA while still retaining public ownership, and balancing the need to address the legitimate concerns of stakeholders against the added costs of new ownership arrangements, and the contravention of a key RPA principle, is it appropriate to proceed with the establishment of a statutory ownership body?

*The premise of this question is fundamentally flawed and the inevitable outcome fails to provide parity of treatment for the Protestant community.*

2. Would the proposals in this paper address the concerns of stakeholders on this issue?

*Regrettably not, for the reasons outlined above.*

3. Is there a more appropriate ownership arrangement that would address the concerns of stakeholders while keeping costs and risks to a minimum, and ensuring robust financial controls and accountability arrangements safeguarding this asset for future generations?

*The creation of two bodies would appear to be a poor use of resources and contrary to the RPA principles of rationalisation. There also seems within the papers to be a duplication of functions e.g. around planning and nomination of governors. However, it is difficult to see how a single body could be created when one is voluntary and the other is statutory. The TRC is not convinced that the proposals address fully the future support and ownership requirements of publicly owned schools. It has argued for a model based on public funding which could address both the schools estate and governance.*

4. Should the legal owner simply hold the deeds of these schools, or have a long term transformational role?

*The suggestion within the papers is that the ownership body in the long term facilitates school boards of governors taking on their own legal ownership. The paper indicates clearly that this is a most onerous role and not to be taken lightly. It raises accountability challenges which are difficult to fully quantify at this stage. The TRC does not believe this would be a realistic proposal.*

5. Do you agree that the ownership body should have a statutory obligation to take account of the views of the representative organisation?

*The TRC considers that the current proposals for these two bodies present too many unresolved difficulties.*

### **Concluding Comment**

**The TRC continues to assert an alternative funding rather than legal ownership model as the basis on which to determine governance arrangements. It believes this model could also secure protection of ownership rights. Further it argues that whatever model is used it must secure protection of ethos as of right.**

## **APPENDIX III**

### **JOINT STATEMENT BY THE EDUCATION SPOKESPERSONS FOR THE FOUR MAIN CHURCHES**

**5 November, 2008**

As representatives of the Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, Methodist and Catholic Churches, working in education, we wish to put on public record our concerns about the current impasse in education reform in Northern Ireland. Our primary concern is pastoral, particularly for those immediately affected by the failure to reach agreement around new transfer arrangements to post-primary schools.

We feel compelled to give voice to a deep unease among teachers and parents of primary school pupils, especially those parents with pupils in year 6. There is a growing sense of frustration within our Churches, and within society as a whole, that no agreement at a political level seems within reach.

It is clear that there are strong yet unreconciled convictions about the best system of education for the future. Each viewpoint seems to cancel out the other and, in the absence of consensus, we risk heading to an abyss of unregulated arrangements. It is also of concern that year 6 children are increasingly likely to become anxious or distressed as they pick up on adult confusion about the type and number of any tests in the future.

Over the summer a group of educationalists, representing a diverse range of views on transfer, met together and produced tentative proposals which in our view seem to suggest a workable approach. The group shared ideas, displaying vision and openness to a new way forward, which would lead to the disappearance of academic selection at age 11 and the use of criteria to access certain courses and pathways at the age of 14 which could include, amongst others, academic criteria. That group's work may not be the final word but we feel that it is worthy of detailed consideration and may form a basis for on-going discussions leading to an increasing degree of consensus about the contentious issue of transfer arrangements.

We ask our politicians, and others, to stand back from established positions and to create the space necessary so that, through dialogue between those with different outlooks, the best way forward may be found for all children.

Statement issued by:

Rev Ian Ellis (Secretary to the Church of Ireland Board of Education NI)

Rev Trevor Gribben (Education Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland)

Rev Trevor Jamieson (Northern Convenor of the Methodist Church in Ireland Board of Education)

Bishop Donal McKeown (Chairman of the NI Commission for Catholic Education)

#### APPENDIX IV

**Transferor Representatives' Council  
STATEMENT FROM THE TRC REGARDING  
THE IMPASSE ON TRANSFER  
19 March, 2009**

Following a meeting of the Transferor Representatives' Council this week, the body which represents the voice of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland on education matters in Northern Ireland, the Educational Spokespersons for these three Churches issued the following statement:

As representatives of the Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist Churches, working in education, we wish to put on public record our intense

disappointment that the necessary political will did not exist to at least find an accommodation on an agreed and regulated interim arrangement for transfer. It is clearly apparent that, even with the best efforts of many involved, much confusion and uncertainty exists among Principals and School Governors and that there is a deep sense of unease among teachers and parents of year 6 pupils in all primary schools.

An unregulated system of transfer within Northern Ireland is something that is unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of the whole community and as such represents a failure in good governance. We would therefore call upon the Minister of Education and the political parties, even at this late stage, to seek to find agreement to enable regulated interim arrangements for transfer to be put in place. This would create the certainty and confidence, which only such regulated interim transfer arrangements, can provide.

During the space created by agreed interim transfer arrangements, we would propose that a 'Working Group on Transfer' should be tasked with seeking to build a genuine longer-term consensus. To ensure such a Working Group on Transfer has the confidence of political parties and the wider community, we would suggest that it should be appointed in a consensual manner and made up largely of individuals from within the educational community, representing a range of necessary skills and views on transfer.

Statement issued by:

Rev Ian Ellis (Secretary to the Church of Ireland Board of Education NI)

Rev Trevor Gribben (Education Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland)

Rev Trevor Jamieson (Northern Convenor of the Methodist Church in Ireland Board of Education)

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.

### **Northern Ireland**

2. That the General Assembly express appreciation to the political parties in Northern Ireland for recognising the long standing right of the Transferring Churches to nominate governors for Controlled schools and for advocating, on the basis of fairness and equality, that these rights should remain and welcome the assurance by the Minister of Education that the relevant legislative provisions, necessary to ensure these rights of nomination, will be retained.

3. That the General Assembly express grave concern about the current proposals for the creation in Northern Ireland of a new Education and Skills Authority and other related bodies:

- (a) believing that the proposals remove from the Transferring Churches the historic right to have representation at a wider level on the bodies owning and administering the schools the Churches established and transferred into state control; and therefore viewing the proposals as fundamentally rupturing the trust, and indeed agreement, between the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the state by the elimination of this

wider governance role as of right;

- (b) believing that the proposals deny a voice, as of right, to the Protestant community of Northern Ireland in maintaining the Christian ethos of schools which the vast majority of children from that background attend; and therefore viewing the proposals, taken alongside proposals for other sectors, as failing to respect the principle of parity of esteem enshrined in the Belfast Agreement between the Protestant and Catholic communities of Northern Ireland.

4. That the General Assembly express dismay that the promised Review of Special Education Needs Provision in Northern Ireland has not been forthcoming and calls for steps to be taken to progress this review as a matter of urgency,

5. That the General Assembly express deep disappointment that the necessary political will did not exist to at least find an accommodation on an agreed and regulated interim arrangement for transfer between primary school and secondary school, viewing an unregulated system of transfer as a failure in good governance.

### **Republic of Ireland**

6. That the General Assembly express thanks to those who fulfil demanding responsibilities in the oversight of the small but significant number of National Schools in the Republic of Ireland under Presbyterian Patronage.

7. That the General Assembly, noting with concern the recent cuts in the funding available for secondary education in the Republic of Ireland and the disproportionate effect such cuts have had on many Secondary Schools under Protestant management, call upon the government to ensure that on-going policy protects minority rights within the state and secures the future of Secondary Schools with a Protestant ethos.

8. 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 FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Convener: JOHN MILLAR

1. The process of merging the Staff and the PWA/Overseas Board etc Pension Schemes with the Ministers' Pension Scheme has been in train since this was approved at last year's General Assembly. As from 1 January, 2009, all Scheme members have been accruing benefits under the new arrangements.

2. The legal formalities of transferring the assets and liabilities of the Staff and the PWA/Overseas Board etc Schemes are well advanced and it is hoped to complete these by the end of March, 2009. When all transfers and legal matters have been completed the Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978) will be renamed The Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009). Overtures to reflect the change in name are appended to the Report.

3. In 2008, when submitting its proposals for changes to pension arrangements, the Board was at pains to point out the possibility of higher funding rates in the future. Regrettably, this appears to be happening quicker and more severely than anticipated.

The Actuary has carried out a valuation of the new merged Scheme as at 31 December, 2008, and this shows a deficit of £20 million. There are various methods of arriving at a funding rate and the issues are set out below in the Report of the Pensions and Assessments Committee.

At the time of writing this Report, a meeting has been arranged between the Scheme Trustees and The Pensions and Assessments Committee to see if agreement on a funding rate can be reached.

Whatever the outcome of discussions with the Trustees, it is clear that pension costs will increase substantially. A Supplementary Report and Resolution will be prepared for the General Assembly.

Despite the changes agreed last year, negative investment returns and lower long-term interest rates have contributed to a major deterioration in the position of defined benefit schemes. The Church will require further serious consideration of its attitude to pensions. As a result of a resolution at last year's General Assembly, this is currently the responsibility of the General Board.

4. The Report of the Tyrone Memorial Review Panel is Appendix I of this Report. The Panel, which included members of the Board, Union Commission and Board of Mission in Ireland, recommended that the time is now opportune to consider a new basis for the financial support of Ministers. The Board concurred and the General Assembly will be asked to require the Board to develop proposals and to report back in 2010.

5. The various Funds and Accounts administered by the Board have substantial bank balances and, due to the banking crisis, this has caused a lot of concern during the last year. The Board constantly reviews the situation and, in addition to spreading deposits between a number of banks, confines deposits to those banks with high credit ratings.

6. In order to ensure on-going compliance with the procedures for reporting Ministers' Expenses to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Board has decided to refer details of outstanding submissions to relevant Presbyteries for action.

7. Excluding the assessment for Ministers' Pensions which is not yet available, the undernoted proposed assessments are the same, in total, as in 2008.

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>
	p	p	p
Central Ministry Fund	20.00	18.00	16.00
Retired Ministers' Fund	4.25	6.00	7.00
Widows of Ministers' Fund	5.00	5.50	6.25
Prolonged Disability Fund	0.50	0.25	0.50
Incidental Fund	5.00	5.00	6.00
Church House External Work	3.50	3.50	3.50
Special Assembly*	0.25	0.25	0.25
Ministerial Development Fund*	0.25	0.25	0.25
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Sub-total	38.75	38.75	39.75
Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)	0.0	26.00	22.50
PCI Pension Scheme (2009)	tba		
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total		64.75	59.75
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

\*These figures are set by other Boards and are provisional at the time of writing.

### **Mr John Millar**

*The Rev JL Casement writes:*

8. The Board wishes to express appreciation to Mr John Millar who has been Convener since 2004. This is a very demanding role and the Board has benefitted greatly from his wide range of experience and his devotion to the responsibilities of the position. During his time, he has to deal with a wide range of issues including the amalgamation of the former Boards of Finance and Administration and Ministry and Pensions, the previous and present reviews of the Tyrone Memorial, the assessment of the job evaluation scheme, and the extremely complex issues involved in the review of pension. In a previous capacity as convener of the Retirement and Pension Committee, he played a key role in the establishment of the Prolonged Disability Fund. He has always given of his time freely and has combined his role as Convener with that of being a member of the Executive Committee of Trustees, Chairman and Trustee of the Pension Schemes and has on many occasions been an important member of other committees and panels. The Board is indebted to him for his wise leadership and recognise the extensive experience and abilities he has brought to the role.

## PENSIONS' AND ASSESSMENTS' COMMITTEE

### Central Ministry Fund

1. At the end of 2008, CMF had a retained balance (excluding investments) of £2,024,308, a decrease of £95,672 on 2007. This is despite an increase in the rate of assessment from 16p in 2007 to 18p in 2008.

2. One of the principal reasons for the deficit is an increase of £116,042 in the cost of augmented grants, from £564,009 in 2007 to £680,051 in 2008. A substantial contributory factor was the adverse currency movement of Sterling against the Euro. Many charges in the Republic of Ireland are augmented, thus necessitating the purchase of Euro to pay stipends.

3. During 2008 bank interest earned on CMF retained balance was £130,311. Best estimates indicate that, because of unprecedented falls in interest rates, owing to the global financial recession, interest in 2009 is likely to amount to circa £34,000, a decrease of some £95,000.

4. Taking these factors into account, the Committee concluded that, in order to maintain a prudent reserve, it is necessary to increase the rate of assessment again this year.

5. The proposed rate of assessment for 2009 is therefore 20p per £ of Stipend, an increase from 18p in 2008.

6. The following increases were set by the Board, under the Tyrone Memorial Scheme:

Stipend	% Increase
£0 - £25,000	4.50%
£25,001 - £30,000	3.75%
£30,001 - £35,000	3.25%
£35,001 - £40,000	2.75%
£40,001 and over	2.25%

*EURO Stipends increase by 3.9% under Tyrone Memorial*

7. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2009:

#### (a) Ministerial Minimum

	Northern Ireland		Rep. of Ireland	
	2009 £	2008 £	2009 €	2008 €
Ministerial Minimum	22,416	21,450	35,241	33,917
After 5 years' service	22,977	21,986	36,123	34,765
After 10 years' service	23,538	22,522	37,005	35,613
After 15 years service	24,099	23,059	37,887	36,461
After 20 years service	24,660	23,595	38,769	37,309
After 25 years service	25,221	24,131	39,651	38,157
After 30 years' service	25,782	24,668	40,533	39,005



**(b) Family Grants 2009**

	2009		2008	
	£	€	£	€
Birth to 10 years	335	982	320	945
11 to 15 years	502	1,548	480	1,490
16 years and over				
At school	752	2,862	720	2,755
At university	2,503	4,774	2,395	4,595
<b>Bands – Joint Incomes</b>				
<i>Reduction - Nil</i>	25,673	39,404	24,745	37,925
<i>Reduction - £1 for every £5</i>	34,538	52,999	33,290	51,010
<i>Reduction - £1 for every £2</i>	34,538	52,999	33,290	51,010

The grant in respect of any child who is 16 years + falling into category (b) and who is in receipt of a maintenance or training grant shall be reduced by £1 every £1 by which such grant or other sponsorship or scholarship exceeds £1,000.

**(c) The amount a Minister may earn**, apart from Congregational work, without the augmented grant being affected, shall be £4,472 under Par 316(2)(d)(i) of the Code or £2,350 under Par 316(2)(d)(ii). The maximum under the above paragraphs shall be £4,472.

**(d) That in reckoning augmentation for 2009**, the CMF shall not take account of a sum not exceeding the annual bonus, being income from the Commutation, Sustentation and Central Ministry Funds. Code Par 316(2)(e).

8. The Board recommended that in the light of the strain placed upon CMF funding by the continued growth in Bonus payments as highlighted in Reports 2008, p 238, par 5, CMF Bonus for 2008 be held at £1,518pa. It was agreed that the future of bonus should form part of the discussions of the Tyrone Memorial Review Panel.

**Widows of Ministers Fund**

9. At the end of 2008, WMF had a retained balance (excluding investments) of £1,043,424, an increase of £8,190 on 2007.

10. It is anticipated that, for the reasons stated in par 3, interest on the retained balance will decrease by circa £47,000 from £63,855 to £17,000.

11. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2009:

- (a) That the assessment for 2009 be 5p per £ of Stipend, a reduction from 5.5p in 2008, continuing with the pattern of reductions over recent years.
- (b) That the maximum Widows Pension be £ 6,165.
- (c) That widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension receive a maximum of £ 6,165 plus £475.
- (d) That widows not in receipt of Northern Ireland State Pension or PWFA receive a maximum of £ 6,165 plus £500.
- (e) That widows whose husbands were not eligible for Northern Ireland State Pension receive a maximum of £6,165 plus £4,716.

12. The recommended reduction in assessment implies, on budgeted figures, a reduction in reserves over 2009 of some £78,000.

### **Presbyterian Widows Fund Association**

13. All Ministers, under the provisions of the Code, are required to join this Association at ordination. The annual membership subscription is 1.25% of the Ministerial Minimum for active Ministers and is 0.2% for retired Ministers. An additional 0.1% is charged to Ministers not under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Membership provides an annuity to widows, which is currently £1,200.

14. The General Assembly, in 2008, granted permission, in special circumstances, for one Licentiate not to join the Association.

### **Retired Ministers Fund**

15. At the end of 2008, RMF had a retained balance (excluding investments) of £1,920,315, an increase of £213,956 on 2007.

16. A substantial portion of the increase came about as a result of a generous bequest of £142,000 to the fund which is unlikely to be repeated in 2009.

17. Furthermore it is anticipated that, for the reasons stated in par 3, interest on the retained balance will decrease by circa £81,000 from £110,000 to £29,000.

18. The Committee, nevertheless, being mindful of the demands on Congregations, and as a consequence of having built a prudent reserve, wish to reduce the assessment.

19. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2009:

- (a) That the assessment for 2009 be 4.25p per £ of Stipend, a reduction from 6.0p in 2008, continuing with the pattern of reductions over recent years.
- (b) That the maximum Basic Retirement Allowance be £11,208.
- (c) That Supplemental Grant for those living in the Republic of Ireland with no State Pension is currently £7,543 married, £4,716 single.

20. The recommended reduction in assessment implies, on budgeted figures, a reduction in reserves over 2009 of some £195,000.

### **PCI Pension Scheme (2009)**

21. In 2008 the General Assembly agreed that the PCI Pension and Life Assurance Scheme (The Staff Scheme) and the PCI PWA/Irish Mission/Overseas Board Retirement and Death Benefits scheme would merge with MPS (1978) to form a single scheme, to be renamed the PCI Pension Scheme (2009), with a unified benefit structure.

22. The merger of the schemes requires that an actuarial valuation be carried out. The results of the valuation determine the funding rate necessary to provide for future service and to eliminate any actuarial deficit.

23. The valuation was calculated on several different bases each of which use slightly different assumptions. The trustees considered all the bases but

agreed to a basis which makes some allowance for the unprecedented low interest rates and the consequent worsening of yields on Gilts.

24. When the changes to the Schemes were proposed, it was hoped that, as a result of those changes, the unified scheme might start off with a small actuarial surplus. However, as a consequence of the financial turmoil during the period since the proposals were agreed, the value of the scheme investments has fallen considerably and financial conditions have worsened. The combined effect is that the valuation has shown the merged scheme to have a very substantial actuarial deficit of some £20 million.

25. The Funding rate for accrual of future benefits, on the basis chosen, has been calculated as 23.5% of pensionable income (16.5% employer, 7% member).

26. Reports 2008 (p 241, par 28) indicated that The Pensions Regulator is uneasy about 'recovery periods', for the elimination of scheme funding deficits, in excess of 10 years. The Regulator has, however, given indication that there is 'sufficient flexibility in the rules' to cover the additional deficits that many schemes will have experienced during the current period of financial difficulty. This appears to be a coded message to suggest that a more pragmatic approach may be taken by schemes and that a longer recovery period may be appropriate.

27. The funding rate for repayment of the deficit, over a 14 year term, which is the average period to retirement of the active members of the scheme, would, on the selected basis, be a further 10.9% making the combined funding rate 34.4%.

28. The funding rate for repayment of the deficit, over a 20 year term, would, on the selected basis, be a further 8.0% making the combined funding rate 31.5%.

29. If, for example, a 20 year repayment period was selected, this would be likely to attract much closer scrutiny by the Regulator and the Trustees might be expected to seek further security, such as Contingent Assets.

30. Congregational contributions to MPS are collected by an assessment on stipend rather than as a percentage of pensionable income.

31. The assessment required to fund a 14 year recovery period, is 33p per £ of Stipend, an increase of 7.0p on the current assessment.

32. The assessment required to fund a 20 year recovery period, is 29.5p per £ of Stipend, an increase of 3.5p on the current assessment.

33. Under the rules of the scheme the Trustees and the 'Employer' must agree a funding rate. If agreement cannot be reached the matter will be referred to the Regulator.

34. The Trustees, acting upon advice from the scheme actuary, requested a 14 year recovery period.

35. Pensions and Assessments Committee acting as the 'Employer' agreed to approach the Trustees to request that they reconsider a 20 year recovery period on the grounds of affordability.

36. A final decision regarding the funding rate is required by 31st March, 2010, although it is desirable for the rate and consequent assessment to be agreed in time for the 2009 Assembly.

37. Since the last Assembly, the following were granted leave to retire, at or over age 65, by their Presbyteries:

The Rev WH Sanderson (Ballydown and Katesbridge), the Rev Brian Kennaway (Crumlin), the Very Rev Dr JW Lockington (Clogherney), the Rev William McKeown (Ravenhill), and the Rev RN Agnew (West Kirk).

38. Leave to retire early on ill health grounds was granted to the Rev RJ Mattison (Cremore, Poyntzpass and Fourtowns), having been approved by his Presbytery and Pensions and Assessments Committee.

39. Unanimous approval was given to the Rev WJ Johnstone (Craigie Hill), and the Rev Noel Ward (Banagher) to seek the permission of the 2009 General Assembly to retire on or after their respective 64th birthdays, in August, 2009, and December, 2009.

40. The Trustees did not award any discretionary increase for pensions in payment, accrued pre 1997, in excess of the Guaranteed Minimum Pension.

### **Ministers Prolonged Disability Fund**

41. At the end of 2008, the Fund had a retained balance of £753,257, an increase of £6,866 on 2007

42. It is anticipated that, for the reasons stated in Par 3, interest on the retained balance will decrease, by circa £35,000, from £47,031 to £12,000.

43. This fund is very 'sensitive' to falling interest rates, as interest represents a significant proportion of its income. (63% in 2008).

44. For this reason the Committee feel that it is necessary to increase the assessment.

45. The following recommendations were approved by the Board for 2009:

(a) That the assessment for 2009 be 0.5p per £ of Stipend, an increase from 0.25p in 2008.

(b) That the maximum level of grant for 2009 increase to £11,298.

46. In 2008, 4 Ministers received benefits under the Fund.

47. In addition to annual grants, pension contributions to MPS are paid by the fund until the beneficiary returns to work or attains his or her normal retirement age. In broad terms the cost to the fund, for each person receiving benefit, including pension contributions, is in excess of £17,000 pa.

### **The Staff Pension Scheme**

48. The Trustees Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2007, are included in the published accounts.

### **Incidental Fund**

49. At the end of 2008, the Incidental Fund had a retained balance of £309,058, an increase of £59,415 on 2007.

50. Within this balance a sum of £150,000 is held as provision for Legal, Actuarial, Advisory and administrative costs incurred but not yet paid in connection with the review of the Church Pension Schemes.

51. Grants from the Incidental Fund are approved by General Assembly under resolutions pertaining to individual Boards. It is the role of the Board of

Finance and Personnel, acting on advice from its Pensions and Assessments Committee, to recommend an appropriate assessment, sufficient to meet the grants agreed and to maintain a prudent reserve.

52. On budgeted figures, should the assessment remain at 5p per £ of stipend, the underlying reserve in the Incidental Fund at the end of 2009 will be circa £85,000. The Committee consider this to be an adequate figure, although not quite at the level that would be considered desirable!

53. The following recommendation was approved by the Board for 2009: That the assessment for 2009 be 5.0p per £ of Stipend, the same as in 2008.

#### **The Ministerial Development Fund**

54. At the end of 2008, the Ministerial Development Fund had a retained balance of £396,285. Responsibility for recommending any assessment for this fund lies with the Board of Christian Training.

#### **Church House Stonework Repair**

55. Responsibility for recommending any assessment for repairs to Church House stonework lies with the Property Management Committee.

#### **Guide to Congregational Assessments**

56. The Financial Secretary has produced a leaflet, for Congregational Treasurers, explaining assessments. This is an excellent publication which will help Treasurers to understand the system.

57. Assessments are set by the General Assembly, in arrears, and apply to the year in which they are set. Thus, should Assessments increase, the next Direct Debit, in August, collects the increase retrospectively. This can cause Congregational Treasurers difficulty with budgeting.

58. It was suggested that one solution might be that at the September Pensions and Assessments Committee meeting, recommendations be made to the Board for the incoming year, for assessments to be collected on a provisional basis from the start of the incoming year. When final assessments are agreed by General Assembly, any necessary adjustments would be made. This process should considerably reduce the possibility of budgeting problems.

59. A resolution is appended to seek permission for this system to be implemented. If this resolution is approved the first 'Provisional' assessment will be set at the October 2009 Board and the first debit collected by this method in February 2010.

DOUGLAS CROWE, Convener

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

1. The Committee met on two occasions during the year.
2. Thanks are due to Ms Laura Kelly, Head of Personnel, and her team for their provision of a thoroughly professional Human Resources Service throughout the year.

3. Thanks are also due to Mr Herbie Smyth and Mr Ian McElhinny for their work in respect of the Retired Ministers' House Fund.

### **Personnel Matters**

4. The roll-out of the Job Evaluation Scheme is on-going, with most Church House administrative posts having been evaluated. Remaining posts are being scheduled for the near future and thereafter the Panel will proceed with the evaluation of the executive graded posts.

5. A Panel to monitor and develop Health and Safety awareness has been established. During the year it issued guidance to Northern Ireland Congregations on how to start addressing Health and Safety issues and organised a training evening on risk assessments. The Panel is working with Peninsula Business Services to update the Health and Safety manual. The Committee's thanks are due to all members of the Panel for their contributions to this subject which is of key importance to our Congregations.

6. Work has continued on the task of developing and updating personnel policies and procedures to reflect the changing legislative requirements and the needs of our staff.

7. A salary increase of 1% was applied to Administrative and Executive scales in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland from 1 January, 2009. The Committee is aware this was less than the increases applied to Ministers stipend under the provisions of the Tyrone Memorial system, also from 1 January, 2009. The economic and financial situation changed significantly between the two dates the increases were considered. The Board has agreed that the Conveners of the two relevant Committees i.e. this Committee and the Pension and Assessments Committee should jointly consider the timing and basis of future discretionary increases

8. A new points based system for employing Non European Economic Area Nationals has been introduced and the Church has registered centrally with the UK Borders Agency.

9. The Peninsula Employment manual for Congregations in Northern Ireland has been updated and re-issued.

### **Retired Ministers House Fund**

10. Outline planning consent in respect of the property in Cullybackey that was bequeathed to the Fund by Miss Jane Megaw was received during the year. It is expected that marketing of the site may not occur until there are signs of improvement in the property market.

11. A limited number of Applications for assistance were received during the year. The Fund continues to provide assistance either by way of loans or letting of available property. During the year, one property was completely refurbished and on-going repair work carried out to a number of other properties.

DAVID LAMB, Convener

**APPENDIX**

**Sterling Salary Scales of Staff in post on 1 January 2009 (inclusive of a discretionary 1% increase with effect from 1 January 2009, following the annual review of salaries.)**

**EXECUTIVE POSTS****Scale 1 (£21,872 - £26,172)**

Communications Officer, BMI  
General Secretary, PW  
Payroll and Assessment Manager  
Programme Officer, Peacemaking, Youth Level, (FT)  
Taking Care Trainer and Co-ordinator

**Scale 2 (£24,829 - £30,068)**

Assistant Residential Services Manager  
Buildings Manager and Safety Officer  
Children's Development Officer  
Director of Nightlight  
Financial Manager  
Finance and Office Manager  
Programme Officer, Peacemaking, Adult Level, (FT)  
Project Manager, Willowbrook  
Training Officer, YACB, (FT)  
Youth Development Officer  
University Chaplain UUJ

**Scale 3 (£27,898 - £34,217)**

Director of Programmes  
Education in Mission Officer, BMO  
IT Development and Support Manager  
Minister and Superintendent, Kinghan Mission  
Personnel Officer, BMO

**Scale 4 (£30,848 - £38,785)**

Head of Personnel  
Residential Services Manager  
Senior Financial Accountant  
University Chaplain (QUB)

**Scale 5 (£34,217 - £41,910)**

Communications and Press Secretary  
Director of Christian Training  
Director of Youth and Children's Ministry  
Deputy General Secretary

**Scale 6 (£36,822 - £45,074)**

Executive Secretary, BMO  
Director of Social Service  
Executive Secretary, BMI

**Scale 7 (£41,910 - £54,193)**

General Secretary  
Financial Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS****Scale 1 (£12,025 - £14,039)**

Clerical Officer  
Handyperson  
Secretary/Receptionist  
Telephonist

**Scale 2 (£13,013 - £15,203)**

Caretaker and Warden, Youth Centres  
Clerical Officer (Personnel)  
Secretarial/Clerical Officer (Taking Care)  
Secretary (YACM)  
Receptionist/Telephonist  
Secretary (BMI)  
Secretary/Clerical Assistant (Personnel)  
Secretary (GSO)  
Information and Technology Assistant (GSO)  
Secretary/Receptionist (PW)  
Clerical Officer (FSO)

**Scale 3 (£14,723 - £17,177)**

Co-ordinator Counselling Services  
Deputy Building Manager  
Nightlight Development Officers (one FT)  
Payroll and Clerical Assistant  
Senior Secretary  
Wages Clerk  
Senior Secretary (YACM)  
Senior Secretary (PW)  
Senior Secretary (BMO)  
Senior Secretary (BMI)

**Scale 4 (£16,814 - £19,512)**

Administrative Assistant (Personnel)  
Assistant to the Information Officer  
Departmental Secretary



Lay Assistant – Kinghan  
 Personal Secretary (FSO)  
 Deputy Senior Administrator (BMO)  
 Office Supervisor and Personal Secretary (BMI)  
 Administrative Assistant (YACM)  
 Senior Secretary (GSO)

**Scale 5 (£18,489 - £21,497)**

Assistant Accountant  
 Co-ordinator PCI Year Team and Volunteers  
 Development Officer, PW, (FT)  
 Financial Assistant  
 Personal Assistant to the Director of Social Service  
 Production Manager  
 IT Support Assistant  
 Regional Youth and Support Workers (Euro Scale), (FT)  
 Resident Manager, Tritonville Close (Euro Scale)

**Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£20,520 - £23,599)**

Assistant Chaplain, QUB  
 Senior Administrative Officer (YACM)  
 Personal Secretary and Office Supervisor (GSO)  
 Personnel Officer  
 Senior Administrative Officer (BMO)

## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. As reported to the General Assembly in June 2008, a contract for the refurbishment of the external fabric of Church House (but excluding Fisherwick Buildings), was awarded to Hugh J O'Boyle, Downpatrick. The total net cost of this project, including professional fees and VAT, but allowing for a substantial grant of over £1 million from the NI Environment Agency, is £3,212,281. This contract is progressing in a satisfactory manner and should be completed to the required quality standards and within the approved budget by the summer of 2010. Payment for this project will continue to be paid at 3.5p per £ of stipend as approved at the General Assembly in 2007.

2. Trading in the Shopping Mall has continued to be difficult and a recent marketing report highlighted the problems in attracting new tenants in the current economic climate to both the Mall and to Fisherwick Buildings. Whilst every effort is made to ensure payment for Rents and Service Charges from previous and existing tenants, the present financial restraints and cash flow problems make this increasingly difficult.

3. There is steady demand for the letting of the Assembly Hall and associated rooms to outside organisations, and this continues to produce substantial income.

4. The Report of the Church House Panel and decisions on its Resolutions are awaited, as these will have a major impact on the future use and possible refurbishment of Fisherwick Buildings, on future marketing of the Shopping Mall, and on the upgrading and reconfiguration of the Church House offices and front door entrance to the building.

5. The Committee is grateful to the staff directly involved with the management and operation of the building and thank them for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

HUBERT MARTIN, Convener

## FINANCE, LEGAL AND IT COMMITTEE

1. **General Expenses** – General Expenses, which include the costs of the General and Financial Secretary’s offices, were 3.4% below budget for the year ended 31 December 2008 and were considered satisfactory.

Budgeted expenses for the year ended 31 December 2009 reflect a 1% increase in salary cost, incremental scale increases, and the impact of staff vacancies during 2008. Overall the budget was considered to be satisfactory.

2. **Allocation of General Expenses** – A new basis for allocating General Expenses became operational on 1 January, 2009. The costs of the General Secretary’s Office will be fully charged to the Incidental Fund and the costs of the Financial Secretary’s Office charged out on a basis of the service provided to the various Boards and Agencies i.e. finance, payroll, IT and personnel.

3. **Auditors/SORP accounts** – For year ended 31 December, 2008 two sets of SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice) accounts have been prepared. One for the activities under the General Assembly and the other for the Trustees who have separate legal status. The audit opinion is expressed on these accounts. The audit opinion in respect of the General Assembly accounts was qualified with respect to certain technical disclosures required under Financial Reporting Standard 17 relating to Pensions Liabilities. It is planned to address this issue following the merger of the Pension Schemes.

4. **Statistics** – see appended tables

5. **Statistics Form and Statement of Recommended Practice** – The Sub-Committee set up to consider revising the statistics form in line with the requirements of those who use the statistics and the Statement of Recommended Practice has made good progress during the year. Two accounting packages have now been “approved for use” in Congregations by the Board. Work continues on the Chart of Accounts and finalising the accounts and statistical return formats.

6. **Statistical Returns from Presbyteries** – Congregations currently complete an annual statistical return to the Board of Finance and Personnel. These returns are collated and a summary included in the Boards report to the General Assembly with a more detailed report included in the Assembly Minutes. At present, no return of Presbytery finances is made. It was agreed that an annual Financial Return from Presbyteries should be submitted and an appropriate resolution submitted to the General Assembly.

7. **Regulation of Charities** – The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 has now been passed. The legislation will result in some significant administrative changes over the next few years. An evening was held in Church House in December 2008 for Treasurers and others to provide some basic training and information about the changes. The successful meeting was attended by over 600 representatives and recognising the need to keep Congregations informed about the requirements it may be necessary to arrange further meetings and this will be kept under review.

8. **Risk Assessment** – Risk Assessment is on-going. A questionnaire was passed to all Board Conveners/Secretaries to enable them to report to the Board of Finance and Personnel. At the time of writing not all reports had been received. Nothing as yet has come to the Committee's attention which needs to be reported.

9. **Bank Overdrafts and deposit accounts** – The Committee continues to receive reports on overdrafts. It reviewed the policy determining which banks would be used to hold deposits and agreed that accounts should only be opened with banks whose Standards and Poor's "LTD" credit rating was "A1" or above or whose Moody's "LTD" rating was "A" or above. It was also agreed that no more than 25% of total funds would be placed with one individual bank.

10. **Ministerial expenses** – 9 Ministers failed to submit their Ministerial Expenses Returns for the tax year 2007/8 and their names were reported to Presbytery Clerks accordingly.

11. **Handbook for Treasurers** – As the handbook has not been updated since 2002, it is planned to review this once the new Charities legislation regulations are available.

12. **Insurance** – The Committee recommended that the Insurance service be put out to tender every 5 years as a matter of course consistent with the policy for other professional services.

13. **Information Technology** – Mr Stephen McMurray has made an extremely valuable contribution with respect to IT services and is now providing essential support to IT systems in Church House as well as PCI projects outside Church House. Demand for IT services is currently beyond the capacity of the department and consequently projects are being prioritised. Due to the many, IT issues arising we plan to set up an IT Sub-Committee in 2009 to review the way forward.

14. The Committee continues to work on a number of other tax, finance, legal and IT matters.

15. Special thanks go to the Staff in the Financial Secretary's Office for their hard work and assistance to the Committee during the year.

MICHAEL FITCH, Convener

## TABLE ONE

## PERSONS AND AGENCIES

	2007	2008	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	209	205		4
Ministers in Active Duty	381	384	3	
Retired Missionaries	9	10	1	
Missionaries in Active Duty	51	50		1
Total Ministers and Missionaries	650	649		1
Licensures	17	19	2	
Congregations	549	549		
Total Families	108,175	107,433		742
Persons of All Ages	257,551	255,557		1,994
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	86,685	85,462		1,223
Baptisms	1,833	1,820		13
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	2,028	1,929		99
Communicants	109,683	109,629		54
Attended at Least One Communion during year	68,320	67,341		979
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	6,928	6,778		150
Number on Rolls in Sunday Schools and Bible Classes	27,022	26,291		731

**TABLE TWO**  
**CONGREGATIONAL INCOME**

	2007		2008		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R. of I.
Specified Sources	30,057,301	2,896,438	30,697,279	3,152,993	N.I.	8.9%
Building Fund etc.	21,183,369	1,096,009	17,327,985	1,741,785	-18.2%	58.9%
Received "For Others"	7,701,128	624,874	7,663,342	581,079	-0.5%	-7.0%
Raised from other sources	5,456,889	1,321,914	7,064,273	1,346,666	29.5%	1.9%
Bequests, Loans, Transfers etc.	9,712,921	384,951	10,667,287	1,578,218	9.8%	310.0%
Total Receipts	74,111,608	6,324,186	73,420,166	8,400,741	-0.9%	32.8%
Total Receipts Less Bequests etc.	64,398,686	5,939,235	62,752,879	6,822,523	-2.6%	14.9%
Bequests	2,064,989	90,686	1,746,960	91,953	-15.4%	1.4%

**TABLE THREE**  
**CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE**

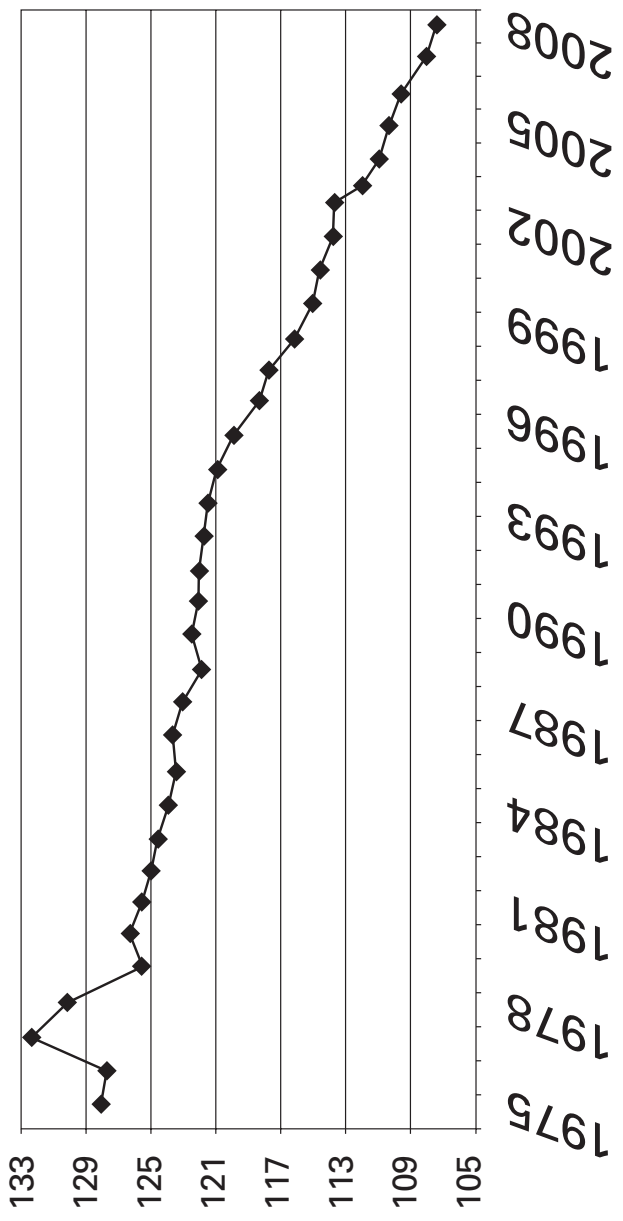
	2007		2008		% Difference N.I.	R. of I.
	£	€	£	€		
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	15,862,666	1,390,182	16,723,589	1,537,616	5.4%	10.6%
Payments under Assembly Assessments	5,449,459	523,275	5,863,982	558,424	7.6%	6.7%
Building, Repairs, etc.	20,854,685	1,767,844	20,738,664	3,513,130	-0.6%	98.7%
United Appeal Schemes	3,403,021	254,938	3,361,717	237,474	-1.2%	-6.9%
Supplementary Schemes						
Other Religious and Charitable Objects	5,583,260	600,283	5,430,530	576,707	-2.7%	-3.9%
General Expenses	9,375,004	1,319,837	10,068,276	1,489,256	7.4%	12.8%
Total Payments	60,528,095	5,856,359	62,186,758	7,912,607	2.7%	35.1%

**TABLE FOUR**  
**CONGREGATIONAL BALANCES**

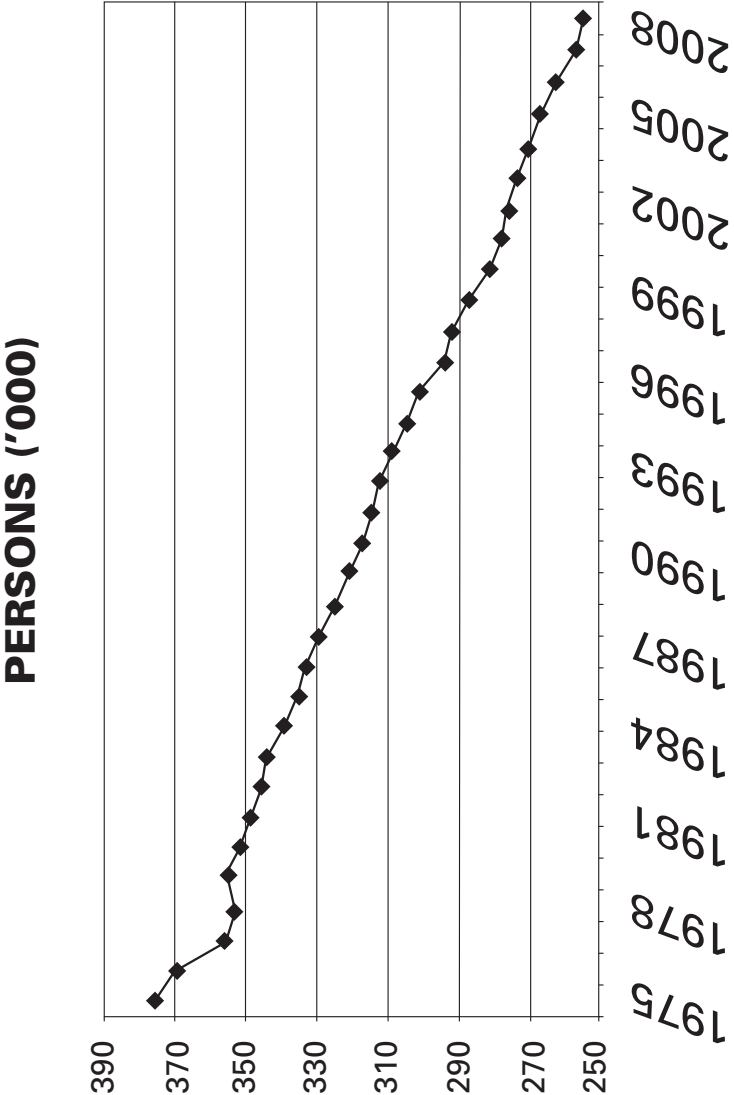
	Closing 2007		Opening 2008		Closing 2008		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R. of I.
Credits	42,333,922	4,994,164	42,654,992	5,025,533	45,529,771	5,195,564	6.7%	3.4%
Debits	5,822,550	424,233	5,235,711	418,724	6,651,667	487,580	27.0%	16.4%
Net Credits	36,511,372	4,569,931	37,419,281	4,606,809	38,878,104	4,707,984	3.9%	2.2%

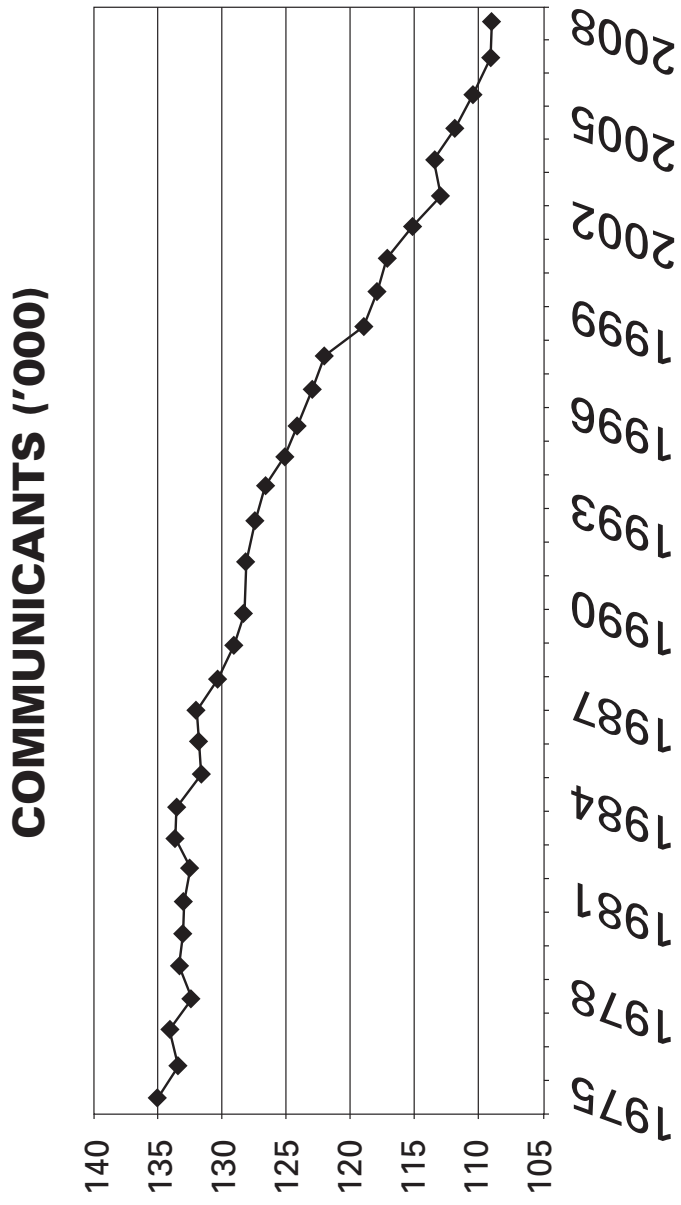


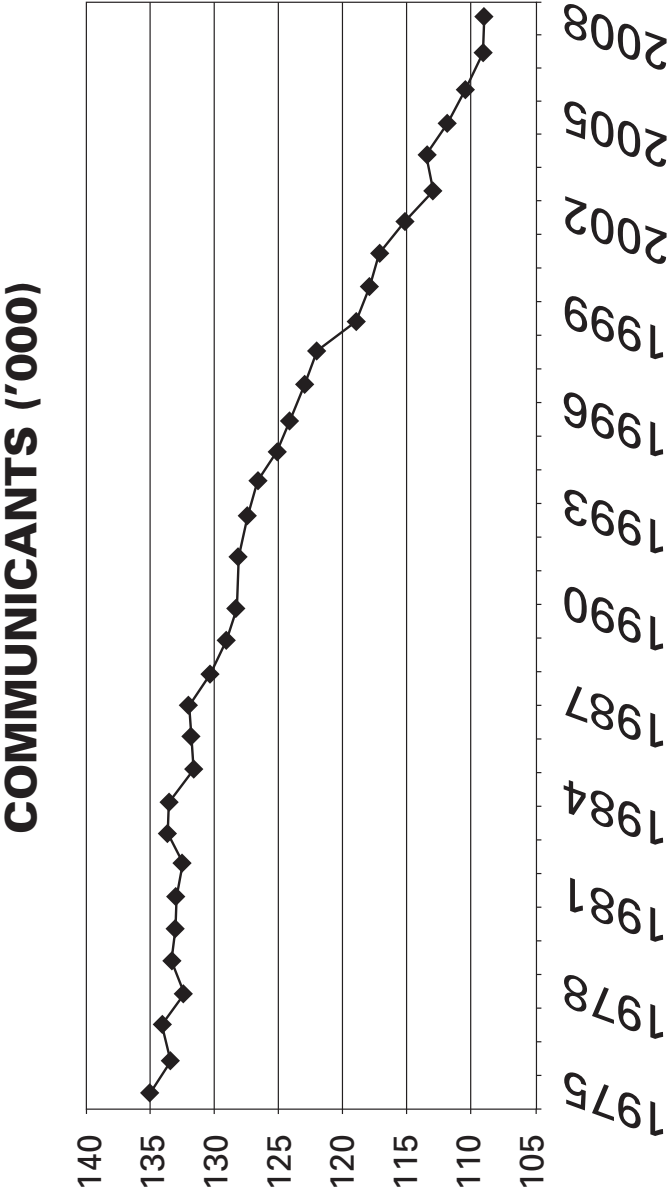
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## APPENDIX 1

## REPORT OF TYRONE MEMORIAL REVIEW PANEL

**Purpose:** The General Assembly, 2008, resolved 'that the Board of Finance and Personnel establish a Panel to carry out a review of the Tyrone Memorial with representation from the Union Commission, Board of Mission in Ireland and other interested parties as considered appropriate and present an interim report to the General Assembly in 2009'.

**Background:** In January 2002, the present procedures for determining stipends (referred to as 'the Tyrone Memorial') were introduced. Stipends from that date were fixed using the Stipend for 2001 as the base on which calculations of increases were made.

The main aims of the Tyrone Memorial were:

- to address the inequality in Stipends;
- to end the link between Stipend and Specified Sources;
- to enable Bible teaching on giving to be carried out free from the accusation of self-interest on the part of Ministers;
- to enable Congregations to retain more of the income generated through increased giving.

In 2005 and 2006, the Board reported to the Assembly on a review of the operation of the Tyrone Memorial. It was recognised that the review was early in the life of the new procedures but some notable points emerged e.g:

- there was a small reduction in the amount of Specified Sources used to pay Stipend although this was more marked where Stipends are above the minimum;
- the gap between average Stipends and the minimum had narrowed a little;
- since contributions to CMF are based on Stipend, some Congregations are paying less than they would have under the fraction system;
- since the minimum increased by a higher percentage than higher Stipends, a greater burden was, and will continue to be, borne by CMF.

A further review was scheduled for 2010, but, following discussions between the Board and Union Commission, it was agreed to recommend bringing this forward by one year.

**Review:** When the current figures are measured against the aims of the Tyrone Memorial the following positive consequences emerge:

- at least 100 Ministers are better off because the percentage increase in their Stipends is greater than the percentage increase in the Specified Sources of their Congregations;
- in 2001 the highest Stipend was 2.7 times the minimum whereas in 2008 it had reduced to 2.36 times. In addition, following retirements, new call Stipends have not exceeded twice the minimum;
- Ministers now feel free to speak about finance without the suggestion of self-interest.

Despite the positive consequences, there are other noteworthy negative aspects (not necessarily due to the Tyrone Memorial):

- despite some Ministers being better off as a result of the Tyrone Memorial, many are receiving less than they would have done under the old fraction system;
- where Stipends are less than they would have been, this has an adverse impact on CMF and contributes to a higher CMF Assessment;
- because Stipends are based on 2001 levels, there are disparities between Congregations of similar size and financial strength. No account is taken of changes in financial strength unless a review is carried out by Union Commission – reviews are normally carried out every 7 years and, clearly, any shortening of this period would be helpful;
- Congregations with falling income appear reluctant to apply to the Union Commission for review of Stipends and augmentation. A considerable proportion of Congregations (around 50%) have not increased Specified Sources by the percentage increase in the minimum from 2001 to 2007;
- In 2007, 287 Congregations paid a higher fraction than they were in 2001. 64 are paying over 40%.

**Consideration of Review:** The Panel debated the matters highlighted above and present their views on the working of the Tyrone Memorial:

- there has been a narrowing of the gap between those on the minimum and others over 6 years but the rate of this is slow and will take a very long time to reduce significantly;
- concentration on Stipends, whilst important, is not complete unless account is taken of farm, bequest and Bonus income;
- reviews have been too infrequent and too slow to reflect changes in ability to pay. There is a need for a clearer definition of what income should be taken into account when reviews take place or Stipends are determined;
- despite the advances that have been made, it appears that, with the negative aspects highlighted earlier, the process is not going to lead to an acceptable system, equitable to both Ministers and Congregations, even in the longer term.

**The Way Ahead?:** The Panel recognises that many attempts have been made to address the question of Stipends in the past and pays tribute to the authors of the Tyrone Memorial which has gone some way to meeting its laudable aims. However, it considers the time is ripe to have a fresh look at the matter.

There is a general view amongst the Panel that the Call should be paramount in ministry. However, it would appear that practical considerations, such as family responsibilities, are capable of discouraging individuals from accepting calls to less well-off Congregations.

An examination of the practices of other Churches in relation to Stipends revealed that none of the others has as great a difference between minimum and

maximum as PCI. The Church of Scotland, for example, operates a scale with the minimum rising to the maximum, 33% higher, over a period of 10 years.

The Panel has been considering the introduction of a system based on a minimum with increments reflecting years of service and a smaller 'local allowance' based on agreed criteria. (The range between minimum and maximum Stipends would be narrower than at present). This would include some of the principles underlying the present system but, hopefully, would eradicate most of the anomalies.

Any consideration of a new basis for the financial support of Ministers would take account of income from all sources as well as ministerial expenses and would necessitate a review of the way in which assessments are levied. It would be important to look at this in the context of the strong helping those who are not so strong.

Any new procedures would require careful consideration of ways of protecting current levels of Stipend and, whilst it would be a lengthy period before the changes are fully implemented, progress would be easily monitored.

**Recommendation:** There will be a considerable amount of work involved in producing a detailed proposal for consideration by the Church. As a first step, the Panel would recommend that the General Assembly be asked to approve the following:

'that the General Assembly instruct the Board of Finance and Personnel to prepare detailed proposals for an alternative basis for the provision of financial support for Ministers and to make a further report to the General Assembly, 2010'.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the rate of assessment for the Incidental Fund for 2009 be 5.00p in the £ of stipend.
3. That the rate of assessment for the Central Ministry Fund for 2009 be 20.00p in the £ of stipend.
4. That the rate of assessment for the Retired Ministers' Fund for 2009 be 4.25p in the £ of stipend.
5. That the rate of assessment for the Widows of Ministers' Fund for 2009 be 5.00p in the £ of stipend.
6. That the rate of assessment for the Ministers' Prolonged Disability Fund for 2009 be 0.50p in the £ of stipend for Ministers, Licentiate and College Professors and of Basic Ministerial Minimum for Ministers who are Missionaries.
7. That the rate of assessment for the Church House External Work for 2009 be 3.50p in the £ of stipend.
8. That, under the provisions of the Code Par 223(3), the Rev WJ Johnstone (Craigy Hill) and the Rev Noel Ward (Banagher) be given permission to retire on or after their 64th birthday and that their pension be in accordance with the Code and the Rules of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009).

9. That the General Assembly instruct the Board of Finance and Personnel to prepare detailed proposals for an alternative basis for the provision of financial support for Ministers and to make a further report to the General Assembly 2010.

10. That the General Assembly authorise the Board of Finance and Personnel to set provisional assessments for existing Funds which can be applied from 1 January in each year and approved, or otherwise, at the ensuing General Assembly when over or under-provision can be corrected.

11. That Presbyteries submit an annual statistical return, in a form to be approved by the Board of Finance and Personnel, and that a summary report be prepared each year for the General Assembly; the first return to be made for the year ended 31 December, 2010.

12. That the resignation of Mr John Millar as Convener of the Board of Finance and Personnel be accepted, that he be thanked for his services and that Mr John Hunter be appointed in his place.

13. That the Board of Finance and Personnel, with its associated working Committees for the ensuing year, be appointed in accordance with Par 286 of the Code as follows:

### OVERTURES TRANSMITTED

#### **Anent Par 124(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 124(1) of the Code the words 'Ministers' Pension Fund (1978)' be deleted and the words 'Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.

JOHN MILLAR

#### **Anent Par 125(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 125(1) of the Code the words 'Ministers' Pension Fund (1978)' be deleted and the words 'Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.

JOHN MILLAR

#### **Anent Par 125(A) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 125(A) of the Code the words 'The object of the **1978 Ministers' Pension Scheme Fund** shall be to provide the appropriate Funds for the contribution to be made to the Ministers' Pension Scheme 1978' be deleted and the words 'The object of the **Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009) Fund** shall be to provide the appropriate funds for the contribution to be made to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.

JOHN MILLAR

#### **Anent Par 318A(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 318A(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place: '318A (1) The

object of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009) Fund shall be to provide the appropriate funds for the contribution to be made by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009)'.  
JOHN MILLAR

**Anent Par 318A(2)(b) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 318A(2) (b) of the Code the words 'Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)' be deleted and the words 'Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.  
JOHN MILLAR

**Anent Par 318B(3)(b) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 318B(3)(b) of the Code the words 'Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)' be deleted and the words 'Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.  
JOHN MILLAR

**Anent Par 319(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par. 319(1) of the Code the words 'Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)' be deleted and the words 'Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.  
JOHN MILLAR

**Anent Par 320(3) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 320(3) of the Code the words '1978 Pension Scheme' be deleted and the words 'Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.  
JOHN MILLAR

**Anent Par 321(4) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 321(4) of the Code the words 'Ministers' Pension Scheme' be deleted and the words 'Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.  
JOHN MILLAR

**Anent Par 324(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 324(1) of the Code the words 'Ministers' Pension Scheme (1978)' be deleted and the words 'Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.  
JOHN MILLAR



**Anent Par 325(3) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 325(3) of the Code the words 'Ministers' Pension Scheme' be deleted and the words 'Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.

JOHN MILLAR

**Anent Par 326(1)(b) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 326(1)(b) of the Code the words 'Ministers' Pension Scheme' be deleted and the words 'Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.

JOHN MILLAR

**Anent Par 326(1)(c) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 326(1)(c) of the Code the words 'Ministers' Pension Scheme' be deleted and the words 'Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009)' substituted in their place.

JOHN MILLAR

# UNITED APPEAL BOARD

Convener: Rev RIA ALLELY

Secretary: THE CLERK

1. The Board thanks all Congregations who, in what was a very difficult year, due to the “Credit Crunch” and the trials exacerbated by the Presbyterian Mutual Society, gave their support to the United Appeal in the year 2008. The generosity of Church members is acknowledged and commended.

2. The Board regrets to report that when the Accounts of the 2008 Appeal were finalised, it failed to achieve the target by £233,953 (£21,869 in 2007). However, taking into account interest earned and money received late for the 2007 Appeal the Board decided to pay Boards the budgeted grants in full for 2008. Since the accounts for 2008 were finalised £199,694 was received as late payments to the 2008 Appeal (£107,120 in 2007).

3. An analysis of the returns from Congregations show that 52 did not contribute by the 31 January, 2009 deadline and that a further 150 failed to reach their target. If this pattern is continued it may result in Boards not being able to complete certain projects.

4. Congregations are encouraged not to use United Appeal contributions to bolster their General Account credit balances, but to remit what is collected every quarter.

5. It is suggested to Congregations that they build into their Strategy for Mission a realistic monetary element to ensure that members are able to continue their generosity towards Outreach. Congregations are encouraged to consider monthly collections, supported, of course, by the Gift Aid Scheme.

6. Budgets submitted by the Boards have, as usual, been very carefully considered and some have had their requests reduced (See Schedule 4). The Board, guided by its Finance Committee, agreed the 2010 Appeal at £3,309,654 – subject to comments below – a decrease of 5.9% (See Schedules 3 and 4). The Board felt that it was the right time to suggest to the Assembly that the request by the Board of Christian Training for the Students’ Bursary Fund (SBF) should be taken by way of an assessment. This would mean that all ministry assessments would be under the same “umbrella” and consequently, more easily controlled. The assumption has always been for the SBF to have first call on United Appeal Funds as it was understood that whatever was required for the education of students for the ministry should be met in full.

7. Accepting the above, when the amount required by the SBF (£543,000) is added to the proposed allocation, the total amount required overall is £3,852,654 – an increase over 2009 of 9.79%. If the amount required for the Students’ Bursary Fund is taken out of both 2009 (£207,000) and 2010 (£543,000), the increase in the Appeal is 0.23% or £7,454.

8. As reported last year: “The stark reality is that there is no financial slack left in the system.” The Board is very conscious that, because of the present financial problems, certain projects and posts may well have to be postponed or reduced, which it deeply regrets.

9. The Church has overcome many difficulties in the past, believing in a Sovereign God who is working out His great plan of redemption in us and through us. The Church look to Him for hope and assurance as it strives to honour both the Great Commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves, and the Great Commission to go into all the world with the Gospel, confident in the conclusion of that Commission: “*And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.*” (Matthew 28:20b)

### APPRAISALS COMMITTEE

*The Rev Dr Donald Watts reports:*

1. During the year the Appraisals Committee met as required to examine new posts and capital projects. It has been agreed that Boards now need to submit capital projects over £40,000 (formerly £20,000). The Committee looks at all submissions in great detail and the Board wishes to place on record its appreciation of the time given by the Committee members.

2. The main approvals were:-

- Cook-Manager at the Chaplaincy Centre, Elmwood Avenue (to June 2009)
- Guysmere Warden/Caretaker (temporary contract)
- PW Development Worker (post continued to June 2010)
- Personnel Assistant – BMI (part-time)
- Regional Youth and Support Worker (Donegal) (for 2 years externally funded)
- Young Adults Development Officer
- Site for new Church, Mullingar
- Software development at Union Theological College

### RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the General Assembly agree that from 2010 the financial requirements of the Students' Bursary Fund will be met by an assessment on Congregations.
3. That the United Appeal for 2010 be as set out in Schedules (III) and (IV).
4. That the United Appeal Board for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with par 287 of the Code as follows:-

## SCHEDULE I

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2007	Specified Sources 2007 £	United Appeal 2009 £
Ards.....	8,378	2,974,848	332,486
Armagh.....	3,938	1,703,311	172,993
Ballymena.....	7,478	2,848,167	307,336
Belfast North.....	6,065	1,901,134	226,863
Belfast South.....	3,763	1,680,028	168,177
Belfast East.....	6,598	2,722,757	282,661
Carrickfergus.....	5,585	1,678,756	204,968
Coleraine.....	4,344	1,747,278	183,616
Derry & Strabane.....	3,346	1,106,265	128,305
Donegal.....	1,330	480,366	53,226
Down.....	4,927	1,525,571	183,264
Dromore.....	5,063	1,890,200	205,992
Dublin & Munster.....	1,336	927,161	77,827
Foyle.....	2,870	826,139	103,327
Iveagh.....	3,686	1,391,017	150,784
Monaghan.....	979	383,373	40,811
Newry.....	2,811	1,129,619	118,761
Omagh.....	2,535	903,267	100,775
Route.....	3,644	1,252,337	142,337
Templepatrick.....	4,252	1,499,302	168,168
Tyrone.....	3,798	1,454,500	156,528
	86,726	32,025,396	3,509,205

50% of the allocation for 2009 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Specified Sources. Specified Sources for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2007 of 1.47.

The above allocations reflect the move of Congregations to new Presbyteries from March 2008. Presbyteries affected: Ards, North Belfast, South Belfast, East Belfast and Down.

## SCHEDULE II

	Requested 2009 £	Proposed Grant 2009 £
<b>BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND*</b>	<b>1,180,000</b>	<b>1,050,000</b>
Home & Irish Mission .....	690,000	560,000
Congregational Life .....	70,000	70,000
Property Committee (Church Extension).....	75,000	75,000
Home Mission General Account .....	300,000	300,000
Urban Mission.....	45,000	45,000
<b>BOARD OF EDUCATION* .....</b>	<b>35,000</b>	<b>35,000</b>
<b>BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING* .....</b>	<b>551,615</b>	<b>526,700</b>
Board of Christian Training .....	31,876	32,000
Union Theological College.....	260,724	235,700
Students Bursary Fund.....	207,000	207,000
Applicants, Students & Licentiates.....	11,015	11,000
Summer Assistants.....	35,000	35,000
Christian Training .....	6,000	6,000
<b>BOARD OF YOUTH &amp; CHILDREN'S MINISTRY* .....</b>	<b>520,000</b>	<b>510,000</b>
<b>BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS .....</b>	<b>366,000</b>	<b>357,500</b>
Social Witness Board.....	252,000	250,000
PCI Counselling (Marriage & Family Project).....	24,000	22,500
Chaplains' Committee.....	90,000	85,000
<b>BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS* .....</b>	<b>1,050,000</b>	<b>1,050,000</b>
<b>BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS*</b>		
Department of Communications .....	90,000	85,000
.....	3,792,615	3,614,200
Currency losses		
Contingencies (max 5% of Total Appeal) .....		70,000
Allocation from reserves.....		(175,000)
<b>Appeal to Congregations .....</b>		<b>3,509,200</b>

\* Board operating on a consolidated budget

### SCHEDULE III

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2008	Specified Sources 2008 £	United Appeal 2010 £
Ards.....	8,308	3,019,944	311,500
Armagh.....	3,891	1,786,394	164,445
Ballymena.....	7,428	2,902,945	288,624
Belfast North.....	5,773	1,971,936	210,140
Belfast South.....	3,673	1,701,040	155,967
Belfast East.....	6,501	2,776,031	264,344
Carrickfergus.....	5,400	1,735,787	191,139
Coleraine and Limavady....	5,693	2,215,060	220,719
Derry and Donegal.....	5,077	1,837,010	189,935
Down.....	4,910	1,541,582	171,966
Dromore.....	4,935	1,905,269	190,589
Dublin and Munster.....	1,230	1,149,423	81,148
Iveagh.....	3,677	1,419,742	142,013
Monaghan.....	1,094	559,228	49,077
Newry.....	2,763	1,123,815	109,555
Omagh.....	3,524	1,218,942	129,035
Route.....	3,668	1,284,991	135,118
Templepatrick.....	4,232	1,519,039	157,713
Tyrone.....	3,685	1,509,156	146,627
	85,462	33,177,334	3,309,654

50% of the allocation for 2010 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Specified Sources. Specified Sources for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2008 of 1.27.

The above allocations reflect the move of Congregations to new Presbyteries from March 2009. Presbyteries affected: Coleraine and Limavady, Derry and Donegal, Dublin and Munster, Monaghan, Newry, Omagh.

**SCHEDULE IV**

	Requested 2010 £	Proposed Grant 2010 £
BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND	1,180,000	1,040,000
BOARD OF EDUCATION	27,500	27,500
BOARD OF CHRISTIAN TRAINING	944,154	325,454
BOARD OF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY	460,000	470,000
BOARD OF SOCIAL WITNESS	321,000	321,000
BOARD OF MISSION OVERSEAS	1,050,000	962,000
BOARD OF COMMUNICATIONS	165,000	115,000
	<hr/> 4,147,654	<hr/> 3,260,954
Currency losses		
Contingencies		223,700
Allocation from reserves		(175,000)
		<hr/> 3,309,654
Appeal to Congregations		<hr/> 3,309,654

# COMMISSION ON TRUSTS

1. Attention is drawn to the Capital Account of the General Investment Fund. The Commission advised the acceptance of the Trust Funds.

AJ RANKIN, Convener

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the Commission on Trusts for the ensuing year be appointed in accordance with Par 130 of the Code as follows:-



# TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Hon Secretary: Rev Dr DONALD J WATTS

Financial Secretary: Mr CLIVE KNOX

1. The following is an extract from the Minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees at their Annual General Meeting held in Church House, Belfast, on 24 March, 2009.

2. The Report of the Executive Committee and the Statement of audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December, 2008 of the following were laid before the Trustees, and were adopted by them:

The General Investment Fund

The Commutation Fund

The Non-Participating Trust Funds

The Magee Fund

The Tops Wilson Trust Fund

The Fire Insurance Trust Fund

The Fortune Mission Bequest

The Lindsay Memorial Fund

Trust Funds

3. Moved by the Rev WJ Orr, seconded by Mr George McCullagh and unanimously agreed, that the Report and the Statements of Accounts be adopted, signed by three Trustees, inserted in the Appendix to the Minute Book and lodged with the Clerk of Assembly to be laid before the Assembly in June. The Report and the Statement of Accounts were, therefore, signed by the Rev WPH Erskine, Mr GW Cosgrove and Mr J Suitters 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 2008 of the Getty Trust, Union Theological College and The War Memorial Hostel and had accepted these for inclusion in the volume of Accounts to be submitted to the General Assembly. On the proposal of Mr J Millar OBE, seconded by Mr JO Greer, this report was received.

5. Three retiring members of the Executive Committee were re-appointed for a further three years, these being the Very Rev Dr David Clarke, Mr George McCullagh and Mr John Millar OBE.

6. Mr George McCullagh and Mr David Bell CB were nominated members of the General Assembly, according to the provision of the Code Par 97 (h) (iii).

7. It was with regret that the Trustees noted the death of their esteemed member, the Very Rev Dr TJ Simpson.

### Trust Funds

8. A summary Account of the various Trust Funds is included in the Book of Accounts 2008. The following Trust Funds are distributed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Trustees.

Having considered the process for distributing income from the various Trust Funds the Trustees have agreed to recommend to the General Assembly that, where the terms of Trust permit, these should be distributed via United Appeal rather than directly to various agencies or projects as has been the practice in the past.

**Mrs A M Davidson Trust:** The total income for 2008 available for distribution is £8,411.70. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£8,411.70</u>
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**Sir Wm V McCleery Estate:** The total income for 2008 available for distribution is £43,917.72. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

Central Ministry Fund	80%
Retired Ministers' Fund	10%
Widows of Ministers' Fund	10%

**Estate of Miss Irene Scott:** The total income for 2008 available for distribution is £9,099.42. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£9,099.42</u>
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**Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown:** The total income for 2008 available for distribution is £5,839.68. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£5,839.68</u>
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**Estate of Mr Victor Morrow:** The total income for 2008 available for distribution is £1,903.44. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	<u>£1,903.44</u>
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### GENERAL INVESTMENT FUND

9. <b>Declaration of Dividend</b>	15.4.08	15.10.08
Number of shares qualifying	5,419,074	5,442,389
	£	£
Income from investment for distribution and income tax recoverable less administrative charge and Investment Advisers' Fees	634,477	979,630
Dividend per share	15.00p	18.00p

During 2008 £255,618 was transferred from the Dividend Equalisation Reserve, in accordance with the Scheme Rules, and the balance on the Reserve at 31 December, 2008 is £601,166.

The combined annual Dividend of 33.00p per share is to be compared with 31.00p per share for 2007; 30.00p for 2006; 27.00p for 2005; 27.00p for 2004; 29.30p for 2003; 28.5p for 2002; 28.00p for 2001; 28.00p for 2000; 27.00p for 1999.

<b>9. Valuation</b>	15.4.08	15.10.08
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	39,569,639	30,082,643
Cash on Deposit	142,138	425,830
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	678,400	601,166
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£40,390,177	£31,109,639
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
No of Shares Issued	5,408,227	5,462,795
Share Value	£7.4683	£5.6948

The Trustees meet with Investment Managers, Newton Investment Management Limited, three times a year to review investment performance. During 2008 the negative return of 19.5% compared to a benchmark negative return of 18.5%. Despite positive returns from fixed interest holdings, investments in property trusts have performed very poorly.

#### **Crescent Church Loan Fund**

10. No loan requests were received during 2008, although since 1 January, 2009 loan requests of £115,000 have been approved. Interest is currently charged on loans at bank base rate on the average balance outstanding over the term of the loan, but this is under review.

#### **Getty Bequest**

11. The allocation of grants out of the income of the Trust Estate of John Getty for the year ending 31 December, 2008 was as follows:

Overseas – Foreign	2,850
Overseas – Jewish	1,550
Home Mission	3,750
Belfast City Mission	2,850
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£11,000</b>

#### **Magee Fund**

To facilitate Union Theological College in completing further development and refurbishment of the College facilities the Magee Fund provided, in February 2009, an interest free loan of £366,000. This is in addition to an earlier loan of £300,000. The loan is secured by a 6½% interest in the College property.

**Non Participating Trusts Fund**

14. Following detailed discussions and a report from the Assembly Solicitor the Trustees realised some of the investments held in the Non Participating Trusts Fund during 2008 and re-invested the proceeds in the General Investment Fund.

**Banking Arrangements**

15. During 2008 the Trustees received and agreed to a request from the Board of Finance and Personnel to open additional deposit accounts so that the Church's central funds could be placed with a wider range of banks.

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommendation regarding the Mrs A M Davidson Trust be adopted.
3. That the recommendation regarding the Sir Wm V McCleery Trust be adopted.
4. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Irene Scott Trust be adopted.
5. That the recommendation regarding the Miss Ida Mary McGeown Trust be adopted.
6. That the recommendation regarding the Victor Morrow Trust be adopted.
7. That in accordance with the Will of the late John Getty the following be constituted as the Committee for the "direction and management of the application" of the income from the Getty Bequest:

Very Rev Dr S Hutchinson, Revs Dr DJ Watts, RJA Bell, WJ Orr; Mr Wilson Ervin, CBE, Sir Eric McDowell, Mr David Bell, CB, Mr AT Ross, Mr John Millar, OBE.

# 2010 ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE

Co-Conveners: Revs DH THOMPSON, TC MORRISON

## “Confident in Christ”

1. Who would have thought it? In 21st Century Irish life Christianity is being relocated as something for the heart, the home and the Church, but not the work place nor any other public space. We are told that faith is acceptable but only if it is privatised. That’s hardly what Jesus had in mind when he commissioned the Church to make disciples of all people.

2. As Congregations within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland prepare to draw up mission plans, facing calls to privatise and not evangelise gives food for thought as to what those plans might look like.

3. And this in a time when economic recession is biting hard. Because of the difficulties created through the Presbyterian Mutual Society going into administration many Presbyterian people and Congregations are more acutely aware of the impact of recession than might otherwise have been the case. Many other people are suffering financially because investments in other funds have not produced the expected return, jobs have been lost, pensions are at best precarious, homes are being repossessed and the economic future remains uncertain at least. Many are learning at first hand that security in material things is no security at all.

4. In the providence of God then, the 2010 Assembly Conference, from 23-26 August, with the overall theme of “Confident in Christ” comes at just the right time.

5. Mission plans complete, Congregational representatives will have the opportunity to reflect on and react to what it means to be “Confident in Christ”.

6. The themes for each of the three main days of the Conference:

### **Jesus is Lord in the face of –**

- **Global Challenge**
- **Social Change**
- **The Church on the margins.**

7. The morning speakers are Stafford Carson, David Bruce and John Woodside.

8. The keynote addresses on each of the 4 evenings on the theme “Confident in Christ” will be given by Ajith Fernando (Sri Lanka National Director, Youth for Christ).

9. At the time of writing detailed work is being carried out by the Committee in planning for worship, workshops, seminars, all of the practical arrangements for the smooth running of the Conference.

10. A further report will be available in the Daily Minutes with up-to-date news regarding costs and booking arrangements among other things.

**RESOLUTIONS**

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the 2010 Assembly Committee be appointed as follows:

OVERTURES

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