

BOARD OF MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Rev RA PATTON

Secretary: Rev DJ BRUCE

INTRODUCTION AND REPORT SUMMARY

1. The BMI Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Board of Mission in Ireland is “Serving the Church, Enabling Mission”. The Board’s task is to describe a vision for Presbyterian mission in Ireland and to offer resources to help realise it. In the course of this, the Board works closely with Congregations and Presbyteries to enable them to retain and develop their focus on mission.

2. Mission Development

2.1 A central part of the report this year is a summary of the Presbytery responses to the Board’s proposals for Future Mission Development, brought to the 2010 General Assembly last year as “Appendix A”. The Board has listened carefully to Presbyteries and presents a revised approach, which the Assembly will be invited to consider this year.

3. Proposals regarding Church Planting

3.1 The Board has been active in supporting new Church plants in Donabate, Co Dublin and the Cliftonville Road in Belfast. These initiatives have taken different paths, which is what might have been expected due to their unique settings. Regulations for the governance of emerging Congregations within the denomination, especially when membership of new Churches may not be drawn from Presbyterianism, are under consideration.

4. Revision of the Book of Public Worship

4.1 The Panel and Working Groups revising this important publication will report on progress. The scale of the task means that a final report will not be ready this year. It is the Board’s intention that these revised resources will be available as downloadable files. In addition, the Board seeks to test the mind of the Assembly regarding some changes to practice at services of ordination. A draft service outline is included as Appendix B to this report. If agreed, some changes to the Code will be required. Overtures to this effect will be brought to the Assembly through the Supplementary Reports.

5. The BMI Team

5.1 The BMI team is made up of Home and Urban Mission Ministers, Deaconesses, Irish Mission Workers and other Church-based staff supported by BMI grants. We record thanks to Almighty God for the work being done across Ireland through the ministry of these people who serve so faithfully. A directory of their names and spheres of service is appended as Appendix A to this Report.

5.2 In addition to this, the office team continues to serve the needs of the Board, and do so with great fortitude. In the past year there has been the additional disruption to their daily routine brought about by the very welcome refurbishment of Church House. The Board records its special thanks to them: Lorraine Beatty (Property and Grants), Rev David Bruce (Executive Secretary), Evelyn Craig (Secretary pt), Nehru Dass (Finance Manager), Robin Fairbairn (Communications), Mandy Higgins (Office Supervisor), Elaine Huddleston (Secretary), Laura Whitcroft (Secretary pt), Rev David Thompson (Mission Development), and Marianne Trueman (Personnel pt).

STRATEGY FOR MISSION COMMITTEE

1. A Detailed Strategy for Future Mission Development

1.1 As a follow up to the Presbytery (2008/9) and Congregational Mission Plan (2009/10) processes BMI presented a Strategy for Future Mission Development to the General Assembly of 2010 (General Assembly Reports 2010, Appendix A pp187-192). The Board was keen to stimulate fresh thinking and suggest some new approaches aimed at *'harnessing the best of the new breeze of mission blowing throughout the denomination'*.

1.2 As the report to last year's Assembly states, "The Board recognises that any strategy for mission development needs to be tested as to its potential to add value to what is happening on the ground, and will benefit by being refined by the reflection of the wider Church". Thus the outline strategy was sent down to Presbyteries for their comments to be returned by 31 December, 2010.

1.3 The Board is grateful to Presbyteries for their considered responses and presents the following summary along with a revised strategy for future Mission Development.

2. What Presbyteries told the Board about Presbytery mission planning

2.1 Presbyteries have generally appreciated the experience afforded by the Mission Planning process and the Board's work in facilitating it.

2.2 The report to last year's General Assembly raised the issue of Presbytery **capacity**. Most Presbyteries acknowledged that they struggled to find time and resources to undertake the task of strategic mission development. Where Presbyteries are small and experiencing multiple vacancies there are many competing demands. Equally, where Presbyteries are larger, the scale of the task can be overwhelming. One Presbytery acknowledged that reorganising the way they operate and changing structures would free up some extra capacity. The Board is grateful for the work of Presbyteries in supporting and developing mission within their bounds and remain aware of the constraints of limited resources.

2.3 The report also raised the issue of **proximity** – the awkwardness Presbyters find in commenting on the work of neighbouring Congregations. This is acknowledged in most responses. Overall, the Board senses that some progress has been made in encouraging Presbyteries to comment on the work of Congregations under their care, but that proximity issues remain. Where specific

strategic issues are pressing and Presbyteries have to take action or decisions, they are more likely to welcome Board comment or facilitation. It is therefore anticipated that the Board's future role will be primarily reactive to issues arising from specific missional issues, rather than pro-active by way of stimulating a general, Church-wide Presbytery Mission Planning type initiative.

2.4 There remains a lack of clarity as to the role of Presbytery in supporting Congregations in mission. Some Presbyteries understand that this should be, and must increasingly become, part of their life. Where this is the case they welcomed the prospect of being empowered through having their capacity built to increase their effectiveness. Others are less sure. One Presbytery preferring to cast its role primarily in the legal language of being a 'Court of the Church', albeit with a secondary role in supporting and encouraging Congregations.

2.5 The Board notes that one of the specific goals identified by the Priorities Committee of the General Board in their report to the General Assembly of 2009 was a re-examination of the role of Presbytery. Until there is denominational consensus on this issue, it will continue to prove difficult to chart a way forward for Presbytery mission development. One Presbytery commented, that, '*BMI must strive not to convey an amalgam of a country-wide missional development strategy as the paradigm for each congregation or Presbytery*' (Omagh). The Board concurs and is committed to serving and enabling each Presbytery in an individual way specifically tailored to their needs.

2.6 The Board anticipates being in contact with each Presbytery on an annual basis to offer them an opportunity to suggest one specific means to serve and enable them in supporting Congregations in mission development.

3. What Presbyteries told the Board about congregational mission planning

3.1 Presbyteries have generally recognised the value of the Mission Plan process at congregational level and were grateful for the *Tell it Again* materials produced by the Board.

3.2 Presbyteries have appreciated the Board's encouragement to Congregations to take note of their context in shaping local mission. One Presbytery commented that more resources to help with this task would be welcome.

3.3 One of the ways the Board can serve and enable local Congregations in mission is by the production of good quality resources rooted in the variety of contemporary Irish contexts. Consequently, a priority of future Mission Development strategy will be to aim to produce at least one quality resource for use at congregational level each year.

3.4 The Board sought to encourage that mission planning take place within an atmosphere of worship and dialogue. There is a general acknowledgement that the need to strike a biblical balance between planning, prayer and the work of the Spirit has been taken seriously. There remain, however, different perspectives on how well PCI is striking that balance as a denomination. One Presbytery stated that, '*The statement regarding fostering an atmosphere of worship and dialogue is the most important aspect of the whole*

paper but Section 5 [the section on Presbytery Mission Audits] is the total antithesis of this' (Derry & Donegal). As a Church, there is a need to continue to work at ensuring that what God joins together in the responsibility to be his witnesses and depending on what only he can do in changing the heart are not separated in how the importance of mission is communicated.

3.5 To continue to foster this atmosphere, the Board is committed to exploring how the existing opportunity of Presbytery Mission in Ireland Evenings can better serve the purpose of stimulating worshipful reflection on the task of mission.

4. What Presbyteries told the Board about the outworking of Presbyterian polity and the role of the Board of Mission in Ireland

4.1 Last year's report drew attention to the potential of Presbyterian polity in facilitating the Church's ability to rise to the challenge of missional engagement:

A much undervalued strength of our Presbyterian polity is the interlocking relationship between the local congregation, Presbyteries and the Boards of the General Assembly. Nowhere is this more a strength to build upon than in the area of mission. The mission planning process modelled a positive working relationship in which mutual respect began to replace institutional distrust. As in all areas of Church life, unity is a fragile treasure, which God calls us to maintain and develop. We need to learn to become more comfortable with, and value, gracious creative tension. Our ability as a denomination to respond to future challenges and opportunities in mission may rise or fall on our aptitude in harnessing the latent strength of this aspect of our Presbyterian heritage.

4.2 The Board remains unwavering in its commitment to continue to explore how best to harness this potential, but recognises that interactions between the Board, Presbyteries and Congregations can be complex. The Board re-states again its commitment to serving the Church and enabling mission.

4.3 A number of Presbytery comments as to their view of the Board's future role are quoted below, even though it is felt that sometimes they may misunderstand the intent of the Board's suggestions in the initial report. The summary headings are the Boards.

Continue to strengthen Presbytery in their role

Overall, we are happy with the increased emphasis on mission and the need to strengthen the role of Presbytery in the tasks of the Gospel. (Ballymena)

Stimulate, encourage and challenge the Church to mission but with a light touch

This report on the whole is to be welcomed and endorsed but not without reservation because there are genuine concerns raised within the report. These proposals if adopted will result in BMI, Presbyteries and Congregations working more closely together for the cause of Christ on this island and this is to be encouraged as each plays its part in encouraging local Congregations to engage more effectively in mission. One of our strengths in PCI ought to be partnership. However as Presbyterians we do not always like to be told what to

do and there are still suspicions about an over-bearing presence of any Board of the Church on congregational life. Left to our own devices we have a natural tendency to look inward and it requires hard and creative work to develop our missional thinking and reach out with the Gospel. While some have done that and are doing that very successfully, we all need the challenge and the encouragement to do so and the proposals of BMI provide that encouragement and challenge. (Newry)

Frame future strategy against the background of some evident institutional distrust

This process has involved Presbyterian polity at every level: congregation, Presbytery, Board and General Assembly. BMI has gone out of its way to declare that in the process the centre is not imposing itself on Congregations and Presbytery accepts its sincerity in that. Sadly, however, we believe that BMI will need to continue to do this because there is a tendency in our denomination to distrust the centre, and we therefore ask Congregations to accept and trust the bona fides of BMI in this. (Carrickfergus)

Avoid an over bureaucratic approach

We do not need to be jumping through hoops to meet the targets set by BMI so much as we need to be actually working at telling the gospel to lost people. It is really important that any audit process should not get in the way of getting on with the work. (Tyrone)

Allow Presbyteries to take the initiative and call on BMI for support when required

We are not convinced that the Assembly should authorise the Board of Mission in Ireland to have a continued formal directive role in the working of Presbyteries. We resist the idea that a Board (which after all is simply a committee of the Assembly) should be given authority to exercise ‘oversight’ over Congregations, even if this is in conjunction with Presbytery. The mandate of the Board of Mission in Ireland has already developed from facilitation to administrating the Assembly requirement to compile mission plans. To give the Board the authority to supervise the implementation of mission plans is a step too far. There would certainly be a continuing role for Presbytery Mission Development Committees and it would be a sufficient function for the Board of Mission in Ireland to maintain regular contact with each committee to encourage and exchange information. We would encourage the development of such relationships. The way forward for mission development is for Presbyteries to take responsibility, availing themselves, when appropriate, with the resources the Board of Mission in Ireland is able to provide. This might avoid the danger of mission planning becoming a distraction rather than an aid to the mission of the Church. (Ards)

Take the opportunity to reassess our role in the light of where we are post-Mission Planning

We appreciate the work and expertise of the Board's Mission Development Officer, but this role for the future needs to be reassessed. (Derry and Donegal)

Assist Presbyteries and Congregations by supplying perspective and vision

We would welcome BMI's practical input to assist Congregations and Presbyteries implement activities particularly where needs have been recognised for which there is a deficiency of willing or available personnel and expertise. The Board must remain the servant of both Presbytery and congregation while they each welcome (the) Board's perspective and envisioning. (Omagh)

Stimulate the Church with good models of mission

The distinctive role of each body needs to be worked out and the Board should continue consultation with Presbyteries, enabling the Board to supply ideas and models of mission to help Congregations, but not by way of imposition. We wonder if the Board needs to clarify their role, as the current remit of the Board in the Code is significantly different from that which is stated in the report. Should it be to stimulate the formation of the right value systems for Congregations? (North Belfast)

Focus on achieving more by doing less and engaging with each Presbytery to meet specific challenges

In general, the South Belfast Presbytery is of the opinion that the BMI should see itself primarily as a resource for Presbyteries so that Presbyteries can be a better resource for Congregations. In doing so BMI should assign itself relatively few things to do - but they should make time to do those few things well. In that way, BMI could rotate through the various Presbyteries more efficiently and be available to the Development Committees on a more regular basis. (South Belfast)

5. What Presbyteries told the Board about the Strategy shift from Mission Planning to Mission Development

5.1 Presbyteries broadly welcomed the shift from Mission Planning to Mission Development described in last year's report as follows:

Mission development needs to be seen as a dynamic ongoing process to which we are always bending our minds and hearts and wills, rather than an exercise in mission planning to which we routinely return every five years.

5.2 This endorsed the Board's view that, post mission planning, there is a need to stop, take stock and have a greater degree of freedom as to how best to serve the Church and enable mission in future than would be afforded by being locked in to a five-year plan model which could easily become merely formulaic.

5.3 One Presbytery clearly grasped the importance of the shift in terms of changing denominational culture and commented as follows: *'We agree that the lasting impact of the initiative may in the longer term be measured less by the specific projects generated and more by the culture of new missional thinking created, what is commonly called 'mindset'. And it is vital that the gains of the*

last few years are not lost by a failure to follow through on commitments. So perhaps we need to think not so much about mindset, but heartset, to move from ambition to action, and if it's not stretching the concept too far, find ways of getting mission into our hearts so that it becomes the life-blood of the Church (Carrickfergus).

5.4 This is indeed the deeper and longer term challenge.

6. What Presbyteries told the Board about the proposals for Presbytery Mission Audit and Consultations

6.1 In the Board's report to the General Assembly last year, the Presbytery Mission Audit was envisaged as a possible tool to address the question of how the Board of Mission in Ireland and Presbyteries could work together in the support and oversight of Congregations in the task of local mission.

6.2 Although some Presbyteries interpreted this as affording the Board a role beyond its remit, the intent of addressing this question was for the Board to offer Presbyteries support in fulfilling their role by providing supplementary resources to deal with capacity and proximity issues mentioned above.

6.3 The concept of the Presbytery Mission Audit was outlined as follows in last year's report:

PRESBYTERY MISSION AUDIT. To assist Presbytery in exercising these roles more effectively, the Board proposes the development of a rolling process of Presbytery Mission Audit. Facilitated by the Mission Development Officer in conjunction with Presbytery Mission Development Committees, the process of Mission Audit would proceed as follows:

SCHEDULE

Four Presbyteries audited per year, beginning September 2011. One Presbytery Audit undertaken in each of the following periods Sept/Oct; Nov/Jan; Feb/Mar; Apr/May.

PROCESS

Two month review process facilitated by BMI Mission Development Officer along with Presbytery Mission Development Committee.

COMPONENTS: *With room for flexibility determined by local situations, the following basic plan is proposed:*

- *Gathering of congregational information by questionnaire;*
- *Joint Presbytery Worship service around missional theme (Sunday night, stated Presbytery meeting, or other);*
- *Preparatory meeting of Presbytery Mission Development Committee and BMI Mission Development Officer to examine congregational returns;*
- *Series of informal face-to-face interviews undertaken by Presbytery Mission Development Committee and BMI Mission Development Officer with Minister and one representative elder to review each congregation's mission and to pray together;*

- *Compilation of short, focused comment on each congregation's progress in mission with further suggestions to explore as appropriate;*
- *Identification of any particular common challenge or emerging opportunity for mission within the Presbytery area or within its Congregations;*
- *Production of Presbytery Mission Audit document;*
- *Audit document presented to Presbytery for discussion and approval;*
- *BMI/Presbytery facilitated training day on presenting issues for Congregations in mission development and/or to showcase potential models for mission;*
- *Twelve months later, Presbytery Mission Development Committee obtain a written review of congregational progress and follow up with personal contact where necessary;*
- *Any future missional issue arising within Presbytery bounds would then be considered in the light of the latest audit and by dialogue between all the parties concerned.*

6.4 Acknowledging the extra burden undertaking the Audit would put on Presbyteries for an intensive two month period once every five years, the report made the following recommendation with regard to Presbytery Consultations.

PRESBYTERY CONSULTATIONS

Recognising that there may be some overlap with the existing system of Presbytery Consultation, it is proposed that in the calendar year in which a Presbytery undertakes a Presbytery Mission Audit, the process of Presbytery Consultation be suspended.

6.5 The Audit proposal raised many questions. Responses varied from enthusiasm, to guarded acceptance, to rejection of the concept. The general consensus seems to be that it is vital that there is an effective process by which each Presbytery intentionally supports, encourages and oversees congregational development of mission in an ongoing way.

6.6 One Presbytery described their desire as follows: *'We are keen to implement our mission plans with the minimum of interference yet with meaningful support'* (Dromore). In terms of encouraging Congregations to implement mission plans another Presbytery commented on the need for this task to be handled with a light touch, *'the challenge therefore in these proposals is to get the right level of oversight and encouragement without making Congregations feel that they are living under a heavy burden'* (Newry). The Board completely concurs and, in the rolling out of the Mission Planning process at both Presbytery and congregational level the Board has sought to act as gentle encouragers and companions in mission development. The Board remains open to suggestions as to the best means, *'to support Congregations, in particular, in developing their local mission'* (General Assembly Reports 2010 p189).

6.7 As opposed to the introduction of the Presbytery Mission Audit, a significant number of Presbyteries are keen to explore how the present

Consultation process could be developed as a tool of mission development. A variety of views were expressed as below. The headings are the Boards.

Improve the Consultation process

Building another formal externally driven auditing process additional to Presbytery Consultations, (which already incorporates the Missional Theme), will divert Presbytery personnel from doing mission. Best to improve the Consultation process, including the Missional Theme, rather than bolt on another process. Capacity building of Presbytery personnel involved in Consultations would be preferable to direct external involvement from BMI. (Derry & Donegal)

Change the Consultation process to adopt more missional outlook

To have Presbytery mission audits while still retaining Consultations, even if not done that year, will result in a process of accountability that is too cumbersome. One alternative might be to change Consultations so that they have a more missional outlook. (Armagh)

Recast the Consultation process to account for progress in mission development

At present we are investigating how we can recast our consultation process to take account of the progress of mission development within the various Congregations. (Ards)

Retain the Consultation in its present form

However, one proposal of the BMI which may not need to be adopted in our Presbytery is the idea of a formal Presbytery Mission audit – which periodically would replace the normal Presbytery Consultation. Whilst we recognise that in many areas this would be a good idea, in Ballymena, it may not. This is because our Consultation process is clear on mission and thorough about the question of a congregation's outreach and commitment to the lost. (Ballymena)

Integrate the Consultation process with the Mission Audit

Presbytery is most concerned that Presbytery Mission Audits would replace the process of Presbytery Consultations, which are an invaluable way of ensuring that the finance and fabric of Church buildings, as well as the health and safety of our members is maintained. Presbytery asks that the BMI identify a way to integrate rather than separate Mission Audits and Presbytery Consultations. (Route)

Abolish the Consultation process and replace it with the Mission Audit

The report draws attention to an overlap with Presbytery Consultations. As mission is so fundamental to the life of a congregation, and the amount of time mission development will take in Congregations and Presbyteries, we recommend that Consultations be abolished, that the Presbytery Mission Audit replace it, along with a mainly documentation-based audit of records, finances and other administrative matters which used to be addressed in some aspects of

the Visitation and Consultation processes. It might be called a Congregational Administration Audit and could run over a rolling 10 year period through each Presbytery. (Carrickfergus)

Associate the Consultation process with the Mission Audit

We see mission as part of the Consultation process and suggest that it be worthwhile to explore how to associate Consultations with Audits. In South Belfast Presbytery the experience of Consultations has been most welcome. (South Belfast)

6.9 While welcoming the desire to harness the potential of a revised Consultation process as a tool for supporting Congregations in reviewing their missional effectiveness, the frequency of Consultations must also be considered. Derry and Donegal, the Presbytery with the largest number of Congregations under its care, drew attention to this, stating, *'a Presbytery Mission Audit is unnecessary if Consultations were conducted more frequently – every five years.'* The Board notes this, but recognize the limited capacity of Presbyteries to deliver this level of consultation.

6.10 Some Presbyteries suspended Consultations during the Church year 2009/2010 due to the work associated with the Mission Plan process. Using the Reports of Presbytery to the General Assembly in 2009 as the most recent example of the number of Congregations consulted within a typical year by each Presbytery, the figures reported are as follows:

● Ards	1
● Armagh	3
● Ballymena	2
● North Belfast	1
● South Belfast	2
● East Belfast	2
● Carrickfergus	0
● Coleraine	none reported
● Derry and Strabane	2 (both joint charges)
● Donegal	none reported
● Down	none reported
● Dromore	2
● Dublin & Munster	none reported
● Foyle	1
● Iveagh	none reported
● Monaghan	1 (three point charge)
● Newry	0
● Omagh	1
● Route	(NB: 'visited') 2
● Templepatrick	3
● Tyrone	none reported

6.11 Having reflected upon the comments of Presbyteries and, notwithstanding the above observations about the frequency of the Consultation process as presently practiced across the Church, the Board welcomes the work of the General Board in exploring a revision of the Consultation process, and

requests that the focus on helping Congregations reflect on the effectiveness of local mission be emphasised.

7. What Presbyteries told the Board about Networks

7.1 The concept of building and maintaining a series of networks to serve and enable contextualised thinking about mission at congregational level was overwhelmingly endorsed by Presbyteries.

7.2 The Urban Mission Network is already beginning to gain momentum and has been welcomed by many. An initial Rural Mission Conversation has paved the way for the adoption of a more regional approach to networking for those ministering in that context across the island.

7.3 The more general missional Church designation requires further work. To begin to further explore this area of work, a number of conversations on leading congregational change for mission will be piloted in the coming Church year.

7.4 The Board is enthusiastic about the potential of these networks and will prioritise their development as a key aspect of mission development strategy.

8. Conclusions. A revised strategy for the future of mission development

8.1 The Board has sought to listen to the views of Presbyteries and to respond positively to what has been heard.

8.2 The Mission Planning process has created momentum for developing mission as a denomination. The Board is thankful to God and the many individuals who have played their part in creating a new awareness of the missional challenge and a new conversation about missional opportunity. This is the platform on which it is essential to build.

8.3 The key element of last year's proposals was the shift in emphasis from Mission Planning to Mission Development. This having been overwhelmingly endorsed, the Board looks forward to transitioning to a strategy that engages in mission development in a low-key, long-term, intentionally relational way to positively impact upon the whole culture of the Church in mission.

8.4 The immediate future effectiveness of the Board in improving the missional output of the Church lies in accurately identifying the key issues facing Congregations on the ground, and helping them to address these appropriately and creatively, thereby stimulating still greater hunger for and imagination in mission.

8.5 The Board remains committed to harnessing the potential of Presbyterian polity for mission. To do so, it is proposed that the Mission Development Officer maintains annual contact with Presbytery Clerks and Mission Development Co-ordinators to offer support in mission development in whatever form they deem appropriate.

8.6 The Board trusts that the General Board Consultation review will adequately seek to address concerns about their frequency and offer a way forward that boosts the momentum of Congregational Mission Planning.

8.7 The Board commends to the Church the developing work of a series of networks built around urban, rural and missional designations.

8.8 In the service of the wider mission of the Church, the Board commits to developing a course for the training of Evangelists and assessing the potential of running a Missional Church style course, one aspect of which would address the issue of Church planting.

9. A summary of the Revised Strategy for the future of Mission Development

9.1 Engagement with Presbyteries

- Representatives of the Board of Mission in Ireland will contribute to the General Board review of the Presbytery Consultation process.
- The BMI Mission Development Officer will initiate conversations with each Presbytery to discern specific ways in which the Board might support local Mission Development.
- The BMI Communications Committee will constantly review the Mission in Ireland Evenings seeking to discern how they might be used more creatively to stimulate worshipful reflection on the task of mission.
- The Board will offer perspective or facilitation to Presbyteries on any missional issue arising at their request.

9.2 Engagement with Congregations

- The BMI Research and Resources Committee will aim to commission at least one high quality missional resource for congregational use each year.
- The BMI Research and Resources Committee will make it a priority to gather and share effective models for mission to the Church at large.
- The BMI Mission Development Officer, in conjunction with appropriate input from the Strategy for Mission Committee, will develop the series of networks around Urban Mission, Rural Mission and Missional Church.

9.3 Serving and Enabling the mission of the Wider Church

- The BMI Research and Resources Committee, in conjunction with the Board of Christian Training, will develop and deliver a course for the Training of Evangelists.
- The BMI Research and Resources Committee will assess the potential of developing and delivering a Missional Church style course, one aspect of which would address the issue of Church planting.

WILLIAM HENRY, Convener

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Committee's work has been largely shaped by seeking to develop focused resources aimed at meeting specific needs identified during the Mission Planning process.

1. WORSHIP PANEL

The Rev Karen Campbell reports:

1.1 Psalms Roadshows showcasing both metrical and contemporary psalmody as well as specially commissioned pieces from local composers were held in Bannside and Orangefield. Feedback has been positive and a request to hold another event in the North West area in the autumn is being considered.

1.2 The mentoring scheme for Church musicians continues to remain popular with three mentors operating to almost full capacity.

2. PANEL ON THE REVISION OF THE BOOK OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

The Very Rev Dr David Clarke reports:

2.1 Work on the revision of The Book of Public Worship is ongoing with the material now in second draft form. The Board intends to publish the completed work online as downloadable files, starting later this year, following which the completed work will be offered to the Assembly for consideration and possible approval at a future date. Presbytery responses to the first draft – some in considerable detail – have been carefully considered as work proceeds.

2.2 To help provide the framework for some decisions at the Assembly this year, the revised draft material relating to Services of Ordination is appended as Appendix B to this Report. Issues raised in this include the following:

2.2.1 Code Pars 10 – 14. As part of the work on Services of Ordination, the Panel is considering the wording of **The Standards of the Church** set out in Pars 10 -14 of The Code. While the wording of these paragraphs was amended in 1997 some feel that the time has come to review the wording again, not to change its substance but to make the meaning as clear as possible to all who may be present at a service of ordination or installation. A resolution to test the mind of the Assembly regarding the undertaking of such a review is appended.

2.2.2 Code Pars 204 and 210(1) The laying on of hands. Code Par 204, which deals with the ordination and installation of ruling elders, states that "...the Presbytery...shall appoint Ministers to officiate at the service." Code Par 210, which deals with the ordination, installation and induction of Ministers, similarly states that "...the Presbytery shall appoint Ministers to conduct the service." The question has now arisen as to whether, in services of ordination, ruling elders should join with the Ministers in the laying on of hands. The Book of Public Worship published by authority of the General Assembly in 1965, when dealing with the ordination and installation of Ministers, states that "*Every Minister of the Word is to be ordained by imposition of hands, and prayer, by*

those preaching presbyters to who it doth belong, that is by the Ministers of the local Presbytery” (Page 222). That wording closely follows the wording in two sections of “The Form of Presbyterian Church-Government” (*Touching the Power of Ordination and Concerning the Doctrinal Part of Ordination of Ministers*). The “Form” was agreed by the Westminster Assembly of Divines and was subsequently approved by Act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, February 10, 1645, though it was not explicitly approved or adopted by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Some now feel that, notwithstanding the authorities cited here, ruling elders should join with Ministers in the laying on of hands at services of ordination; indeed it seems that that is already the practice in some Presbyteries. However, it is desirable (i) that the law of the Church and the practice of the Church should be in harmony; and (ii) that there should be consistency and uniformity of practice throughout the Church.

2.2.3 Code 205(2)(a) and 212(2) These sections describe the prayer constituting Presbytery which currently takes place during the service of ordination. Some have taken the view that this act of constitution might more properly take place prior to the commencement of the service when the Presbytery Commission meets to transact some necessary business described in Code Par 211. By providing for the moving this formal act of constitution to the period before the service, and in the interests of clarity, one further element of the service that may appear alien or strange to visitors may be removed.

2.2.4 Code Par 212(1) It is arguable that the sermon (as distinct from the charge to the new Minister and congregation) might be omitted, its function being fulfilled by a ‘Statement of Order’, the reading or readings from Scripture and the Creed. If so, the statement, readings and Creed could be introduced by suitable words from the Moderator, making clear that they give scriptural and historical warrant for the service as a whole.

2.2.5 Code Par 212(5) The Assembly will note the proposals to revise the wording of the questions put to the Licentiate. These revisions contain the substance of the current questions except that the penultimate question does not specifically name the Subordinate Standards. The Standards have been named prior to this in the service and the Westminster Confession of Faith is named in the requirement to subscribe, at section 11.

2.3 Should these revisions be approved by the Assembly, several changes to the Code will be required. Relevant Overtures will be presented in the Supplementary Reports.

3. DIVINE HEALING PANEL

The Rev JL Tosh reports:

3.1 The Panel is in the process of re-examining its means of delivery in terms clearly defining its work and the role of Presbytery Healing Agents. The Panel hopes to re-establish Divine Healing Agents in each Presbytery where the appointment has lapsed.

4. Course for the Training of Evangelists

4.1 A working group has been developing course structure, content and plans for delivery. It is anticipated that the first course will be advertised in August of this year and run for a ten-week period beginning in January 2012.

4.2 Aims of the Course

- Enable the identification of evangelistic gifting
- Empower evangelists to develop gifting
- Equip trainers to deliver evangelistic training

4.3 Timeline

- Advertise the course August 2011
- Preview day – late November 2011
- Application by mid December 2011
- Course – one 2 hour evening session weekly for 10 weeks Jan-Mar 2012, based in UTC

4.4 Cost

- £100 – The Board will encourage Congregations to fund all, or part of this, for nominated participants.

4.5 Requirements for participants

- A letter of recommendation from their Kirk Session
- Willingness for Kirk Session (or other Church or agency) to facilitate an outworking of some aspect of the training in a practical setting locally.

4.6 Purpose of the Preview Day

- To clarify the nature of evangelism within the wider framework of mission
- To offer a taster of the course material
- To offer the opportunity for participants to assess their gifting in this area

4.7 Draft Course Outline: 10 Units

- Theological foundation – What is the Gospel?
- Evangelism and the mission of the local Church
- Irish context(s) and making connections
- Conversational evangelism – listening, questioning, creating opportunities
- Evangelistic resources – what? where? why? how?
- Focused streams – Pastoral, Creative arts, Youth, Children, Street work
- Use of story in evangelism
- Handling the Bible evangelistically
- Initiating evangelistic response – contextually appropriate means, leading a person to Christ
- Mobilising God's people for evangelism

5. Other resources

5.1 AWAKE 2011: This year's AWAKE publication revolved around an exploration of key themes from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles under the title 'God Acts'. For the first time an audio version of the Bible passages and

devotions has been produced as well as supporting resources for children and youth and a series of sermon outlines. Demand for this resource continues to remain high.

5.2 AWAKE 2012: A proposal for production of the next AWAKE to coincide with the General Assembly of 2012, which may include Bible study materials linked to stories narrating models of mission from around the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and beyond, is under discussion.

5.3 A revision of a BMI resource previously entitled *100 Best Evangelistic Resources* has been uploaded to the BMI website and will be followed up by a series of articles in ReachOut magazine.

5.4 An evangelistic resource for use in non-book culture is at concept and design stage.

5.5 An initial 'conversation' on Rural Mission has been held highlighting:

- The importance of rural mission within PCI
- A definition of rural for the purposes of future focus
- Learning gained from the experience of Congregational Mission Planning in rural Congregations
- A suggested response by BMI to serve the rural Church and enable its mission
- A possible agenda for rural mission development

This is a first step towards the formation of a Rural Mission Network.

5.6 A six week resource to explore mission in Congregations operating in commuter contexts, entitled, *Tapestry: a Mission Woven Life*, is being piloted in Waringstown Presbyterian Church. It is hoped to make it available as a free downloadable resource in the autumn.

CHRIS KENNEDY, Convener

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Mrs Cherry Poynton reports:

1. Website

1.1 The Committee has responsibility for the BMI website www.missionireland.org. In this technological age the website is becoming the main method for disseminating information about the Board's work, as well as providing downloadable resources including prayer bulletins. The site was restructured in 2010 to make it easier to navigate since it now contains much more information and many more resources including blogs and photographs on Flickr. Prayerfocus, while a downloadable resource, continues to be emailed to subscribers every week.

2. ReachOut

2.1 Six editions of *ReachOut* magazine were published during the year. 8,000 copies of each edition are printed for distribution but it has been noted that there is still a significant number of Congregations which do not promote the magazine. *ReachOut Connect*, the pull-out section in the magazine has been

redesigned. It contains a monthly prayer diary as well as information about field-workers and specific mission situations.

3. Conferences

3.1 The Board's Communications Officer, Robin Fairbairn organised Mission in Ireland events in 14 Presbyteries in March 2011. He was also responsible for the practical arrangements for conferences for the Deaconesses and for Irish Mission Workers. In addition there were meetings in connection with Urban and Rural Missions. Two Psalms Roadshows run in February (Banbridge) and March (Belfast) were greatly appreciated by those who attended.

4. Publications

4.1 The Committee's Publications Panel continues to look at the production of all of the Board's printed material, which this year included *Awake 2011 – God Acts* and the ongoing work of producing cards as an evangelistic tool for non-readers.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mrs Irene Younge reports:

1. Introduction

1.1 The Board deploys 8 Irish Mission Workers and 1 probationer.

1.2 In partnership with PW, BMI deploys 28 Deaconesses with a further 4 student Deaconesses on probationary year commencing June 2011.

1.3 There are currently 39 Ministers serving with the Board, including 2 Church Planters, 3 in Urban situations and 34 in Home Mission Congregations.

1.4 A full directory of personnel serving with the Board is listed in Appendix A.

2. Home and Urban Mission Ministers and Church Planters

2.1 The Rev Stephen Rea received a Call to serve as Minister of Carlow and Athy and was inducted by the Dublin and Munster Presbytery on 5 August, 2010.

2.2 The Rev Molly Deatherage received a Call to serve as Minister of Ballina, Killala and Ballymote and was Ordained and Inducted by the Monaghan Presbytery on 13 November, 2010.

3. Irish Mission Workers

3.1 Mr Stephen Wilson resigned from the Board on 14 July, 2010. The Board thanks Stephen for his period of service in Mullingar and latterly in Kells and wish Stephen, Karen, Patrick and Callum God's blessing in their future service.

3.2 Mr Harry Moreland has completed his deployment in Fermoy and Cahir and is awaiting redeployment to another location with the Board. The

Board records its thanks to Harry and Anne for their faithful work in the Cork area.

3.3 Decisions about the commissioning and deployment of Mr Eamon Doyle have been deferred.

4. Deaconesses

4.1 Mrs Elizabeth Matthews was called and inducted by the Dromore Presbytery to serve as a Deaconess in Elmwood alongside the Rev Andrew Thompson on 20 June, 2010.

4.2 Mrs Lynda McFaul was called, commissioned and inducted by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus to serve as a Deaconess in 1st Carrickfergus alongside the Rev Dr Cecil Grant on 5 September, 2010.

4.3 Miss Roberta Irvine resigned from 1st Comber and was subsequently called and inducted by the Presbytery of Templepatrick to serve as a Deaconess in Greystone Road, Antrim alongside the Rev Jonathan Moxen on 7 November, 2010.

4.4 Mrs Elizabeth Warnock resigned from service in Abbey, Monkstown and is a Deaconess without charge under the care of the North Belfast Presbytery.

4.5 Mrs Gillian Martin resigned as Deaconess in Woodvale on 31 March, 2010 to take up alternative employment. The Board records its thanks to Gillian for over 30 year's faithful service as a Deaconess.

5. Student Deaconesses

5.1 Mrs Amy Magee commenced a probationary year on 1 June, 2010 in Muckamore Congregation under the supervision of the Rev Peter Dickinson.

5.2 Mrs Eileen Black, Miss Joanne McCourt, Miss Tracey Nicholl and Mrs Hazel Reid commenced their 2nd year of training at Union Theological College in October 2010.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Mr Brian Knox reports:

1. Introduction

1.1 The Property Committee has met regularly and, in addition, numerous inspections of various Church properties have been made by Committee representatives, meetings held 'on location' with Congregational representatives, reports given and actions taken as appropriate. The following is a brief summary of the projects under current examination by the Committee.

2. Mullingar new Church building

2.1 Following discussion with local agents, the existing Church building has been placed on the market for sale, since it is too small for the growing Congregation. A site has been identified, and soil investigation tests are presently being taken. Dependant on receipt of satisfactory results of these and

other technical matters, it is proposed to have a planning application made in April 2011.

2.2 Purchase from the Westmeath County Council of the new site at Rathgowan, Mullingar, will only proceed upon receipt of Planning Approval.

3. Drogheda new Church building

3.1 Discussions/negotiations have continued over the months and it is hoped that these will be concluded in order that appropriate contracts may be put in place leading to commencement of building work on the new site at Bettystown.

4. Ballyshannon sale of old Church building

4.1 The Church building remains for sale and interest has been shown by some prospective purchasers.

5. Mountmellick old Church and adjoining manse

5.1 Despite some hopeful signs, a proposed sale did not proceed. This listed property is back on the market. Every effort is being made to sell the property and in the interim regular visits continue in order to monitor the condition of the property and those on either side given its terrace situation on the main street.

6. Lisbellaw manse extension

6.1 The extension and upgrading works have now been completed.

7. Arklow Church building extension

7.1 Exciting plans for the extension of the Church building in Arklow have been submitted and approved, and a grant has been made available to the congregation to assist in this project. The extension will add much needed capacity to the worship area, in addition to more halls accommodation and improved toilet facilities.

8. Irvinestown new Church building

8.1 A new Church building was opened for the Irvinestown Congregation in May 2010. BMI grant assistance was given towards this important project.

9. Strand, Belfast

9.1 Following an unfavourable insurance inspection, plans to vacate the Church building of the Urban Mission Congregation in Strand have been approved by the East Belfast Presbytery and the Board. The building is scheduled for demolition this summer, and in the meantime the congregation will relocate to a local school. Plans are in place to reconstruct a new suite of buildings on the site.

10. General

10.1 The Property Committee continues to progress other matters such as the preparation of a database of properties for which the Board is responsible; resolution of an insurance claim in respect of property at Kiltegan Park, Cork; verification of land ownership in Roundstone; upgrading/maintenance works at Galway manse, Ballina manse and a former manse at Nunns Island, Galway and a house in Letterkenny.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr Douglas Cowan reports:

1. Introduction

1.1 The Finance Committee meets bimonthly to review the management accounts of the Board. Despite the difficult economic climate, the Committee is grateful to God that expenditure has been kept within the approved budgets for the year.

2. Capital Expenditure

2.1 The capital programme has fluctuated on a year to year basis because of the difficulties in predicting when the purchase of land and actual building projects will receive approval to commence. The Committee anticipates that the Board's capacity to provide further capital grants will be exhausted at the end of 2011, pending the sale of existing assets.

3. Properties

3.1 The Committee has reviewed present arrangements for the ownership and rental of accommodation for Irish Mission Workers. Beyond arrangements already agreed, it is not proposed to sell any surplus properties until market conditions improve.

4. Deaconesses

4.1 The Committee is in discussion with PW about the block grant donation from PW to BMI towards the total costs for deaconess salaries. The Committee reviews the contributions from Congregations towards these employment costs. A moratorium has been placed on the recruitment of new deaconesses.

5. Grants Panel

5.1 The Grants Panel consists of members from the Property and Finance Committees and meets three times per year. It disperses grants under the following headings:

- (a) Irish Mission Fund
- (b) Mission Support Grant
- (c) Home Mission Fabric Grant
- (d) Home Mission Car loan

(e) Home Mission Repair Grant

(f) Home Mission Capital Grant

5.2 With the formation of Mission Support Funds in some Presbyteries, the Board has agreed to provide administrative assistance for the dispersal of grants from these sources, using the existing grants mechanism or a variant of it.

APPENDIX A

Directory of Ministers, Deaconesses and Irish Mission Workers currently serving with the Board.

Home Mission Ministers

Congregations in brackets are not in the Home Mission.

Rev RS Agnew	(1st Monaghan) and Smithborough
Rev MRJ Anderson	Arklow
Rev SG Anketell	1st Bailieborough, Corraneary, (Trinity Bailieborough)
Rev Janice Browne	(Kerrykeel, Milford) and Rathmullan
Rev GD Campbell	(Blackrock) and Bray
Rev CFD Clements	Irvinestown, Pettigo and Tempo
Rev Molly Deatherage	Ballina, Killala, Ballymote
Rev CI Dickson	(Cavanaleck) and Aughtentaine
Rev JG Faris	Cork and Aghada
Rev CJ Gamble	Naas
Rev WJ Hayes	Tullamore and Mountmellick
Rev Kenneth Henderson	(Aughnacloy) and Ballymagrane
Rev G Hewitt (Methodist)	Christ Church, Limerick (Alternating scheme)
Rev HJ Honeyford	(2nd Castledearg) and Alt
Rev KA Jones	(Waterside) and Fahan
Rev Paul Linkens	(Ebrington) and Inch
Rev SJ Lockington	Corboy and Mullingar
Rev Dr DK McCrory	Maynooth
Rev GJ Mackarel	Drumkeeran, Killeshandra, Cavan and Bellasis
Rev Katherine Meyer	Sandymount (Alternating scheme)
Rev Dr JG Millar	Howth and Malahide
Rev NS Millen	(Dundalk, Castlebellingham) and Carlingford
Rev GA Mitchell	Sligo and Boyle
Rev DJ Montgomery	Greystones
Rev W Montgomery	Fermoy and Cahir
Rev DT Moore	Kilkenny
Rev Troy Morgan	Clones, Stonebridge, Ballyhobridge and Newbliss
Rev SW Rea	Carlow and Athy
Rev DW Reid	(Ardstraw) and Douglas
Rev SJ Richmond	Donegal
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 GP Young	Moville and Greenbank
Vacant	Carndonagh and Malin
Vacant	Carrigart and Dunfanaghy
Vacant	Enniscorthy and Wexford
Vacant	(Frankford, Castleblayney) and Corvalley
Vacant	Maguiresbridge, Lisbellaw, Newtownbutler and Lisnaskea
Vacant	Galway (Alternating scheme)

Urban Mission Ministers

Rev Mervyn Gibson	Westbourne
Rev Robert Love	Taughmonagh
Rev Daniel Rankin	Strand

Church Planters

Rev DF Leal	Cliftonville Road
Rev Andy Carroll	Donabate, North Dublin

Deaconesses

Jenny Clegg	Ballycrochan, Bangor
Amanda Cooper	New Row, Coleraine
Muriel Cromie	Belfast City Hospital chaplaincy team
Doreen Draffin	Whitehouse and Hospice chaplaincy team
Eleanor Drysdale	Wellington, Ballymena
Lynda Gibson	NI Prison Service chaplaincy team
Sharon Heron	Strand, Belfast
Roberta Irvine	Greystone Road, Antrim
Christine Kyle	Ulster Hospital chaplaincy team
Phyllis Linton	West Church, Ballymena
Michelle McCauley	Ballygowan
Heather McCracken	Alexandra and locum RVH chaplaincy team
Sonya McCullagh	Shore Street, Donaghadee
Sadie McCullough	Whiteabbey
Lynda McFaul	1st Carrickfergus
Carol McRoberts	Tullycarnet
Elizabeth Matthews	Elmwood, Lisburn
Carol O'Hara	Antrim Area Hospital and Musgrave Park Hospital chaplaincy team
Jackie O'Neill	Joymount, Carrickfergus
Jean Gwyn Patton	RVH chaplaincy team
Julie Peake	Portrush
Margaret Robertson	Gardenmore, Larne
Jenny Robinson	South Belfast Friendship House
Kathleen Spence	Scarva Street, Banbridge
Rosemary Spiers	1st Antrim

Evelyn White	1st Lisburn
Liz Warnock	Interim placement

Probationary Deaconess

Amy Magee	Muckamore
-----------	-----------

Student Deaconesses

Eileen Black	2nd year
Joanne McCourt	2nd year
Tracey Nicholl	2nd year
Hazel Reid	2nd year

Irish Mission Workers

David Boyd	Adelaide Road, Dublin
Tom Dowling	Kilkenny
Kevin Hargaden	Maynooth
Harry Moreland	Cork
Billy Patterson	Drogheda
Keith Preston	Migrant communities, South and East Belfast
William Workman	Athy and Carlow
Philip Whelton	Arklow

Probationary Irish Mission Worker

Eamon Doyle	
-------------	--

BMI-supported outreach workers (2011)

Richie Cronin	Dun Laoghaire
Jonathan Reid	1st Ahoghill
Eddie Spence	Ballygomartin
Appointment pending	Greystones
Appointment pending	Ballyloughan

APPENDIX B**ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF A MINISTER****Introductory Comments**

This order of service has been produced as the first in a series. If its broad outlines are accepted that it can be readily altered to be used in the following:

- Installation of a Minister to a second or subsequent charge
- Induction of an Associate Minister
- Installation or induction of a Minister to special service
- Licensing of probationers for the Ministry
- Ordination of elders
- Commissioning of Deaconesses

Commissioning of Irish Mission Workers
Commissioning of Overseas Mission personnel

Structure of the Service

The structure of this service is as follows:

1-5 Approach to God in praise and prayer.

6-8 Foundations for ministry and ordination in Scripture, read and preached and in the context of the universal faith of the Church expressed in the creed and hymn/s. It would be appropriate to have readings that refer to the ministry of Jesus as the foundation and pattern for all Christian ministry and others to set the ministry of word and sacrament in the context of the wider ministry, fellowship, mission and worship of the Church.

9-18 The local context of the ordination and installation of the Minister is outlined in the narrative of how the individual and congregation have come to this point. This is done in the rather larger context of the life and witness of PCI and culminates in the act of ordination, the congregation making their commitment to play their part and the inclusion of the Minister into the fellowship of Presbytery and the local congregation.

The formal words at **14** link the local story of Licentiate and congregation into the great narrative of Christ and the Church.

19-23 The Minister and congregation are commissioned.

THE ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF A MINISTERⁱ

The members of the Presbytery Commission enter the Church and take their places before the start of worship.

1. Greeting

The Moderator greets the congregation, finishing with an appropriate portion of Scripture [Is 63:7; Dan 2:20-22; Eph 1:3; Rev 5:11-14] and/or call to worship such as the following:ⁱⁱ

Let us worship God, the Creator of heaven and earth; let us worship the Lord Jesus, King and Head of the Church, who has put his Spirit in our hearts to bind us together in fellowship and who has brought us to this joyful celebration.

2. Praise [Such as Ps 135:1-5, IPH 174, 182, 194]

3. Prayers of adoration and confessionⁱⁱⁱ (such as the following)

Let us pray.

Holy Lord, whose Son Jesus Christ lived our human life in unselfish service, conquered death and ascended to the heavens to rule over all things, we worship you as King over the whole universe. Gracious God, who loved your creation and offered your Son to die for it, to rescue it from destruction, we worship you as Redeemer of your people; Eternal Father, who sent your Holy Spirit to regenerate those whom you have called and to constitute your Son's Church, we worship you as the giver of eternal life. Amen.

We praise you, O God, for the Good News that you have given to your Church, to take to the world, the good news that we sinful men and women can be set free from all that brings about your righteous condemnation, all that would damage and destroy us. We are keenly aware of our failures, our short comings, our rebellion. Even as your people, we fall far short of what we ought to be. We confess openly before you the sin that brings shame to us and pain to you. We repent of it, we turn from it, we long for new obedience and new faithfulness. Amen.

The prayers of adoration and confession may end with a responsive element such as the following:

I love the Lord for he heard my voice,
He heard my cry for mercy,

Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.

Be at rest once more, O my soul,
For the Lord has been good to you.
(Ps. 116: 1, 7)

Let the name of the LORD be praised,
Both now and forevermore.

From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets
The name of the LORD is to be praised.

The LORD is exalted over all the nations,
His glory above the heavens.
(Ps. 113:2-4)

4. Reading or readings [Such as Josh 1, Matt 4:18-22, Eph 4:1-16, Rev 21]

5. Praise [Such as IPH 476, 611, 615, 638]

6. Sermon or statement on the nature of the Church^{iv}

7. The Apostles' Creed may be said here

Let us stand to confess our common faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

This may be either the traditional version or the contemporary version (IPH 377 or 378) said by all standing.

8. Praise^v [Such as IPH 361, 380, 452, 456]

9. The Narrative^{vi}

The Vacancy Convener gives an appropriately brief account of the steps leading to the ordination and installation.

10. Preamble

The Licentiate takes his/her place before the Presbytery.

The Moderator says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, who, having ascended to the right hand of the Father, has given gifts for the building up the Church, which is his body, we have met as the Presbytery of PP to ordain NN^{vii} to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and to install^{viii} him/her to the pastoral charge of ...

As we do this we remind ourselves of the foundational standards upon which our Church rests.

The Clerk of Presbytery reads^{ix}

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

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

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

The Confession of Faith (as approved by the Church of Scotland in her Act of 1647), and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, prepared by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, are the subordinate standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Accepting these subordinate standards, the Church holds that, although civil rulers are bound to render obedience to Christ in their own province, yet they ought not to attempt in any way to constrain anyone's religious beliefs, or invade the rights of conscience.

In the Church resides the right to interpret and explain her standards under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

11. The Moderator addresses the Licentiate.^x

NN I am now going to ask you seven questions. The first two are a public profession of your personal faith.

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

I do

Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and life?

I do

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

Do you acknowledge the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to be an integral part of the Church of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world and do you promise to seek the unity and peace of this Church, while upholding Reformed doctrine, worship, government, and discipline in a spirit of love towards all your brothers and sisters in Christ?

I do

Adhering to the fundamental doctrines of the faith, set out in the Standards of this Church, and accepting also the Presbyterian form of Church government to be founded on and in harmony with the Word of God, do you promise to yield submission in the Lord to the courts of this Church and to take your due part in the administration of its affairs?

I do

Now, three questions on the discharge of your ministry in this place.

So far as you know your own heart, are zeal for the glory of God, love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire for the salvation of all people, your central motives as you offer yourself to be ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament?

They are

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

I do

Do you accept the call to be pastor of this congregation, and promise, through the grace of God, to be a faithful Minister of the Gospel among this people?

I do

12. Subscription to the Subordinate Standards

The Moderator addresses the Licentiate in these words:

You are now required to subscribe, in terms of the General Assembly's Formula, 'I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code, Chapter I, paragraphs 12-14, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith'.

The Formula is signed in the Minute book of Presbytery.

13. Praise [Such as IPH 457, 461, 482, 485, 494]^{xi}**14. The Licentiate kneels.**

Those who are to participate in the laying on of hands take their places.

The Moderator says:

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

Through every generation, your wisdom guides your people.

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

The Moderator and other Ministers lay hands on the head of the Licentiate. The Moderator says:

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon this your servant, NN whom we now, in your name and in obedience to your will, by prayer and the laying on of hands, ordain and appoint to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, committing to him/her authority to minister your Word and Sacraments, and to share in the government of your Church.

Increase in this your servant the gifts of your grace that he/she may be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ and become more and more fitted to the work that you have called him/her to undertake.

Here insert appropriate prayer.

The Moderator then continues:

May NN be for us all a source of strength and inspiration so that, with him, we may share in the ministry of Christ, bringing salvation for those who are lost, reconciliation to those who are divided, peace to those who are in anguish, healing to those who are broken, justice to those who are oppressed, and hope for those who are in despair. Receive these, our prayers for him/her whose calling is to pray for all, and, with all your faithful servants, bring him/her at the last into your eternal joy.

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

The Aaronic Blessing (said or sung)**15. The Moderator says: *Let us all stand***

16. The Moderator, addressing the newly ordained Minister, says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, and by authority of this Presbytery, I now declare you NN to have been ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and installed to this charge; as a sign of this I, as Moderator of Presbytery, give you the right hand of fellowship. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Other members of the Commission and representatives of the congregation may now be invited to welcome the newly ordained and installed Minister with a handshake.^{x11}

17. The Moderator says:^{xiii}

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

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

We do

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

We will

18. The Moderator says: *Having committed yourselves, Minister and People, to each other and to living for the glory of God in this place, we join with one voice in prayer: Our Father ...*

19. Charge

The Minister appointed gives a Charge to the new Minister and to the congregation

20. Offering and prayer of dedication**21. Prayer**

Prayer is here offered for the congregation and for the exercise of the ministry of word and sacrament in particular.

22. Praise [Such as IPH 150, 155, 633, 638, 642]**23. The Moderator pronounces the Benediction.**

Footnotes

- i This is an order for the ordination of a Licentiate and installation to a first charge. Some alterations will need to be made for the installation of a previously ordained Minister and for Ministers entering work for which 'installation' is not appropriate.
Because some formal business is transacted before the service begins, Presbytery is constituted with prayer prior to the start of the service.
All that follows, apart from those parts demanded by the Code, is offered as guidance, not prescriptively.
A few parts of this order have their origin in material produced by the Panel on Worship of the Church of Scotland.
- ii While the phrase: The Moderator says, is used throughout, there is significant freedom of expression, as all of the Moderator's words, including the prayers may be altered to suit local tastes, so long as the substance remains the same. Additional words of explanation would be very appropriate in situations where a significant number of people are present for whom the Church and its ceremonies are alien. As with so many formal occasions, getting a balance between formal language, familiar to the reasonably well educated, and informal language, familiar to all present, but transient and sometimes even trivialising is very difficult. The Moderator might explain such terms as Presbytery, Moderator, Clerk, Licentiate and subscribe. Alternatively, short explanations might be printed in a leaflet, to be included with the Order of Service. These explanations might also include a paragraph or two on the role of the Minister in PCI.
- iii There is, of course, no reason why people other than the Moderator might not lead in prayer, here or elsewhere.
- iv It is arguable that the sermon might be omitted, its function being fulfilled by a 'Statement of Order', the reading or readings and the Creed. If so, the statement, readings and Creed should be introduced by suitable words from the Moderator, making clear that they give Scriptural and historical warrant for the service as a whole.
- v If an anthem is desired, it might take the place of this praise or be offered as a processional or recessional.
- vi The Narrative sets the ordination/installation into its context in the life story of the Congregation and the Minister. This may be given by, for example, the Vacancy Convener, Session Clerk or a Board Representative in the case of a Licentiate being called to missionary service. The narrative should be brief and positive in tone, telling how God has brought Congregation and Minister together.
- vii NN is used for the name of the Licentiate. In some places the full name should be used while, in others, the Christian name or Mr/Miss/Mrs or other title should be used as appropriate. PP is used for the name of the Presbytery and CC for the name of the Congregation.
- viii In certain circumstances the newly ordained Minister may be 'inducted'. Here and elsewhere, the appropriate term should be used and other phrases may need to be changed.
- ix The traditional wording has been retained as a change would necessitate a change in the Code. A resolution in this respect is appended.

- x These questions contain the substance of the current questions except that the penultimate question does not specifically name the Subordinate Standards. The Standards have been named above and the Westminster Confession of Faith is named in the requirement to subscribe, at section 11.
- xi This praise breaks the formal part of the ordination recognising that what is done is part of an act of worship. It also recognises that, ultimately, the one who calls, ordains and empowers for service is God himself.
- xii The right hand of fellowship is offered formally by the Moderator. Members of the Presbytery and Congregation welcome the Minister into their fellowship. The latter might include a wider range of members.
- xiii Congregational promises seem appropriate as an expression of fellowship and mutual commitment. As part of the preparation for the service, on the Sunday preceding, the Congregation should be informed of the questions that they will be asked.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Report be received.
2. That the recommendations outlined in the Revised Strategy for Future Mission Development section of the Report be agreed.
3. That the BMI Mission Development Officer maintains annual contact with Presbytery Clerks and Mission Development Co-ordinators to offer support in mission development in whatever manner is deemed appropriate.
4. That the General Assembly support the formation of a series of networks built around urban, rural and missional Church.
5. That the General Assembly commend to Kirk Sessions the Course for the Training of Evangelists and invite them to consider nominating and supporting suitable candidates as participants from their Congregations.
6. That the Panel on the Revision of the Book of Public Worship reviews the wording of Pars 10-14 of The Code and reports to next year's General Assembly.
7. That the General Assembly commend the work of Nightlight under its Director, Mr John Luke and encourage volunteers to offer themselves for service in this and other outreach projects within the Church.
8. 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 and Kirk Sessions.
9. 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: